



Clan Keith are one of the most powerful of the ancient Celtic families, and are said to descend from a great Chatti warrior. This mighty soldier fought beside Malcolm II at the Battle of Barrie in 1010, and during the course of the battle slew the Danish General Camus. In recognition of this act, the king dipped three fingers in the slain Viking's blood and drew them down the shield of the warrior whom he dubbed Marbhachair Chamuis, or "Camus slayer". In reward for his allegiance to the king, Camus Slayer was granted the lands of Keth in East Lothian, from which his descendents took their name. The leaders of the Clan Keith thereafter stayed in close alliance with the Scottish Crown.

The Clan Chiefs held the hereditary title of Great Marischal of Scotland, one of the most prestigious offices of state, from the early 12th Century. By the 12th Century reign of David I, Harvey de Keith possessed half of the lands of Keith, with his great grandson acquiring for the Clan Keith the other half by a careful marriage with a Fraser heiress. A 14th Century marriage with an heiress in Ackergill led to the Keiths gaining the lands of Caithness, but their settlement there earned them the enmity of the neighbouring Clan Gunn, with whom they warred for many years. By the 16th century they owned land from the borders to the very north of Scotland.

Throughout the history of Scotland, the Keiths are renowned for their fealty to the Crown and their deeds truly reflect this loyal spirit. At the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, one of the most glorious moments of Scotland's past, Sir Robert Keith, Great

Marischal, commanded Robert the Bruce's cavalry with such skill and courage that the great king rewarded him with the royal forest of Kintore. This tradition continued with Keiths fighting at the battle of Flodden in 1513, and the 4th Earl founding Marischal College in Aberdeen. Perhaps the most celebrated contribution of the Keiths to the cause of the Scottish Crown came after the defeat of Charles II in the 17th century English Civil War. When Oliver Cromwell invaded Scotland, the Scottish regalia - the Crown, Sceptre and Sword, as well as the state papers, were brought to the Keiths' Dunnotar Castle, which stands near Stonehaven in Kincardine. This mighty castle became the last stronghold to fly the Royal Standard, and withstood eight months of siege before finally surrendering on 24 May 1652 after prolonged cannon bombardment. While the English ripped the castle apart in search of the regalia, the Keiths had lowered it all to an old woman gathering seaweed on the shore, who took them to Kineff Church where they were concealed in the pulpit for 8 years until the monarchy was restored.

The crest of Clan Keith is a stag's head, and the motto is "Veritas Vincit" meaning "Truth Conquers". The Chief, the 13th Earl of Kintore, resides at Keith Hall in Aberdeenshire.

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