



Clan SWINTON

ARMS	Sable, a chevron Or between three boars' heads erased Argent
CREST	A boar chained to a tree Proper
MOTTO	J'espere (I hope)
On Compartment	Je pense (I think)
SUPPORTERS	Two boars rampant Sable, armed, crined and unguled Or, langued Gules
BADGE	A boar's head erased Sable, armed Or, langued gules

This family seems to be of Saxon origin, descended from nobles prominent in the kingdom of Northumberland which straddled the present border between England and Scotland. The name is said traditionally to have been acquired for their bravery and clearing the country of wild boar, and the family arms allude to this legend. The name is, however, more likely to be territorial. The village of Swinewood in the country of Berwick was granted by Edgar, son of Malcolm III, to Coldingham Priory in 1098. The Swintons' possession of their lands was confirmed by a charter of the Prior of Coldingham in the reign of William the Lion.

Edulph de Swinton received a charter, one of the first recorded in Scotland, confirming his property at Swinton from David I around 1140. Henry de Swinton appears on the Ragman Roll as one of the nobility swearing fealty to Edward I of England in 1296. He was joined in this by his brother, William, priest of the church of Swinton. Sir John Swinton, great-grandson of Henry, was a distinguished soldier and statesman in the reigns of Robert II and Robert III. He was a commander at the Battle of Otterburn in July 1388 when the Scots won the day, although their leader, Douglas, was slain. Swinton's second wife was the Countess of Douglas and Mar, but they had no issue. His third wife was Princess Margaret, who bore Swinton a son, later Sir John Swinton of Swinton, reckoned to be the fifteenth Lord of the name. He was a doughty warrior who fought at the Battle of Beaugh in France in 1420. Although the credit for this is claimed by others, he is said to have been the knight who slew the Duke of Clarence, brother of Henry V of England. The incident appears in Sir Walter Scott's poem, 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel'. He was killed at the Battle of Verneuil in France in 1424.

Sir John Swinton was among the band of Scottish barons who signed the bond of protection of the infant James VI in 1567 against the Earl of Bothwell on his marriage to the child's mother, Queen Mary. In 1640 Sir Alexander Swinton, twenty-second of that ilk, became sheriff of Berwickshire. He died in 1652, leaving six sons and five daughters. His second son, Alexander, was appointed to the Supreme Court of Scotland in 1688, taking the title, 'Lord Mersington'. The eldest son, John was colonel for the regiment of Berwickshire, and at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, He was taken prisoner, and his brother, Robert, died in an attempt to carry off Oliver Cromwell's standard. John was later appointed by the Lord Protector to the Council of State he established to assist in ruling Scotland in 1655. His involvement with Cromwell led to his being tried for treason in 1661, and although he escaped the block, his estates were forfeited and he was imprisoned for six years. He died in 1669 and was succeeded by his son, Alexander, who later died without issue. Alexander's brother, Sir John, succeeded as the twenty-fifth Laird of Swinton who, after a successful career as a merchant in Holland, returned to Scotland in the wake of the Revolution of 1688 which brought William of Orange to the throne with his wife, Queen Mary.

His father's forfeiture was rescinded, and Swinton sat in both the Scottish Parliament and, later, in the British, at Westminster. John Swinton of that ilk, the twenty-seventh Laird, became a member of the Supreme Court in 1782, taking the title, 'Lord Swinton'. Captain George Swinton, descended from the Swintons of Kimmerghame, a cadet of the chiefly house, was Lord Lyon, King of Arms, and Secretary to the Order of the Thistle from 1926 to 1929. Major General Sir John Swinton, who still resides at Kimmerghame, is the Lord Lieutenant of Berwickshire. The present chief lives in Canada.

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PO Box 32248, Louisville, KY 40232-2248