



Clan MACNEIL

ARMS

Quarterly, 1st, Vert, a lion rampant Or; 2nd, Argent, issuing from a sea in base, a triple towered castle Proper; 3rd, Or, a lymphad sail furling, oars in action Sable, flagged Gules; 4th, Or, a dexter hand erect couped within an orle of nine fetterlocks Gules

CREST MOTTO

On a chapeau Gules furred Ermine, a rock Proper

Buaidh no bas (To conquer or die)

SUPPORTERS

(on a compartment embellished with plants of dryas) Two lions rampant Proper

STANDARD

The Arms in the hoist and of two tracts Vert and Or, upon which is depicted the crest in the first compartment, and in the second and third compartments a sprig of dryas, slipped and leaved Proper, shoeing two dryas flowers of eight petals, along with the Motto 'Buaidh no bas' I letters Or upon two transverse bands Gules

PINSEL

Vert, displaying the Crest within a strap and buckle, the strap proper and emblazoned of the Motto 'Buaidh no bas' in letters Or, all within a golden circlet bearing the title 'MacNeil of Barra' in letters Vert, all ensigned of a chapeau Gules furred Ermine and in the fly an escrol Or containing the Slogan 'Buaidh no bas' along with a branch of dryas Proper

PLANT BADGE

Plants of dryas

The Clan MacNeil claims descent from Niall, a descendent of Aodh O'Neil, King of the North of Ireland at the beginning of the eleventh century. Aodh was twentieth in descent from Niall of the Nine Hostages, the pagan fifth-century founder of the might U'Neill dynasty. Niall came to the island of Barra in the Outer Hebrides around 1049, and is reckoned the first chief. 'Barra' means the 'isle of St Barr', but it is uncertain whether this is St Fionnbharr, the founder of Cork, or St Barr, great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages. Neil Macniel, fifth of Barra, was described as a prince at a Council of the Isles in 1252. He was still the chief when King Haakon's army was defeated at Largs in 1263, ending the Norwegian domination of the Hebrides. His son, Neil Og Macneil, is believed to have fought with Robert the Bruce at Bannochburn. He was rewarded with lands in north Kintyre, which were added to his barony of Barra.

The ninth chief, Gilleonan, received a charter of Barra and Boisdale from the Lord of the Isles in 1427. His namesake, the twelfth chief, was one of the island lords tricked into attending on James V at Portree. Promised safe conduct, they were promptly arrested and imprisoned. Barra was held until the king's death in 1542, when he was released by Regent Moray, who sought to use the island chiefs to counterbalance the growing power of the Campbells. His son was one of the chiefs who supported the last Lord of the Isles in his alliance with Henry VIII of England in July 1545. The treaty they signed, which agreed to accept the English king as overlord of the isles, proclaimed the ancient enmity between the isles and the realm of Scotland. In March 1579 the Bishop of the Isles made a complaint of molestation against Macneil of Barra. His grandson, the fifteenth chief, was no less troublesome. He was denounced so many times before the Privy Council that he has been described as a 'hereditary outlaw' and was known as the 'the Turbulent' or 'Ruari the tatar'. He has also been described as the last of the Vikings, raiding from his island Castle of Kisimul. The king eventually issued letters requiring that his loyal vassals 'extirpate and root out' the chief and clan of Macneil. Ruari, who lived by the sword, was probably not surprised when his own nephews launched an attack on Kisimul in 1610. They captured their uncle and placed him in chains. His eldest son, Neil Og, became chief. He had a more conventional attitude towards central authority, and was appointed a Colonel of Horse by King Charles. He fought at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. His grandson, Roderick Dhu, the Black, was well received at court, and in August 1688 he received a Crown charter of all the lands of Barra erected into a free barony.

The Macneils were Jacobites, and Black Roderick led his clansmen to fight for James VII at Killiecrankie in 1689. He remained loyal to the cause and rallied to the 'Old Pretender' at the Rising of 1715. His two sons, Roderick and James, went into exile in France. They returned on their father's death and, for his Jacobite sympathies, Roderick was consigned to a prison ship, the *Royal Sovereign*. He was later taken to London and was not released until July 1747. The estates, however, were not forfeited.

The Clan prospered until the time of the twenty-first chief, General Roderick Macneil who was forced to sell Barra in 1838. The General had no children, and the chiefship passed to a cousin, whose line had emigrated to America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was from the New World that the father of the present chief came to reclaim Kisimul, together with the greater part of the island of Barra, in 1937. He devoted a great part of his life to the restoration of Kisimul, which is once again home of the chiefs. His work was praised by the late Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk, one of Scotland's greatest traditionalists, in these words: 'It is often complained that some chiefs have sold their old clan territory and emigrated. Here is an outstanding example of the reverse; a chief who devoted his life and fortune to returning from the New World to rebuild the ruined home of his forefathers.' His son, who is a professor of Law, divides his time between Bara, Edinburgh and the USA.

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Clan MAC NEIL Septs

BARA	MAC GUCKI(A)N	MAC NEIL(L)(E)	MAC REEL
MAC ARAVARRA	MAC GUGAN	MAC NEILAGE	MAC RELLIS
MAC CARAVARRA	MAC GUIGAN	MAC NEILAGE	MANEELY
MAC CORRAN	MAC KNEAL	MAC NEILEDGE	MINEELY
MAC CREEL	MAC KNELLIE,-Y	MAC NEL(L)IS	NAIL(L)
MAC CREIL	MAC KREAL	MAC NELLY	NEAL(E)
MAC CRELLIS	MAC KREEL	MAC NELL	NEEL
MAC EANLAIG	MAC NALE	MAC NELLIE,-Y	NEIL(L)
MAC GOUGAN,-EN	MAC NATT	MAC NELT	NEILSON
MAC GOUGHAN	MAC NEAL(L) (E)	MAC NIAL(L)	NELSON
MAC GRAIL	MAC NEELY,-IE	MAC NIEL(L)(E)	
MAC GREAL	MAC NEIL(L,E)	MAC REAL	

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