

**A New Edition of an Early American Treasure  
from American Ancestors and Palfrey Press**

**The *Gore Roll*, a rare and precious artifact, the earliest known roll of arms in America, is now available in print for the first time.**



July 10, 2024 (Boston, Mass.) ***The Gore Roll: The Earliest Known Roll of Arms in America***, a new book from American Ancestors® and [Palfrey Press](#), brings the *Gore Roll*, a unique artifact of colonial American history and art, to life in full color for the first time ever. This significant publication offers a fresh perspective on early American culture, identity, and decorative arts. The special edition presents the original roll of arms in context with information written by scholars and historians of heraldic arts and is a timely release, as the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences holds its first-ever conference in the United States in Boston in September 2024.

The *Gore Roll*, named after its author, John Gore (1718–1796), a Boston coach painter, is a treasure from the mid- to late eighteenth century. It features eighty-four complete coats of arms in pen and ink and watercolor and fifteen uncolored drawings of arms, each providing rich insight into heraldic traditions in North America.

The *Gore Roll* was missing or lost for more than seventy years. Copies were created by historian Isaac Child in 1847 and Harold Bowditch, a Boston doctor and heraldic scholar, in 1926. In 1934, Dr. Bowditch secured the original *Gore Roll* and donated it to New England Historic Genealogical Society (also known as American Ancestors®).

In this new publication, the original eighteenth-century roll, the nineteenth-century copy, and the twentieth-century copy are reproduced together for the first time, in full color. The pages of the *Gore Roll* are accompanied by relevant artwork from *The Book of Coates and Crests: The Promptuarium Armorum*, a roll of arms created between 1602 and 1616 by William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant of Arms in Ordinary at the College of Arms, London. Dr. Bowditch's insightful monograph, published by the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1936, is presented alongside the *Gore Roll* paintings, also for the first time.

Included, as an appendix, is Bowditch's 1944 Colonial Society of Massachusetts essay, "Early Water-Color Paintings of New England Coats of Arms."

"Heraldry is more than a display of colorful shields and crests. It is a tapestry of lineage and legacy that speaks to longing for identity and belonging. In colonial America, where an emerging merchant class was vying for status and respectability alongside landed gentry, this longing was especially keen. This important work offers fresh insights into how some early Americans saw themselves," commented Brady Brim-DeForest, Publisher of Palfrey Press, Patron of the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, and Trustee of American Ancestors®.



Brady Brim-DeForest, Publisher of Palfrey Press and Patron of the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, holds the original 1750s *Gore Roll*.



By Harold Bowditch

Foreword by Brady Brim-DeForest

Preface by Ryan J. Woods

Introduction by D. Brenton Simons OBE

“The *Gore Roll* and the Committee on Heraldry’s *Roll of Arms*” by Nathaniel Lane Taylor

7-¾ x 12-½ hardcover, 344 pages, illustrated

**Purchase *The Gore Roll: The Earliest Known Roll of Arms in America***

<https://shop.americanancestors.org/collections/latest-releases/products/the-gore-roll>

**This definitive edition of the *Gore Roll* is being made available at the same time registration is open for the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences**, which will take place in Boston, Massachusetts, September 24–28, 2024, the first time the conference has been held in the United States. American Ancestors, a national center for family history, culture, and heritage and the preeminent publisher of family history–related scholarship, is hosting the conference.

Read more about the International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences.

“The *Gore Roll* is a fascinating piece of art and history, and we are delighted to make it available in its original form through the patronage of Brady Brim-DeForest and in collaboration with Palfrey Press. Conserving records that tell our history is part of our mission, and so is sharing documents, stories, and artifacts with as wide an audience as possible to help educate, inspire, and connect people through history and genealogy,” said Ryan J. Woods, President & CEO of American Ancestors and Chairman of the Committee on Heraldry.

The Committee on Heraldry, founded by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, is the oldest non-governmental heraldic body in the world. The Committee was formed to “collect and preserve information in regard to heraldry.” Its interests are national in scope, embracing the use and understanding of heraldry throughout the current United States and all its colonial predecessors. The Committee actively supports heraldic education, offers symposia and online programming, assists in collecting and conserving original manuscripts, seeks donations of heraldic publications, and, in conjunction with other activities at American Ancestors, engages with constituents throughout the United States and abroad who wish to learn more about heraldry in their family histories.

### **About American Ancestors®**

American Ancestors is a national center for family history, heritage, and culture based in Boston, Massachusetts, and one of the world’s top destinations for family history research, according to *USA Today*. American Ancestors is the global brand of New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), America’s oldest and largest genealogical society (founded in 1845). American Ancestors serves more than 450,000 members and online subscribers engaged in family history nationally and around the world through its website, [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org), with more than one billion names in its databases. Located in Boston’s Back Bay, American Ancestors is home to a world-class research center and archive, an expert staff, and the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center. It maintains a publishing division that produces original genealogical research, scholarship, and educational materials, including the *Register*, the flagship journal of American genealogy since 1847, and *American Ancestors*, its award-winning magazine.

### **About Palfrey Press**

Palfrey Press is a specialist publisher producing authoritative historical books on diverse subjects including heraldry, oral history, architecture, and other antiquarian matters. Drawing on an extensive network of subject matter experts Palfrey Press aims to deliver best-in-class books, combining exceptional research with world-class art. Palfrey Press was founded by Brady Brim-DeForest in 2022. Learn more at [www.palfreypress.com](http://www.palfreypress.com).

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