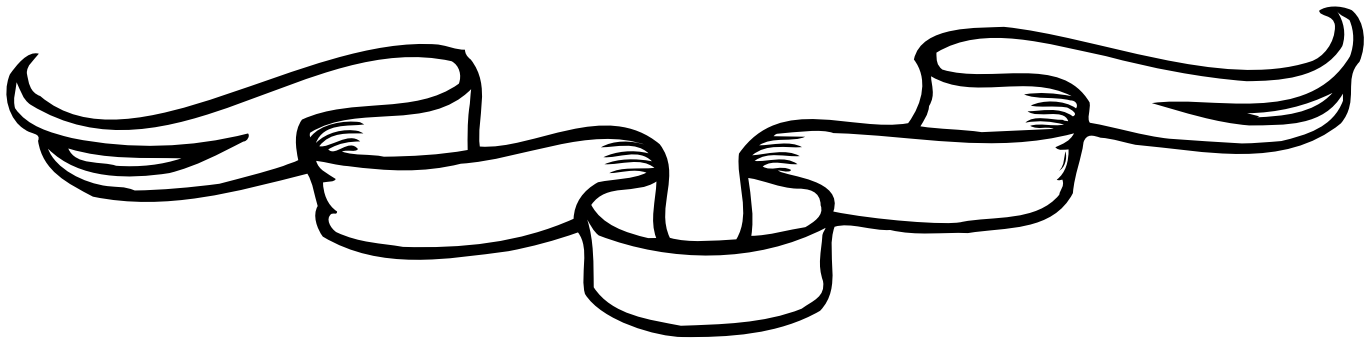
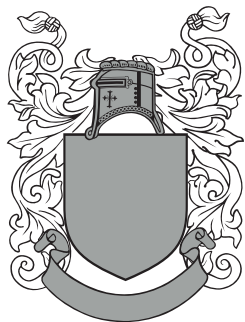


Build your
own
coat of
arms

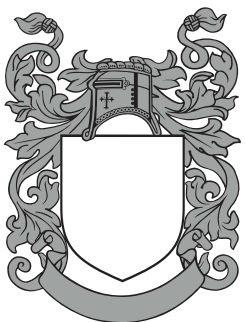




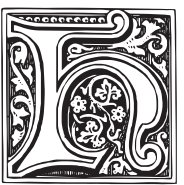
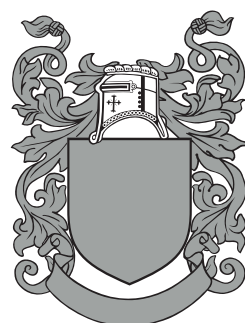
An Achievement of Arms such as the arms depicted on the left typically consists of these parts; the Escrolls, displaying the family motto and name, the family crest (if any) seen above the helmet, the actual Coat of arms (also known as 'arms,' or 'the shield'), the Helmet depicted below the crest, the Torse on top of the helmet, and the Mantle draped from the helmet. Each of these elements will be described below. Supporters were a later addition to the Achievement: they are somewhat rare, and are usually personal to the grantee.



Mantle was spread over and draped from the helmet and served as a protection, 'to repel the extremities of wet, cold, and heat, and to preserve the armor from rust.' The numerous cuts and slits suggest that it had been torn and hacked on the field of battle. The style or design of the mantling is up to the individual heraldic artist, and it is usually depicted in the main color and metal from the shield.

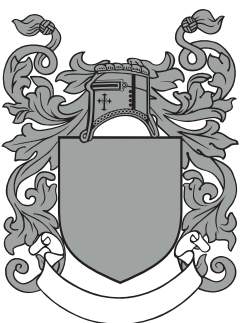


Shields (or Escutcheons) at first were painted simply with one or more bands of color or 'ordinaries'. Later, the ordinaries were used in conjunction with other figures or symbols.



Helms (or Helmets) varied in shape in different ages and countries, often depicting rank. The Esquire's Helm, as depicted here, is generally shown silver, with a closed visor and facing to the dexter (its right).

On top of the helmet is a Torse or wreath which was formed by two pieces of silk twisted together. Its purpose was to hold the crest and mantle on the Helm. The Crest was usually made of wood, metal, or boiled leather. It provided the double advantage of easy identification and the addition of height to the wearer.



The motto was originally a war cry or slogan. Mottoes first began to be shown with arms in the 14th and 15th centuries, but were not in general use until the 17th century. Thus the oldest coats of arms generally do not include a motto.

