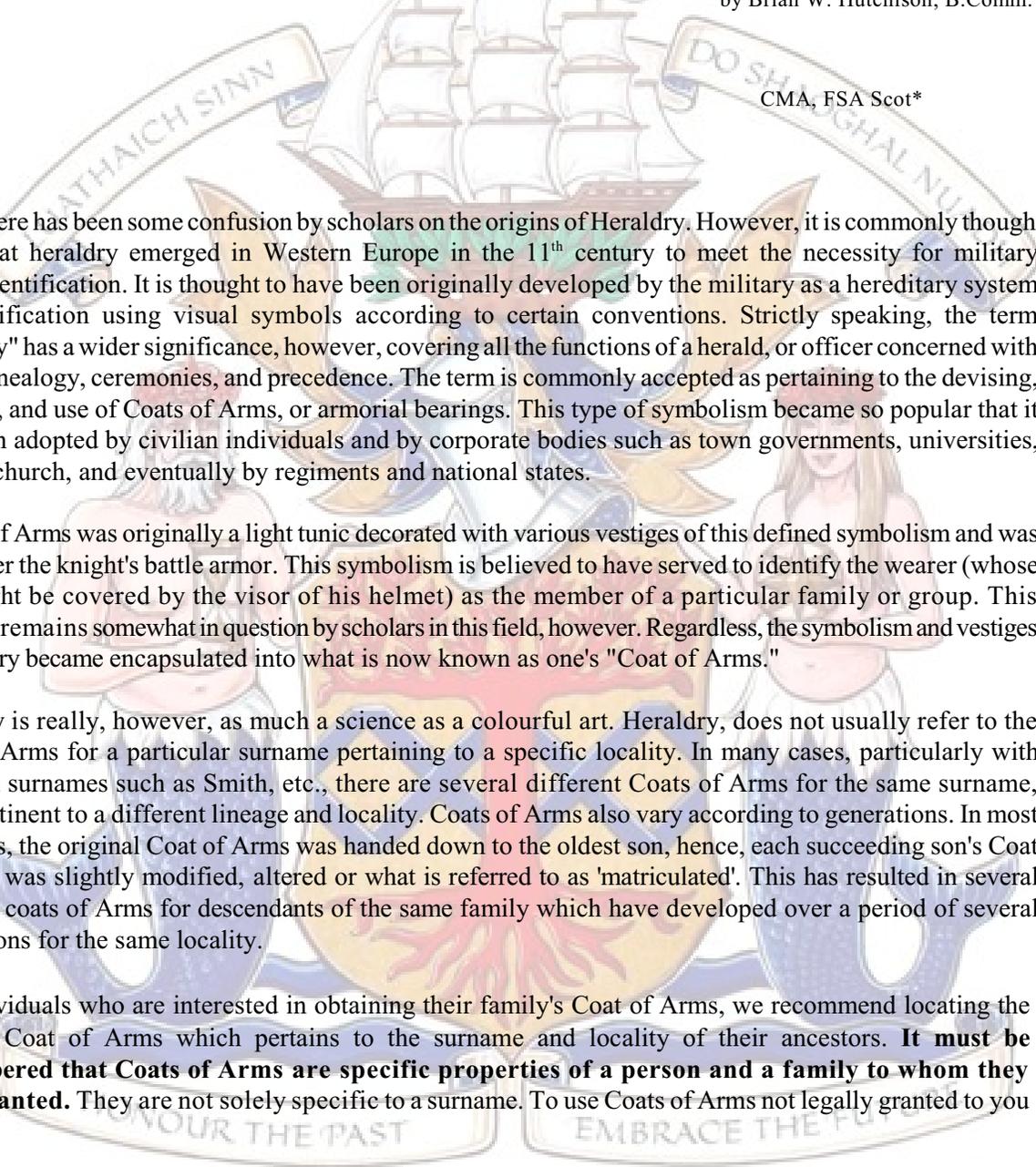


HERALDRY AND COATS OF ARMS

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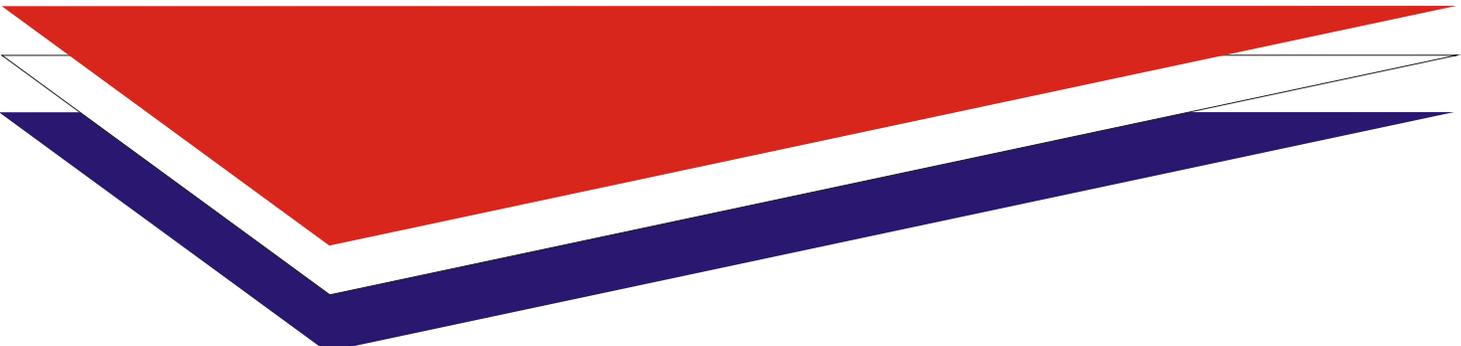


There has been some confusion by scholars on the origins of Heraldry. However, it is commonly thought that heraldry emerged in Western Europe in the 11th century to meet the necessity for military identification. It is thought to have been originally developed by the military as a hereditary system of identification using visual symbols according to certain conventions. Strictly speaking, the term "heraldry" has a wider significance, however, covering all the functions of a herald, or officer concerned with arms, genealogy, ceremonies, and precedence. The term is commonly accepted as pertaining to the devising, granting, and use of Coats of Arms, or armorial bearings. This type of symbolism became so popular that it was soon adopted by civilian individuals and by corporate bodies such as town governments, universities, and the church, and eventually by regiments and national states.

A Coat of Arms was originally a light tunic decorated with various vestiges of this defined symbolism and was worn over the knight's battle armor. This symbolism is believed to have served to identify the wearer (whose face might be covered by the visor of his helmet) as the member of a particular family or group. This premise remains somewhat in question by scholars in this field, however. Regardless, the symbolism and vestiges of heraldry became encapsulated into what is now known as one's "Coat of Arms."

Heraldry is really, however, as much a science as a colourful art. Heraldry, does not usually refer to the Coat of Arms for a particular surname pertaining to a specific locality. In many cases, particularly with common surnames such as Smith, etc., there are several different Coats of Arms for the same surname, each pertinent to a different lineage and locality. Coats of Arms also vary according to generations. In most countries, the original Coat of Arms was handed down to the oldest son, hence, each succeeding son's Coat of Arms was slightly modified, altered or what is referred to as 'matriculated'. This has resulted in several different coats of Arms for descendants of the same family which have developed over a period of several generations for the same locality.

For individuals who are interested in obtaining their family's Coat of Arms, we recommend locating the original Coat of Arms which pertains to the surname and locality of their ancestors. **It must be remembered that Coats of Arms are specific properties of a person and a family to whom they were granted.** They are not solely specific to a surname. To use Coats of Arms not legally granted to you



by an appropriate state body and using them as your own, or your family's own, is not acceptable nor legal. To use such armorial bearings, unless granted to you or your family personally, should be connected to a clear statement that they "represent arms of someone with the same surname or of the same clan only and have not been personally granted." Even with this proviso they should never be used for financial gain, nor under other pretenses.

Should you have interest in surname related armorial bearings, our Heraldry Specialists will assist you in locating the original Coat of Arms for your surname. In addition, our staff of professional illustrators can assist you in enlarging and providing color to your Coat of Arms making it suitable for framing.

For further information on Heraldry & Coats of Arms, refer to the following major Internet web-sites:

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- *Coat of Arms (Wikipedia)* - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms
 - *Heraldic Authorities, Societies & Newsgroups* - <http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/cuhags/links/socs.htm>
 - *Heraldry on the Internet* - <http://www.digiserve.com/heraldry/>
 - *Heraldry* - <http://www.internationalheraldry.com/>
 - *Chivalry and Heraldry* - <http://heraldictimes.org/2010/10/20/chivalry-and-heraldry/>
 - *Heraldry, Coats of Arms and Crests* - <http://www.heraldicsculptor.com/heraldry.html>
 - *Laws of Heraldic Arms (Wikipedia)* - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_heraldic_arms
 - *Royal Heraldry Society of Canada* - <http://www.heraldry.ca/>
 - *Canadian Heraldic Authority* - http://archive.gg.ca/heraldry/index_e.asp
 - *Heraldry by Countries* - <http://www.heraldica.org/topics/national/>
 - *Heraldry Links* - <http://www.heraldrylinks.com/>

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