

Regency Manor



Terms of Address

This information is taken directly from the website [Regency Lady's "Terms of Address" page](#). It has been put here, simply for ease of use (and the fact that I cannot access it from my ISP in Melbourne, Australia).



One of the greatest challenges in writing (or reading) a Regency is keeping track of who gets called by what title. Who gets called my lord and who your grace? And why do some ladies get addressed as Lady , some as Lady , and some as Lady ?

Take heart, apparently the Ton had trouble keeping all this straight as well. Debrett's Peerage was first published during the Regency.



Peers

The holders of these titles (with the exception of Baronet and Knight) are legally peers, and as such have certain rights in law that commoners do not have.

eg:

Title

Form of address
Form of reference

The Duke of Wellington

My lord duke (archaic), or
Your Grace, or Duke
The Duke of Wellington,
His Grace

The Marquess of Queensbury

My lord marquess, my lord
Lord Queensbury

The Earl of Chatham

My lord
Lord Chatham

Viscount Palmerston

My lord
Lord Palmerston

Baron Alvanley

My lord
Lord Alvanley

Sir Percy Blakeney, Baronet

Sir Percy
Sir Percy

Sir Arthur Wellesley, Order of the Bath

Sir Arthur
Sir Arthur

Wives of Peers

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Wives of peers are legally commoners - the titles are by courtesy only.

The widow of the earliest title holder is called the Dowager Countess of Chatham. Any other widows of subsequent title holders are styled Mary, Countess of Chatham. (The deciding factor is the order of succession. If Ann, age 22, is the widow of the 4th Earl, and Mary, age 45, is the widow of the 5th Earl, Ann is the Dowager Countess of Chatham and Mary is Mary, Countess of Chatham.)

eg:
Title

Form of address
Form of reference

The Duchess of Wellington

Your Grace, or Duchess
The Duchess of Wellington,
Her Grace

The Marchioness of Queensbury

My lady
Lady Queensbury

The Countess of Chatham

My lady
Lady Chatham

Viscountess Palmerston

My lady
Lady Palmerston

Baroness Alvanley

My lady
Lady Alvanley

Lady Blakeney

My lady
Lady Blakeney

Lady Wellesley

My lady
Lady Wellesley

Duke's Children

The duke's eldest son takes his next highest title as a courtesy. He is legally a commoner. The family name in this example is Wellesley.

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

eldest son

Marquess of Wellington
My lord
Lord Wellington

eldest son's wife Marchioness of Wellington

My lady
Lady Wellington

younger sons

Lord Charles Wellesley
My lord
Lord Charles

younger son's wife Lady Charles Wellesley

My lady
Lady Charles

daughters

Lady Catherine Wellesley
My lady
Lady Catherine

Marquess' Children

The marquess' eldest son takes his next highest title as a courtesy. He is legally a commoner. The family name in this example is Storey.

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

eldest son

Earl of Sandwich
My lord
Lord Sandwich

eldest son's wife Countess of Sandwich

My lady
Lady Sandwich

younger sons

Lord Michael Storey
My lord
Lord Michael

younger son's wife

Lady Michael Storey
My lady
Lady Michael

daughters

Lady Anne Storey
My lady
Lady Ann

Earl's Children

The earl's eldest son takes his next highest title as a courtesy. He is legally a commoner. The family name in this example is Gould.

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

eldest son

Viscount Maitland
My lord
Lord Maitland

eldest son's wife

Viscountess Maitland
My lady
Lady Maitland

younger sons

the Honorable John Gould
Sir
Mr. Gould

younger son's wife the Honorable Mary Gould

Ma'am
Mrs. Gould

daughters

Lady Martha Gould
My lady
Lady Martha

Viscount's Children

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

sons

the Honorable Geoffrey Blake
Sir
Mr. Blake

son's wife the Hon. Susan Blake

Ma'am
Mrs. Blake

daughters

the Hon. Sarah Blake
Ma'am
Miss Blake

Baron's Children

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

sons

the Honorable Augustus Smythe
Sir

son's wife

the Hon. Lucretia Smythe
Ma'am
Mrs. Smythe

daughters

the Hon. Letitia Smythe
Ma'am
Miss Smythe

Baronet's Children

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

sons

Jonathan Olney
Sir
Mr. Olney

son's wife Horatia Olney

Ma'am
Mrs. Olney

daughters

Aurelia Olney
Ma'am
Miss Olney

Knight's Children

eg:
child

Title
Form of address
Form of reference

sons

James Wellesley
Sir
Mr. Wellesley

son's wife

Maria Wellesley
Ma'am
Mrs. Wellesley

daughters

Hannah Wellesley
Ma'am
Miss Wellesley



One problem many people have with getting titles straight, is the matter of what happens when a peer's daughter marries a commoner. Here is an illustration which I hope will help.

Mr. Parker, a young man of talent and address and with the sponsorship of an uncle in government, achieves a diplomatic position in Vienna under the British Ambassador, the Duke of Wight. The duke has a young, lovely, and determined daughter, Lady Martha Smythe, (Smythe being the duke's family name) who falls in love with Mr. Parker.

The duke, seeing that Mr. Parker is set to rise in life (and trusting in his daughter's instincts) agrees to the match. The young couple is now Mr. Parker and Lady Martha Parker. She keeps her rank based on her father's position even after her marriage to a commoner.

Mr. Parker, after proving that the duke's trust was well placed, and having averted some diplomatic disaster, has been given a knighthood. The couple is now Sir David Parker and Lady Martha Parker. She is not Lady Parker, even though that would be correct for a knight's wife. Her rank is still derived from her father, because a knight is still a commoner.

After further adventures in the diplomatic field (and for certain reasons the safety of the realm requires silence on) Sir David has been made a baron. The couple is now Lord Parker and Lady Parker. A baron is a peer and his wife will now take her status from him.

There is also the rare (but not quite as rare in novels) situation where a lady holds a title in her own right. I need to do some more research on the finer points of this matter.