

THE HERRIOTT COAT-OF-ARMS

by Dean A. Miller

The late A. Dean Herriott began his inquiries into the existence of a Herriott coat-of-arms (coat, or shield), to serve as an "accepted generic familial identification for Herriotts," by writing to the Lord Lyon King at Arms, the chief herald of Scotland, in February, 1985. The Lord Lyon replied in March of that year, and over time he gave us most of the information we needed for at least identifying various Scottish Herriott or Heriot coats-of-arms. However, all of these coats were, the Lord Lyon wrote, properly *individual* identifications, specifically inherited by or awarded to and borne by the holder of or heir to a particular "name" or, in Scotland, displayed by the Chief of that family. At least this was true in the case of Herriott of Ramornie or Ramournie, and Herriott of Trabroune, several of whose coats, dated from different periods, we know. There was also a coat listed for the Trustees of the George Heriot School, a coat which must have been a variation on the personal coat-of-arms of the well-known Jinglin' Geordie Herriott, whose motto, appropriately enough for the philanthropist who founded and funded the hospital (later the school) in the early 17th century, was "I DISTRIBUTE CHEARFULLIE."

Whether or not our original David Herriott, the emigrant of 1685, had his own coat-of-arms (that is, was "armigerous" or arms-bearing) we do not know. As a prominent burgher of Edinburgh and, almost certainly, a relative of Jinglin' Geordie, he very well may have had his own coat, though the Lord Lyon's records don't show one for him.

Now, of the various Scottish Herriott coats-of-arms that were located, all had certain features in common that distinguished them, for instance, from coats registered for the several English Heriots who boasted coats-of-arms: these were a white (or argent) "field" for the shield, a blue (azure) "fess" or wide bar across the shield, and on this fess three five-lobed figures (cinquefoils) of the same color or metal, silver/argent, as the field. On this foundation, there were variations such as: three mullets or molets "gules" (that is, red stars) on the silver field (two at the top - "in chief" and one at the bottom - "in base"), or three "escallops," scallop-shells or cockleshells, colored azure ("of the second," meaning colored like the second element named on the coat, the horizontal fess) and arranged in the same pattern, two up and one down.

The last is the coat shown in the illustration to the right, made up as a plaque, but properly registered by the Court of the Lord Lyon, in the 18th century, as the arms of Captain William Herriott of Ramornie.

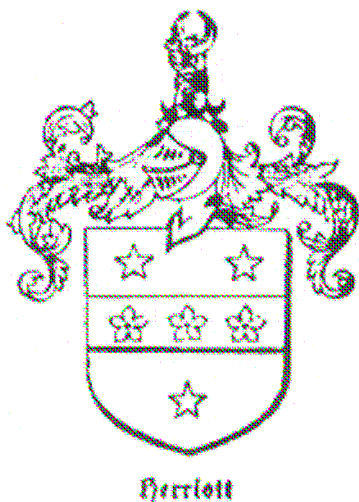
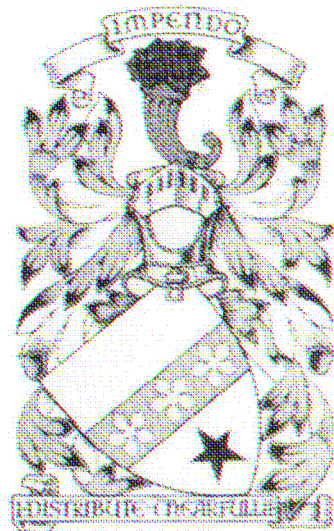


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Another Herriott coat (on the left) was registered in 1905, with the variation or, technically, "difference" of an azure/blue border "indented" (a simple zig-zag line) all around the silver field.

The coat of the George Heriot School (right) has one black ("sable") mullet or star in base, that is, at the bottom, with the rest of the design as is usual for Herriott coats.



In 1985, the Herriott Heritage Association *informally* adopted the coat-of-arms of one of the Herriotts of Trabroune to be the "heraldic" identification of the Association (shown at left). This coat could serve perfectly well to mark the kinship of our group with one of the old, arms-bearing Scottish Herriotts, but there were some problems. The coat we chose could be used here in the States but could not or should not be used in Scotland, the old Herriott homeland, where it had been officially registered by the Court of the Lord Lyon as an individual, personal coat, complete with its specific crest (the device - a lion's paw grasping

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a crescent - extending about the knight's helmet) and motto.

The present Herald of the Association, Dean A., took over the problem of the identifying Herriott coat-of-arms from A. Dean in August, 1986, but despite an exchange of more or less polite correspondence with the Court of the Lord Lyon no real progress was made until September, 1990. Here we should note that the Lord Lyon, being the chief Herald of Scotland, oversees a large and busy establishment, since he not only authenticates and registers all inherited coats-of-arms, and any variations on these coats (for example, arms adopted by a younger son, or a brother of the heir) in Scotland, but also has to deal with all of the Scottish clans, and especially with the question of who legitimately can claim or inherit the Chieftainship (often with lands, castles and such involved, as well as the honor of the thing) of this or that clan: disputes can arise, and some of these raucous arguments have been going on for decades, which explains why most Lords Lyon are what the Scots call "Writers to the Signet" - that is, lawyers. In September 1990, we made a significant breakthrough, because of a chance meeting in St. Andrews, Fifeshire, Scotland. The chance meeting was between the Association's herald, Dean A. Miller, his wife (the Association's recording secretary, Martha Herriott Swift) and a genuine Scottish herald, Charles J. Burnett, Esq., who holds the post and title of Ross Herald of Arms in the Court of the Lord Lyon. Having become acquainted over a couple of gins-and- tonic, they outlined the problem to him, and Burnett, by letter, assured them that we could in fact do what we always thought we could do: design our own corporate coat-of-arms for the Herriott Heritage Association, and a motto, and have this checked and authenticated by the Court of the Lord Lyon.

In designing the new coat, the HHA's herald first took those basic "Scottish Herriott" elements already noted, that is the argent field, azure fess and argent cinquefoils (these were first registered to a Herriott of Trabroune by a famous Lord Lyon, Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, in 1542 A.D.). To these we added, at the suggestion of Martha, three escallops or cockle-shells, which were anciently the mark of a pilgrim or wayfarer, and tinctured red: the shield or coat and its charges then would be colored red, white, and blue to mark the new identity of the emigrant Herriotts in the United States. The old motto, in Latin "Forte Posce Anima" or, approximately, "Be Firm in a Brave Heart" was converted to "Forte Anima in Terram Novam" - "A Brave Heart in a New Land."

This proposed coat-of-arms and motto was submitted to Charles Burnett, Ross Herald, who then drew up the necessary Petition to the Lord Lyon. The appropriate fees were paid, and on 22 January, 1992, the Herriott Heritage Association received its official Grant of Arms, with motto, and its new status "as a Society Noble in the Noblesse of Scotland" from the Court of the Lord Lyon. Our new coat, with its very old associations and echoes, is blazoned (described verbally, in the proper heraldic language) as "**Argent, on a fess Azure three cinquefoils of the First between three cockleshells Gules**" - a simple and, we think, an elegant blazon. It was, we also believe, a proud moment for the Association. A. Dean Herriott, who started the whole process of locating our coat-of-arms as well as founding the Association, did not survive to see the actual Grant of Arms "signed, sealed and delivered" but at the time he died he knew that the HHA was about to receive this special identification and particular honor.

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This Herriott Heritage Association coat can be used anywhere, in this country or abroad, and in any appropriate manner. For those in the Association who subscribe to *The Highlander* magazine, the Herriott coat-of-arms and motto is proudly displayed on our entry or card in the magazine's section on Clan and Family Associations. Banners and flags bearing the new (old) coat-of-arms are now in the process of preparation. An identifying blazon or shield, a coat-of-arms closely associated with the extended family of Scottish Herriotts, a coat that in its basic features is almost five hundred years old, is now officially and forevermore our particular and special honor and boast. We display it proudly.

