

Very Early History of the NAPIER Family,  
Ancestors of LYDIA ANN OAKS CENTER

I. Sir Alexander (Archibald) 4<sup>th</sup> Laird of Merchiston NAPIER



Born 1449, Merchiston, Midlothian, Scotland  
Died 8 May 1529, Merchiston, Midlothian, Scotland

Spouse: Catherine Elizabeth Boyd Douglas



Born 1453, Whittingham, East Lothian, Scotland  
Died 1499, Scotland

Married 1479, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland

II. Sir Alexander 5<sup>th</sup> Laird of Merchiston NAPIER

Born about 1479, Merchiston Castle, Midlothian, Scotland

Died 9 Sept 1513, Battle of Flodden, Northumberland, England

[Note: David Center had several ancestors and relative who died in the Battle of Flodden including Duncan Campbell, John Moncrief and his son, and Alexander Napier.]

Spouse: Lady Janet Chisholm  
Born about 1483, Perth, Perthshire, Scotland  
Died 1540, Scotland

Married 2 Jan 1510, Perth, Perthshire, Scotland

### **III. Sir Alexander NAPIER Jr**

Born 1509 in Merchiston, Scotland  
Died 10 Sept 1547 in Inveresk, Scotland

Spouse: Dame Annabell Margaret, Lady Capringtoun CAMPBELL  
Born 1512 in Glenorchy, Argyll, Scotland  
Died 20 Jun 1575 in Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland

Married 9 Oct 1533 when she was age 21

Her family's home:



Kilchurn Castle  
Lock Awe, Argyll and Bute, Scotland

Kilchurn Castle is a ruined 15th century structure on the northeastern end of Loch Awe, in Argyll and Bute, Scotland. It was the ancestral home of the Campbells of Glenorchy, who later became the Earls of Breadalbane also known as the Breadalbane family branch, of the Clan Campbell. The earliest construction on the castle was the towerhouse and Laich Hall (looks onto Loch Awe). Today, its picturesque setting and romantic state of decay make it one of the most photographed structures in Scotland. Kilchurn Castle was built in about 1450 by Sir Colin Campbell, first Lord of Glenorchy, as a five storey tower house with a courtyard defended by an outer wall. By about 1500 an additional range and a hall had been added to the south side of the castle. Further buildings went up during the 16th and 17th centuries. Kilchurn was on a small island in Loch Awe scarcely larger than the castle itself, although it is now connected to the mainland as the water level was altered in 1817. The castle would have been accessed via an underwater or low lying causeway. At the turn of the 16th century Kilchurn Castle was extended by Sir Duncan Campbell with the addition of a single storey dining hall built along the inside of the south curtain. During the second half of the century, another Sir Colin Campbell, the 6th Laird, continued to improve the castle's accommodation by adding some chambers to the north of the tower house, and remodeling the parapet. This included the introduction of the circular corner turrets adorned by corbels, most of which have survived remarkably well. Towards the end of the 16th century the Clan MacGregor of Glenstrae were occupying the castle. Once owning the lands of Glenorchy during the 14th century, until they passed through marriage to the Campbells, the MacGregors were appointed keepers to Kilchurn Castle as the Campbells spent much of their time at Fincharn. This arrangement lasted until the very early part of the 17th century, when a violent feud between the two families brought it to an end and the Campbells retook possession. In 1681 Sir John Campbell of Glenorchy was made 1st Earl of Breadalbane. To take advantage of the turbulence of the times, he converted Kilchurn into a modern barracks, capable of housing 200 troops. His main addition was the three storey L-shaped block along the north side. Engraving of Kilchurch Castle by William Miller, 1846 Kilchurn was then used as a Government garrison during the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite risings. The Campbells attempted, unsuccessfully, to sell Kilchurn to the government, after they moved in 1740 to Taymouth Castle in Perthshire. In 1760 the castle was badly damaged by lightning and was completely abandoned; the remains of a

turret of a tower, still resting upside-down in the centre of the courtyard, attest to the violence of the storm. William Turner's watercolour *Midday* depicts the castle amidst the weather conditions and the geology of Scotland. It was created in 1802. The ruin is currently in the care of Historic Scotland, and is open to the public during the summer. Access, during summer only, is either by boat from Lochawe pier, or on foot from Dalmally. Both points are on the A85 road. During 2006 and 2007 there was an access problem to the castle. Network Rail, in accordance with their policy of blocking foot crossings on railway lines, closed the crossing to Kilchurn, effectively removing land access. However in 2007 access via the nearby viaduct was created, restoring landward access once more.

#### IV. Sir Archibald 7th Laird of Merchiston NAPIER

Born 1534 in Merchiston Castle, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland  
Died 15 May 1608 in Merchiston Castle, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland

Spouse: Janet BOTHWELL  
Born 1534, Merchiston, Scotland  
Died 20 Dec 1583);

Married 17 Jan 1548, Edinburgh, Scotland, when they were both age 14

#### V. John NAPIER



Merchiston  
Castle



Napier Coat of  
Arms & Tartan

Born 1550, Merchiston Tower, Edinburgh, Scotland

Died 3 Apr 1617

Spouse: Agnes CHISHOLM  
Born 1560, Perth, Scotland  
Died 1582

Married 1579, Merchiston, Scotland

John's History in Wikipedia:

Field	Mathematics
Alma Mater	University of St Andrews
Known for	Logarithms Napier's Bones
Influenced	Henry Briggs

John Napier of Merchiston (1550 - 4 April 1617) - also signed as Neper, Nepair - named Marvellous Merchiston, was a Scottish landowner known as a mathematician, physicist, astronomer and astrologer. He was the 8th Laird of Merchistoun.

John Napier is best known as the discoverer of logarithms. He was also the inventor of the so-called "Napier's bones". Napier also made common the use of the decimal point in arithmetic and mathematics.

Napier's birthplace, Merchiston Tower in Edinburgh, Scotland, is now part of the facilities of Edinburgh Napier University. After his death from the effects of gout, Napier's remains were buried in St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh.

Early life:





Merchiston Castle or Merchiston Tower was known as the home of John Napier, the eighth Laird of Merchiston. It now stands in the middle of the Merchiston Campus of Napier University in Edinburgh.

Napier's father was Sir Archibald Napier of Merchiston Castle, and his mother was Janet Bothwell, daughter of the politician and judge Francis Bothwell, Lord of Session, and a sister of Adam Bothwell who became the Bishop of Orkney. Archibald Napier was 16 years old when John Napier was born.

As was the common practice for members of the nobility at that time, John Napier did not enter schools until he was 13. He did not stay in school very long, however. It is believed that he dropped out of school in Scotland and perhaps travelled in mainland Europe to better continue his studies. Little is known about those years, where, when, or with whom he might have studied, although his uncle Adam Bothwell wrote a letter to John's father on 5 December 1560, saying *"I pray you, sir, to send John to the schools either to France or Flanders, for he can learn no good at home"*, and it is believed that this advice was followed.

In 1571 Napier, aged 21, returned to Scotland, and bought a castle at Gartness in 1574. On the death of his father in 1608, Napier and his family moved into Merchiston Castle in Edinburgh, where he resided the remainder of his life.

Investigations:

John Napier had possessions stolen from his castle, so he suspected his servants. He then devised a plan to see which of his servants stole from him. He had a jet black cock (cockerel or rooster) which he then coated in soot and placed in a darkened room. He then told the servants that the rooster knew if the hands petting him were thieving hands. He then instructed his servants to go in and pet him. The one servant with clean hands had a dirty conscience.

Advances in mathematics:



- ☞ Bust of Napier, holding his 'bones', at the Craighouse Campus of Napier University, Edinburgh



- ☞ An ivory set of Napier's Bones from around 1650



- ☞ A set of Napier's calculating tables from around 1680

His work, *Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio* (1614) contained fifty-seven pages of explanatory matter and ninety pages of tables of numbers related to natural logarithms. The book also has an excellent discussion of theorems in spherical trigonometry, usually known as Napier's Rules of Circular Parts. Modern English translations of both Napier's books on logarithms and their description can be found on the web, as well as a discussion of Napier's Bones (see below) and Promptuary (another early calculating device). His invention of logarithms was quickly taken up at Gresham College, and prominent English mathematician Henry Briggs visited Napier in 1615. Among the matters they discussed was a re-scaling of Napier's logarithms, in which the presence of the mathematical constant  $e$  (more accurately,  $e$  times a large power of 10 rounded to an integer) was a practical difficulty. Napier delegated to Briggs the computation of a revised table. The computational advance available via logarithms, the converse of powered numbers or exponential notation, was such that it made calculations

by hand much quicker. The way was opened to later scientific advances, in astronomy, dynamics, and physics; and also in astrology.

Napier made further contributions. He improved Simon Stevin's decimal notation. Arab lattice multiplication, used by Fibonacci, was made more convenient by his introduction of Napier's bones, a multiplication tool using a set of numbered rods.

Napier may have worked largely in isolation, but he had contact with Tycho Brahe who corresponded with his friend John Craig. Craig certainly announced the discovery of logarithms to Brahe in the 1590s (the name itself came later); there is a story from Anthony à Wood, perhaps not well substantiated, that Napier had a hint from Craig that Longomontanus, a follower of Brahe, was working in a similar direction. It has been shown that Craig had notes on a method of Paul Wittich that used trigonometric identities to reduce a multiplication formula for the sine function to additions.

Theology:

Napier had an interest in the *Book of Revelation*, from his student days at St Salvator's College, St Andrews. Under the influence of the sermons of Christopher Goodman, he developed a strongly anti-papal reading. He further used the *Book of Revelation* for chronography, to predict the Apocalypse, in *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John* (1593), which he regarded as his most important work; he also applied the Sibylline Oracles, to calculate the date of the end of the world. Napier believed that would occur in 1688 or 1700. He dated the seventh trumpet to 1541.

In his dedication of the *Plaine Discovery* to James VI, dated 29 Jan 1594, Napier urged the king to see "that justice be done against the enemies of God's church," and counselled the King "to reform the universal enormities of his country, and first to begin at his own house, family, and court." The volume includes nine pages of Napier's English verse. It met with success at home and abroad. In 1600 Michiel Panneel produced a Dutch translation, and this reached a second edition in 1607. In 1602 the work appeared at La Rochelle in a French version, by Georges Thomson, revised by Napier, and



that also went through several editions (1603, 1605, and 1607). A new edition of the English original was called for in 1611, when it was revised and corrected by the author, and enlarged by the addition of *A Resolution of certain Doubts proponed by well-affected brethren*; this appeared simultaneously at Edinburgh and London. The author stated that he still intended to publish a Latin edition, but it never appeared. A German translation, by Leo de Dromna, of the first part of Napier's work appeared at Gera in 1611, and of the whole by Wolfgang Meyer at Frankfurt-am-Main, in 1615. Among Napier's followers was Matthew Cotterius (Matthieu Cottière).

Astrology and the occult:



Memorial to John Napier in St Cuthbert's Church

In addition to his mathematical and religious interests, Napier was often perceived as a magician, and is thought to have dabbled in alchemy and necromancy. It was said that he would travel about with a black spider in a small box, and that his black rooster was his familiar spirit.

A contract still exists for a treasure hunt, made between Napier and Robert Logan of Restalrig. Napier was to search Fast Castle for treasure allegedly hidden there, wherein it is stated that Napier should  
*"...do his utmost diligence to search and seek out, and by all craft and ingine to find out the same, or make it sure that no such thing has been there."*

## Influence:

Among Napier's early followers were the instrument makers Edmund Gunter and John Speidell. The development of logarithms is given credit as the largest single factor in the general adoption of decimal arithmetic. The *Trissotetras* (1645) of Thomas Urquhart builds on Napier's work, in trigonometry.

## Eponyms:

An alternative unit to the decibel used in electrical engineering, the neper, is named after Napier, as is Edinburgh Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The crater Neper on the Moon is named after him.

## Family:

In 1572 Napier married Elizabeth Stirling, daughter of James Stirling, the 4th Laird of Keir and of Cadder. They had two children before Elizabeth died in 1579. Napier then married Agnes Chisholm, with whom he had ten more children. His father-in-law James Chisholm of Cromlix was later mixed up in the Spanish blanks plot, over which Napier with others petitioned the king.

## List of works:

(1593) *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John*

(1614) *Mirifici logarithmorum canonis descriptio* (Edward Wright's English translation was published in 1616).

(1617) *Rabdologiæ seu Numerationis per Virgulas libri duo* (published posthumously)

(1619) *Mirifici logarithmorum canonis constructio* (written before the *Descriptio*, but published posthumously by his son Robert)

(1839) *De arte logistica*

**VI. Robert Mungo NAPIER**

Born 1579, Dumbarton, Dunbartonshire, Scotland  
Died 1633, London, England

Spouse: Anna DRUMMOND  
Born 1586, Merchiston, Scotland  
Died 1614, Edinburgh, Scotland

Married 1608, Edinburgh, Scotland

**VII. Patrick NAPIER**

Born 1608, Edinburgh, Scotland  
Died 24 Nov 1659, Fields, London, England

Spouse: Joan WALLIS  
Born 1608, Merchiston, Edinburgh, Scotland  
Died 1650 Edinburgh, Scotland

Married 4 Jul 1628, St. Gregory, London, England

**VIII. Dr. Patrick NAPIER**

Born 1634, Edinburgh, Scotland  
Died 1 Mar 1668, Jamestown, York Co, Virginia, USA

Spouse: Elizabeth BOOTH  
Born 15 Nov 1641, York Co, VA  
Died 5 Apr 1717, Hampton, York Co, VA

Married 10 Nov 1658, Jamestown, York Co, VA

Evidence of Dr. Patick Napier emigrating to VA:

NAPIER

of

VIRGINIA TENNESSEE and MISSISSIPPI

Note: This includes documented evidence of the Napier family who were previously shown in *Historical Southern Families*, Vol. XV.

Dr. Patrick Napier Jr., surgeon and planter, was born in Scotland ca 1635 and had emigrated to Gloucester County, Virginia, by 1654. He married in 1658 Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Booth and his wife Frances. Robert Booth was Clerk of York County, Virginia, 1639; Justice, 1652; Virginia House of Burgesses, 1653-54.

Dr. Patrick Napier lived first in Hampton Parish, York County, Va., and later in Blisland Parish, New Kent County, Virginia. He willed his 1500 acre plantation there to his children, Robert and Frances, Feb. 20, 1668. He died prior to April 12, 1669 when his will was filed.

Refs: Greer, Early Virginia Immigrants, p. 237; Nugent, Cavaliers & Pioneers, pp. 307, 342; Tyler's Quarterly, Hist. of York County in the Seventeenth Century, #1, p. 268, #XIII, p. 269, #XXIII, p. 215; Burke's Distinguished American Families, 2839; York Co., Va. Deeds, Wills etc. 1664-1672, pp. 28-29.

Capt. Robert Napier Sr. (#2) planter, only son, named in his father's will, was born in York County, Va. ca 1660, and lived in New Kent,



Words on Plaque:

"Nearby lived Patrick Napier of Queenes Creek in the County of Yorke chirurgeon, one of the earliest surgeons of Scottish Descent in Virginia. Born about 1634, and apprenticed to the surgeon general of the Scottish army defeated by Cromwell in 1650, Patrick Napier arrived here before 1655. He married Elizabeth, a daughter of Robert Booth, clerk of the York County Court and a member of the House of Burgesses. By horse and boat, Napier attended the sick, performed surgery, bled his patients, and dispensed various remedies consistent with the practice of medicine in the mid-17th century. He died in 1669. He was the progenitor of most of the Napiers in America."

## IX. Captain Robert NAPIER



Born 2 May 1660, York, VA

Died 3 Sept 1731, York, VA

Spouse: Mary PERRIN

Born 1655, New Kent, VA

Died 3 Apr 1718, York, VA

Married: 11 Oct 1688

Captain Robert Napier, Sr., was born before 1668. He was a planter who owned more than 2,700 acres of land, an attorney and commander of a company of Virginia Rangers guarding the Indian frontier, as well as being a vestryman of St. Peter's, New Kent, where George and Martha Washington were later married. He married Mary Perrin in 1688/9 and they had seven children. Their four sons Booth, Robert, Jr., Rene' and Patrick would become the ancestors of most, not all, American Napiers.

**X. Robert NAPIER, Jr**

Born 16 Sept 1697, St Peters Parish, New Kent, VA

Died 5 Jan 1763, Albemarle, VA

Spouse: Mary Tarleton Hughes

Born 1697

Died 9 Dec 1755

Married 1716 and 1723, Henrico, VA

**XI. Patrick NAPIER**

Born 1725, Albemarle, VA

Died 1799, Montgomery, VA

Spouse: Judith Mary Burk

Born 10 Mar 1742, Augusta, VA

Died 1800, Montgomery, VA

Married 1759, Augusta, VA