



ESCOMB SAXON CHURCH

THE MOST
DISTINGUISHED
SURNAME
SHIERCLIFFE

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While your recent ancestors and famous people bearing your surname may be known to you, it is often a family's distant past which fades into the unknown over the centuries. Research has shown that this surname is of Anglo-Saxon origin. Few cultures have had the lasting impact on English society as that of the Anglo-Saxons. The Shiercliffe family history draws upon this heritage as the bearers of the name influenced and were influenced by the history of the English nation. Historians have carefully scrutinized such ancient manuscripts as the Domesday Book, compiled in 1086 A.D., the Ragman Rolls (1291-1296), the Curia Regis Rolls, the Pipe Rolls, the Hearth Rolls, parish registers, baptismals, tax records and other ancient documents and found the first record of the name Shiercliffe in Yorkshire where they held a family seat as Lords of the Manor. The Saxon influence of English history diminished after the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The language of the courts was French for the next three centuries and the Norman ambience prevailed. But Saxon surnames survived and the family name was first referenced in the year 1379 when John de Shirclif held estates in that shire near Sheffield.

SPELLING VARIATIONS

Many different spellings of the surname were found in the archives researched. Although the spelling Shiercliffe occurred in many manuscripts, from time to time the surname was spelt Shiercliffe, Shirtcliffe, Shircliffe, Shercliffe, Shirtcliffe, Shirtliff, Shirtliffe, Shetliffe, Shortliffe, Shortlife, Shirtcliff, Shercliff, Surecliffe, Sureliff, Surelife, Shirecliff and Shirecliffe, and these spelling variations were frequent, even between father and son. It was common to find the same individual referred to with different spellings of their surname. By example, the famous playwright William Shakespeare signed his name with different spellings and legal documents added further to the possible variations. "Shakespeare," "Shakespere," "Shakespear," "Shakspere" and "Shaxspere" were all used in reference to this famous individual. Typically, scribes, church officials and the bearers of a name spelled words as they sounded rather than adhering to any spelling rules used today.



The Saxons were a Teutonic tribe originally from northern Germany who began to settle in England in about the year 400 A.D. Their first settlements were in Kent, on the south east coast. Gradually, they probed north and westward from Kent and during the next four hundred years forced the ancient Britons back into Wales and Cornwall to the west. They won territories as far north as Lancashire and Yorkshire, pushing the Britons into Cumbria and Southern Scotland. The Angles, another Teutonic tribe, occupied the eastern coast, the south folk in Suffolk, the north folk in Norfolk. The Angles sometimes invaded as far north as Northumbria and the Scottish border. The Angle and Saxon cultures blended together as they came to dominate the country. For hundreds of years England was comprised of five independent Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until unification in the 9th century. By 1066, England, under Harold, was enjoying reasonable peace and prosperity. However, the Norman invasion from France and their victory at the Battle of Hastings meant that the Anglo-Saxon landowners lost their property to the invaders. The Saxons were restive under Norman rule, and many moved northward to the Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire, where Norman influence was less pervasive. Rebellious Norman nobles frequently joined them in their flight northward.

As peace was restored, the Shiercliffe surname emerged as that of a notable English family in the county of Yorkshire where they held a family seat. Later, in 1510 they were also shown on tax records where Thomas Shirliffe held estates in Sheffield. From their early beginnings, for the next few centuries, bearers of the family name acquired estates and manors as they established themselves throughout England. Several major conflicts, the Wars of the Roses, the Cromwellian found them sometimes to be in opposing camps with conflicting interests. Many changes in spelling the surname were accidental, some were deliberate, to declare a cause, or to distance a branch from the main stem which was at Ecclesfield Hall in Yorkshire.

EARLY NOTABLES

Distinguished members of the family include the Shirecliffe family of Yorkshire.

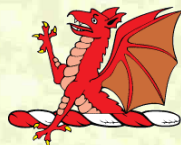




Turmoil at home made the New World appear attractive to many families in England. They immigrated to Canada, the United States, Australia, and some moved to continental Europe. Members of the Shiercliffe family risked the hazardous voyage to start a new life in new lands. This decision to emigrate was never made casually, for while there were hardships at home, the journey across the sea was so perilous that up to 40 percent of a ships' passengers would not reach their destination.

SETTLERS

There are 19 settlers with similar origins in the Appendix.





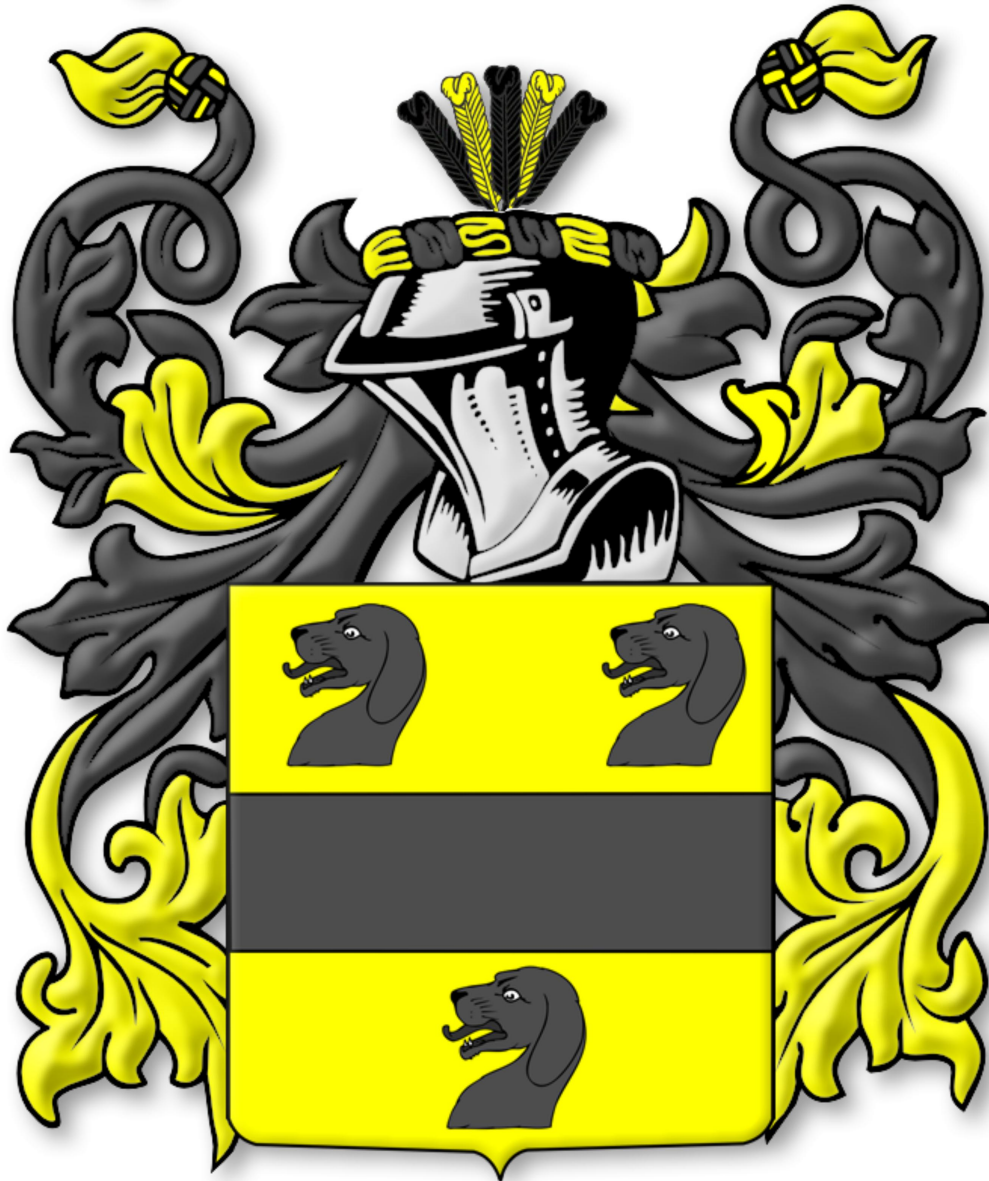
CURRENT NOTABLES

By the time of the American Revolution (1775-1783), the colonial population had reached approximately 2.5 million people. Black slaves constituted roughly 22 percent of the total; about 250,000 were Scots-Irish; approximately 200,000 were Germans. Protestants formed the overwhelming majority of white people, although approximately 25,000 Roman Catholics and about 1000 Jews also lived in the colonies. Approximately 50,000 people loyal to the British crown made their way north to Canada following the American Revolution. They were known as the United Empire Loyalists, and were granted lands in Nova Scotia, along the St. Lawrence River and along the Niagara Peninsula.

There are 26 notables with similar origins in the Appendix.



The Ancient Arms of



Shiercliffe



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 Shiercliffe 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 SHIERCLIFFE

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 Shiercliffe did not include a motto.

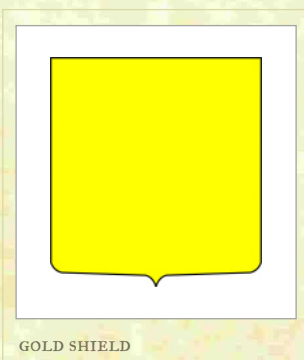
SHIELD

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 Shiercliffe can be described as follows:



SHIERCLIFFE ARMS

Gold shield between three greyhound's heads.



GOLD SHIELD

"Or" (from the French word for gold) is the tincture of Gold and was considered the noblest color. One of only two metals used in heraldry, it exceeds all others in value, purity and finesse. It represents the light of the sun, and was once borne only by princes.

Gold is said to gladden the heart and destroy all works of magic. It is also associated with excellence and achievement, and the bearer surpasses all others in valor. It is represented on coats of arms by the color yellow, and in engravings by an indefinite number of small points.

Symbolic Virtues: Or, the heraldic name for gold, symbolizes the virtues of faith, justice and mercy. Gold is the metal for excellence, as it is the purest and most unalloyed. It offers joy, success, prosperity and longevity.

Precious Stone: Carbuncle; Topaz

Planet: Sun

Obligations: To defend good and honor, and to fight to the death for one's country, surpasses all others in valor.

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.

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. If a family had no crest, and many chose not to, plumes (feathers) were often displayed instead.





APPENDIX - NOTABLE LIST

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SHIERCLIFFE

- LaWanna "Lou" Shurtliff (1935-2020) American politician, Member of the Utah House of Representatives (2019-2020)
- Professor Rosuelf Shirtleff, American professor of Theology of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire c. 1808
- Lisa Shirtleff - Winfrey, American actress, known for L'Antoinette (2015)
- William Lewis Shurtleff K.C. LL.D., (1864-1954) Canadian lawyer and newspaper owner from Quebec
- Bertrand Leslie Shurtleff (b.1897) American NFL football offensive lineman
- Michael Shurtleff (1920-2007) American Broadway casting consultant and writer, best known for writing Audition, a book for actors on the audition process
- Arthur Asahel Shurtleff (1870-1957) American landscape architect and urban planner from Boston
- Mark Shurtleff (b.1957) American Attorney General of Utah
- Nathaniel Bradstreet Shurtleff Sr. (1810-1874) American politician, 20th mayor of Boston, Massachusetts (1868 to 1871)
- F.R. "Dick" Shirtliff, co-founder of Davis & Shirtliff, one of East Africa's largest suppliers of water related goods
- Paul Robert Shirtliff (1962-2009) English footballer
- Peter Andrew Shirtliff (b.1961) English football coach and former player
- Sir George Shirtcliffe, of Wellington, New Zealand
- M. Karl Shirtliff, American politician, U.S. Attorney for Idaho, 1977-81 ^[1]
- L. W. Shurtliff, American Republican politician, Delegate to Republican National Convention from Utah, 1904 ^[2]
- Stephen Shurtleff, American Democratic Party politician, Alternate Delegate to Democratic National Convention from New Hampshire, 2004 ^[2]
- S. W. Shurtleff, American politician, Supervisor of Ann Arbor Township, Michigan, 1869-78 ^[2]
- Nathaniel B. Shurtleff (1810-1874) American politician, Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts, 1868-70 ^[2]
- Maurice Shurtleff, American Republican politician, Alternate Delegate to Republican National Convention from Illinois, 1940 ^[2]

- Mark L. Shurtleff (b.1957) American Republican politician, Utah State Attorney General, 2001-13; Delegate to Republican National Convention from Utah, 2004, 2008
[2]





AMERICAN SETTLERS

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SHIERCLIFFE

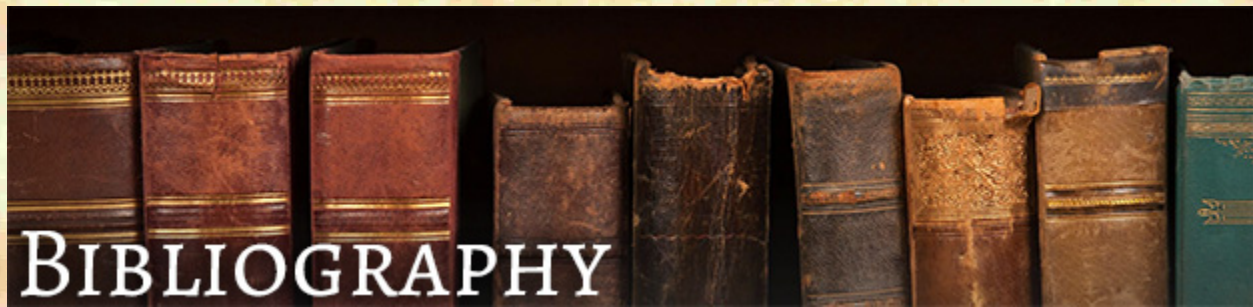
- William Shercliffe, who settled in Plymouth, MA sometime between 1620 and 1650
- John Shirtcliffe, who arrived in Maryland in 1646
- John Shirtliffe, who settled in Maryland in 1646
- Mrs. Shirtliffe, who arrived in Maryland in 1649
- John Shercliff, who landed in Maryland in 1649^[3]
- John Shircliffe, who landed in Maryland in 1651^[3]
- William Shurtleff, who landed in New England in 1666^[3]
- Ann Shircliffe, who arrived in Maryland in 1668
- Ann Shirtcliffe, who settled in Maryland in 1668
- Wm. R. Shurtleff, who settled in Boston in 1819
- Benjamin Shurtleff, who arrived in Allegany (Allegheny) County, Pennsylvania in 1839^[3]
- Charles Shirtcliff, who arrived in Philadelphia in 1848
- L. E. Shurtleff, who settled in San Francisco in 1852
- E. Shurtleff, who arrived in San Francisco in 1852
- Lorenzo J. Shirtliffe, aged 25, who landed in America, in 1912

CANADIAN SETTLERS

SURNAME VARIANTS OF SHIERCLIFFE

- Hannah Shurtleff, who settled in Nova Scotia sometime between 1739 and 1867
- Faith Shurtleff, who settled in Nova Scotia in 1761
- Kingston Shurtleff, who settled in Ontario in 1871
- Humpry Shurtleff, who arrived in Ontario in 1871





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

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

MEDIEVAL ROLLS

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

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

Assize Rolls: records from court sessions

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.

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.

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

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

Feet of Fines: Legal agreements, usually about property ownership

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

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

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

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

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.

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Extra Credit goes to Hayley Green at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ASchurch1.jpg> for the picture on the cover.

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