

Kings and Queens of Your Castle: Noble Relatives from Long Ago

Have you ever wondered if kings and queens lived in your family long ago? Many families had noble ancestors who lived in huge castles! Even if no one told you about your noble kin, clues may be in your family crest.

In medieval Europe, there were royal classes and peasant classes. Kings, queens, and nobles were royalty. They lived in giant castles and manors. Knights guarded their land. Servants like cooks and maids worked inside. Outside, peasants farmed the fields. Nobles threw big feasts with jugglers and meat from hunting.

If your ancestors were nobles, your family name probably traces back to them. Coats of arms were symbols for each noble clan. These crests showed special pictures and colors for that family. Images like lions meant bravery. Trees meant life. The oldest son inherited the family crest.

Castles had fancy areas for nobles. The great hall was used for meals, meetings, and parties. Lords and ladies slept in nice bedrooms called chambers. Secret stairs let them sneak around. Nobles loved to hunt and fly falcons on their land. They also held jousts and archery contests to show battle skills. Being a noble sounded fun back then!

But castles also had gloomy places. Dungeons held prisoners in cramped cells. Torture tools punished criminals. Ghosts were said to creep around towers and crypts. Castles looked amazing outside but could be creepy inside. You had to be careful living in one!

Noble kids needed training. Sons learned to be knights and future lords. They studied fighting, horse riding, and hunting with bows or spears. Girls learned sewing, dance, singing, and how to host feasts. Both learned reading, music, and manners too.

Signs of noble ancestors include fancy jewelry from generations ago. Silver sets with family crests hint at high status roots. Paintings of lords and ladies in ruffles provide clues. Elegant clothing like gowns, crowns, and coats of arms could mean noble blood. Check attics for tapestries, swords, and throne-like chairs too!

Of course, few can prove their families include real royals. Over time, links to noble roots get lost. Records disappear. But tales survive about the kings and queens in your family tree. Imagine your ancestors ruling long ago in castles on the hills. You rule your own life now!

Glossary

- ancestor: a family member from past generations
- crest: a symbol for each noble clan, often on shields
- chamber: a bedroom for royals in a castle
- manor: a big house where nobles lived on their land

Reading Comprehension Questions*

1. What did family crests show for each noble clan?
a) Important values b) Royal colors c) Special symbols d) Celebrations
2. According to the article, what is one skill noble girls learned?
a) Sword fighting b) Jousting c) Hunting d) Sewing
3. Where might you find a dungeon in a castle?
a) Near the stables b) Inside a tower c) By the moat d) In the kitchen
4. How could jewelry, paintings and elegant clothing give clues about ancestors?
a) They showed ancestors were artists. b) They meant your ancestors were royal and high class. c) They passed through generations. d) They showed values.
5. Why might few people today have proof of royal ancestors?
a) Stories were hidden. b) Royalty was rare. c) Records were lost over time. d) Names changed.
6. What is the main idea of the article?
a) Living in castles was dangerous. b) Royalty and nobles had fancy lives. c) Clues may show if ancestors were noble. d) Ladies learned skills to be proper.

Answer Key