



FYVIE CASTLE

THE MOST
DISTINGUISHED
SURNAME
SKEHAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SURNAME HISTORY

Ancient Origins	3
Ancient History	3
Spelling Variations	4
Early History	5
Early Notables	5
Life in Ireland	6
The Great Migration	7
Current Notables	8
Historic Events	8

SURNAME SYMBOLISM

Introduction	11
Motto	12
Shield	12
Crest	15

FURTHER READINGS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appendix - Notable List	18
Appendix - Historic Event List	20
Appendix - Settler List	21
Bibliography	23
Citations	27





The Skehan surname is thought to be derived from the Aberdeenshire parish of the same name. Legend has it that the first bearer of the name was second son of Struan Robertson, who saved king Malcolm II (circa 1014) by slaying a wolf with his "sgian," or "skene," (Scottish dagger) in Stocket Forest. which meant "a dagger." It is said that he was rewarded with the lands of Skene and henceforth used the name Skene. ^[1]

"The Skenes obtained this name for killing a very big and fierce wolf, at a hunting in company with the king, in Stocket forest in Athole; having killed the wolf with a dagger or skene." ^[2]

"Some derive their names as well as their arms from some considerable action, and thus a son of Struan Robertson, for killing a wolf in Stocket forest in Athole, in the king's presence, with a dirk, received the name of Skene, which signifies a dirk, and three dirks points in pale, for his arms." ^[3]

ANCIENT HISTORY

The Pictish race, one of the founding races of the British Isles, arrived in Scotland from Brittany about the 5th century B.C. The bearers of the surname Skehan are believed to be descended from this race. Migrating from northwest France they sailed northward to Ireland where they were refused permission to land, but they were allowed by the Kings of Ireland to locate in the eastern part of Scotland with the proviso that all their Kings marry an Irish Princess. According to the Venerable Bede, England's oldest historian, this established their matriarchal hierarchy, rare in the annals of British history.

Nechtan was a Pictish King, in about 724 A.D.; according to Roman history, many Pictish kings before him had fought gallantly at Hadrian's Wall against the Roman invasion many centuries before. Their rivals to the west, the Dalriadans or the highlanders of the Western Isles, were their constant foes in the battle for supremacy for power over all Scotland, known then as Alba, or Caledonia.

Nechtan was finally expelled from Pictland by Alpin, half Dalriadan, half Pict, the result of a political marriage. Alpin's son, Kenneth MacAlpine, son of Alpin, became the first recorded King of Scotland as we know it today. The Picts, compressed by the northern

invasion of the Orcadian Vikings from the north who penetrated as far south as Caithness, were left with a territory on the eastern coast of Scotland from Aberdeen, south to Edinburgh.

Among the many sources that researchers examined were such documents as the Inquisitio, 1120 A.D., the Black Book of the Exchequer, the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, The Ragman Rolls, the Chronicles of the Picts and Scots; and various cartularies of parishes in Scotland. From these archives came early records of the name Skehan in Aberdeenshire (Gaelic: Siorrachd Obar Dheathain), a historic county, and present day Council Area of Aberdeen, located in the Grampian region of northeastern Scotland, where they held a family seat sometime before the year 1250. The family had always maintained the rank of free Barons and held the Castle Skene, and the Earldom of Mar in Aberdeen.

The family is "of territorial origin from the lands of Skene, Aberdeenshire, erected into a barony in 1317 in favor of Robert de Skene. The first record of the name is in 1296 when Johan de Skene of the county of Edneburk and Johan de Skene of the county of Aberdene rendered homage[to King Edward I of England]. Probably, like many other old families, the Skenes were hereditary possessors of the church of Skene, a vicarage dependent upon the church of Kinkell, and toox their name from it. This supposition is rendered probable by the designation of Patrick as a cleric, and by the fact that in 1358 a Giliane de Skene is mentioned who is probably a descendant of the John de Skene who bore the head of John the Baptist on his seal." [4]

SPELLING VARIATIONS

The spelling of the surname Skehan was found in many different forms. Skehan was found in many references, the surname was also spelled Skene, Skeyne, Skeen, Skeene, Skin and MacSgian (Gaelic), and some of these versions are still used today. These changes in spelling frequently occurred, even between father and son. For instance, one clanswoman was recorded being born as Moffit, married as Moffat, and the spelling Moffett appeared on her headstone. Preferences for spelling variations usually either stemmed from a division of the family, had religious reasons, or sometimes patriotic reasons. Scribes and church people frequently selected their own version of what they thought the spelling should be.



The family name Skehan emerged as a Scottish Clan or family in this territory. More specifically they developed in their original territories of Aberdeen. John Skene rendered homage in both Edinburgh and Aberdeen in 1296 to King Edward I of England on his brief conquest of Scotland. His son, Robert, obtained the crown charter of Skene from Robert the Bruce in 1317, and it remained in the hands of the Skenes until 1825, when the last of the male line died. Descending from Robert, James Skene branched to Wester-Corse and Ramore, but this line is also extinct. John Skene acquired Curriehill, and Gilbert acquired Rubieslaw, and his grandson, John, acquired Hallyards. Adam de Skene is on record, for he fell at the battle of Harlaw in 1411, fighting against Donald of the Isles. A later Gilbert Skene acquired Pollerton. They also branched to Easter Fintray, Dyce in Aberdeen, and Newtyle in Forfar. Their present family seats are at Hallyards and Rubieslaw. The Clan tartan is a red and black sett.

EARLY NOTABLES

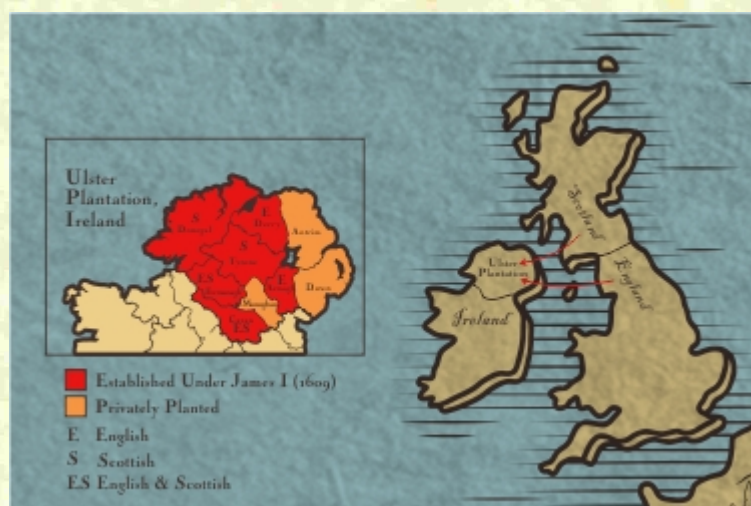
Notable amongst the Clan at this time was Sir John Skene (1543-1617), who acquired Curriehill (taking the title Lord Curriehill); he was a much published lawyer in Scotland, who compiled the Scottish legal dictionary *De Verborum Significatione*, in 1597 and was also at one time ambassador to Scandinavia. A later Sir John Skene eventually sold the estates at Curriehill. ^[5]





During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, Scotland was ravaged by religious conflict. The newly found passionate fervour of Presbyterianism and the Church of Scotland rejected all who could not pass "The Test" of taking an oath of belief in the Church. Those failing the "Test" were frequently hanged, drawn and quartered in the High Street, or, more kindly, banished to the Colonies, to Australia or to the Carolinas.

Meanwhile, the Roman Church still fought to retain its status. Many Clansmen were freely "encouraged" to migrate to Ireland. From 1603 to 1790, Scottish Clans and families were recruited from the English Scottish border and north of Edinburgh to populate northern Ireland with Protestant stock faithful to the new religion of the crown. Many heads of families migrated from Scotland to Ireland during this period. In Ireland, the name more often than not, appears as Skehan, from the Gaelic Mac Sceacháin. This name belongs to the Oriel counties of Monaghan and north Louth where it has often been changed to Thornton. It is also well known in north Tipperary. ^[6]





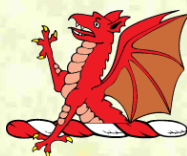
THE GREAT MIGRATION

The migration or banishment to the New World also continued, some went voluntarily from Ireland, but most went directly from Scotland, their home territories. Some also moved to the European continent. They sailed to the New World across the stormy Atlantic aboard the small sailing ships known as the "White Sails." These overcrowded ships, sometimes spending two months at sea, were racked with disease, sometimes landing with only 60 percent of their original passenger lists.

SETTLERS

- Mr. James Skehan, (Skeehan), (b. 1817), aged 19, Irish farm labourer who was convicted in Tipperary, Ireland for life for assault, transported aboard the "Earl Grey" on 27th August 1836, arriving in New South Wales, Australia, he died in 1874^[7]

As well as 36 more in the Appendix.





CURRENT NOTABLES

In Later years, immigrant to North America would move westward, settling the regions from the middle west, to the prairies to the west coast. During the War of Independence allegiances were divided. Some remained American, whilst others became United Empire Loyalists and moved north to Canada.

- Patrick William Skehan (1909-1980) American Old Testament semitic scholar
- Allan Skehan (1906-2004) Australian rules footballer who played for the Carlton Football Club in the Victorian Football League (1927-1929)
- Philip "Phil" Skehan (1894-1921) Australian rules footballer
- Donal Skehan (b.1986) Irish singer, television personality, food writer and chef
- John Skehan (1922-1992) Irish broadcaster on RTÉ, radio and television
- Noel Skehan (b.1945) Irish retired sportsperson from Bennettsbridge, County Kilkenny
- Theresa Skehan, American Democratic Party politician, Delegate to Democratic National Convention from Pennsylvania, 1944^[8]

As well as 40 more in the Appendix.

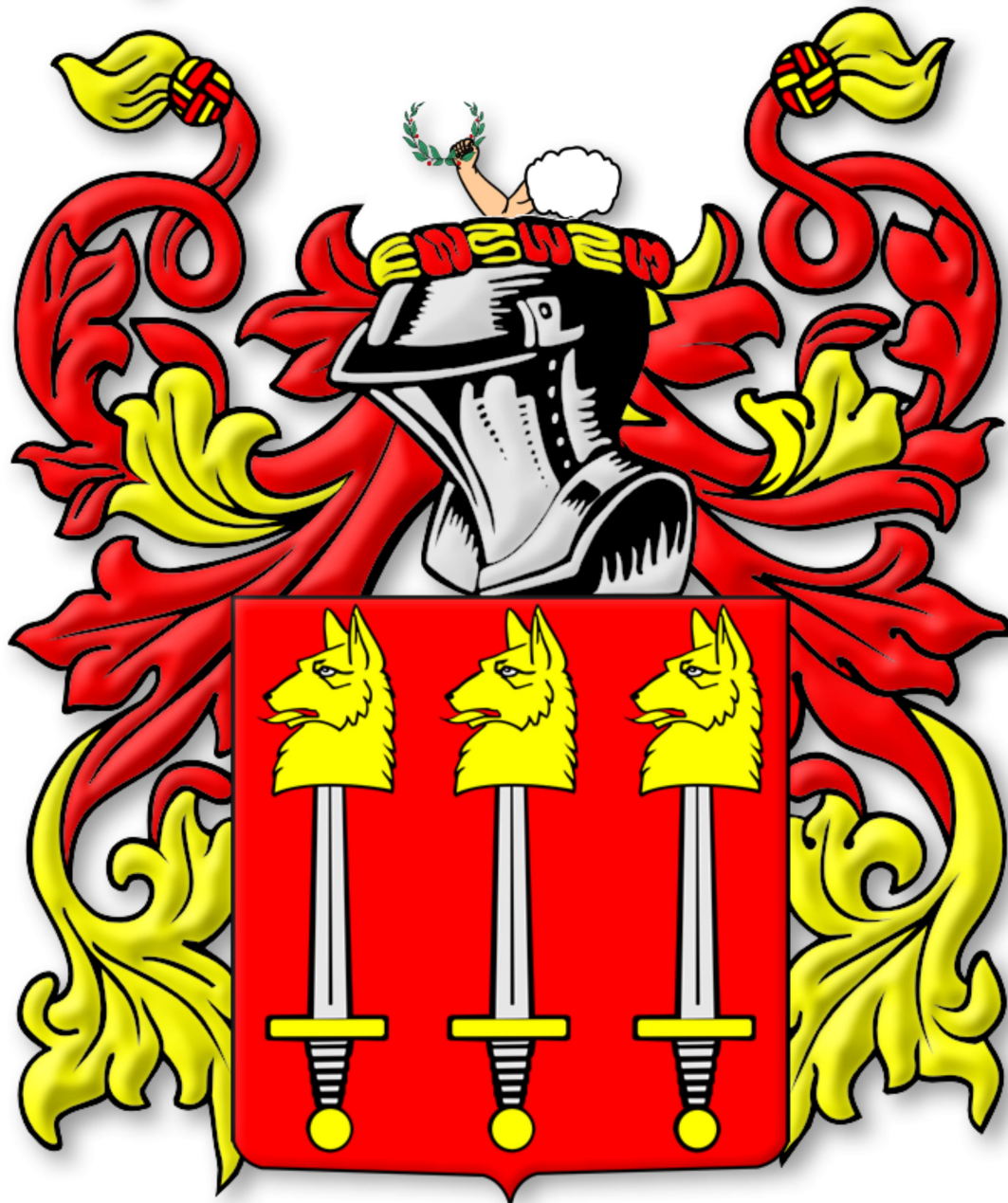




There are 1 historic event entries in the Appendix.



Virtutis regia merces



Skehan



The practice of using symbols to represent people is ancient, and in Scotland it evolved into a complex system of armory. Although greatly influenced by England's example, Scotland's heraldic tradition also developed on its own, and there are many devices that are uniquely, and sometimes, exclusively Scottish.



An Achievement of Arms such as the Skehan arms depicted on the left typically consists of these parts: the Escrolls, displaying the family motto and name, the family crest (if any) seen above the helmet, the actual Coat of arms (also known as 'arms,' or 'the shield'), the Helmet depicted below the crest, the Torse on top of the helmet, and the Mantle draped from the helmet. Each of these elements will be described below. Supporters were a later addition to the Achievement; they are somewhat rare, and are usually personal to the grantee.



MANTLE OF SKEHAN

The mantle was spread over and draped from the helmet and served as a protection, 'to repel the extremities of wet, cold, and heat, and to preserve the armour from rust.' The numerous cuts and slits suggest that it had been torn and hacked on the field of battle. The style or design of the mantling is up to the individual heraldic artist, and it is usually depicted in the main color and metal from the shield. The helmet (or Helm) varied in shape in different ages and countries, often depicting rank. The Esquire's Helm, as depicted here, is generally shown silver, with a closed visor and facing to the dexter (its right). On top of the helmet is a Torse or wreath which was formed by two pieces of silk twisted together. Its purpose was to hold the crest and mantle on the Helm.

MOTTO

The motto was originally a war cry or slogan. Mottoes first began to be shown with arms in the 14th and 15th centuries, but were not in general use until the 17th century. Thus the oldest coats of arms generally do not include a motto. Mottoes seldom form part of the grant of arms: Under most heraldic authorities, a motto is an optional component of the coat of arms, and can be added to or changed at will; many families have chosen not to display a motto.

The motto for the Skehan coat of arms displayed here is:

VIRTUTIS REGIA MERCES

This translates as:

A PALACE THE REWARD OF BRAVERY.

SHIELD

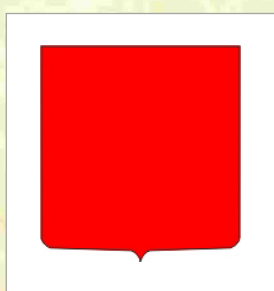
Shields (or Escutcheons) at first were painted simply with one or more bands of color or 'ordinaries'. Later, the ordinaries were used in conjunction with other figures or symbols. The Coat of Arms for the surname Skehan can be described as follows:



THE SKEHAN SHIELD

SKEHAN ARMS

A red shield with three silver skenes, blades pointing up, and on the point of each a gold wolf's head.



RED SHIELD

RED SHIELD

Gules, derived from an Old French word goules or gueules meaning "throats" translates into modern English as "red" and is the military color for excellence and fortitude. It is symbolic of nobility, boldness and ferocity, and can also represent fire and summer. Some ancient laws restricted its use to princes and their families. Red corresponds to the metal copper and is denoted in engravings by numerous perpendicular lines.

Symbolic Virtues: Red denotes the virtues of charity and courage, and indicates the qualities of valor, patriotism, and creative power. Those who bear a red insignia are obliged to right wrongs and win fame in arms.

Precious Stone: Carnelian, Ruby

Planet: Mars

Obligations: To right wrongs and win fame in arms

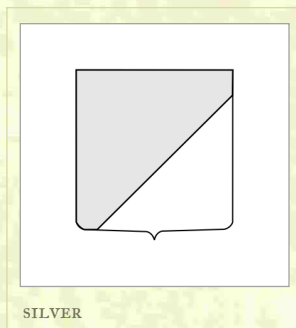
THREE

"Three" devices, beasts or ordinaries of the same have a special significance in heraldry.

First of all, there is the obvious reference to the Trinity in the design that would signify observance of the Christian doctrine.

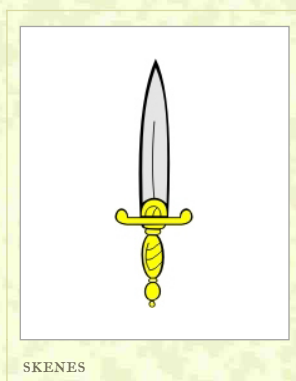
Secondly, with many Arms it brings balance that is steeped in tradition. To better understand this latter scenario, we must look at the evolution of shield in personal armory. Kite shields that were the most popular from the the 10th-14th century evolved into Heater shields that had flat tops c. 1250. This was the time of heraldry's beginnings and when "three" objects were used for balance in each corner of the shield.

Later, with the advent of the "chief," "chevron" and "bend" three devices brought balance to these ordinaries too.



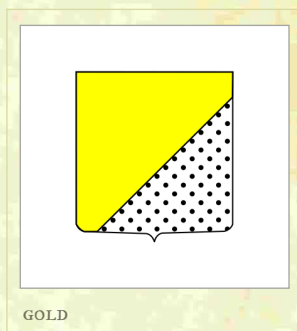
SILVER

Argent (from the French for silver), or Silver is one of the two metals used in heraldry. It is usually represented on a shield by the colors gray or white. This metal represents nobility, peace and serenity. It is associated with the qualities of purity and chastity, because the metal withstands the test of fire.



SKENES

The Scottish dirk (Scottish Gaelic: Biodag), is a dagger or knife and is associated with vengeance, death, sacrifice, and piety. It can also be a symbol of power, justice or military honor. Today, dirks are a traditional accessory worn with the kilt as a part of full Highland dress for formal occasions.



GOLD

"Or" (from the French word for gold) is the tincture of Gold, or in heraldic terms "or," was considered the noblest color.

One of only two metals used in heraldry, it exceeds all others in value, purity and finesse. It represents the light of the sun, and was once borne only by princes. Gold is said to gladden the heart and destroy all works of magic. It is also associated with excellence and achievement, and the bearer surpasses all others in valor.

It is represented on coats of arms by the color yellow, and in engravings by a dotted pattern.



WOLFS HEAD

A wolf was often born by valiant captains who served loyally through long sieges or hard enterprises. It signifies valor and guardianship.

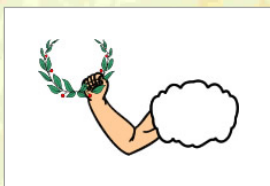
Wolves were viewed as ferocious and merciless and it was thought that they could paralyze their enemies with a look before destroying them. The bearer of this symbol was a deadly enemy to have.

Early wolves were drawn crudely and did not resemble the animal very closely, while later representations were more realistic. The head of a wolf is particularly common in Scottish heraldry.

The first shield to bear the wolf's head was that of "Hugh Lupus, first Earl of Chester, and nephew of William the Conqueror. He probably derived the cognomen of 'Lupus' from this bearing. " ^[9]

THE CREST

The Crest was worn on top of the helmet, and was usually made of wood, metal, or boiled leather. It provided the double advantage of easy identification and the addition of height to the wearer. The Crest for the surname Skehan is described as follows:



THE SKEHAN CREST

AN ARM ISSUING FROM A CLOUD HOLDING A
GARLAND.

ISSUING

Issuing or issuant indicates a charge arising from the bottom line of a field, from a coronet, the side of the shield or an ordinary.



CLOUD

CLOUD

The cloud, the symbol of the ethereal heights of heaven, represents the quality of higher truth. They are very seldom used as bearings on arms but quite frequently arms are represented as issuing from them, particularly in French arms.



GARLAND

The Chaplet or Floral Chaplet is a wreath without stems or ribbon, made of oak, laurel or other leaves, and carrying flowers, usually roses.

It is a symbol of fame and is frequently part of a crest.

The Chaplet was originally an ancient ornament for the head, granted to gallant knights for acts of courtesy.^[10]

There is also a Chaplet that looks like a plain, broad circlet, charged at four regular intervals with stars, roses or other objects.

A Chaplet of Oak and Acorns is called a Civic Crown, but more frequently the Chaplet is synonymous with wreath or garland, which is commonly made of laurel and roses.

"The Triumphal Wreath is composed of laurel leaves accompanied with berries. The laurel was consecrated by the Romans to Apollo. A laurel wreath was worn in token of victory by the Roman emperors during their magnificent triumphal entries into Rome. " ^[11]





APPENDIX - NOTABLE LIST

NOTABLES FOR THE SURNAME SKEHAN

- Patrick William Skehan (1909-1980) American Old Testament semitic scholar
- Allan Skehan (1906-2004) Australian rules footballer who played for the Carlton Football Club in the Victorian Football League (1927-1929)
- Philip "Phil" Skehan (1894-1921) Australian rules footballer
- Donal Skehan (b.1986) Irish singer, television personality, food writer and chef
- John Skehan (1922-1992) Irish broadcaster on RTÉ, radio and television
- Noel Skehan (b.1945) Irish retired sportsperson from Bennettsbridge, County Kilkenny
- Theresa Skehan, American Democratic Party politician, Delegate to Democratic National Convention from Pennsylvania, 1944 ^[8]

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SKEHAN

- Trent Skanes, Canadian curling skip from the St. John's Curling Club, St. John's who played at the 2018 Newfoundland and Labrador Tankard
- Walter R. V. Skanes (1896-1961) Newfoundland-born, Canadian fisherman, oil worker, civil servant and politician who represented St. Barbe in the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly from 1928 to 1932
- Shepherd Skanes, American football coach who has served as head coach at Concordia-Selma from 2005 to 2012 where he compiled an overall record of 33-40
- Robert Skene (1908-1988) English cricketer
- Robert Skene (1914-1997) American polo player
- Robert Skene (1719-1787) British Army officer and MP
- Philip Skene (1725-1810) English Army officer and New York landowner, a figure in the Saratoga campaign of the American Revolution
- Alexander Leslie Henderson Skene (1882-1959) Scottish footballer who played as a goalkeeper from 1901 to 1911
- James Henry Skene (1812-1886) Scottish author, traveller and British Consul at Aleppo, third son of James Skene of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen
- George Skene (b.1955) Canadian modern pentathlete who competed at the 1972 and 1976 Summer Olympics
- George Skene (1749-1825) Scottish soldier and politician
- Clydesdale Duncan "Clyde" Skene (1884-1945) Scottish footballer who played in the Scottish League for Falkirk, Queen's Park and Dundee as a centre forward (1903-1915)
- William Forbes Skene (1809-1892) Scottish historian and Celtic scholar who was appointed the Royal Historiographer for Scotland in 1881, and was the author of The Highlanders of Scotland, Celtic Scotland, and other celebrated works

- James Skene (1775-1864) Scottish friend of Sir Walter Scott, second son of George Skene of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen, and his wife Jean Moir; his ancestor returning to Scotland with a fortune, bought the estate of Rubislaw
- Danus George Moncrieff Skene (1944-2016) Scottish politician
- Jesse Skeens, American DJ and record producer, better known as Medway who has released records on such record labels as Hooj Choons and Release Records
- Sherri Skanes, American treasure hunter, artist
- James W. Skene, American founder of Skene, an American automobile manufactured from 1900 to 1901
- Dexter Skeene (b.1964) Trinidadian international footballer who played on the national team 1988 to 1991, currently the CEO of the TT Pro League
- Major General Henry G. "Hank" Skeen (1933-2006) American General of the United States Army





APPENDIX - HISTORIC EVENT LIST

USS ARIZONA

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began shortly after 8.00 local time on the 7th December 1941, the aircraft deployed from six aircraft carriers struck the Pacific Fleet as it sat in the harbor, and the USS Arizona was one of these ships defending Hawaii. The Air raid alarm started on board at 7.55, shortly after 8.00 ten Nakajima B5N torpedo bombers started their attack with several near misses as small ricochets' they struck USS Arizona in the vicinity of Turret II believing to have penetrated the armored deck near the ammunition magazines, causing the forward magazines to detonate and create a cataclysmic explosion, causing 1177 of the 1512 crewmen aboard the USS Arizona to lose their lives. There is memorial in place in Pearl Harbor across the ship's sunken remains which includes a shrine room listing the names of the lost crew members.



USS ARIZONA

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SKEHAN

- Mr. Harvey Leroy Skeen, American Seaman Second Class from Arizona, USA working aboard the ship "USS Arizona" when she sunk during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7th December 1941, he died in the sinking^[12]



APPENDIX - SETTLERS LIST

AUSTRALIAN SETTLERS

- Mr. James Skehan, (Skeehan), (b. 1817), aged 19, Irish farm labourer who was convicted in Tipperary, Ireland for life for assault, transported aboard the "Earl Grey" on 27th August 1836, arriving in New South Wales, Australia, he died in 1874 ^[7]

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SKEHAN

- Mr. William Scanes, English convict who was convicted in Middlesex, England for 7 years, transported aboard the "Baring" in April 1815, arriving in New South Wales, Australia ^[13]
- Mr. Charles Skene, Scottish convict who was convicted in Aberdeen, Scotland for 7 years, transported aboard the "Barossa" on 27th August 1841, arriving in Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land) ^[14]
- George Skeen, aged 20, who arrived in South Australia in 1855 aboard the ship "Bucephalus"
- Isabella Skeen, aged 31, a house maid, who arrived in South Australia in 1855 aboard the ship "Bucephalus"
- Thomas Skeen, aged 25, who arrived in South Australia in 1858 aboard the ship "Stamboul"

NEW ZEALAND SETTLERS

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SKEHAN

- Robert Skeen, who landed in Auckland, New Zealand in 1840
- Robert Skeen, aged 19, who arrived in Auckland, New Zealand aboard the ship "Westminster" in 1843
- Catherine Skeen, aged 21, who arrived in Auckland, New Zealand aboard the ship "Westminster" in 1843

AMERICAN SETTLERS

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SKEHAN

- John Skene who settled in West New Jersey in 1664
- John Skein, who arrived in New Jersey in 1678 ^[15]
- Robert Skene, who was on record in Maryland in 1700
- Richard Skeins, who landed in Virginia in 1701 ^[15]
- Robert Skene, who landed in Maryland in 1740 ^[15]
- Thomas Skene, who arrived in South Carolina in 1760
- David Skene, who settled in New York in 1765
- Phillip Skein, who arrived in New York in 1820

- James Skeen, who arrived in Allegany (Allegheny) County, Pennsylvania in 1845 [15]
- J Skein, who landed in San Francisco, California in 1851 [15]
- Alexander Johnston Chalmers Skene, who arrived in America in 1855 [15]
- Thomas Skeen, who arrived in Philadelphia in 1858
- Joseph Skeene, who arrived in San Francisco, California in 1872 [15]
- Wm. Skeen, aged 29, who settled in America from Aremagh, in 1892
- Oswald Skeen, aged 27, who landed in America from Newcastle, in 1905
- James Skeens, who settled in America, in 1905
- Jones Skains, aged 18, who landed in America, in 1906
- Dorothy Skeens, aged 16, who landed in America from Portsmouth, England, in 1910
- Henrietta Skeens, aged 43, who immigrated to the United States from Kloon, England, in 1910
- Thomas Skeen, aged 14, who immigrated to the United States from Liverpool, Eng, in 1917

CANADIAN SETTLERS

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SKEHAN

- Mr. Philip Skene U.E. from Skenesborough [Whitehall], New York, USA who returned to the United Kingdom c. 1780 [16]
- Matthew Scane, aged 35, a labourer, who arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick aboard the ship "Sea Horse" in 1833
- William Skehen, who arrived in Nova Scotia in 1842
- Sarah Skeens, aged 45, who immigrated to Toronto, Canada, in 1914
- Samuel Skains, aged 22, who settled in Colliers, Newfoundland, in 1920





Here is a listing of some of the sources consulted when researching British surnames. The resources below directly or indirectly influenced the authors of our surname histories. We have most of these titles in our library, others we have borrowed or had access to. Source materials have been chosen for their reliability and authenticity. Our research into surnames is ongoing, and we are continually adding to our source library. For each surname history, we seek and refer to sources specific to the surname; these are generally not included in the list below.

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MEDIEVAL ROLLS

Where available we consult Medieval Rolls or use their information as reprinted in secondary sources.

Subsidy Rolls: taxation records from the 12th to the 17th centuries.

Assize Rolls: records from court sessions

Pipe Rolls: rolls of the Exchequer of accounts of the royal income, arranged by county, for each financial year. Many 12th and 13th century documents have been published with indexes by the Pipe Roll Society.

Calendarium Inquisitionum Post Mortem: Feudal inquiries, undertaken after the death of a feudal tenant in chief to establish what lands were held and who should succeed to them. Records exist from around 1240-1660.

Roll of Battle Abbey: a list of the principal Norman Knights said to have accompanied William across the English Channel. Original roll was lost.

Curia Regis Rolls (Rotuli Curiae Regis): Rolls and Records of the Court held before the king's Justices. Various translated and published, London 1835),

Feet of Fines: Legal agreements, usually about property ownership

Register of the Freemen of York: list of freemen from 13th-18th century, published by the Surtees Society, Francis Collins (editor) in 1897.

Historia Regum Britanniae ("The History of the Kings of Britain"): a legendary account of British history, accredited to Geoffrey of Monmouth in around 1136.

Hundred Rolls (Rotuli Hundredorum): various royal inquests, documents were held in the tower of London. Much was published in 1818 Ragman Rolls: rolls of deeds on parchment in which the Scottish nobility and gentry subscribed allegiance to Edward I. of England, A. D. 1296.

Charters: documents recording grants, usually of land recorded by the Chancery

Heralds' visitations: 16th-17th century, county by county visits to regulate the use of arms; many published by the Harleian Society.

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