

Will of John Morse 1781

PCC Canterbury Prob 11/1077

John Morse was a highly successful Jamaica planter and merchant born about 1720 and died in London about March 1781. He had large landholdings in Jamaica in the parishes of St David, St Thomas in the East and Portland and principally in the parish of St Elizabeth. In the 1754 these holdings totalled 8526 acres, and nearly a century later in 1840 his estate still owned over 8000 acres. His sister Catherine was married to Joseph Royall another Jamaica planter, and as a business associate of Zachary Bailey he was trustee for Bailey's nephew the noted Jamaica historian Bryan Edwards. His name and that of the company of Morse and (Thomas) Smith appears on numerous indentures and documents in connection with Jamaica. Trevor Burnard¹ records that at his death he left £138,575 in personal property in Jamaica, of which £100,768 was in the form of debts owed to him, being his half share of £200,232 owed by 26 planters to Morse and Smith.

In the name of God Amen

I **John Morse** of the City of London Esquire do make and ordain this to be my last Will and Testament in manner following I give devise and bequeath all my Estates real and personal whatsoever and wheresoever unto my good friends **Joseph Royal of Portman Street** London Esquire **Edmund Green of Dyers Court** Aldermanbury Merchant **William Mitchell** of the Parish of St Catherine in the Island of Jamaica Esquire and **John Vanholen** of the Parish of St Elizabeth's in the said Island Planter and the Survivors and Survivor of them their Heirs Executors and Admons In Trust to sell and dispose of the same and every part thereof in the best manner they can and pay and apply the Monies arising therefrom and the Rents Issues and Profits thereof after payment of my just Debts to the several uses intents and Purposes hereinafter mentioned that is to say To Mrs **Mary Traner?** and her Assigns one Annuity or Yearly Sum of fifty pounds per Per annum payable half yearly during her life which

¹ <http://www.britishearlyamerica.stir.ac.uk/conference/2009papers/TrevorBurnard.pdf>

she long since purchased of me together with the arrears due on the same as appears by her account in my Book Also to pay my dear **Sister Sarah Vanholen of Amsterdam** one Annuity of fifty pounds per Annum during her life commencing from the day of my decease together with whatever may be due to her on account of the Board and other Expenses of **my reputed Daughter Frances Morse** who boards with her and I desire will continue so to do Also to pay my dear **Sister Catherine Royal a** Legacy of one hundred pounds And to the said Frances Morse two thousand pounds Sterling payable in three years after my decease if She shall then be living And in the mean time to pay her Interest thereon at four per cent half yearly for her support Also I give and bequeath unto my **Nephew Edward Morse** all such Principal Monies as shall be and remain due and owing and payable to me at my decease by one Bond or obligation of **Thos Smith** Esquire bearing date the first day of November one thousand seven hundred and seventy five in the penalty of five thousand five hundred pounds conditioned for the payment of two thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds Sterling on the twenty fifth day of December one thousand seven hundred and eighty without Interest together with the said Bond to be assigned to him by my Executors which said Bond and another for the like sum was given to me towards the purchase of Fonthill Plantation in Jamaica which he is in possession of And all the rest and residue of the Monies arising from the Sale and disposal of my said Estates and from the Rents Issues and Profits thereof I give devise and bequeath unto and to the use of **John Morse** Lieutenant of his Majestys first Troop of Horse Guards **Robert Morse** late of Lincolns Inn Barrister at Law the said Edmund Green and Catherine his wife and **Ann Morse and Sarah Morse** (which said John Robert Catherine Ann and Sarah are my reputed Sons and Daughters) their Heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns to be accounted for and paid to and amongst them equally as the same shall come to the said Trustees hands Part and share alike all Charges and Expenses attending the said Trust being first paid and satisfied the said Edmund Green and Catherine his wife being entitled to no more than one equal fifth part and share equally with the said John Robert Ann and Sarah And in case both or either of them the said Ann and Sarah should die under Age and without Issue the part and share of her or them so dying to go to and be divided

among the surviving Brothers and Sisters their Heirs and Assigns equally And I do hereby empower my said Trustees and the Survivors of them and their Heirs and Assigns to make good and sufficient conveyances and assurances in the Law to all and every the Purchasors of my Lands Plantations and other real Estates in the Fee Simple or for such Estates as I have in the same And until such Sales shall be made the said Trustees to stand seized of the same to the uses of this my Will And Lastly revoking all former and other Wills by me heretofore made I do hereby nominate and appoint the said Joseph Royal Edmund Green William Mitchell and John Vanholen Exors of this my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this **twenty ninth day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven** Jno Morse Signed Sealed Published and declared by the Testator as and for his last Will and Testament in the Presence of us who subscribed our names as Witnesses in the Presence of the Testator and of each other Hector Rose Thos Smith Jas Thomas

This Will was **proved at London the eighteenth day of April in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty one** before the Worshipful Francis Simpson Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right Worshipful Peter Calvert Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the Oath of Edmund Green Esquire one of the Executors named in the said Will to whom Administration was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the deceased he having been first sworn duly to Administer Power reserved of making the like grant to Joseph Royal William Mitchell and John Vanholen and Esquires the other Executors named in the said Will when they or either of them shall apply for the same./.