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By B.W. Morris

Historical Accounts in Colonial Virginia, 1695 Essex, Virginia Witch Trial, part of a larger research study and publication into the Morris Family of Virginia. This Account serves as a preview of Morris's forthcoming book: *House of Burgesses Member George Morris, and the Morris Family of Virginia*.

George Morris

George Morris (23 October 1616 – c. 1685) was a surveyor, planter, military officer and member of the House of Burgesses for New Kent County.¹ George was also the progenitor of the Morris Family of Virginia.

EARLY LIFE AND FAMILY

George was born in the City of London on 23 October 1616, and baptized on 1 November 1616 at St Mildred, Poultry, City of London, England. *George Morris* was the son of *Richard Morris* and Anne, and grandson of *Richard Morris Esq*, a London merchant² who served as Master of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers. The arms of Morris, "*vert, a stag trippant, or*" George's cousin was *Ralph Morris*, Lord of Helmingham Hall, who was observed bearing his father's coat at the "Visitation of Suffolk in 1612."³

George's aunt *Mary Morris* was the Countess of Dover who first married *Sir William Cockayne*, Lord Mayor of London in 1619.⁴ Her second marriage was to Henry Carey, Fourth Lord of Hunsdon and First Earl of

¹ "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries". The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. 15 (3): 313–323. 1908. ISSN 0042-6636.

² Cockayne, George Edward (1897). Some account of the Lord Mayors and Sheriffs of the city of London : during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, 1601-1625. unknown library. London : Phillimore and Co.

³ Corder, Joan (1965). Dictionary of Suffolk Arms. Ipswich, Suffolk: Suffolk Records Society. p. 26.

⁴ "COCKAYNE, Charles (1602–1661), of Cockayne House, Broad Street, London and Rushton Hall, Northants. | History of Parliament Online". www.historyofparliamentonline.org. Retrieved 2024-12-28.



Dover.⁵ According to historical records, seven generations from Mary Morris, Countess of Dover from 1565 - 1648 resulted in 7 Generations consisting of 67 People, 2 Duchesses, 2 Dukes, 7 Countesses, 5 Earls, 4 Viscounts, 2 Viscountesses, 2 Baronesses, 1 Baron, 1 Baronet.⁶ Henry Carey was a major investor in the Virginia Company.

George married *Eleanor Morris*, and had at least one son, William, and a daughter, Catherine (1638–1713). William's wife *Eleanor Morris* was accused of witchcraft in a 1695 Virginia Witch Trial in King & Queen County by fellow settler *Anne Ball* wife of *William Ball*. Eleanor was found not guilty, and in June 1695 filed a defamation suit in neighboring Essex County that Ball pay 5,000 pounds of tobacco in damages. The jury ruled in favor of Eleanor but reduced the sum to 500 pounds of tobacco.⁷

VIRGINIA CAREER AND LAND GRANTS

George was a supporter of Charles I and upon the execution of Charles, many Cavaliers (or Charles I allies) removed themselves to the Virginia colony at Jamestown to avoid persecution. In 1649, George sailed alongside Majors *Francis Morryson*, *Richard Fox* and *Francis Cary*, and *Colonel Henry Norwood*. *Francis Cary (Carey)* is the younger cousin of the aforementioned *Henry Carey*.

Almost eleven years later, George is mentioned in a court filing on 4 April 1661 between *Harquip*, chief of the Chickahomini tribe, as having surveyed a 743-acre tract alongside Lt. Col. *Abraham* and *James Cole* on property claimed by *Philip Mallory*.⁸ On 2 March 1661, *George Morris* was requested by

⁵ Gibson, C. A. (1970). "Massinger's London Merchant and the Date of "The City Madam"". *The Modern Language Review*. 65 (4): 737–749. doi:10.2307/3722548. ISSN 0026-7937.

⁶ "Maternal Family Trees England". www.allabouthistory.co.uk. Retrieved 2024-12-28.

⁷ 1694-1695 Essex County, Virginia. Virginia Order Book. Richmond, Virginia: Antient Press. p. 246.

⁸ Sams, Conway Whittle (1916). *The conquest of Virginia, the forest primeval : an account, based on original documents, of the Indians in that portion of the continent in which was established the first English colony in America*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University Library. New York ; London : G.P. Putnam's Sons.



Lt. Col. *Nathaniel Bacon* to survey land claimed by Capt. *Martin Palmer* and *John Prosyer* concerning one-thousand acres.⁹

On 14 December 1660, *George Morris* alongside *John Pigge* received 1,000 acres in New Kent County as payment for transporting 20 persons from England who were aspiring to enter the tobacco business.

In 1662, then acting governor of Virginia, Francis Morrison Esq., with the consent of the Council of State granted George Morris and William Lane 2,500 acres of land in Rappahannock County. As part of the agreement, Morris and Lane agreed to transport 40 settlers from England.¹⁰

On 19 July 1663, George Morris received 1,350 acres New Kent Co. on the North side of the Mattaponi River part thereof on the branches of Chescaack Path, the land bordered that of *Anthony Arnold*, payment for the transport of 15 more persons. [*Historical Note: Arnold was hung on 14 March 1667 for participation in the Bacon Rebellion.*]

A second transaction was recorded on 19 July 1663, *George Morris* received 933 acres also in New Kent Co., described as "South Side of Narrows of York River upon branches of Black Creek, beginning at a corner Tree by Westover Path belonging to land of Mr. Jones and *Jonathan Higby*, formerly *William Pullams*, along land of Mr. *Brereton* and *Anthony Arnold*."

1667: 1,600 Acres. A joint grant with *John Long*, located on branches of Major Andrew Gilson's Creek, payment for transporting 32 additional settlers.

⁹ Virginia. mn; Virginia (Colony) Laws, statutes; Hening, William Waller (1809). The statutes at large; being a collection of all the laws of Virginia, from the first session of the legislature, in the year 1619. Published pursuant to an act of the General assembly of Virginia, passed on the fifth day of February one thousand eight hundred and eight . University of Pittsburgh Library System. Richmond: Printed by and for Samuel Pleasants, junior, printer to the commonwealth.

¹⁰ 1662-1664 Old Rappahannock County, Virginia Deed Book 1, Part II. Antient Press (published 2016). 1989. pp. 303–304. ISBN 1680341251.



On 29 Apr 1668, *George Morris* acquired 860 acres, New Kent County, Stratton Major Parish, on north side of Mattaponi River, by an Indian path to *John Madison's* house, adjoining *Anthony Arnell*.

- On 8 May 1674, for 3,000 acres in (Old) Rappahannock County.¹¹
- In 1679, he was granted another 700 acres in Rappahannock County.
- In 1680, George Morris founded the Jasmine Plantation located in Providence Forge. It was used as the Headquarters for the Revolutionary Army in 1779 by General *George Washington*.¹²
- 1683: 5,000 Acres located within New Kent and Rappahannock County for transporting 40 settlers.

Of those that Morris sponsored, some were members of his extended family including *Edward Morris*, *Anne Morris*, *Mary Morris*, and *William Morris*. His son, William, also engaged in transporting settlers to which included more Morrises.

BACON'S REBELLION AND HOUSE OF BURGESSES

From 1676 to 1677, *Nathaniel Bacon* attempted to overthrow the governor, *Sir William Berkeley*. Morris, a Royalist and friend of Berkeley, served as a Major either before or during the revolt.

Of the 1,000 Regulars sent from England, George's cousin from Suffolk was among them, *William Morris*. William was commissioned on 4 March 1676¹³ and served as Adjutant in Colonel *Herbert Jeffery's* Regiment commanding seventy soldiers.¹⁴¹⁵ In 1678 the regiment returned to England but left five officers and 2015 soldiers as a contingent. Captain *William Morris*

¹¹ "A Guide to the Virginia Miscellany Papers, 1657-1931 Virginia Miscellany Papers, 1657-1931 24715". ead.lib.virginia.edu. Retrieved 2024-12-29.

¹² "Williamsburg Magazine September 2009 by The Virginia Gazette - Issuu". issuu.com. 2009-12-04. Retrieved 2024-12-29.

¹³ "America and West Indies: October 1676 | British History Online". www.british-history.ac.uk. Retrieved 2024-12-29.

¹⁴ "America and West Indies: April 1678 | British History Online". www.british-history.ac.uk. Retrieved 2024-12-29.

¹⁵ "Virginia in 1678-1679 (Continued)". *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. 24 (3): 250–260. 1916. ISSN 0042-6636.



remained in military service until 1680-81 before returning to England. William Morris obtained permission from the Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, Secretary of State to Lord Culpeper to return to England. The issue was dated at Whitehall on 22 September 1680,

"Conveying His Majesty's Pleasure that Mr. William Morris of the Middle Plantation in Virginia" should be given leave to return to England on private matters."

William never returned to Virginia. His wife Frances filed a petition on his behalf during his time in Virginia.¹⁶

Among the co-conspirators found guilty during the inquest was John Langston, who was a member of the House of Burgesses for New Kent. Langston was expelled¹⁷ and George Morris took his place beginning on 9 June 1680,¹⁸ serving on the Private Causes Committee. On George's swearing in he was listed as *Major George Morris*.

*"Major George Morris tooke the Oathes of Alleigance & Supremacie and ye oath of a Burgess which was administered to him by Mr Secretary Spencer & Colonel William Cole"*¹⁹

Morris served alongside Charles Turner. Morris served as a member from 1680 until 1682 and stepped down likely due to his health. He was replaced by John West. George died around 1685. West also served during the revolt as a captain.

¹⁶ "America and West Indies: April 1678 | British History Online". www.british-history.ac.uk. Retrieved 2024-12-29.

¹⁷ House of Delegates History (DOME)". history.house.virginia.gov. Retrieved 2024-12-29.

¹⁸ Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries". The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. 15 (3): 313–323. 1908. ISSN 0042-6636.

¹⁹ McIlwaine, H. R. (Henry Read) (1871). Virginia. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. Richmond: Virginia State Library. p. 203.