



## Clan SKENE

<b>ARMS</b>	Gules, three dirks paleways Argent, hilted and pommelled Or, surmounted of as many wolves' heads coupéd of the third
<b>CREST</b>	A dexter arm issuing from the shoulder out of a cloud, holding forth in the hand atriupphal drown, Proper.
<b>MOTTO</b>	Virtutis regia merces (A palace the reward of bravery)
<b>SUPPORTERS</b>	Dexter, a Highland man in his proper garb holding a skene with his right hand in a guarding posture; sinister a Highland man in a servile garb his target on the left arm and a dirlach by his side
<b>STANDARD</b>	Azure, a St Andrew's Cross Argent in the hoist and of two tracts Gules and Argent, upon which is depicted the Crest three times along with the Motto 'Virtutis regia merces' in letters Sable upon two transverse bands Or
<b>PINSEL</b>	Gules, displaying the Crest within a strap and buckle Proper inscribed with the Motto 'Virtutis regia merces' in letters Or, all within a circlet of the Last bearing the title 'Skene of Skene' in letters Sable, the same ensigned of a chapeau Azure furred Ermine, and in an Escrol Argent surmounting a sprig of gean Proper the Solgan 'A Skene' in letters Sable.

**T**he traditional origin of this name is found in an eleventh-century legend of the Robertsons. It is said that a younger son of Roberson of Struan saved the life of the king by killing a savage wolf with only his small dagger, or 'sgian'. He was rewarded with a grant of lands in Aberdeenshire which he named after the weapon which had brought him the good fortune, and the family thereafter were named for their ownership of this land. The feat is commemorated in the chief's shield, which displays three wolves' heads impaled on daggers, or as they have now been blazoned, 'durks'.

The first recorded bearer of the name was John de Skeen, who lived during the reign of Malcolm III. After Malcolm's death he supported Conald Bane, a rival to the succession of King Edgar. His lands were forfeited, and they were only restored when the Skenes joined the army of Alexander I marching against rebels in the north in 1118. His great-grandson, John de Skene, held the lands during the reign of Alexander III, and his son, Patrick, appears on the Ragman Roll in 1296, submitting to Edward I of England. However, the Skenes staunchly supported Robert the Bruce, and after his victory their lands were erected into a barony. Adam de Skene was killed at the Battle of Harlaw in 1411. Four generations later, Alexander Skene de Skene is listed among the dead on the ill-fated field of Flodden in 1513. Yet another Skene laird fell at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547.

The Skenes were not Covenanters, and for their support of Charles I they were forced into exile. The chief took service with the Swedish armies under King Gustavus Adolphyus. In 1827 the direct line of the Skenes of Skene died out and the estates passed to a nephew, James, Earl of Fife.

Other prominent branches of the family include the Skenes of Dyce, Halyards, Rubislaw and Curriehill. Sir John Skene of Curriehill was a prominent sixteenth-century lawyer who was appointed to the Supreme Court Bench in 1584, taking the title, 'Lord Curriehill'. He was knighted by James VI, and his son was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia in 1626. Sir John's 2<sup>nd</sup> son, John Skene of Hallyards, also rose to high judicial office as the Lord Clerk Register. One of the Skenes of Hallyards later founded Skeneborough on the shores of Lake Champlain in Canada. James Skene of Rubislaw was a close friend of the novelist, Sir Walter Scott, and is said to have provided Scott with some inspiration for both *Quentin Durward* and *Ivanhoe*. William Forbes Skene, the celebrated writer and historian, was appointed historiographer royal for Scotland in 1881.

On 17 February 1944, the Lord Lyon recognized Dnus George Moncrieffe Skene of Halyards as chief of the name and arms of Skene. The matriculation also recognizes the new chief's son, Dugald, as heir apparent. Danus Skene of Skene, who is a teacher with degrees from the Universities of Sussex, Chicago and Aberdeen, matriculated his arms as Skene of Halyards in 1992. It was established that John Skene of Halyards, son of Sir John Skene and his wife, Barbara Forbes of Cragievar, was lineally descended from the second son of James Skene of that Ilk, who died around 1604. John of Halyards, matriculated his arms in the Lyon register in 1672, differenced from the chiefly arms by the addition of a gold crescent on the shield. In the petition of Danus Skene, it was asserted that there was good reason to believe that, on the death of Alexander Skene of that Ilk with no issue in April 1827, the succession

passed to next most senior line – thickened of Halyards. This argument was accepted subject to the proviso that the Lord Lyon’s decision was ‘for aught yet seen’, which means that if a rival claimant, nearer in blood to the old chiefly line, comes forward in the next ten years, then the case can be re-opened. AS no other claimant has emerged in the past one hundred and sixty-seven years, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Skenes once more have a bloodline chief under whose standard they can rally.

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

**Clan genealogists:** ..... Gloria B. Skeens  
Genealogist  
Clan Skene Association, Inc.  
2008 Lyndon Avenue  
Red Bank, TN 37415  
Home Page: <http://www.ClanSkene.org>

See also HALL  
See also DYCE/DYESS

For other surnames of Clan Skene, contact:  
A. T. Skeen, F.S.A. Scot  
President  
Clan Skene Association, Inc.  
152 Keven Drive  
Troutman, NC 28166-8683  
email: [tskeen@i-america.net](mailto:tskeen@i-america.net)

**Clan SKENE Septs**

CARISTAN,-ON	DYAS	NORIE	SCENSE
CARNIE,-Y	DYCE	PINKIESLAW	SCHENSE
CURRIEHILL	DYESS	RANNIE,-Y	SKAINS
DICE	DYSE	RENNIE,-Y	SKEAN(S)
DIE	HALL	RUBISLAW	SKEEN(E)(S)
DIS(S)	HALLYARD	SCENSE	SKENE
DISE	MAC GALLIARD	SCHENSE	

This clan information sheet has been prepared by  
The Scottish Society of Louisville, Inc.  
PO Box 32248  
Louisville, KY 40232-2248