

SLAVE TRADE JOURNALS AND PAPERS

Part 1: The Humphrey Morice Papers from the Bank of England

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

"The prince of London slave merchants ... was Humphrey Morice, ... Member of Parliament, and Governor of the Bank of England...."

Hugh Thomas

writing in *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York & London, 1997)

In the nine years between 1721 and 1730 the British carried around 100,000 slaves from Africa to the Americas. The majority of the ships sailed to Africa from London which sent an average of around fifty-six ships a year during 1723-1727, while Bristol sent thirty-four ships and Liverpool eleven.

Humphrey Morice was one of the main slave merchants of London in this period. In 1720 he had eight slave ships, all named after his wife or daughters.

Some of Morice's vessels were constant traders. The *Judith* snow made her first voyage in 1721 and her seventh in 1730; the *Katharine* galley made her first voyage in 1724 and her sixth in 1730, setting a pattern of an annual voyage, and the *Portugall* galley left on her sixth voyage in 1729. Morice tended to use the same captains, the most famous of whom was William Snelgrave.

He exported from London metal, pewter, brass, swords, guns, beads and textiles and usually loaded a second cargo of goods in Rotterdam of gunpowder, spirits, cloth, brass pans, iron bars, tobacco pipes and knives. He was very keen to sell Dutch goods to Dutch traders in Africa, acquiring gold from Dutch traders in exchange.

His instructions to the captains were explicit and well informed and suggest he preferred to sell the slaves he bought on the Gold Coast to the Portuguese in Africa rather than send his ships across the Atlantic. But if the slaves were not sold in Africa he sent them to Virginia, Maryland, Jamaica and Barbados where he usually exchanged them for rum. He was, however, very keen that they should not linger in the New World. He gave strict orders that after delivering the slaves in America that the ship should not stay any longer than fourteen days waiting for a cargo of tobacco for the return journey.

He operated a complex network of vessels in the trade, often having several ships simultaneously in African waters. This meant he could easily exchange goods and information among his captains. In his instructions to his captains he often listed the names of the commanders of his vessels whom they might meet. He urged full cooperation between them and wrote out signals to be observed among ships in his service. For example the ship *Henry* in 1721-22 supplied the *Sarah* and the *Elizabeth* with goods, received 120 slaves from the *Elizabeth*, delivered 100 slaves to the *Sarah* and sold seventy-six slaves to the Portuguese before making its way to the slave market in Kingston, Jamaica.

The captains he used were experienced in buying and selling slaves. They were paid in part through a captain's commission on slaves and goods sold and through the ability to transport slaves free of freight. They had to keep a daily account of trade. He was very concerned for his captains and their crew and when one of his ships was seized by pirates he immediately offered William Snelgrave another ship and ordered that money should be distributed among the crew.

He aimed to reduce losses of slaves by death in the Middle Passage by selling the slaves in Africa. He was concerned for the treatment of the slaves and instructed a surgeon to sail on all his slave ships, with records to be kept of deaths of slaves. Captains were also instructed to buy limes to prevent scurvy during the Middle Passage. Because of the employment of surgeons and the supply of the correct provisions Morice's losses were usually small compared with other traders. The *Judith* in her voyage of 1728-29 lost thirteen of 227 slaves and on her voyage of 1730-31 she lost thirteen of 280.

Humphrey Morice was born about 1679, the only child of Humphrey Morice, citizen and mercer of London. His parents died when he was a boy and he was cared for by his uncle, Nicholas Morice and privately educated. About the year 1700 he set up business as a merchant in Nicholas Lane, London and traded extensively with Africa, North America, Holland, Russia and elsewhere.

In 1720, after the death of his first wife, Judith Sandes, who was the daughter of a prosperous London merchant and by whom he had five daughters, he moved to a house in Mincing Lane, London. In 1722 he married again, this time to Katharine who bore him two sons.

His cousin, Sir Nicholas Morice, was influential in helping him to secure a Parliamentary seat for Newport, Cornwall in 1713. He held the seat until 1722 when he was elected as MP for Grampond. He held this seat until his death in 1731. He was elected as Director of the Bank of England in 1716, served as Deputy Governor from 1725 to 1727 and as Governor from 1727 to 1729. He died suddenly in 1731, probably as a result of gout, but there are suspicions that he committed suicide.

Although he left a substantial amount of money it was not enough to pay his creditors. His debts amounted to nearly £150,000, including a claim of £29,000 from the Bank of England for bills he had discounted and which were discovered to be fictitious. It would seem that he had contributed large sums of money to the Whig cause in the hope of being given a peerage.

The collection of Humphrey Morice papers which are held at the Bank of England archive and which are published in this microfilm collection afford the researcher a wealth of detail for the history of slaving during a period when London was the focus of the slave trade.

The Slave Journals in the collection cover the period 1721 to 1730 and are all in excellent condition. They contain the orders and instructions to the captains of Morice's slaving ships for the purchase and disposal of the slaves together with a list of goods to be exchanged for slaves. The slaves bought are listed by age and divided into Man, Woman, Boy and Girl. Prices are given for them, a man costing an average of £24 and a woman £16. (The prices are in coastal units of account and sometimes in sterling). The central role of the Europeans in exploiting and expanding the Slave Trade is well documented, as is the involvement of local Africans in the coastal trade and in bringing slaves to the coast from the interior.

In the instructions in the journal of the *Judith* of September 1721 Morice tells William Clinch, the Captain exactly what sort of negroes he should buy:

" In the choice of your Negroes, I would have you have a regard no Negroes be under twelve years of Age nor any...above Twenty five years old and if possible buy two males to one Female...and observe that your Negroes are sound, Good and healthy and not blind, Lame or Blemished".

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In the same journal is a list of the goods which were "to be disposed of in exchange for negroes". They include "Tobacco, guns, Sringe, corral, Amber, Pipes, gunpowder, spirits and beans".

In the journal of March 1725 he tells Captain Edmund Weedon of the *Anne*:

"I am in hopes you will be able to purchase upwards of Two hundred Negroes, besides Gold, Elephants Teeth and Bees Wax...."

His concern for the welfare of the slaves is shown in the journal of September 1721 when he tells the Captain:

"Take care your Negroes have their Victualls in proper Season and at regular times and that their food be well boyled and prepared and do not Sufferr any of your Shipp's Company to abuse them, always looking out and watching that they do not endeavour to rise and Surprise you which may hazard to endanger your own Life...."

Concern is also shown for the slaves in the instructions of March 1730 to Captain Jeremiah Pearce of the *Judith*:

"Be carefull of and kind to your Negroes and let them be well used by your Officers and Seamen...."

He is, however, keen to get as good a deal as possible from the sale of the slaves. He instructs the same Captain:

"You must be mindful to have your Negroes shaved and made Clean to look well at every Island you touch at and to strike a good Impression on the Buyers...."

There are instructions to the captains regarding the way to trade with the Africans:

"You must endeavour to hire or buy at Commenda or any other place a good large Canoe and in the Secure Canoe men to go down the Coast along with you for at Quittah and Popoe they will be of singular use to you to land and gett ashore your Goods, and carry off your Negroes, which will tend greatly towards your dispatch at those places...."

He also gives instructions to the captains on how to sell the slaves in North America and on the loading of the return cargo - not to sell only the best negroes at the first stops and to avoid long waits for return cargoes.

"You must be expeditious as Possible to take in a Loading of Sugars, for to Lye long at any of the Islands to take in a Loading, will be very detrimental to mee, And the great charge your Ship Sails at will eat up the ffreight".

The two Journals of Humphrey Morice cover the years 1708-1710. They give details of money paid and received from his business transactions with North America, Jamaica, Barbados, Africa, Brazil and Guinea in goods such as tobacco, wine, wool, sugar and silk.

His Letter Book of 1703-1706 contains business letters for those years covering trade in cloth and other commodities.

Also included are five volumes of Trading Accounts and Personal Papers, three volumes of Personal and Business Letters and one volume of Documents relating to British Trade with Africa, America and the West Indies.

The Trading Accounts and Personal Papers contain a wide variety of material. There are accounts, receipts, bills, details of wages paid to the seamen, with much on slave business. There are letters from captains giving accounts of their voyages with details of the goods traded, weather conditions, slaves bought, sold, ill and numbers of those who died on the voyage.

The following instructions from a captain to the first mate in Volume 1 give explicit instructions on how to deal with the slaves:

"Let there be great care taken in boyling their victualls well and to induce them to eat Brans let some pieces of Beefe be minced small and boyled in them..... When any slaves are taken with the small pox let them be put in the storeroom to prevent the Infection spreading and lett Mr Wilson have beefe, flower, Rice and Brandy for those Slaves whom he thinks fitting. When any Slaves die let Mr Willson with some other officer be Present at the time of committing them to the water: noting the day of the month and sickness which they died of. The slaves are to be served water three times a day, Tobacco once a week and Pipes when they want. When you see fitting give them a dram of corn brandy and more especially in a cold morning: be as saving as profitable of your London water for drinking, boyling their victualls in what you gott from the shore. Be mindful to iron your strong rugged men Slaves, but favour the young striplings or those who begin to be sick: and let them in general be washt at convenient times: in an Evening divert them with musick letting them dance".

The Personal and Business Letters cover topics such as: interest paid, the National Debt, petitions, wills, bills, inventories of goods, the sale of negroes and lists of slaves who died on voyages and the disposal of cargoes on the Coast of Africa. Included also are family papers relating to Morice's uncle, cousin and wife.

The interesting documents relating to British Trade with Africa, America and the West Indies include petitions of planters and traders for the protection of British shipping against pirates and against Spaniards, and reasons against imposing duties on negroes imported and exported at Jamaica.

This little known collection of the Humphrey Morice Papers from the Bank of England gives researchers a fascinating resource for the study of the slave trading activities of one of the most prominent slave merchants of London during the early 1700's. It contains a wealth of previously unstudied detail on goods traded, slaves bought and the conditions and treatment on the slave ships, revealing the important role London played in the slave trade during this period.

It offers an opportunity to examine rare historical evidence concerning the enslavement of Africans. Who were the Agents? Who kept the profits? How was the trade carried out?

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REEL 1

M7/6 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to William Snelgrave of the *Henry*, second voyage 15 July 1721

M7/7 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice Orders and Instructions to William Clinch of the *Judith*, snow, first voyage 13 Sept 1721

M7/8 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to Stephen Bull of the *Sarah*, second voyage 30 Oct 1722

M7/9 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to William Snelgrave of the *Henry*, third voyage 20 Oct 1722

M7/10 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to William Boyle of the *Portugal*, galley, fourth voyage 11 May 1724

M7/11 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to Edmund Weedon of the *Anne*, fourth voyage 25 March 1725

M7/12 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to William Snelgrave of the *Katharine*, galley, fifth voyage 22 Sept 1729

M7/13 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to Thomas Hill of the *Anne*, galley, first voyage undated

M7/14 Slave Journal of Humphrey Morice

Orders and Instructions to Jeremiah Pearce, commander of the *Judith*, snow, seventh voyage 3 March 1730

REEL 2

M7/196 Journal of Humphrey Morice 1 July 1708 - 30 March 1709

M7/20 Journal of Humphrey Morice 11 Oct 1709 - 29 July 1710

Volume 1 Trading Accounts and Personal Papers Humphrey Morice - Letters 1-52

Volume 2 Trading Accounts and Personal Papers

Humphrey Morice - Letters 53-102

Volume 3 Trading Accounts and Personal Papers

Humphrey Morice - Letters 103-150

REEL 3

Volume 4 Trading Accounts and Personal Papers

Humphrey Morice - Letters 151-199

Volume 5 Trading Accounts and Personal Papers

Humphrey Morice - Letters 200-246

Volume 6 Personal and Business Papers c1700-c1731

Item 435: Copies of the wills of Sir Humphrey Morice's father, 4 May 1684 and Sir Godfrey Copley, 14 October 1704 1684, 1704

Item 436: Invitation to dine with the East India Company, 29 May 1730

Bill for the funeral expenses of Mrs Judith Morice, 15 January 1719/20

Item 437: Promissory note of John Adams, 29 May 1703 in favour of Sir Nicholas Morice for £6.12s 2d

Item 437: Bill for 35 guineas drawn by John Morice in favour of Sir Nicholas Morice, 19 August 1710

Item 438: Draft of Nicholas Morice's petition resigning the office of Clerk of the Signet and asking for it

Item 438: to be transferred to his nephew Joseph Moyle c1708

Two memoranda concerning Sir William Morice, father of Sir Nicholas 1682/1704

Address to William III from the Devon Quarter Sessions, 30 July 1689

Five addresses to the Grand Jury of Devon 1692-1694

Manuscript statement of Sir Nicholas Morice's estate as found at Warrington, 12 December 1712

Item 439: Papers relating to Sir Humphrey Morice's appointment as Master of the King's Buckhounds and disagreements with the Duke of Kent about hunting the hounds. Reasons why Windsor Forest Keepers refuse a certificate for peat cutting 1716-1718

Item 440: Tradesmen's Bills 1698-1723

Item 434: Papers relating to the South Sea Company 1720-1722

Item 492: Two notices of Committee of Treasury meetings and an invitation to dine at Pontacks c1730

Item 494: Printed list of Governors and Directors of the Bank of England 1727

Item 520: Memorandum in the handwriting of Humphrey Morice relating to a proposed loan to Austria nd

Item 442: List of Members of Parliament nd

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Item 442: List of documents in the possession of Edmund Prideaux, 29 April 1691
Receipt for £2800 Bank Stock c/a John Browne 1712
Account Sales of £2000 Bank Stock 1722

Item 488: Two receipts for Land Tax 1722

Item 496: Papers relating to the South Sea Company 1720-1722

Item 497: Papers relating to the South Sea Company 1720-1722

Item 499: His Majesty's Speech to the House of Commons, 20 January 1725 1725
Votes of the House of Commons, 9 October 1722
His Majesty's Speech to the Houses of Parliament, 12 November 1724

Item 500: Abstracts of the Acts...to Ports and Places nd
The Case of the Merchants Trading in Tobacco at Whitehaven in the County of Cumberland nd
Reasons...for regulating the importation of Tobacco. nd

Item 501: Newspaper cutting from *The Daily Post*, 6 March 1727
Newspaper cutting from *The Daily Courant*, 3 December 1729

Item 503: Newspaper cutting referring to the South Sea Company c1721

Item 506: Abstract of the Penal Laws nd
List of the Nominees...named in Annuity Orders nd

Item 508: List of the Nominees...named in Annuity Orders nd

REEL 4

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Item 517: Letter from J Wood to Rev Mr Grosvenor concerning the Scottish Rebellion of 1715, 6 September 1722 1722

Item 514: An account of Funds granted to the Bank of England 1694-1716
Abstract of a proposal for reducing the interest on the National Debt and raising a Sinking Fund 1716
Observations on behalf of the Bank of England on the Bill for releasing their Annuity of 6d 1716
Suggestions as to the terms upon which the Bank of England may consent to a reduction of interest on their advances to Government, 9 May 1717
Minutes of the Court of Directors of the Bank, 15 May 1717

Item 514: Suggestions for reducing the interest on the National Debt and raising fresh capital 1717
Draft of an agreement between the Treasury and the Bank relating to Exchequer Bills, 16 March 1718/19
Memorandum concerning the sale of silver by the Bank to the East India Company, 31 August to 13 September 1731

Item 518: Account of slaves who died on the *Elizabeth* 1725

Item 489: Bills of Lading nd

Item 441: Statement by John Browne concerning Ann Sande's fortune, 22 January 1716
Statement of expenses of Anne Morice 1720/21

Item 490: Receipt for call of 15% on £4000 Bank Stock 1709

Item 491: Receipt for call of 10% on £5100 Bank Stock 1710

Item 493: Printed notice of a meeting of Trustees under an Act of 12 Anne, addressed to Humphrey Morice, 6 June 1721
Unnumbered items -mostly Bills

Item 511: Mrs Saunders' Bills for John Morice's schooling and board 1722-1725

Item 512: Release given by Sir Nicholas Morice to Nicholas Morice Esq, 22 September 1704

Item 512: Release given by Sir William Carew to Nicholas Morice Esq, 7 November 1711
Three list of amounts owing to Nicholas Morice Esq for rents etc at South Milton and Exeter 1711/12
General Power of Attorney given by Thomas Sandes to John Browne, 30 October 1705
Particulars of the Will of John Browne in the handwriting of Humphrey Morice, 13 April 1716
Copy of Declaration of Trust from Humphrey Morice to Anne Sandes, 23 March 1716/17
Statement of Account of Humphrey Morice as Trustee for Anne Sandes 1717/23
List of Exchequer Orders left at the Exchequer by Humphrey Morice, 30 September 1715
List of payments in the handwriting of Humphrey Morice, 11 January 1719/20
Inventory of goods in his Nicholas Lane House in the handwriting of Humphrey Morice c1720
Bill of Granado Chester, Corn Chandler paid by Humphrey Morice, 8 February 1723/24
Copy of Bond given by Humphrey Morice to Sir Nicholas Morice, 6 May 1721
Draft of Bond from Humphrey Morice to Sir William Morice (as Executor to his father Sir Nicholas Morice) c1726

Item 512: Draft agreement in the handwriting of Humphrey Morice concerning an amount held in trust for Sir William Morice 1726
Draft instructions to Counsel given by Humphrey Morice for the defence of an action brought against him by Granado Pigott, January 1723/24
Receipt for £269 15s 6d for the Solicitor's costs of Granado Pigott in his cause against Humphrey Morice, 10 February 1726/27
Order of the Master of Rolls on the action brought by Granado Pigott against Humphrey Morice and others, 7 March 1727

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Receipt from Jasper Blythman for £193.10 for the costs in the Cause Pigott v Morice paid by Humprhey Morice, 12 May 1727
Promissory note of Humphrey Morice to Granado Pigott for £1,622 7s 3d with a year's interest payable 31 October 1731

Item 528: Authority from Sir William Scawen to Humphrey Morice to buy an estate in Berkshire, 18 May 1720

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Item 530: No description available for this item

Item 532: Applications for holdings in a new Africa company 1720
Volume 8 Personal and Business Papers c1730-c1731

Item 533: Applications for holdings in a subscription to Bank Stock 1722

Item 541: Miscellaneous letters

Item 542: Please note that the following letters are listed as they appear in the catalogue at the Bank of England. However the letters are not kept in sequential order and do not appear on film in the following order.
To his uncle Nicholas Morice defending certain business transactions, 29 January 1709
To Lady Copley, letter of sympathy on the death of Sir Godfrey Copley, 11 April 1709
Recommendation of William Wood as the secretary of Jamaica, 16 November 1714
To Sir Nicholas Morice, sending two bags of money to him, 11 June 1715
To the Hon Nicholas Lechmore, Attorney General, re the Royal Mines and Battery Company, insurance of trading ships etc, 17 November 1719
To Granado Pigott, senior, concerning a marriage settlement for Granado Pigott, junior and Anne Sandes, 1 December 1720

Item 542: To the Hon Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs concerning a cargo of indico detained illegally, 3 April 1721
To Nathaniel Butler concerning the sale of 160 oz of gold dust, 7 April 1721
To John Tymms with instructions for taking money to Sir Nicholas Morice, 6 May 1721
To Captain William Boyle with instructions for a voyage to Africa, 26 June 1724
To Captain Keate complaining of Keate's behaviour in leaving his "Chief Mate ashore in an island beyond the Seas", 26 July 1731
List of goods belonging to Captain Roberts nd
List of goods for a cargo nd
List of shrouds and cables for the West Indies or New England, addressed to Thomas Sandes, 3 January 1704/05
Note from Peter Hollander asking Morice to endorse a note for £2000, 31 March 1711
From John Symons re the late Robert Melhuish, 11 February 1714
Abstract of several letters John Symons received from La Roche and Co from Lisbon 1714-1715
From John Symons re the late Robert Melhuish, 17 February 1715

Item 542: From John Symons with an enclosure for Samuel Bury, 29 April 1715
List of money owed to and by Wood, 11 October 1715
From Thomas Wood apologising for not enclosing a list of business debts in a previous letter, 25 February 1715/16
To William Nicholson and Major John Smith in Patuxant River, Maryland asking them to sell 200 negroes which Captain Stephen Bull will bring, 4 December 1718
To Captain Bull on the Coast of Africa with instructions as to the disposal of his cargo. (States that war was declared against Spain on (17 December), 15 January 1718/19
To Captain William Snelgrave with instructions for his voyage and information about other ships, 27 November 1719
From Joa Feliz Reiz to William Baillie who had just arrived in port, 16 January 1721
Recommendation from Morice and Charles Long for Alexander Henderson, as Attorney General of Jamaica, 10 October 1721
Note from Matthew Roycroft acting for Joseph Windham to Mr Timms asking what Morice has done in Henry Branthwait's affair, 4 July 1722

Item 542: From Charles Weekes of Dorchester concerning ships and cargo, 1 February and 13 February 1724
From unknown person on board the *Diamond* in Honduras Bay giving an account of pirates, 20 September 1724
From Charles Small on board the *Lyell* near St Iago to Richard Mead telling of the death of a midshipman, 25 February 1730
From John Spencer asking for money for the ship *London*, 16 June 1731
From Thomas Hunt announcing his arrival of the ship *Morice* and asking for a berth at Deptford or Woolwich, 24 July 1731
Account of goods bought by John Smallwood and Captain Hogg of the *Sarah* galley, 29 July 1731
To Messrs Withers and Harrison of Barbados concerning the sale of negroes, 29 June 1731
From Robert Law at Cork announcing that two of Morice's ships are homeward bound from the Windward passage, 28 July 1731
From Charles Ross asking for his account to be settled, 3 August 1731

Item 542: From Pierre Locquett of Amsterdam asking Morice to remit money belonging to John Pranger, 14 September 1731
From Pierre Locquett asking for a reply to his earlier letter, 9 October 1731
From Jeanne Dubor, 19 October 1731
From Katherine Morice to Messrs Basnett Tymms and Hide in Jamaica with instructions for selling negroes nd
Poem on a scrap of paper addressed to Nicholas Morice at Warrington nd
Documents Relating to British Trade with Africa, America and the West Indies 1720-1725
Memorial to the Admiralty from the merchants of London trading to Africa, asking for protection for their ships against pirates, 29 July 1720
Criticism of the proposal to form a new African company and limiting the trade to Africa to that company c1720
Memorandum proposing means of protecting the British trade to America against the Spaniards c1725
Opinions of five counsel on a proposal for forming a company to carry on a foreign trade 1720
Draft of a petition of planters, merchants and traders concerned in the West India trade for protection of British shipping against pirates nd
Reasons against passing the Jamaica Act to prevent fraudulent trade to Hispaniola and other foreign parts nd
Reasons against a Jamaica Act for laying a duty on certain imports from the American colonies nd
Petition of merchants to the Governor of Jamaica against any alteration in the value of the current coin of the island, 18 October 1722
Copy of a Royal Patent for gold and silver mines in Jamaica in favour of Charles Long and others, 4 July 1721
Reasons against the passing of any Act in Jamaica for laying any duties on negroes imported or exported into that island

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Petition to the King from the South Sea Company against imposing duties on negroes and flour imported and exported at Jamaica, 10 July 1724

M7/35 Letter Book of Humphrey Morice 1703-1706

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