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From the historical and enchanting region of Scotland emerged a multitude of noble families, including the distinguished Armstrong family. The Armstrong surname is thought to come from the Middle English words "strong" and "arm," and has also been rendered in Gaelic as MacGhillielaidir. Surnames evolved during the Middle Ages when people began to assume an extra name to avoid confusion and to further identify themselves.

Though shrouded by the mists of time, the early records of Scotland reveal that the name Armstrong is of Norman origin, introduced to the region after the Norman conquest of England in the 11th century. The history of the name has since become interwoven with the colourful plaid of Scottish history and is now an intrinsic part of the heritage of Scotland.

Professional historians consulted such ancient manuscripts as the Domesday Book (compiled in 1086 by William the Conqueror), tax records, baptisms, family genealogies, and local parish and church records in search of early records of the name. Armstrong was first found in Cumberland where they were seated from early times. This well known Border surname, the Norman "Fortenbras" is an instance of a surname assumed from a personal attribute, strength of arm.

Many alternate spellings of the name occurred in the manuscripts researched. Your name, Armstrong, was found in many references, but the records also included variations such as Armstrang, Armestrang, Harmestrang, Armystrang, and others. Scribes recorded and spelled the name as it sounded; so it was not unlikely, for a person to be born with one spelling, married with another, and buried with yet another written on his or her headstone.

The Normans were descended from the Vikings that raided Northern France in the late 9th and early 10th centuries. The French King, Charles the Simple, achieved peace in 911 by creating the Duchy of Normandy, named after the Norsemen, and granting it to Rollo, their chief, who ruled as a vassal of the French King. However, rather than transforming that portion of France into another Scandinavia the Viking settlers adopted the culture of the natives and merged with them. So though they had Viking roots, it was French speaking, Christian people that invaded England, and not Norsemen.

From England the Normans spread north to Scotland. The Scottish King, Malcolm Canmore was established as a vassal of William's and Norman influence gradually worked its way into Scotland. In 1128, the Earl of Huntingdon, who later became King David I of Scotland, invited his noble Norman friends to the north to strengthen his royal court, granting them larger estates than they had in England. Having spent part of his youth at the English court, King David was particularly influenced by the Normans and adopted many of their institutions and ideas.

The surname Armstrong emerged as a notable Scottish family name in the county of Liddesdale, and the Debateable Lands when they had moved north to Scotland. Popular tradition says that the Armstrongs were of Anglo-Norman descent, descended from the Fairbairn family. It is said that a Fairbairn, armour bearer to the King of Scotland, lifted the King back onto his horse with one arm, after the King had been unseated in battle. The King then granted him lands in Liddesdale and bestowed on him the name of Armstrong. However, although this legend may be true in part, the Armstrongs were of greater nobility than armour bearers. Perhaps the earliest recorded record is of Adam Armstrong, who was pardoned at Carlisle in 1235 for causing the death of another man. William Armestrangh served on an inquisition in the same city in 1274. In 1328 there is a record of payment of the King's debt by William Armestrang. In 1342 Richard Harmestrang loaned King David II sufficient money for him to return to Scotland from Calais. Gilbert Armstrong was High Steward of Scotland and later Ambassador to England in 1363. Records show the Armstrong family firmly established in Liddesdale by 1376. Kinmont Willie, Lairds Jock, Davy of Whitaugh, Meikle Sim, David Bangtail, Davy 'the lady', Sim the Laird, and Old Sim of Mangerton, were but a

few of the colourful Armstrongs. King James V of Scotland in Liddesdale in 1529, commanded John Armstrong to appear before him for a banquet at Caerlenrig. Unsuspecting, John arrived with 50 unarmed men, where the King ordered them all to be hanged, which gave rise to the Border Ballad "Johnie Armstrong." 'Kinmont Willie' was also captured by treachery, but this time by the English, and Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch helped him to escape from Carlisle Castle. The Armstrongs were hard riding men, fearless and uncontrollable, but suffered greatly in the dispersment of the "unruly" border clans. Following the 1587 act passed by the Scottish parliament, most of the Armstrongs were forced to flee their lands, in 1610 and the Armstrong lands passed into the possession of the Scotts, another powerful Border family. One of the Clan's tartan setts include the colours green, black, blue and a thin red line. Notable among the family at this time was Kinmont Willie.

People began to leave Scotland to escape political problems and economic hardship. There was much emigration to Ireland where land was confiscated from the Catholic Irish and given to English and Scottish settlers for political reasons. The Armstrongs settled in Ulster in the 17th century.

The New World beckoned next and though many went from Ireland, most came directly from Scotland. They sailed 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 the overcrowded ships arrived with only 60 or 70% of their passenger list.

In North America, immigrants bearing the family name Armstrong, or a spelling variation of the name, included Avis Armstrong, who was on record in Connecticut in 1660; Edward Armstrong, who received a land patent in Maryland in 1666; Addam Armstrong, who came to Virginia in 1691; David Armstrong, who arrived in Charleston, SC in 1717; Andrew Armstrong, who was constable of the Ferryland district, Newfoundland, in 1730; as well as Christopher Armstrong, who arrived in Prince Edward Island in 1774. A great number of Armstrongs have settled in Newfoundland, Quebec, and throughout the eastern United States.

From their ports of arrival, many North American settlers joined the wagon trains westward.

Many of the earliest settlers to Australia were convicts, transported from Britain to live and work in the penal colonies, others were offered incentives and financial assistance.

Contemporary notables of this surname include distinguished people such as Lord William Armstrong (1810-1900), industrialist and engineer, whose house at Craggside was the first in the world to be lit by hydro-electricity, he later he acquired Bamburgh Castle, still owned by the family; Edwin Howard Armstrong (1890-1954), American engineer and radio inventor; Lance Armstrong (b.1971), American cyclist and cancer survivor, 4-time winner of the Tour de France; and Neil Alden Armstrong (b.1930), American astronaut, and first person to set foot on the moon.

The Motto for the Coat of Arms translates as: *I remain unvanquished.*