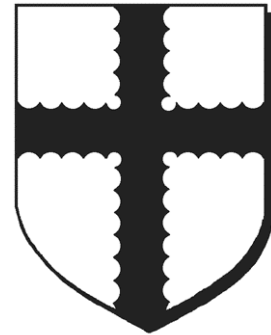


Sinclair

The Sinclair Family Name and Arms

The name Sinclair was originally “Saint Clair” and then “St. Clair.” Our Sinclair family may have taken their name from Saint-Clair-sur-Epte in the most southerly part of Normandy, about half way between Rouen and Paris. Some sources suggest a Norman French origin “sint clair” which means “clear well” or “clear pool” while others claim it came from Saint Clare of Assisi (1194 – 1253; canonized in 1255). The latter would seem less likely because our first Saint Clair ancestors appear to pre-date this saint. The ancient arms of the Sinclair Family are described as “Argent, a cross engrailed sable” which means “a silver shield with a black cross indented in a series of curves.”



Sinclair

Generation One

Sir Robert de Saint Clair

Robert lived in Normandy where he married Eleanor de Dreux, relict (widow) of Hugh, Lord Chateaufort and daughter of Robert, second Count de Dreux, in France, by Joland de Coucy, his wife. Sir Robert had a son:

- **Sir William Sinclair**, shown next.

Generation Two

Sir William Sinclair

Sir William was Sheriff of Edinburgh 1266, 1288-90; of Haddington 1264-90; Linlithgow 1264-90; Dumfries 1288; and Justiciar of Galwythie 1288-89. He was guardian to Prince Alexander of Scotland from 1279 to 1281. Alexander predeceased (1283-84) his father Alexander III who granted a Sir William on April 8, 1280 a charter of the baxter (border) lands of Innerleith, and a charter of the lands and barony of Roslin, on September 14, 1280. On the outbreak of the War of Independence, he was one of the garrison who defended the Castle of Dunbar in 1296 against Edward I, and on its surrender, on March 25, 1296, was sent a prisoner in the Tower of London.

Sir William Sinclair is said to have married Agnes, who may have been a daughter of Patrick, Earl of Dunbar. Agnes may or may not be the same person as Amicia, described as a “widow of William St. Clair, dwelling in the county of Edinburgh” who had a two years protection from Edward I. on April 7, 1299.

Sir William had the following children:

- **Sir Henry St. Clair**, shown next.
- William St. Clair, who succeeded Matthew de Crambeth as Bishop of Dunkeld in 1312. William distinguished himself by repulsing the English force which landed at Donibristle in Fife in 1317. Heading his own servants, and rallying the Scottish forces, the enemy was driven to their ships with a loss of 500 men.
- Annabel St. Clair, who married first to Sir Robert Bisset, and secondly to Sir David Wemyss.
- Gregory St. Clair (perhaps) who is said to be the ancestor of the Longformacus family.

Generation Three

Sir Henry St. Clair of Roslin

Died before January 28, 1335/36

Sir Henry swore fealty to Edward I on June 13, 1292. However, he was one of the garrison of Dunbar Castle, where he was taken prisoner in 1296 and sent to England. He was exchanged in 1299; and about September 15, 1305 was appointed Sheriff of Lanark by Edward I. Sir Henry appears to have switched sided frequently; he eventually supported the Bruce, and fought against the English at Bannockburn.

On October 21, 1314, Sir Henry had a Charter from King Robert, of all His Majesty's lands on the Muir of Pentland, and a further Charter from Edward de Gourton of the part of the lands of Gourton, tenanted by Roger de Hauewood, dated the Friday after the feast of St. Bartholomew, August 28, 1317. He was one of the Barons of Scotland, who signed the letter dated April 4, 1320 to Pope John XXII, asserting the independence of Scotland.

Sir Henry married Alice de Fenton who survived him; and they had the following children:

- **Sir William St. Clair**, shown next.
- Sir John St. Clair, who accompanied his brother Sir William on the expedition to the Holy Land with the heart of Bruce. He was slain, as was his brother, by the Saracens at Andalusia in Moorish Spain, on August 25, 1330.

Generation Four

Sir William St. Clair

Died (slain by the Saracens) on August 25, 1330

In 1329, Sir William had a grant of a pension of £40 in anticipation of his services in the Holy Land. He was one of the knights chosen to accompany Sir James "the Good" Douglas (remembered as "the Black Douglas" by the English) to Palestine with the heart of Robert the Bruce. He was slain, as was his brother John, by the Saracens at Andalusia in Moorish Spain on August 25, 1330. There are several versions of this story; but all agree that Robert the Bruce was buried at Dunfermline, his heart removed, and taken on a crusade to the Holy Land. The Scottish knights encountered a vastly superior Saracen force in southern Spain and rather than surrender, they attacked, were defeated, and slain. The Saracens were said to be so impressed by the bravery of the Scots that they returned the heart of Robert the Bruce to Scotland where it was buried at Melrose Abbey . . . or so the story goes. There is a conical lead casket, believed to contain the heart of Robert the Bruce, buried at Melrose.

Sir William had the following children:

- **William Sinclair**, shown next.
- Margaret Sinclair, who married first to Thomas Stewart, Earl of Angus who died in 1361 and secondly to Sir John Sinclair of Hermandston.
- Thomas Sinclair (perhaps) who was Bailie of Orkney for the King of Norway. His son:
 - Alexander Sinclair
- John Sinclair (perhaps) who was a witness in 1367.

Generation Five

William Sinclair of Roslin

Died in 1358

William was a minor when his father died; and he succeeded to the pensions of his father and his Uncle John. He had a Charter from King David II of the lands of Morton and Merchamyston in Midlothian, on the resignation of William Bisset on February 10, 1357/58. He had a safe conduct to go to England on May 6, 1358 on his way abroad to Prussia to fight in foreign wars. On September 17, 1358, King David confirmed on William an annuity granted to his grandfather Sir Henry St. Clair (See Generation Three) and William appears to have died shortly thereafter.

William married **Isabella**, second daughter of Malise, 8th Earl of Strathearn, Earl of Orkney and Caithness (see *De Quincy*, Generation Nine) and they had the following children:

- **Henry Sinclair**, mentioned next.
- David Sinclair, who had a charter under the Great Seal of the lands of Newburgh and Auchdale in Aberdeenshire in exchange for any rights which he had in Orkney and Shetland, derived from his mother, dated April 23, 1391.

Generation Six

Henry Sinclair, 1st Earl of Orkney

Born circa 1345

Died (slain while resisting an invasion from the south) in 1404

Henry was proclaimed Lord of Rosslyn upon the death of his father in 1358. He married first to a granddaughter of the King of Norway and Sweden; but she died shortly thereafter before they had any children. On the death of his maternal grandfather, Malise, Earl of Stratherne, Orkney, and Caithness he became one of the competitors for the earldom of Orkney, the others being his cousins, Aleander del Ard and Malise Sperra, Lord of Skaldale. (See *De Quincy*, Generation Eight) These three proceeded to Norway, where, having submitted their claims to King Hakon VI, he, at Marstrand on August 2, 1379 formally invested Henry as Earl of Orkney and Lord of Shetland, under certain restrictions. The Earl was to govern the islands and to enjoy the revenues during the King's pleasure, but was not to build any castles, and was to be answerable to the King's Court at Bergen. At his death the earldom was to revert to the Crown of Norway if he left no sons, and if he did they were to be re-invested. In defiance of the terms of his charter he built the Castle of Kirkwall. Henry had a charter from King Robert III of the castlewards of Pentland and Roslin, built the dungeons of Roslin and certain walls thereabout, and laid out parks for fallow and red deer.

In 1389 Henry attended the coronation of King Eric of Norway. In 1391 he was engaged in the conquest of the Færoe Isles, and at this point legend becomes mixed with history. Henry is said to have met the Venetian voyager Nicolò Zeno, who happened to be wrecked there, and was appointed by Henry to be captain of his fleet. Having conquered the Færoes, he next descended on Shetland, where Malise Sperra had established himself, and with the assistance of Zeno, Sperra was defeated and slain with seven of his followers near Tingwall. With the brothers Antonio and Nicolò Zeno, Henry is next reputed to have set out to discover a rich and populous country in the far west which had been stated to exist by fishermen, who alleged they had been

driven there by a storm. Encountering fog they drifted south to the west of Ireland and landed at Icara (Kerry), from whence they sailed north-west and, according to legend, came to Greenland.

It is entirely possible that Henry Sinclair visited Greenland about 1392 at which time there may have been some Norse colonies there, although they would most definitely have been in a state of decline. The last Bishop of Greenland known to have visited his see died in 1372. Henricus (Erik) was consecrated as Bishop of Greenland in 1389, but there is no record of him ever finding a ship to take him there. A ship from Norway spent a winter at an abandoned Greenland settlement circa 1406 - 1410 and found only wild cattle and no people. Unfortunately, there is no actual historical record or evidence of Henry Sinclair having visited Greenland, and we can only say that he is reputed to have done so and that such a voyage would have been quite possible.

As Earl of Orkney, Henry was entitled to impose taxes and wear a crown if he chose to do so. Because of this, he is referred to as “Prince Henry Sinclair, Earl of Orkney”, although it appears that he was never actually granted the title of Prince. Regardless, he was a vassal of the Kings of both Scotland and Norway, and was a man of considerable wealth and power with his own fleet of 13 ships that plied between Norway, the Orkneys and Rosslyn. He was also the Duke of Oldenburg in Denmark, Admiral of the High Seas for Scotland and Lord Chief Justice of Scotland.

The Legendary Voyages

Henry Sinclair is alleged to have left the Orkneys in early April 1397 or 1398 with 12 or 13 ships and journeyed to what is now Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Most of the ships then returned to the Orkneys; but two remained in the New World, journeyed on to Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and returned the next year. Some details of this legend are as follows:

The Zeno Brothers: The Venetian brothers Nicolò and Antonio Zeno were ship wrecked on the Island of Frislanda (thought to be The Færoes) where the local prince named Zichmni (thought to be Henry Sinclair) is said to have hired one or both of them as navigators or admirals. The Zeno brothers sent a record of this voyage including the famous “Zeno Map” back to a third brother Carlo “the Lion” Zeno in Venice. Regardless of their exact role, the Zeno Brothers are a part of the legend. The Zeno Map and manuscript relating the details of the voyage were kept secret until 1558 when a descendant, also named Nicolò, decided to make a printed book of it. It has also been suggested that Zichmni was a Baltic pirate named Wichmann and that the Zeno brothers were involved in pirating when they were supposed to have been exploring and map making.

Newfoundland: They landed, but were attacked and driven off by native people. They managed to replenish their food, water and wood supplies at a nearby site; but were once again driven off and a number of men were killed. Visitors recently returned from Newfoundland report that the hospitality displayed by the inhabitants of the province in the early 21st century has improved dramatically since the late 14th century.

Nova Scotia: They landed in Nova Scotia in late May or early June and found the native Micmac Indians friendly. Henry Sinclair became known as “Glooscap”, the white Micmac god. He built a castle and buried the Holy Grail (and perhaps the Arc of the Covenant as well) in a mysterious deep shaft on Oak Island. All except two ships returned to the Orkneys, and Henry Sinclair wintered in Nova Scotia during which time he and his men built a larger ship . . . or so the story goes.

Massachusetts and the Westford Knight: Next spring, Henry Sinclair and his men sailed south and landed in Massachusetts. At that point, Sir James Gunn died and a memorial was inscribed on a rock on Prospect Hill in Westford, Massachusetts. This memorial is described by some as nothing more than a crudely pecked outline of an 18th century tomahawk while other describe it as a Knight Templar in armour carrying a sword and a shield bearing the arms of the Clan Gunn.

Rhode Island and the Newport Tower: Later the same year, Henry Sinclair is reputed to have sailed on to Rhode Island where he built the mysterious Newport Tower, which is also said to have been built by the Vikings in the 11th century and by Portuguese explorers in 1511. The best evidence, supported by radioisotope dating, suggests that the Newport Tower was built as a windmill during the 17th century.

Henry Sinclair's Family

According to Sir John Balfour Paul: *The Scots Peerage*, 1904 - 1914, Vol. VI, p. 569, Henry Sinclair married to Jean Halyburton, a daughter of Sir Walter Halyburton of Dirleton.

According to Florence Van Rensselaer: *The Livingston Family in America*, New York, 1949, pg. 28, Henry Sinclair married circa 1370 -1374 to Jean de Haliburton, a daughter of Sir John de Haliburton of Dirleton and Margaret Cameron. Sir John was a son of Sir Walter Halyburton. Ms. Van Rensselaer gives as her reference Sir John Balfour Paul: *The Scots Peerage*, 1904 - 1914, Vol. IV, pp. 330 - 338; corrections in Vol. IX, p. 102.

Regardless of Jean's exact parentage, she and Henry had the following children:

- Henry Sinclair, 2nd Earl of Orkney, born circa 1375, died on February 1, 1420. Henry married Egidia Douglas, a daughter of Sir William Douglas of Nithdale and granddaughter of Archibald "the Grim", 3rd Earl of Douglas. (See *Scotland*, Generation Thirty-one) Henry and Egidia had issue:
 - William Sinclair, 3rd Earl of Orkney who married Elizabeth Douglas, a daughter of Archibald Tyneman, 4th Earl of Douglas who was a son of Archibald "the Grim", 3rd Earl of Douglas. Thus, William (3rd Earl of Orkney) and his father Henry (2nd Earl of Orkney) both married granddaughters of Archibald "the Grim", 3rd Earl of Douglas.
 - John Sinclair who is said to have married Ingeborg, a natural daughter of Waldemar, King of Denmark by Jova Little.
- William Sinclair.
- Elizabeth Sinclair who married Sir John Drummond of Cargill.
- Margaret Sinclair who married James of Cragy, Laird of Hupe in Orkney.
- Jean Sinclair who married Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine.
- a daughter who married Cockburn of Skirling.
- a daughter who married Heron of Marieton.
- Mary Sinclair who married Thomas Somerville of Carnwath.
- Marjory Sinclair who married Sir David Menzies of Weem.
- **Beatrix Sinclair**, mentioned next. She was probably the youngest daughter (perhaps posthumous) of Henry Sinclair, 1st Earl of Orkney.

Generation Seven

Lady Beatrix Sinclair

Born circa 1400 - 1404, perhaps after the death of her father.

Died before February 8, 1462

Beatrix married before March 7, 1425 to James “the Gross”, 7th Earl of Douglas, a son of Archibald “the Grim”, 3rd Earl of Douglas, eldest son of Sir James “the Good” Douglas who was slain by the Saracens in 1330 while taking the heart of Robert the Bruce to the Holy Land. (See Generation Four) Sir James Douglas was of Balvany in Banffshire, and was created Earl of Avondale and Lord Balvany before becoming the 7th Earl of Douglas.

Most genealogies, including *The Scots Peerage*, show Beatrix as a daughter of Henry Sinclair, 2nd Earl of Orkney. This could not be so. Beatrix married James “the Gross”, 7th Earl of Douglas, a son of Archibald “the Grim”, 3rd Earl of Douglas. If she were a daughter of Henry Sinclair, 2nd Earl of Orkney, she would have been marrying her mother’s uncle. (See Generation Six) The Church would not have granted a dispensation for such a marriage. For further details, see Andrew B. W. MacEwen: *Some Corrections to the Sinclair Pedigree in The Genealogist*, Volume 2, Number 1 (Spring, 1981) pages 51 – 53.

Beatrix and James had the following children:

- William, 8th Earl of Douglas
- James, 9th Earl of Douglas
- **Janet Douglas**, mentioned next.

Generation Eight

Lady Janet Douglas

Married before 1451 to Robert, 1st Lord Fleming, (*See Scotland*, Generation Thirty-four)

Janet and Robert had the following daughter:

- **Beatrice Fleming** who married **Sir James Livingston**, 3rd Lord Livingston of Callendar.
(*See Livingston*, Generation Eight)

See *Livingston*, Generation Eight for the continuation of this line

Sources

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