

Clan Leslie Society INTERNATIONAL



Clan Leslie History

Clan Leslie is an old family. It was founded by Bartholomew, Chamberlain to Queen Margaret of Scotland (the Saint Margaret) by a grant of land made around 1070 by King Malcolm III Caenmore. This grant was in the Garioch, which became the first Leslie homeland (the village of Leslie where the restored Leslie castle stands) when Bartholomew married King Malcolm Caenmore's sister, Beatrix. The Leslies count many illustrious members in history, notably the first Earl of Leven, Alexander Leslie. He had been a Field Marshal with the Swedes and commanded the army of the Covenant. John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, was Queen Mary's advisor and diplomatic representative.

The clan developed four branches about the middle of the 13th century. Two, the Leslie Earls of Ross and the Barons Leslie died out. The head of the third eventually became the first Earl of Rothes, and of the fourth, the Baron of Balquhain. With exception of those who are direct part of the Rothes, all Leslies in the world are descended from George, the first Baron of Balquhain, who died in 1351. There are probably several thousand Leslies (there are several spellings of the name) in the United States, many more when the septs are included (Bartholomew, Lang, More, Abernethy, and Carnie also being listed).

The Leslies were perhaps the only clan to have several family branches abroad, all founded by soldiers. The Leslies in Austria, while simultaneously keeping a title in Scotland, produced diplomats and soldiers. This branch became counts of the Holy Roman Empire and ended in the middle of the last century; the last claimant to the title returned to Scotland and died there. The French branch was founded in 1630 and expired when the descendants came back to Scotland about the time of the French Revolution. The largest and most long-lasting of the Leslie branches abroad was in Russia and was founded by General Alexander Leslie and ended with General Lord Alexander Leslie.

Famous Leslies include David, Lt. General of the Scots Army under Kings Charles I and II; five Protestant bishops: John, Duke of Rothes, statesman and diplomat during the reign of Charles II; Sir John Edinburgh, philosopher and mathematician; Alexander, in Russia, a geographer of international repute; several who were Catholic theologians in Germany; Robert Charles, born in America but who worked in Britain, in the 19th century, a fine painter; James a General in the Austrian Imperial Army, one of those who lifted the Siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1683; Henry David and Thomas, both in the latter part of the last century, the first a composer and the other a renowned political economist.

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