

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Statement of: KATHERINA HARLOW

Date of Birth: over 21

Address: High and Over, Highover Park, Amersham Bucks HP7 0BP United Kingdom

Phone: (H) 011447738265959 (W)

Occupation/Employer: Art Historian

Phone:

This statement consisting of 2 pages each signed by me, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated the 1<sup>st</sup> day, of October 2020 Signed: *Katherina Harlow*

I Katherina Harlow of High and Over, Highover Park, Amersham, Bucks HP7 0BP, United Kingdom, will say as follows:

The facts and matters referred to in this witness statement are within my own knowledge and belief except where I indicate otherwise. Where facts are within my own knowledge, they are true. Where they are not within my own knowledge, they are true to the best of my information and belief. Where information has been provided to me by another, I have stated the source of my information and belief.

I am Bermudian, and I also have United States citizenship. I am an Art Historian and have worked as an interior designer. At present, I live in the UK but hope to return to Bermuda in the future.

My mother, Mary Frances Trott North (Moehring) was the youngest of three daughters of Henry Thompson North MP, known affectionately as 'The Objector General'. She was born in 1917 in Bermuda. I was born in 1953 in Washington, DC, as my mother married an American and lived at this point in the United States. My mother returned to live in Bermuda when I was 18 months old, and I spent much of my childhood in Bermuda in my grandparents' home 'Glendon' and later with my mother at 'Mercer Heights'.

My mother died in Bermuda in 1966, and her sister Jean Underwood North (Outerbridge) then acted as legal guardian to me, together with her husband, Robert Valentine Outerbridge. They are both now deceased and buried in Bermuda.

When I was growing up in Bermuda, my mother told me that my grandfather had once owned a private beach which was known as Pink Beach. It was a beach attached to his other landholdings and other family lands. It was in an area where his family owned land near Mangrove Lake in Smiths Parish close to what is known as Tuckers Town. The beach was used by the family as an amenity for swimming and picnics. My mother told me there was an

Signed: *Katherina Harlow* Signature witnessed by: *H. Underwood*

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old shipwreck there which they used to play on and have family picnics. A lot of my grandfather's land was used for farming as he used to export produce as his main source of income. He also owned and operated a quarry on Harrington Sound Road. I believe the beach when our family owned it, was undeveloped - it was a beach amenity adjoining other lands.

My mother and this was also confirmed by my aunt Jean, told me that my grandfather had been very distressed as he had been forced to sell the Pink Beach property by the government. He was in the government at the time. He did not want to sell the property and he did not need to sell it. I believe this would have been in the 1920s as from my mother's discussion with me, she had been in her youth and was then unmarried.

She told me that once the property had been compulsorily purchased, the government had then sold it on to a foreign developer at a profit. My grandfather was upset that the property had not been offered back to him to purchase. His understanding was that the beach was purchased by the government for the 'national good' rather than being sold to an outside developer. He felt he had been betrayed or 'stitched up' according to the account which I heard from my mother and other families. I believe he was given a right of access to the beach for his lifetime, but this access stopped with his death in 1957 and was not extended to family members. The loss of the beach impacted him and the distress he felt was relayed to me through the years.

My mother told me that he felt betrayed by other members of the government over this acquisition and reselling of the beach. From what I know of my grandfather, he was an outsider. He was not one of the Forty Thieves, despite his land holdings. For him, land was important to cultivate produce, and he worked hard to support his family. I was told he started working from an early age, at about 14 years old, as he supported his brothers and sisters before his marriage and children were born. Despite being an MP, he always regarded himself as a farmer and his focus was on family and work.

Recently, I was surprised to see an article in The Royal Gazette regarding the loss of land in Tuckers Town, which was at the same time my grandfather lost Pink Beach. In the article, it published the voting by the MPs, which enabled the forced sales. My grandfather was one of the vast majority who voted in favour of this. I find it hard to understand why he would have voted for this as it adversely affected him and eventually caused him such distress. I can only speculate on the reasons why he did this. I believe he thought he was voting for something in the national interest and this morphed into something he did not anticipate. I believe he thought the purchase of Pink Beach was for the beach to be used as a public beach, rather than being sold to a developer to become a private beach and then closed off to the nation and his own family.

I will be willing to give evidence before The Commission of Inquiry into Historic Loss of Land in Bermuda via video link or audio link, whether inside or outside of Bermuda.

Signed: *Katherina Hawlow* Signature witnessed by:

*A. F. ...*

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*Katherina Hawlow*