



The Loch Lomond district has long been renowned throughout Scotland for producing some of the most turbulent Clans in the land, and it is in this territory that the MacFarlanes are known as the most warlike. The Clan is descended from Gilchrist, brother of Maldowen, 3rd of the Ancient Earls of Lennox in the 13th century. It is from the 4th Chief, Gilchrist's great grandson Bartholemew, (whose Gaelic equivalent is Parlan) that the Clan draws its name - Macfarlane Clan.

The Macfarlane Clan's close affinity with the ancient Earls of Lennox was demonstrated when Duncan, 6th Chief, received from the Earl the lands of Arrochar. Duncan also obtained the adjoining land for the MacFarlanes through marriage to an heiress. So strong was the bond between the MacFarlane Chiefs and the ancient Earls of Lennox, that when the last of the ancient Earls was executed by King James I in 1425, the MacFarlanes claimed the earldom. This was not to be, however, and the King awarded it instead to the Stewarts of Darnley. This injustice inspired a strong enmity between the MacFarlanes and the new Earls of Lennox, and the ensuing conflicts resulted in the MacFarlanes forfeiting much of their Clan lands. The opposition only ceased in the 15th century, when the 10th Chief married the Earl of Lennox's daughter, and although their son, Sir Iain was slain at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, the old enemies allied themselves to produce a powerful force. The war-like nature of the MacFarlanes manifested itself clearly throughout the Clan's tumultuous history, but it was after the alliance with the Earls of Lennox that the MacFarlane warriors' reputation really escalated. MacFarlane clansmen fought

at Flodden and at Pinkie Cleugh in 1547.

In the Earl of Lennox's struggle against Mary, Queen of Scots, 300 clan members were in the vanguard of the nobles' army at the Battle of Langside in 1568. However, while MacFarlane troops were renowned for their ability, it was the Clan's inherent turbulence which ultimately led to its downfall. With the direct male line of the chiefship severed by the death of a Chief without an heir, the Clan lands passed from the control of the rightfully elective MacFarlane Chiefs into other ownership by feudal law.

The MacFarlanes became involved in a conflict with their powerful neighbours, the Colquhouns in 1589, when the Colquhoun Chief was caught in compromising circumstances with the wife of the MacFarlane Chief. The MacFarlanes responded with typical boldness, setting the Colquhouns' castle at Bannachra on fire, and killing their Chief by way of revenge. This was not good enough for the cuckolded Chief, however, who cut off the private parts of his foe, and served them to his adulterous wife for dinner. Such extreme behaviour led to the MacFarlanes becoming known as a dangerous Clan and under King James VI the MacFarlanes were proscribed, their name banned, and their lands forfeited. While many of the Clan emigrated to Ireland and America, others were removed in 1624 to different parts of Scotland.. The last known Clan chief was thought to have moved to America in the 18th century.

Today the chiefship is vacant. The Clan crest is a demi-savage holding a sword in his right hand and a crown in his left, the motto reads "This I'll Defend".

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