The Morse Family

Estimated reading time: 3 minutes

The earliest mention I've found in the village is when Thomas Morse of Wickselm, near Berkeley, married Anna Trotman on 8th May 1635. Her father's family and her mother's family (Hicks) were wealthy.

The Hicks lived at Piers Court at that time, I believe. I suspect that when Anna died, only 2 years after the marriage, the Morse family gained a toehold in Stinchcombe. (Anna/Anne Morse's tomb is the one I'm always mentioning as the oldest chest tomb in the churchyard.) Thomas married again and continued to live at Wickselm. I can't easily link him to the later Morses in Stinchcombe, but it seems probable there is a link.

The 1776 Electoral Register lists Thomas Morse Senior, a resident of Dursley, as owning a house and land in Stinchcombe. The house is let to William Dee, who is recorded as a yeoman in Stinchcombe in 1768. The house could well be Melksham.

Thomas Morse Junior also lives in Dursley in the 1776 Register and owns an orchard in Stinchcombe.

A Thomas Morse is mentioned as attending the Inquisition Post Mortem at Wotton-under-Edge in 1623 of John Hickes of Piers Court. This suggests he was living locally, though not necessarily in Stinchcombe.

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Stinchcombe History Society has transcribed various indentures that were in the keeping of Stinchcombe United Charities and are now held at Gloucestershire Archives. Several 18th and 19th century indentures mention members of the Morse family.

1780 and 1793 – A Thomas Morse referred to as the owner of land called Mugger's/Magger's Cliff, the steep slope at the back of Wick Lane.

1793 – A Thomas Morse is made a feoffee in Stinchcombe, suggesting he was an important person in the village although he continues to be referred to as Thomas Morse of Dursley. A feoffee by this time is a sort of parish charity trustee.

1841 – A Thomas Morse, probably the son of the man of the same name in 1780 & 1793, is still one of the feoffees. He is referred to as Thomas Morse of Ashmead House in Cam. The indenture actually says that his late father was called Thomas Morse.

1877 – A Thomas Morse of Ashmead in Cam is a trustee. He may be the same man as in 1841 or possibly his son.

A newspaper article of 1901 describes the sale by auction of Capt Morse's property. It says that he has been in New Zealand for some years and has no intention of returning. Melksham Court Farm, 144 acres let to Mr James Nicholls, is one of the lots. It is bought by Mr W C Wilcox of Old Sodbury

for £3,800. He also buys Bownace Wood for £500. James Nicholls buys Overend House for £360 at the same auction.



Thomas Morse esq selling up for life in Australia