**The Language of Heraldry**

**Heraldic Colors:**
Yellow or Gold - Generosity
White or Silver - Peace & Sincerity
Black - Constancy (& sometimes Grief)
Blue - Loyalty & Truthfulness
Red - Military Fortitude & Magnanimity
Green - Hope, Joy & sometimes Loyalty
Purple - Royal Majesty, Sovereignty & Justice

**Heraldic Animals:**
Bear - Protectiveness
Bee - Industriousness
Camel - Perseverance
Dog - Loyalty
Double Eagle & Eagle - Leadership & Decisiveness
Dragon - Defender of Treasure
Falcon or Hawk - Eagerness
Fox - Cleverness
Griffin (part eagle, part lion) - Bravery
Horse - Readiness to Serve
Lion - Courage
Pelican - Generosity & Devotion
Raven - Constancy
Snake - Ambition
Stag, Elk or Deer - Peace & Harmony
Tiger - Fierceness & Valor
Unicorn - Extreme courage
Wolf - Constant Vigilance

**Heraldic Symbols:**
Axe - Dutiful
Bridge - (signifies a governor or magistrate)
Crescent - Enlightenment
Crosses - Christian sentiments
Crown - Authority
Fire - Zeal
Flaming Heart - Passion
Fleur-de-lys (stylized Iris flower) - Purity (associated with France)
Hand - Faith, Sincerity & Justice
Heart - Sincerity
Horns & Antlers - Fortitude
Lightning - Decisiveness
Moon - Serenity
Oyster Shell - Traveler
Ring - Fidelity
Scepter - Justice
Star - Nobility
Sun - Glory
Sword - Warlike
Tower or Castle - Fortitude & Protectiveness

Heraldry played a very dramatic role in Medieval history. Heraldic arms signified and defined your families stature in the community and country. It was a symbol of family pride that could not be argued and gave the bearer a link to his ancestral family. It was also necessary in the often violent and war filled Medieval era. Coats of arms were used as identification in war and travel.

This made it easier to distinguish between friend or foe. The arms also serve as a subtle but constant reminder to descendants who bear them of their continuing responsibility to lead righteous and honorable lives. By doing this they endow bigger and better things to their family which will be shown in the [coat of arms](http://www.surfcanyon.com/search?f=slc&q=coat%20of%20arms&p=wtigck) that the bearer takes such great pride in displaying.

The most simple and well known reason for heraldry is identification. A coat of arms is a graphic and plain means of identification. It tells the onlooker who is under the Great War helm and if he is a cause for threat. Also, many knights and nobles would often go on far reaching quests and journeys. Most often they would be familiar with very few people so recognition by facial features was difficult. A coat of arms was more far reaching and well known than the appearance of the man. It gave the bearer a sort of graphic catch phrase that was noticed and perceived more than the actual features of the man.

The coat of arms also proudly represents an active relationship between past and present family members. It creates a visible link to the past and a proud statement about family members accomplishments and honor. The coat creates a family bond and promotes the idea of a family joined together by an unbreakable spirit. The coat showed all of past family members triumphs that were forever and could not be blemished by any deed done in the future. It was a sort of heirloom passed from member to member that signified their place in the world and what your family has done to ensure that place.

Coats of arms just represented a little of what heraldry is about. Heraldry also consisted of banners in wars and markings on anything to convey a message. Certain banners were used in war time to signify the start of an attack. They were also used to deploy certain member of the army such as archers, or infantry. They were used to communicate strategies and commands in the load and confusing onslaught of war. Heralds were often commissioned by generals and kings to be messengers, diplomats, and army officers. It was their job to identify markings and coats of arms to prevent confusion in the fast paced battle.

Coats of arms are synonymous with the Medieval era. They, and the art of heraldry, were one of the most important and far reaching issues of that time. Back then, your family [history](http://www.surfcanyon.com/search?f=slc&q=coat%20of%20arms%20history&p=wtigck) and honor were the most important parts in identification. Knight and nobles wanted to make it known that their family was truthful and successful. The coat of arms was a recorded kind of identification which was fully able to survive change and loss. The legacy left behind by fallen ancestors can never be devalued or stolen. It was considered a part of the bearer and could even be added to by the person who wore the markings. The owner could increase the birthright in meaning and significance. This was very important to people in that time. Honor was above all else and heraldry was in fact the identification of that honor.

