

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

Have you ever wondered if you have royal blood? Long ago, lots of families had noble ancestors who lived in castles! Even if no one told stories about your noble kin, the clues may be in your family crest.

In medieval Europe, society was divided into classes. Royals and nobles were at the top. They lived in massive castles and manors. Knights guarded their land. Servants like cooks and maids worked inside. Peasants farmed the fields outside. Nobles threw fancy feasts with music, jugglers, and hunted meat.

If your ancestors were nobles, your family name probably has records tracing back to them. Coats of arms represented noble families. These crests showed symbols and colors unique to each clan. Pictures on the shields reflected a family's history. Images like lions meant courage. Trees stood for life. The oldest son inherited the family crest.

Castles had special areas for nobles. The great hall was used for dining, meetings, and parties. Lords and ladies slept in fancy chambers. Secret stairs and tunnels allowed sneaking around. Nobles loved to hunt and falcon on their lands. Jousts and archery contests showed off battle skills. It was good fun being a noble back then!

Of course, castles also had gloomy places. Dungeons held prisoners in small cells. Instruments of torture were used to punish criminals. Ghosts were said to lurk in towers and crypts. Castles looked glorious on the outside but could be scary inside. You had to watch your back if you lived in one!

Being a noble child took special training. Sons learned to be knights and future lords. They studied combat, horseback riding, and hunting with bows or spears. Daughters were raised to manage the household. They learned sewing, dance, singing, and how to host events. Both learned reading, music, and good manners too.

Signs your ancestors were nobles include beautiful jewelry passed down for generations. Silver sets decorated with family crests point to high status roots. Portrait paintings of ruffled lords and ladies provide clues. Fancy clothing like silk gowns, coats of arms, and crowns means noble blood. Check attics for tapestries, swords, scepters, and throne-like chairs too!

Of course, few people can prove their families include actual royals. Over time, descendants lose touch with noble roots. Records get lost. But stories survive about

the kings and queens of your family tree. Use your imagination to envision your ancestors reigning long ago in castles high on the hill. You are the ruler of your own life's kingdom!

Glossary

- ancestor: a person related to you from past generations
- crest: a symbol representing a noble family, often displayed on shields
- chamber: a bedroom for royals in a castle
- manor: a large house where nobles lived on their land

Questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What did family crests represent for noble clans?
 - a) Special celebrations
 - b) Unique symbols
 - c) Important values
 - d) Royal colors
2. What is one skill noble ladies learned, according to the article?
 - a) Jousting
 - b) Hunting
 - c) Sewing
 - d) Sword fighting
3. Where in a castle might you find a dungeon?
 - a) In the kitchen
 - b) Inside a tower
 - c) Near the stables
 - d) By the moat
4. How could jewelry, paintings and fancy clothing provide clues about ancestors?
 - a) They proved your family worked as artists.
 - b) They showed your ancestors were wealthy and high class.
 - c) They symbolized your ancestors' values.
 - d) They were passed down from generation to generation.
5. Based on the article, why might few people have proof of royal ancestors today?
 - a) Royalty was uncommon.
 - b) Records got lost over time.
 - c) Stories were purposely hidden.
 - d) Descendants changed their names.
6. What is the main idea of the article?
 - a) Living in medieval castles was dangerous.
 - b) Royalty and nobles had luxurious lifestyles.
 - c) Clues can reveal if your ancestors were noble.
 - d) Ladies learned special skills to be proper.

Answer Key

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. b
5. b
6. c