



ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

THE MOST
DISTINGUISHED
SURNAME
CONQUEROR

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The Conqueror surname derives from the Old French word "conquest" meaning "conquest;" as a name it most likely evolved from a nickname.

ANCIENT HISTORY

The ancient chronicles of England and early records of the name Conqueror, show it to be an old Norman surname. The history of the name is closely interwoven within the majestic tapestry as an intrinsic part of the history of Britain.

In-depth research by skilled analysts into ancient manuscripts such as the Domesday Book (compiled in 1086 by William the Conqueror), the Ragman Rolls, the Wace poem, the Honour Roll of the Battel Abbey, the Curia Regis, Pipe Rolls, the Falaise Roll, tax records, baptismals, family genealogies, local parish and church records, shows that the Conqueror name was first found in Bedfordshire (Old English: Bedanfordscir), located in Southeast-central England, formerly part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia, where they held a family seat as Lords of the Manor. After the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, having prevailed over King Harold, granted most of Britain to his many victorious Barons. It was not uncommon to find a Baron, or a Bishop, with 60 or more Lordships scattered throughout the country. These he gave to his sons, nephews and other junior lines of his family and they became known as under-tenants. They adopted the Norman system of surnames which identified the under-tenant with his holdings so as to distinguish him from the senior stem of the family. After many rebellious wars between his Barons, Duke William, commissioned a census of all England to determine in 1086, settling once and for all, who held which land. He called the census the Domesday Book,^[1] indicating that those holders registered would hold the land until the end of time. Hence, conjecturally, the surname is descended from the tenant of the lands of Houghton Conquest, Hugh de Beauchamp from Countess Edith, who was recorded in the Domesday Book census of 1086.

SPELLING VARIATIONS

Many alternate spellings were found in the archives researched, typically linked to a common root, usually one of the Norman nobles at the Battle of Hastings. Although your name, Conqueror, appeared in many references, from time to time the surname included Conquest, Concwest, Conkwest and Conqueror, and these changes in spelling frequently occurred, even between father and son. Scribes recorded and spelled the name as it sounded. Typically a person would be born with one spelling, married with another, and buried with a headstone which showed another. All three spellings related to the same person. Sometimes preferences for different spelling variations either resulted from a branch preference, religious affiliation, or sometimes nationalistic statements.





The ancestors of the family name Conqueror are believed to be descended originally from the Norman race, frequently but mistakenly assumed to be of French origin. They were more accurately of Viking origin. The Vikings landed in the Orkneys and Northern Scotland about the year 870 A.D., under their King, Stirgud the Stout. Thorfinn Rollo, his descendant, led his people into northern France early in the 10th century. In 911, King Charles III was forced to cede territory to Rollo, who became the first Duke of Normandy, the territory of the north men. Rollo married Charles' daughter and became a convert to Christianity. Duke William who invaded and defeated England in 1066, was descended from the first Duke Rollo of Normandy.

Duke William took a census of most of England in 1086, and recorded it in the Domesday Book. A family name capable of being traced back to this manuscript, or to Hastings, was a signal honour for most families during the Middle Ages, and even to this day.

The surname Conqueror emerged as a notable family name in Bedfordshire where they held a family seat. Succeeding was William Conquest seated there in 1355. In the meantime they had also acquired estates in Berkshire and Gloucestershire. For those interested in further research of the early history of the surname we recommend the ancient Harleian Manuscripts which are in the archives of the British Museum. These Manuscripts are a Catalogue of the Herald's Visitations between 1510 and 1600. Some histories go back to the Magna Carta Barons and earlier to Hastings. This distinguished surname Conquest is recorded in manuscripts 1097, 1390, 1531, 2109, 4600, and 5186. During the time of the Norman Kings there were many feudal rebellions. Many barons were attainted, traded their lands, and moved their families out of the royal influence, even into Scotland. Sir John Conquest was knighted in 1306. Sir Richard and Sir Edmond were knighted in 1603 on the occasion of the coronation of King James 1st. Sir Richard Conquest was knighted in 1607.

EARLY NOTABLES

Prominent amongst the family at this time was the Conquest family of Bedfordshire.



THE GREAT MIGRATION

The democratic attitudes of the New World spread like wildfire. Many migrated aboard the fleet of sailing ships known as the "White Sails." The stormy Atlantic, small pox, dysentery, cholera and typhoid took its toll on the settlers and many of these tiny, overcrowded ships arrived with only 60 or 70 percent of their passenger list. The migration or banishment to the New World continued, some voluntarily from Ireland, but mostly directly from England or Scotland, their home territories. Some clans and families even moved to the European continent.

SETTLERS

There are 6 settlers with similar origins in the Appendix.



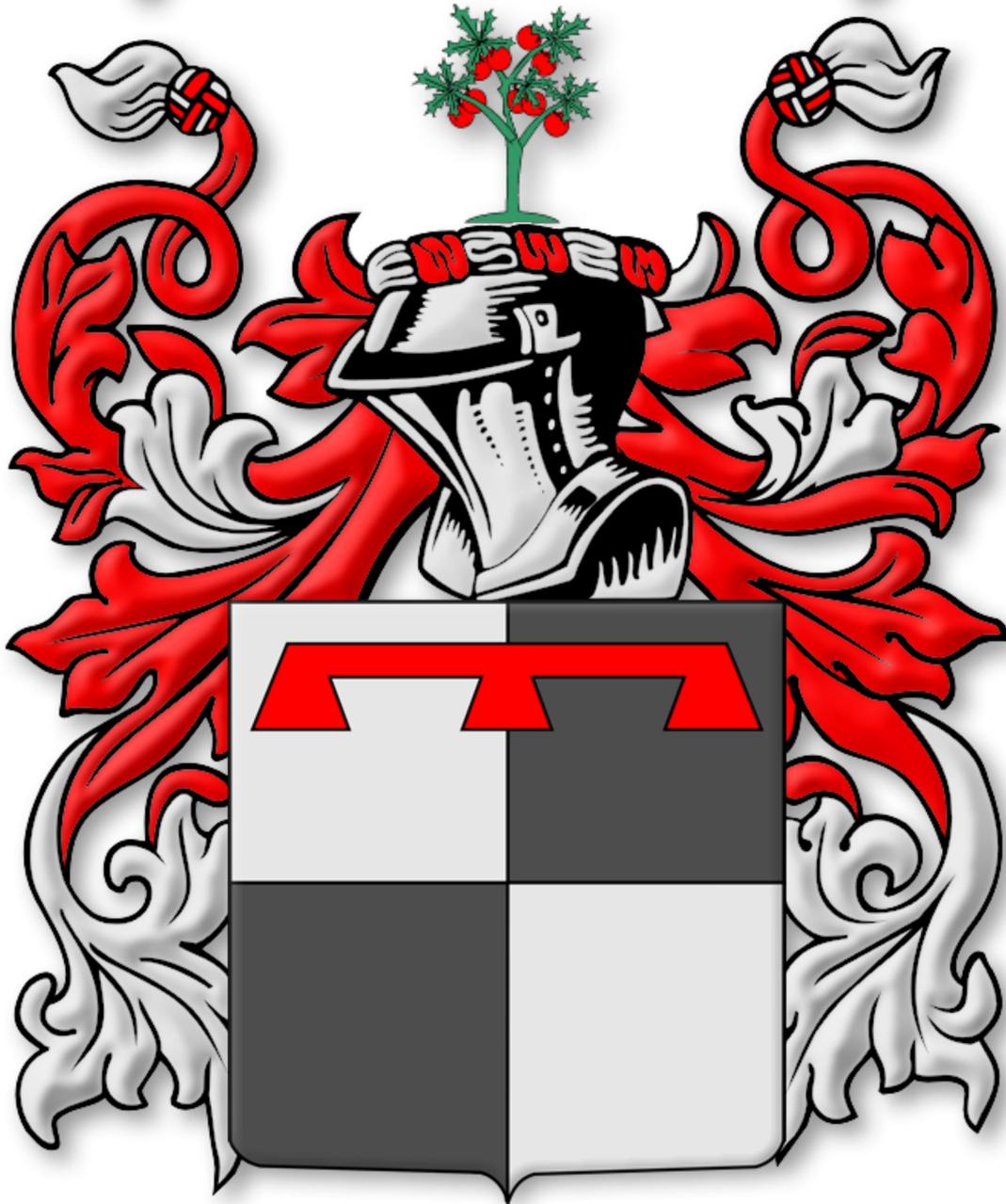


CURRENT NOTABLES

From the port of arrival many settlers joined the wagon trains westward. During the American War of Independence some declared their loyalty to the Crown and moved northward into Canada and became known as the United Empire Loyalists. Distinguished bearers of the family name Conqueror in more recent times include: Dr. George Robert Ackworth Conquest (b. 1917), British historian; and Stuart Conquest (b. 1967), English chess Grandmaster.



The Ancient Arms of



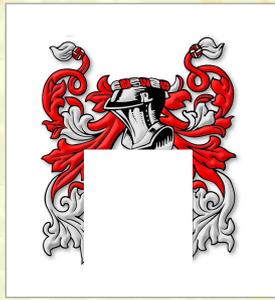
Conqueror



The practice of representing people with symbols is ancient, and in England this habit evolved with feudal society into a system of distinctive devices on shields. The heralds developed an extensive armory that had the important function of distinguishing members of the upper class from each other, whether at court or on the battlefield. Since then, heraldry has grown into a complex field with many rules and a terminology that requires some knowledge to interpret.



An Achievement of Arms such as the Conqueror 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 OF CONQUEROR

The 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 armour 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. The helmet (or Helm) 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.

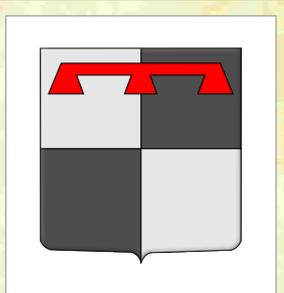
MOTTO

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. Mottoes seldom form part of the grant of arms: Under most heraldic authorities, a motto is an optional component of the coat of arms, and can be added to or changed at will; many families have chosen not to display a motto.

The coat of arms displayed here for the surname Conqueror did not include a motto.

SHIELD

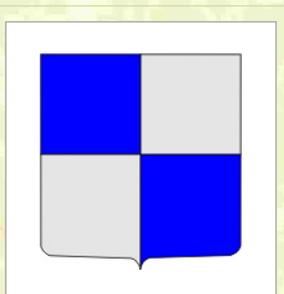
Shields (or Escutcheons) at first were painted simply with one or more bands of color or 'ordinaries'. Later, the ordinaries were used in conjunction with other figures or symbols. The Coat of Arms for the surname Conqueror can be described as follows:



THE CONQUEROR SHIELD

CONQUEROR ARMS

A shield divided quarterly silver and black with a red label of three in chief.

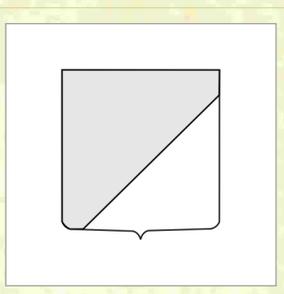


QUARTERLY

QUARTERLY

The shield is divided into four equal quadrants. These are numbered from left to right as reading a book. Usually quartered arms are created when arms are inherited through an heiress. ^[2]

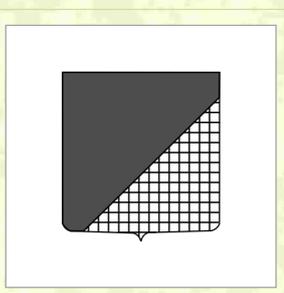
In this later case, the heiress Arms are typically in the 2nd and 3rd quarters with the heir's Arms in the 1st and 4th.



SILVER

SILVER

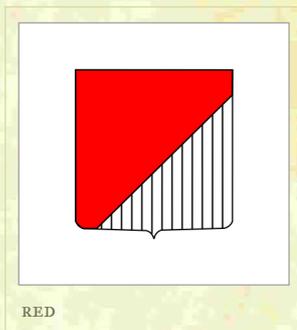
Argent (from the French for silver), or Silver is one of the two metals used in heraldry. It is usually represented on a shield by the colors gray or white. This metal represents nobility, peace and serenity. It is associated with the qualities of purity and chastity, because the metal withstands the test of fire.



BLACK

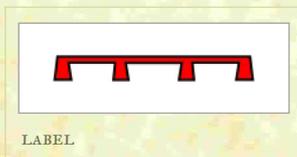
BLACK

Sable (Archaic or literary English for black) or black, the coldest of the colors, corresponds to lead. Black, or "sable," is symbolic of sadness. It also corresponds with winter and is a humble color, suitable for the deeply religious. It denotes the qualities of knowledge, piety, serenity and work. Engravers represent it with numerous horizontal and vertical lines crossing each other.



RED

Gules, derived from an Old French word *goules* or *gueules* meaning "throats" translates into modern English as "red" and is the military color for excellence and fortitude. It is symbolic of nobility, boldness and ferocity, and can also represent fire and summer. Some ancient laws restricted its use to princes and their families. Red corresponds to the metal copper and is denoted in engravings by numerous perpendicular lines.



LABEL

The label was a decorative piece of fabric, usually silk. It was a popular trimming for dress and decor during the Middle Ages. In heraldry, it is represented by a narrow band across the top of the shield, edged by another band from which three short bars hang down. Lately the bars have been drawn more like dovetails, like triangles inserted point first into the lower band. In English arms a label was a mark of difference indicating that the bearer was the eldest son and heir. Some labels on coats of arms can be traced to this origin.

THREE

"Three" devices, beasts or ordinaries of the same have a special significance in heraldry.

First of all, there is the obvious reference to the Trinity in the design that would signify observance of the Christian doctrine.

Secondly, with many Arms it brings balance that is steeped in tradition. To better understand this latter scenario, we must look at the evolution of shield in personal armory. Kite shields that were the most popular from the the 10th-14th century evolved into Heater shields that had flat tops c. 1250. This was the time of heraldry's beginnings and when "three" objects were used for balance in each corner of the shield.

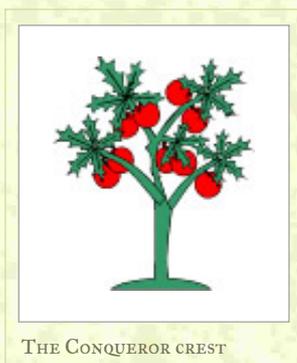
Later, with the advent of the "chief," "chevron" and "bend" three devices brought balance to these ordinaries too.

IN CHIEF

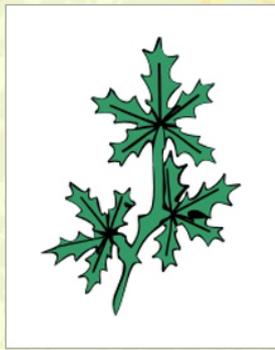
Any charge that is said to be 'in chief' is placed in the upper 1/3 of the shield. A chief itself stands for authority and domination of will.

THE CREST

The Crest was worn on top of the helmet, and 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 Crest for the surname Conqueror is described as follows:



A HOLLY TREE PROPER.

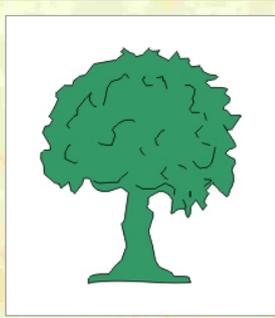


HOLLY

HOLLY

Holly was used to adorn temples and sacred places and its name is derived from the word holy.

Holly is also an emblem of truth. Holly branches are emblazoned sheaves of holly or holly branches of three leaves. The term 'branch' is actually a bit of a misrepresentation, though, because the 'branch' is actually just three leaves tied together.



TREE

TREE

The tree is a symbol of antiquity and strength. Many types of trees are blazoned on shields and crests, but they are generally not depicted accurately. The type of tree can relate to the characteristics of an early bearer of the family name, or perhaps to the land held by that family. The oak tree was sacred to the ancient Greeks and the Celts; the cedars of Lebanon are referred to in the scriptures as trees of stately beauty; the lime or linden tree was sacred to the Germans; the poplar is a symbol of great strength; the cypress tree is a symbol of death, because once cut, it never springs up again from its roots; evergreens, like the pine and the yew, symbolize of death and the hope of eternal life; the ash tree was venerated by the Scandinavians. Trees allude to home or property, and they are also generally considered a symbol of life and strength. Sometimes a hurst of trees, or a wood is found on a shield. Also, a tree stump or tree trunk may be used as a symbol of re-growth and rebirth, especially when it is borne with branches spouting new leaves.

PROPER

The term "proper" describes a charge, or a symbol on a crest or shield, depicted in its natural colors.

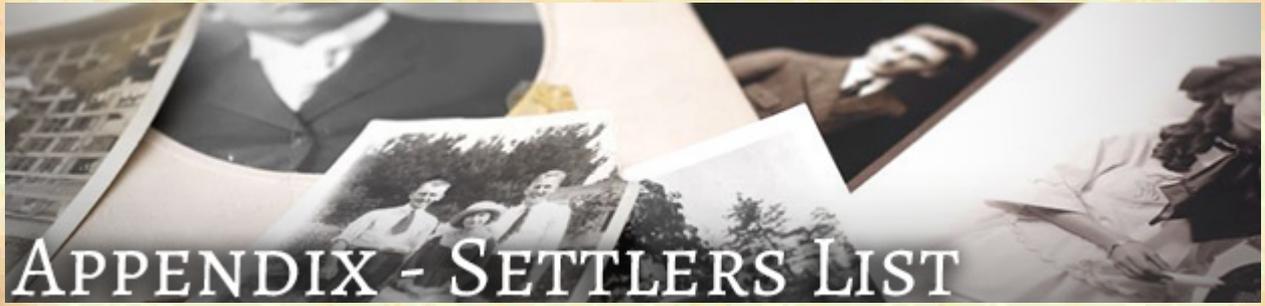


APPENDIX - NOTABLE LIST

SURNAME VARIANTS OF CONQUEROR

- John Tricker Conquest (1789-1806) Scottish man-midwife, he died at Shooter's Hill on 24 Oct. 1866^[3]
- George Robert Acworth Conquest CMG, OBE, FBA, FAAAS, FRSL, FBIS (1917-2015) English-born, American historian and poet, best known for his work *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purges of the 1930s* (1968), recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom
- Brigadier-General Edwin Parker Conquest (1894-1966) American Commanding Officer 366th Infantry Regiment (1943)^[4]



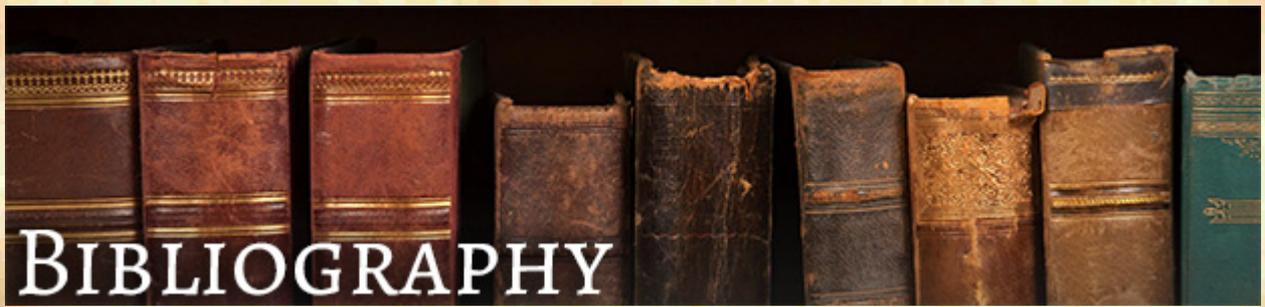


AMERICAN SETTLERS

SURNAME VARIANTS OF CONQUEROR

- Lewis Conquest, who settled in Virginia in 1649
- Richard Conquest, who arrived in Virginia in 1649
- Richard Conquest, who landed in Virginia in 1649^[5]
- Edm Conquest, who settled in Virginia in 1673
- John Conquest, a bonded passenger, who settled in America in 1755





Here is a listing of some of the sources consulted when researching British surnames. The resources below directly or indirectly influenced the authors of our surname histories. We have most of these titles in our library, others we have borrowed or had access to. Source materials have been chosen for their reliability and authenticity. Our research into surnames is ongoing, and we are continually adding to our source library. For each surname history, we seek and refer to sources specific to the surname; these are generally not included in the list below.

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TRUSTED WEB-SITES

British History Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

United Kingdom National Archives:
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

College of Arms (England): <http://college-of-arms.gov.uk/>

Library and Archives Canada:
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/>

The National Archives (USA): <http://www.archives.gov/>

MEDIEVAL ROLLS

Where available we consult Medieval rolls or use their information as reprinted in secondary sources.

Assize Rolls: records from court sessions

Calendarium Inquisitionum Post Mortem: Feudal inquiries, undertaken after the death of a feudal tenant in chief to establish what lands were held and who should succeed to them. Records exist from around 1240-1660.

Curia Regis Rolls (Rotuli Curiae Regis): Rolls and Records of the Court held before the king's Justices. Various translated and published, London 1835),

Register of the Freemen of York: list of freemen from 13th-18th century, published by the Surtees Society, Francis Collins (editor) in 1897.

Historia Regum Britanniae ("The History of the Kings of Britain"): a legendary account of British history, accredited to Geoffrey of Monmouth in around 1136.

Hundred Rolls (Rotuli Hundredorum): various royal inquests, documents were held in the tower of London. Much was published in 1818 Ragman Rolls: rolls of deeds on parchment in which the Scottish nobility and gentry subscribed allegiance to Edward I. of England, A. D. 1296.

Subsidy Rolls: taxation records from the 12th to the 17th centuries.

Pipe Rolls: rolls of the Exchequer of accounts of the royal income, arranged by county, for each financial year. Many 12th and 13th century documents have been published with indexes by the Pipe Roll Society.

Roll of Battle Abbey: a list of the principal Norman Knights said to have accompanied William across the English Channel. Original roll was lost.

Feet of Fines: Legal agreements, usually about property ownership

Charters: documents recording grants, usually of land recorded by the Chancery

Heralds' visitations: 16th-17th century, county by county visits to regulate the use of arms; many published by the Harleian Society.

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