

YOUR NAME AND YOUR COAT OF ARMS -- -- Priceless Gifts From History right to a particular pattern to a Ap, the Scot's and Irish---Mac, and Until about 1100 A.D. most people in particular knight. His family also the Norman's --- Fitz. Europe had only one name (This is still The Irish O' shared his right to display these arms. incidentally denotes grandfather. true in some primitive countries today). In some instances, these records have As the population increased it became been preserved and/or compiled into book awkward to live in a village wherein Characteristic: An unusually small form. The records list the family name perhaps 1/3 of the males were named person might be labeled Small, Short, Little or Lytle. A large man might be and an exact description of the "Coat of John, another sizable percentage named Arms" granted to that family. named Longfellow, Large, Lang, or Long. William, and so forth. Many persons having characteristics of a Interest in heraldry is increasing daily. certain animal would be given the animal's And so, to distinguish one John from This is especially true among people who name. Examples: a sly person might be another a second name was needed. There have a measure of family pride and who named Fox; a good swimmer, Fish; a quiet were four primary sources for these resent attempts of our society to reduce man, Dove; etc. second names. They were: a man's occupaeach individual to a series of numbers tion, his location, his father's name or stored somewhere in a computer. In our In addition to needing an extra name for some peculiar characteristic of his. identification, one occupational group matter-of-fact day and age, a "Coat of Here are some examples. Arms"is one of the rare devices remaining found it necessary to go a step further. that can provide an incentive to preserve The fighting man: The fighting man of Occupation: The local house builder, our heritage. We hope you'll agree that the Middle Ages wore a metal suit of food preparer, grain grinder and suit it is much more than just a wall armor for protection. Since this suit of maker would be named respectively: John armor included a helmet that completely decoration. Carpenter, John Cook, John Miller, and covered the head, a knight in full battle John Taylor. If you are interested in a more in-depth dress was unrecognizable. To prevent friend from attacking friend during the study of the subject of this paper, may Location: The John who lived over the we suggest you contact the genealogical heat of battle, it became necessary for hill became known as John Overhill, the department of any fair-sized public each knight to somehow identify himself. one who dwelled near a stream might be library. We especially recommend the Many knights accomplished this by paintdubbed John Brook or perhaps John "Dictionary of American Family Names" ing colorful patterns on their battle Atbrook. published by Harper & Row and also "The shields. These patterns were also woven Surnames of Scotland" available from the into cloth surcoats which were worn over Patronymical: (father's name): Many of New York Public Library as excellent a suit of armor. Thus was born the term, these surnames can be recognized by the sources on the meaning of surnames. termination --- son, such as Williamson, "Coat of Arms." Jackson, etc. Some endings used by As this practice grew more popular, it other countries to indicate "son" are: Mancy & Walbert Armenian's --- ian, Dane's and Norwegian's became more and more likely that two knights unknown to each other might be ---sen, Finn's---nen, Greek's---pulos, using the same insignia. To prevent Spaniard's --- ez, and Pole's --- wiecz . Nancy L. Halbert this, records were kept that granted the Prefixes denoting "son" are the Welsh---