

The Knight Family Crest



THE BEGINNING: Since the beginning of Knighthood, coats of arms have been of great historical interest. During the Middle Ages, with many wars and conflicts between kings and feudal lords, more and more armor was added to a Knight's battle uniform. With the use of helmets, the identity of the warrior was not certain. In order to identify friend from foe, designs were created and made a part of shields, crests, tunics and flags. The colors and images represented traditions and campaigns the family participated in.

THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE: Besides the ruling family design, those peasants who belonged to the serfdom also used the same crest so they could be commanded as a unit on the battlefield. When the nobleman and patriarch to the family died, the right to use the same crest was passed to the oldest son as part of the patronymical tradition. Other sons could use the same design if some alteration was made, which distinguished his family from the original. In time, many versions of the first basic design proliferated until it was hard to keep track of the identity of the family root. Because of this, there are about 75,000 crests registered, although many more are used without authenticity.

ENFORCING THE USE: King Henry VIII finally sent heralds out to take a census to register and enforce the rules about who had the right to use specific family crests. This method of enforcement was used for about two centuries.

WHERE DID THE KNIGHT CREST COME FROM?: The Knight family crest shown above was "adopted" by the family after an extensive search. It would be impossible to

completely authenticate the actual coat used by our ancestors since for reasons given above, there are many versions found in the Heraldic Register in England. The large section of the New York Public Library on Heraldry has been consulted in order to survey the several registered there for old English families of the Knight surname. For the Knights who came to the New World during the early 1630's there are several found belonging to these families.

The crest found on this page represents Knights who came from Hampshire, England where our ancestors originated. In the library of Bath, England the registry was consulted with the blazon (description) of this crest used to identify its origin between the 12th and 13th centuries. Therefore, according to time and place, this crest most fits the circumstances of our ancestors. Even, if this is not the case, the use of this emblem will help us keep the tradition of the origins of our family alive. We do not claim that this is the proven crest used by our ancestors, but it is typical of those used by these people and is representative of the traditional use of crests by the Knight family centuries ago.

DESCRIPTION: The crest we have adopted has a black background on the shield with a golden "Griffith" figure emblazoned on it. This figure is half fowl and half lion.

The fowl (bird) is the oriental symbol for the Crusades and indicate that the family participated in this great epic.

The lion (lower) part of the figure identifies it as an English family since the lion is the icon of Great Britain.

The silver helmet with red lining signifies that the family is headed by a nobleman, usually a baron or "knighted" land owner.

The trappings or "mantling" further indicates that men of the family were warriors and served the king in battle.

The animal head (a lion or dog) contains seven gold dots which are believed to signify seven major engagements participated by family and peasants from this serfdom.

