

Gray

The surname of GRAY was a nickname 'the one with grey hair'. Surnames having a derivation from nicknames form the broadest and most miscellaneous class of surnames, encompassing many different types of origin. The most typical classes refer adjectivally to the general physical aspect of the person concerned, or to his character. Many nicknames refer to a man's size or height, while others make reference to a favoured article of clothing or style of dress. Many surnames derived from the names of animals and birds. In the Middle Ages ideas were held about the characters of other living creatures, based on observation, and these associations were reflected and reinforced by large bodies of folk tales featuring animals behaving as humans. The name was derived from the Old English GRAEG. Early records of the name mention Baldwin Grai of the County of Buckinghamshire in 1173. Robert de Gray of the County of Oxford was recorded in the year 1273. William Greye of Yorkshire, was listed in the Yorkshire Poll Tax of 1379. Peter Grey (ironmonger) was documented in York, during the reign of Edward III (1327-1377). William Knevett and Katherine Gray were married in London in 1523. Thomas Gray (1716-1771) was the English poet and author of 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' and 'On a Distant Prospect of Eton College', and many more. Edward Whitaker Gray (1748-1806) was the English botanist and physician. In 1773 he was appointed librarian to the College of Physicians and in 1787 became keeper of the natural history collections at the British Museum. An interesting member of the name was Elisha Gray (1835-1901) the American Inventor born in Barnesville, Ohio. He was a manufacturer of telegraphic apparatus, his firm became the Western Electric Company. His 60 patents included a multiplex telegraph. He also claimed the invention of the telephone, but lost the patent rights to Alexander Graham Bell after a long legal battle in the US Supreme Court. The associated arms are recorded in Sir Bernard Burkes General Armory. Ulster King of Arms in 1884. At first the coat of arms was a practical matter which served a function on the battlefield and in tournaments. With his helmet covering his face, and armour encasing the knight from head to foot, the only means of identification for his followers was the insignia painted on his shield, and embroidered on his surcoat, the draped and flowing garment worn over the armour.

ARMS - Vert a lion rampant within a border engrailed argent

CREST - An anchor erect or the rope waved proper

MOTTO - - ANCHOR FAST ANCHOR