

Will of Mary Cooke of Bethnal Green 1843

PCC Canterbury 11/1987

Mary Cooke was born in Jamaica in 1750, the daughter of William Felsted and sister of the composer Samuel Felsted. In 1782 she married Stephen Cooke in Jamaica and they lived there, probably until his death somewhere between 1818 and 1841. In the 1841 census for London she is seen to be living in Bethnal Green with her widowed niece Christiana Dawson, Christiana's three sons and Christiana's nephew Edward Pate. Mary Cooke died in 1843 at the age of ninety-three, and was buried on 10 November 1843 at St Matthew, Bethnal Green. Her request to be buried in an iron coffin reflected current concerns about the activities of body snatchers who were raiding graves to supply the demands for bodies for dissection.

This is the last Will and Testament of me **Mary Cooke of Bethnal Green** in the Parish of St Matthew Bethnal Green in the County of Middlesex Widow First I commend my soul to my Creator through the merits and intercession of my blessed said Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ I desire all my just debts funeral and testamentary charges to be paid as soon as conveniently may be after my decease I desire that my funeral may be plain and frugal and that I may be buried in an Iron Coffin if I die in England I give and bequeath unto **Sophia Pate formerly Sophia Matilda Fry** the sum of £1000 to be paid to her as soon as convenient after my decease I give and bequeath unto **Thomas Felsted Fry** the sum of five hundred pounds sterling to be paid to him upon his attaining the age of twenty-five years I give and bequeath unto **Justina Frances Felsted and Samuel James Felsted** each the sum of two hundred pounds sterling to be paid unto the said **Justina Frances Felsted** upon her attaining the age of twenty-one years or day of marriage and to the said **Samuel James Felsted** upon his attaining the age of twenty-one years I give and bequeath unto **Sarah Felsted** the sum of five hundred pounds sterling to be paid to her as soon as convenient after my decease I give and

bequeath unto **Elizabeth Charity Drake** the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds sterling to be paid to her as soon as convenient after my decease and in case she shall be dead at the time of my decease I do hereby direct that such sum of one hundred and fifty pounds to be paid to her daughter to whom I do give and bequeath the same accordingly I give and bequeath unto **Elizabeth Bream?** Widow the sum of 20 pounds sterling to be paid to her as soon as conveniently after my decease I give and bequeath unto **Robert Smith of the City of Kingston in the Island of Jamaica Stationer** one of my Executors hereinafter named the sum of one hundred pounds Jamaica currency to be paid to him as soon as convenient after my decease I give and bequeath unto **Mary Moore** of the said Island of Jamaica the sum of thirty pounds Jamaica Currency to be paid to her as soon as convenient after my decease I give and bequeath unto the said **Sarah Felsted** all that my Negro Yard situate in Matthew Lane in the City of Kingston aforesaid in breadth from North to South twenty five feet and in length from East to West seventy five feet with every building thereupon to hold unto her the said Sarah Felsted and her heirs for ever and whereas my late husband by his Will bequeathed unto **two Mulatto Women Olive and Kitty** each the sum of one hundred pounds Jamaica Currency and which I hereby direct shall respectively be paid to them within six months after my decease or as soon after as may be convenient I hereby direct my Executors and Executrix hereinafter named to retain sufficient of my money in the public funds or out of other part of my personal Estate to lay out and invest the sum in the same sufficient to pay unto **Margaret Mary Felsted** the sum of twenty pounds per annum sterling British currency free of the legacy tax and which said clear annuity I give and bequeath unto the said **Margaret Mary Felsted** during her natural life the first quarterly payment thereof to be made to her on the first usual quarter day after my decease and after the decease of the said **Margaret Mary Felsted** the same shall sink into and become part of the residue of my personal estate All the rest residue and remainder of my Estate and Effects whatsoever and wheresoever real personal or mixed I give devise and bequeath unto the said **Sarah Felsted and Robert Smith and to William Yorkney** of Bedford Street Covent Garden London Tea dealer upon trust for **my three Nieces the said Sarah Felsted and Christiana Dawson and Susannah May**

Robertson their heirs Executors and administrators to be equally divided between them share and share alike the share of the said **Sarah Felsted** to be paid to her as soon after my decease as the amount thereof can be ascertained or to be paid in part and continued from time to time as circumstances will permit and the share of the said **Christiana Dawson and Susannah May Robertson** to remain in or be invested in the Public funds or other Government securities in the names of them the said **Sarah Felsted Robert Smith and William Yorkney** only as residing in England and the dividends and annual proceeds of such share to be respectively paid unto my said Nieces **Christiana Dawson and Susannah May Robertson** during their lives for their own sole and separate use and over which their present or any future husbands shall have no controul (sic) nor shall the same be subject or liable to their debts or engagements and after the decease of the said **Christiana Dawson** I direct that the amount of her share or proportion shall be paid to and divided between and amongst all her children share and share alike and paid to them such as are Sons upon their attaining the age of twenty one years and such as are Daughters upon their attaining the said age or day of marriage which shall first happen with benefit of survivorship and in like manner I direct the share of the said **Susannah May Robertson** at her decease to be paid to and divided amongst all her children in like manner and at the same times with the benefit of survivorship as aforesaid I give to the said **William Yorkney** a mourning ring of the value of ten pounds ten shillings which I beg him to accept as a small token of my regard And I do hereby nominate and appoint the said **Sarah Felsted Robert Smith and William Yorkney Executrix and Executors** of this my Will hereby revoking all former and other Wills by me at any time heretofore made and declaring this to be my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I the said Mary Cooke have to the first three sheets of this my Will subscribed my name at the bottom of each sheet and to this the fourth and last sheet subscribed my name and set my seal the second day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine /-/Mary Cooke Signed Sealed Published and declared by the said Testatrix Mary Cooke as and for her last Will and Testament in the presence of us who in her presence and at

her request in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as **Witnesses – Wm Richardson 1 Walbrook – Thos Dignam Little Distaff Lane – Geo: Read Walbrook.**

This is a Codicil to the last Will and Testament (bearing date the second day of December 1829) of me **Mary Cooke of Bethnal Green** in the parish of St Matthew Bethnal Green in the County of Middlesex Widow I do desire that the sum of five hundred pounds bequeathed by my will to **Sarah Felsted** who is since deceased shall fall into and form part of my residuary estate and I wish it to be clearly understood to be my desire that the children of Susannah May Robertson being Daughters shall after the decease of their Mother be entitled to receive their respective shares under that my said Will upon their being married or attaining the age of twenty one years which shall first happen And I do thereby appoint **Christiana Dawson** / named in my said Will /Executrix of such my Will in the place of the said Sarah Felsted deceased to act jointly with Robert Smith and William Yorkney therein named and I do confirm my said Will and declare this to be a codicil thereto and to be taken as part thereof In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twelfth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty eight - Mary Cooke Signed Sealed Published and declared as a Codicil to the last Will and Testament of the said Mary Cooke in the presence of us who in her presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto set our hands as Witnesses thereto on the day of the date above written – Wm Richardson / Walbrook – Thos Dignam his Clerk -

In the Goods of Mary Cooke Widow deceased

Appeared Personally **Thomas Dignam of No.1 Walbrook** in the City of London Solicitor and made Oath that he is one of the subscribed Witnesses to the Codicil to the last Will and Testament of Mary Cooke formerly of Gretton Place Bethnal Green and late of Bethnal Green Road respectively in the County of Middlesex Widow deceased bearing date the twelfth day of March one thousand eight hundred and thirty eight now hereunto annexed and he further made Oath that on the twelfth day of March aforesaid the said Testatrix duly executed the said Codicil by signing her name at the foot or end thereof in the presence of this Deponents and of William Richardson the other

subscribed Witness thereto who was present at the same time and this Deponents and the said William Richardson thereupon attested and subscribed the said Codicil in the presence of the said Testatrix. Thos Dignam - On the twenty-first day of November 1843 the said Thomas Dignam was duly sworn to the truth of this Affidavit before me J Addams Surr. Pt. Edwd Toller Not. Pub.

Proved at London with a Codicil the 22 November 1843 before the Worshipful John Daubeny Doctor of Laws and Surrogate by the Oath of **Christiana Dawson** Widow the Niece the Executrix named in the Codicil to whom Admon was granted having been first sworn duly to administer. Power reserved of making the like Grant to Robert Smith the surviving Executor named in the Will when he shall apply for the same.

Transcribed by Anne M Powers

October 2012