

## **AS WATER COVERS THE SEA**

### **a coat of arms for the descendants of Edward Martin Murtha and Josephine Elizabeth Murtha, née Friedrich**

*Unter Schildhaupt Blau, darin zwei Sterne 5-zackig Gold, im Wellenschnitt  
geteilt, 1 Rot eine Sonne untergehend Gold, 12 sichtbare Strahlen,  
2 im Wellenschnitt 6 mal vom Grün auf Gold geteilt*

In Germany coats of arms are considered to be a graphical accessory to a family's name. Anyone can have one, and people continue to create new ones.

Jonathan David Makepeace, a child of Florence Ann Taylor, née Murtha, a child of Edward and Josephine, assumed this coat of arms in 1989 while living in Frankfurt am Main. In 2004 he registered it with the *Heraldische Gemeinschaft Westfalen*, along with a *Wappensatzung* stipulating that it is for use by all of the descendants of Edward and Josephine, regardless of sex or surname, including adoptive and step descendants. The accompanying depiction of the arms was drawn by Michael Waas, Director of the *Gemeinschaft*. In 2005 it was also placed on file with the Committee on Heraldry of the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

The middle part is a red sky with a setting sun representing South Dakota, the sunshine state, and the fact that our forebears came from the east, following the setting sun. The Germans call the West *das Abendland*, the evening land. The twelve rays stand for Edward and Josephine's twelve children.

Murtha, Ó *Muircheartaigh* in Irish, means navigator, and wavy stripes of blue and white are a traditional symbol of water. The bottom part is six wavy stripes of green and gold, representing the prairie, the ocean of grass that our forebears navigated. This may be the first coat of arms to represent grassland in this way. The number six represents their labor on the land, since the biblical week has six workdays. This play on water and grassland is reminiscent of Isaiah 11:6:

In all of My sacred mount [i.e., Israel]  
nothing evil or vile shall be done;  
for the land shall be filled with devotion  
to the LORD **as water covers the sea.**

The top part is blue with two gold stars, another allusion to navigation, representing the guidance of our ancestors in general and of Edward and Josephine in particular.

The shield is oval, a traditional shape for non-combatants, e.g., clergy, an oblique allusion to Josephine's original surname Friedrich, which means peaceful ruler. The shape of the shield is technically not important, however, and it would be equally correct to draw the design on a shield of another shape.

We cannot all share the same surname, but from Cyr to Taylor and beyond we are all one family, all siblings in arms.