



Clan MOFFAT

ARMS

Sable, a saltire and chief Argent

CREST

A crest coronet and issuing therefrom a cross crosslet fitchée Sable surmounted of a saltire Argent

MOTTO

Spero meliora (I hope for better things)

The Moffats are an ancient Borders family who were influential and powerful as far back as the time of Sir William Wallace. The ancestor of the Moffats most likely gave their name to the town of Moffat in Dumfriesshire. The origin of the name itself is thought to be Norse. William de Mont Alto, progenitor of the Movats, married the youngest daughter of Andlaw, who came to Scotland from Norway during the tenth century. Over the years the name softened to Montealt, then Movat, through Moveat, eventually settling at Moffat in its modern form. In the twelfth century the family was of sufficient importance to be designated in deeds and records as 'de Moffet', showing the family were considered to be principal lairds, or landowners.

In 1268, Nicholas de Moffet was Bishop of Glasgow, and the armorial bearing of the different branches of the family seem to indicate a connection with the church. Robert the Bruce, as Lord of Annandale, granted four charters of land in the barony of Westerkirk to the Moffats in 1300. One of these was to Adam Moffat of Knock who was granted 'the same Barony n Eskdale'. Both he and his brother fought at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, along with many Moffat clansmen. They remained the Lairds of Knock until 1609, when the land was sold to the Johnstones. They were also tenants of Midknock for six hundred years, until 1905. In 1336 the king of England granted a safe conduct to William de Moffete and others described as 'coming as ambassadors from David de Brus' – in fact, David II, son of Robert the Bruce. In 1337, Walter de Moffet, Archdeacon of Lothian, was appointed Ambassador to France.

Although there were Moffats in Moffat before 1300, the names of the earliest lairds are not known. They were granted the feu of Granton (not to be confused with the port on the River Forth) and Reddings in 1342 by Sir John Douglas, Lord of Annandale. These remained the principal holdings of the family until 1628, when the lands passed to the Johnstones as a result of overwhelming debt. Other properties of the Moffats in Upper Annandale were Croehead, Ericstane, Braefoot, Meikleholmside, Newton, and Gardenholm. The Moffats also held the lands of Auldtoun, now known as Alton. One Robert Moffat, born there around 1560, was designated 'Moffat of that Ilk', but there were no Moffats in Auldtoun after 1672, and little is known of what happened to this branch after that time.

In 1759, the last Moffat in Gardenholm died and the family moved to Craigbeck in modern Moffatdale. Two brothers, James and David Moffat, moved from Granton to Crofthead in Moffatdale sometime after 1658. James's son, William, was the progenitor of the Craigbeck branch of the family. The Moffats were tenants of Crofthead and Craigbeck until 1920, when Francis Moffat, who died in 1937, purchased Craigbeck and Garowgill, thus restoring a landed position to the descendants of Granton after three centuries of landlessness. In 1909 this Francis also bought Bodesbeck, which had been Moffat land in 1589, almost a hundred years prior to the acquisition of Crofthead and Craigbeck. His son, William, added to the estate by the purchase of Hawkshaw in Tweedsmuir in 1911, and Fingland in 1935. When he died in 1948 he was one of the biggest sheep farmers in southern Scotland, owning some ten thousand acres. His son, Francis, remained in Craigbeck until 1977, when it was sold on his retirement from farming. Godesbeck, Hawkshaw and Fingland are still farmed by Moffats.

Another branch of the Moffat family farmed Garwald in Eskdalemuir. This was first leased to them in 1744, and they remained there until 1950. They were also at Craick in Borthwick Water for more than a century from 1817. The Garwald Moffats have now died out in the male line. Other lands settled by Moffats as the family scattered were Sundaywell and Lochurr. They were there from the latter part of the seventeenth century for over three hundred years. They were very successful farmers and founders of the renowned Lochurr herd of native Galloway cattle.

The Moffats, like many other Borders families, were raiders and reivers, and had many feuds with other clans. Their most notable enemies were the powerful Johnstones. In 1557 the Johnstones murdered Robert Moffat,

possibly then the clan chief, and burned a building in which a number of leading Moffats had gathered. They slaughtered all those who tried to escape. From that date the Moffats were considered a leaderless clan, until 1983, when the late Francis Moffat, after many years of research, was recognized as hereditary clan chief, and the Lord Lyon confirmed to him the indifferance arms of Moffat of that Ilk. His daughter, the present chief, succeeded to the title on his death in April 1992.

Moffats have branched out all over the world, many achieving fame, such as the Reverend Robert Moffat who was patriarch of African missions and founded the Kuruman mission. His daughter married David Livingstone.

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Clan MOFFAT Septs

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