

## THE NAME HERRIOTT

According to William Anderson in his work on *THE SCOTTISH NATION*:

*“The name was derived from a legal term, hariot or heriot, being, under the feudal system, a due belonging to a lord at the death of his tenant, consisting of his best beast, either horse, ox, or cow. In some manors, the best goods, piece of plate, etc., are called hariotics. The name is old in Scotland.”*

Scottish history appears to place Heriot as a name beginning ca. the 12th century.

The following is taken from the book, *THE SURNAMES OF SCOTLAND*:

***HERIOT, Herriot.** From the lands of Heriot in the parish of the same name in Midlothian. Early references to the name are all nearly to the district from which the name is derived. Henry de Heriet witnessed confirmation of the church of Karnewid (Carnwath) to Joceline, bishop of Glasgow, c. 1164-74 (Reg., 52), and Laurence de Herryhot witnessed a grant of the lands of Swaynystoun to the Hospital of Soltre c. 1221-38 (Soltre, p. 24). The lands of Trabroun in the sheriffdom of Berwick were confirmed to John de Heriot de Trabroun, son and heir of James de Heriot de Nudre Marschele in 1424 (RMS., ii, 13). Robert de Heryot was witness in Edinburgh in 1429 (Reg., 336), William Heryot or Heryote in Haddington made an annual gift of five shillings to the monks of Neubotle in 1458 (Neubotle, p. 244, 247), and John de Heriot was vicar of Soltre in 1468 (ibid., 301). The Heriots who appear in the Glasgow district in the sixteenth century were probably connected with Henry Sinclair, dean of Glasgow, who was of the Roslin family (Rental). John Heriot, George Heriot, and Patrick Heriot had special respite and protection in 1504 (Trials, i, p. \*42, \*43). John Hareot and Andrew Hareot were witnesses in Glasgow in 1525 (Reg., 497), William Heriot was burghess there in 1549 (Protocols,i), and Walter Heriot was vicar of Linlithgow in 1537 (Johnsoun). Buchanan says William, John, and Gilbert Heriot safely conducted Robert the Steward out of reach of his enemies in the time of Edward Balliol. Hereate 1569, Hereot 1543, Hereote 1558, Hereott 1595, Heret 1569, Herioitt and Herrioitt 1595, Heriott 1601, Herote 1544, Herreot 1559.*

The Scots Ancestry Research Society states that variant spellings within families was not uncommon in Scotland. Other spellings in Scottish records include Heryot, Heryet, Herrot, Harrat, Hariot, Heriet, Herriote, Herret and Heriocht.

According to the *DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN FAMILY NAMES* by Elsdon C. Smith, “the name Herriot is French. The French names Henri and Herriot mean ‘Descendant of Little Henri (home ruler).’ There are many variations: Harriott, Harriot, Hariot, Herrit, Herriot, Herriott, and Harriett.”

**According to CBN:**  
**HERRIOTT** is the 24,602<sup>nd</sup> most popular  
surname in the United States; frequency is  
0.000%, and the percentile is 79.931.

Searching American historical records shows that spelling variations of the name continued. Immigrants to America were at the mercy of the recorders since “reading and writing” were virtues of but a few of the early settlers. Signatures to documents by mark (X) attest to this.

Variant spellings often came about from the phonetic spelling and/or nationality of the person recording the information.

Those who have done even preliminary researching have found a multitude of variant spellings--Herriott, Herriot, Herritt, Heriot, Harriot, Harriott, Hariot, Hereot. All of these seem to be variations of the same name in early America, though we cannot be positive that all come from a common ancestry. An example of a spelling change for the same person: David Heriot, 1699; David Herriot, 1708; David Herriott 1709. An extreme example involving one person in a period of only seven years from a Baltimore County, Maryland tax list: Oliver Harret, 1699; Hariot, 1701; Harryott, 1702; Harriot, 1703; Herrod, 1704; Hanoid, 1705; Harwood, 1706.

The spelling HERRIOTT is the most prominent in the U.S. today. The spelling HARRIOT survives in the George line yet today. The spelling HARRIOTT was used extensively in both the George and John Foreman lines and is still used today in various branches of the John Foreman line. Other variant spellings used in early days in America may also have survived, but have not been confirmed as of this printing. We recognize the variant spellings as just that, different ways of spelling what appears to be the name of the same family.

The name HERRIOTT is a “phonetic spellers” delight-or-nightmare! Many of us find even today that it is necessary to initiate the “correct” spelling of our surname to avoid any one of a multitude of “possibilities”.

**HERRIOTT!!** As James Wight, DVM, (author James Herriot) put it describing the selection of his pseudo name “it is a nice sounding name, graceful and dignified name. I salute all of you who have been lucky enough to be born with it.”

The preceding emphasizes the necessity for caution when researching and the need for **CROSS-CHECKING** the dates of births, deaths, marriages; geographical locations; given names and initials; comparison of other known facts; etc.