



# Clan NAPIER

## ARMS

Quarterly, 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, Argent, a saltire engrailed cantoned of four roses Gules, barbed Vert (Napier); 2<sup>ns</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, Or, on a bend Azure, a mullet pierced between two crescents of the Field, within a double tressure flory counterflory of the Second (Scott of Thirlestane)

## CREST

A dexter arm erect couped below the elbow Proper, grasping a crescent Argent

## MOTTO

Sans tache (Without stain)

## On Compartment

Ready aye ready

## SUPPORTERS

Dexter, an eagle, wings expanded Proper; sinister, a chevalier in coat of mail and steel cap, all Proper, holding in the exterior hand a lance with a pennon Azure

The Napiers have a long and ancient history and are descended, through the Earls of Lennox, from the Celtic royal families of Scotland and Ireland. One suggested derivation of the name is from the officer of the royal household who was in charge of linen, the 'naperer'. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this title was much used in Scotland, and in common with many families, a more stirring and poetic origin of the name is offered. One of the knights of the Earl of Lennox, possibly a younger son, distinguished himself in battle during the reign of William the Lion. After the victory, the king singled out the young knight praising his valor which he said had 'nae peer'. The earliest certain reference to the name appears in a charter of Malcolm, Earl of Lennox, sometime prior to 1290, which granted lands at Kilmahew in Dunbartonshire to John de Napier. The Napiers were to hold lands at Kilmahew for eighteen generations, until the estate was sold in 1820.

The first Laird of Merchiston, Alexander Napier, was a prominent Edinburgh merchant who amassed a fortune and became Lord Provost of the city. In common with most prosperous merchants of the time, he converted part of his wealth into land, obtaining a charter to the lands of Merchiston in 1436. His son, Sir Alexander Napier, later to be Lord Provost of Edinburgh also, rose high in royal favor. He was wounded while rescuing the widow of James I and her second husband, Sir James Stewart, from rebels who had captured them. James II honored Napier by making him comptroller of the Royal Household in 1440, and Vice Admiral of Scotland in 1461. His son, John, the son-in-law of the Earl of Lennox who was executed in 1444, did not press his family's claim to the earldom. He was killed at the Battle of Sauchieburn in 1488. His heir, Alexander, and his grandson were both killed at Flodden in 1513, and the Battle of Pinkie in 1547 claimed another Napier heir.

The most famous of the name is the seventh Laird of Merchiston, John Napier, who developed the system of Logarithms. His son, Archibald, who succeeded to Merchiston in 1617, accompanied James VI when he traveled to England to claim his new throne, and was sworn a Member of the Privy Council in 1615. He became a judge and was Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland from 1623 to 1624. He was first created a Baronet of Nova Scotia in 1627, and later in that year raised to the peerage as Baron Napier of Merciston. He married Margaret, daughter of the fourth Earl of Montrose, and sister of the great Marquess. The brother-in-law of the king's captain general could scarcely avoid the obligations of kinship, and Napiers supported the king throughout the civil war. Lord Napier died in 1645 and his only son, Archibald, second Baron Napier, was forced into exile when Scotland became part of the Commonwealth. He died in the Netherlands in 1660.

Archibald, third Lord Napier, petitioned the Crown for a new patent to the barony, extending the succession to heir female, including his sisters. The title passed to the only child of his eldest sister, Sir Thomas Nicholson of Carnock, and then to his aunt Margaret Napier, wife of John Brisbane, Secretary to the Admiralty in the reign of Charles II. Baroness Napier was succeeded by her grandson, Francis Scott, who became the sixth Baron and adopted the name and arms of Napier.

Three grandsons of the sixth Lord Napier served throughout the Napoleonic Wars, each attaining the rank of general and the Order of the Bath. General Sir Charles conquered Sind in India, now part of Pakistan, and his statue can still be seen in Trafalgar Square, London. Francis, the eighth Lord, was an ensign when he was captured during

the American War of Independence. He survived the ordeal, and later sat in Parliament as a representative Scottish peer, from 1796 to 1823. The ninth Lord was Chief Superintendent for Trade with China in 1833. He determined that Hong Kong should be annexed. His son, another Francis, became the tenth Lord Napier in 1834. A gifted academic, he received degrees from the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Harvard. He became a diplomat and was highly regarded in Washington prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War. He was a friend of Jefferson Davis, later to be the only president of the Confederate States of America. He was ambassador to the Netherlands, Russia and Prussia. He served as acting Viceroy of India in 1872. A Knight of the Thistle, he was created Baron Ettrick of Ettrick in the peerage of the United Kingdom in July 1872. On his return to Scotland he became chairman of the newly created Crofters Commission.

The present chief, fourteenth Lord Napier and fifth of Ettrick, is Comptroller to the Household, and Private Secretary to HRH The Princess Margaret.

*Taken from "Scottish Clan & Family Encyclopedia", by Collins, HarperCollins Publishers 1994*

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#### **Clan NAPIER Septs**

LAIPER  
LEAPER  
LEIPER  
NAPIER  
NAPPER

This clan information sheet has been prepared by  
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