



The Hendersons are an ancient Clan, tracing their ancestry back to the Picts, Scotland's earliest people. Clan Henderson descend from the Pictish prince Eanruig Mor, meaning "Big Henry", whose family became known in the Gaelic tongue as Maceanruig, or "son of Henry". Through the course of the centuries the name became anglicized to the current form of Henderson, although Gaelic forms of the name still exist. Eanruig Mor is known to be the son of King Neachtain, who ruled the Pictish kingdom from 700 to 724, and is reputed to have constructed the great Pictish fortress of Abernethy.

Clan Henderson lived amid the rugged splendour of Glencoe in the northern Highlands, while other branches of the Clan settled in the Scottish border territory, and in the far north district of Caithness. The border Hendersons soon rose to prominence, holding powerful positions in the mighty strongholds which were such an integral part to the defence of Scotland. One of these great men, William Henderson, was the chamberlain of Lochmaben Castle during the 14th Century. Another, James Henderson, became Lord Advocate in 1494, was appointed to the bench, and acquired the lands of Fordell in Fife for the Clan. Here he built the magnificent fortified mansion of Fordell Castle. The Hendersons were classed as a riding clan, but were sufficiently loyal to evade the Scottish Parliament's 1594 list of turbulent border clans that were to be suppressed.

The success of the Clan Henderson continued to escalate, and by the 17th Century the Clan boasted one of the most notable figures in Scottish politics and church affairs. Alexander Henderson

draughted the National Covenant in 1638, in defence of the Scottish Church and denouncing the changes that Charles I intended to introduce. Alexander was elected moderator of the General Assembly, and was responsible for meeting and negotiating with the King after he surrendered to the protection of the Scottish army in 1646, during the Civil War. Another great Henderson, Thomas Henderson, was a 19th Century astronomer of the highest status, and was appointed as the first Astronomer Royal for Scotland.

The Hendersons of Glencoe were closely aligned to the great Clan Macdonald, for whom they acted as hereditary pipers. The Hendersons were renowned for their fighting ability, and they traditionally formed the bodyguard of the Macdonald chief. This duty they performed with verve, and many Hendersons were killed during the infamous Glencoe massacre. On this dark day, the Campbells villainously broke all the rules of Highland hospitality and murdered their hosts, the Macdonalds of Glencoe. The chief's piper and right hand man, Big Henderson of the Chanters, a strongman over six and a half feet tall, was among those who laid down their lives to defend their friends and allies in the Clan Macdonald.

The Clan Henderson crest is a hand holding an estoile, or a six-pointed star, surmounted by a crescent. The proud motto of the Hendersons reads "Sola virtus nobilitat" which means, in Latin "Virtue alone ennobles". The chief of the Clan Henderson is John Henderson of Fordell, who resides in Australia.

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