



The chronicles of the Cohran family show that the name was first used in the Scottish/English Borderlands by the Strathclyde-Britons. It is a name for a person who lives in Renfrewshire. Few areas of Britain have produced as many notable families in world history as the Border region of England and Scotland; names such as Armstrong, Nixon, Graham, Bell, Carson, Hume, Irving, Lock, Rutherford, and of course, the family name Cohran.

Researchers have confirmed the first documented history of this name in lowland Scotland and northern England, tracing it through many ancient manuscripts, including private collections of historical and genealogical records, the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, the Ragman Rolls, the Hearth Rolls, the Domesday Book, parish cartularies, baptisms, and tax rolls. The first record of the name Cohran was found in Renfrewshire where they were seated from very ancient times, some say well before the Norman Conquest and the arrival of Duke William at Hastings in 1066 A.D.

Different spellings of the name were found in the archives researched, typically linking each alternate to the root source of the surname. The surname Cohran, occurred in many references, from time to time the surname was spelt Cochrane, Cochran, Cocrane, Cocran, Cochren, Cockram, Cockran, Cockren, Cockron, and these changes in spelling frequently occurred, even between father and son. Scribes and church officials recorded the name from its sound.

The family name Cohran is believed to be descended originally from the Strathclyde Britons. This ancient founding race of the north were a mixture of Gaelic/Celts whose original territories ranged from Lancashire in the south, northward to the south bank of the River Clyde in Scotland.

Tracing its ancient development, the name Cohran was found in Renfrewshire where they were recorded as a family of great antiquity seated at Cochrane near Paisley in that shire. Walter Cochrane was the first on record in 1262. His son William Cochrane, the second chief of the Clan, rendered homage to King Edward I in 1296 on his brief conquest of Scotland. Edward Cochrane was one of the nobles accused of making King James III a prisoner at Edinburgh. The coastal McEacherns, known as "the sons of the horse lord" gave their symbol to the Cochranes, and at this point became inexplicably bound up with the Cochranes when Colin McEachern the Chief changed his name to McCochrane, married the heiress Elizabeth Cochrane, and assumed the arms of the Cochrane Clan. Their son, Sir William Cochrane was created the first Earl of Dundonald. He erected the tower which is now known as Cochrane Castle. Andrew Cochrane founded one of the first trade societies in history. Notable amongst the family at this time was William Cochrane, Earl of Dundonald.

By the year 1000 A.D., border life was in turmoil. In 1246, six Chiefs from the Scottish side and six from the English side met at Carlisle and produced a set of laws governing all the Border Clans. These were unlike any laws prevailing in England or Scotland or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world. For example, it was a far greater offence to refuse to help a neighbour recover his property, wife, sheep, cattle or horses than it was to steal them in the first place. Hence the expression "Hot Trod," or, a hot pursuit, from which we get the modern "hot to trot." For refusal of assistance during a "Hot Trod," a person could be hanged on the instant, without trial. Frequently, the descendants of these clans or families apologetically refer to themselves as being descended from "cattle or horse thieves" when, in fact, it was an accepted code of life on the border.

In 1603, the unified English and Scottish crowns under James 1st dispersed these "unruly border clans," clans which had served loyally in the defense of each side. The unification of the governments was threatened and it was imperative that the old "border code" should be broken up. Hence, the Border Clans were banished to England, northern Scotland and to Ireland. Some were outlawed directly to Ireland, the Colonies and the New World.

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Many Border Clans settled in Northern Ireland, transferred between 1650 and 1700 with grants of land provided they "undertook" to remain Protestant. Hence they became known as the "Undertakers." Many became proudly Irish. In Ireland they settled in Antrim, Armagh, Down, and Tyrone, but the name should not be confused with the Irish Corcoran.

But life in Ireland was little more rewarding and they sought a more challenging life. They looked to the New World and sailed aboard the "White Sails" an armada of sailing ships such as the Hector, the Rambler, and the Dove which struggled across the stormy Atlantic. Some ships lost thirty or forty percent of their passenger list. Migrants were often buried at sea having died from dysentery, cholera, small pox, and typhoid.

In North America, early Cohran immigrants, as well as kinsmen bearing spelling variations of this name include: Sir John Cochrane of Ochiltree applied to the King for a grant of 12:000 acres in Carolina on which to settle his clansmen in 1682; and many of the Clan followed naming many villages and towns in North America with the Clan name. In America, in later years, settlers formed wagon trains westward, rolling west to the prairies, or the west coast. During the American War of Independence those who remained loyal to the Crown moved north into Canada and became known as the United Empire Loyalists.

Contemporary bearers of the name Cohran of note include: Lord Cochrane; Sir Desmond Cochrane; General James Cochrane; Phillip Cochrane; Air Chief Marshall Sir Ralph Cochrane.

The Motto for the Coat of Arms translates as: *By valour and exertion.*