

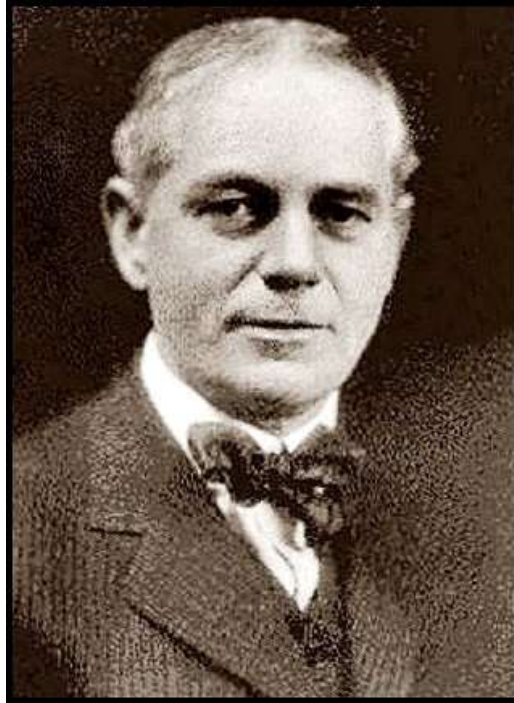
W. Y. MORGAN

REMEMBERING HASKELL COUNTY, KANSAS

Initially written by W. Y. MORGAN in 1902

Rewritten by Eva Mae Cooper

** Additional information added about William Yoast Morgan*



WILLIAM YOAST MORGAN

“Signor Coronado had nothing much on me when you compare his expedition across the plains to my first entrance into Haskell County in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety-six. That was several years ago, and there might be some left who will corroborate my statement. Most of those who are occupying the territory at the present time will merely shake their heads and say that my story is only the tale of a newspaperman who must find something different that he can relate to and write.

That exploring party, which was in search of votes for William McKinley for President, penetrated the wildness of the prairies of old Santa Fe (*Kansas*) while being mounted in a buckboard with a pair of ponies. This generation’s smooth-running automobile may carry its people more quickly, but the buckboard was meant for adventure and experiencing the rough environment.

The time was late summer, and the buffalo grass on the prairie was drying. There had been no rain, according to the statement of our guide, since the fall before.

Occasionally breaks in the soil disclosed evidence that ambitious homesteaders had broken the ground in an attempt to raise crops.

It was agreed that this area would be great if we only had water. The scattered buildings were nearly deserted, and the prairie dog villages were still well populated. The road was a trail across the prairie. A cloudless sky and an over-energetic sun filled the country with reflected heat until it rose from the earth as well as descended from the heavens.

That night I walked out under the glorious moonlight, felt the cooling breeze coming from somewhere, romantic in the relaxed environment, and visualized the wagon teams that once floundered their way across the great American desert. Then, in imagination, I pictured the Indians of the plains, rushing herds of buffalo, and wondered why the pioneer spirit of America could not be "let well enough alone" and concede their country to the original citizens.

Thirty years later, I went through the same country in a motor car. The old town of Santa Fe had vanished, and the parched plains of buffalo grass had changed to fields of wheat, which at that time was almost ready for the harvest. The new towns of Satanta and Sublette were filled with automobiles and tractors. The morning rays of the sun were ripening the grain. The prairie dogs had departed for parts unknown. The sight of a buckboard would probably have frightened the children.

The real estate men in 1896 considered it a good joke to slip in an extra quarter section of land when making a real estate sale to a stranger. That met me with statistics showing the income values of Haskell County land and pointed to the people and the products as evidence for their extraordinary claims, none of which I could dispute. This was due to a prophetic vision coming out of the past that made me know anything was possible in the great grain belt that had taken the place on the map of the legendary desert.

I met the wheat queen and king and all the rest of the cards in the wheat deck. I took a pencil and followed the figures, which proved there is no place else in the world where so much grain can be raised at so low of a cost. The impression of a quarter of a century before faded away, and the prospects of a harvest gave assurance of a certain future.

It was too bad that I lost that glorious vision of plainsmen and Indians, prairie dogs, and Spanish Cavaliers. I could no longer call the romantic retrospect produced by the summer moon on the mention of Haskell County.

I would be forced to see pictures of a happy future with grain elevators and bank accounts and radios, high hopes of a future that might even surpass the present. The image of the old plains fades into obscurity, and the picture of prosperity takes its place."

Additional Information W. Y. MORGAN

WILLIAM YOAST MORGAN, son of William A. Morgan (1841-1917) and Wilhelmina “Minnie” Yoast (1843-1910), was born on 6 Apr 1866 in Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio. His parents were married on 21 Mar 1864 in Hamilton County, Ohio. In 1871, his father moved the family to the state of Kansas. William Yoast Morgan was educated at the University of Kansas, graduating in 1885.

William married **MARY FRANCES “COLIE” ADAIR** in November 1890 at Strong City, Chase County, Kansas. Colie was born on 26 Jan 1872 in Colorado, and her parents were Calvin Witter Adair (1845-1927) and Christiana Jones (1853-1928). They had one daughter, **CLAUDIA MORGAN**, (1902-1958) who attended Ward Belmont College in Nashville, Tennessee. There, she married Fred Lloyd Brundige on 1 Dec 1922. The marriage ended in divorce, and Claudia married again to Omar Liebman in 1927. They had one daughter named Billie. This marriage also ended in divorce.

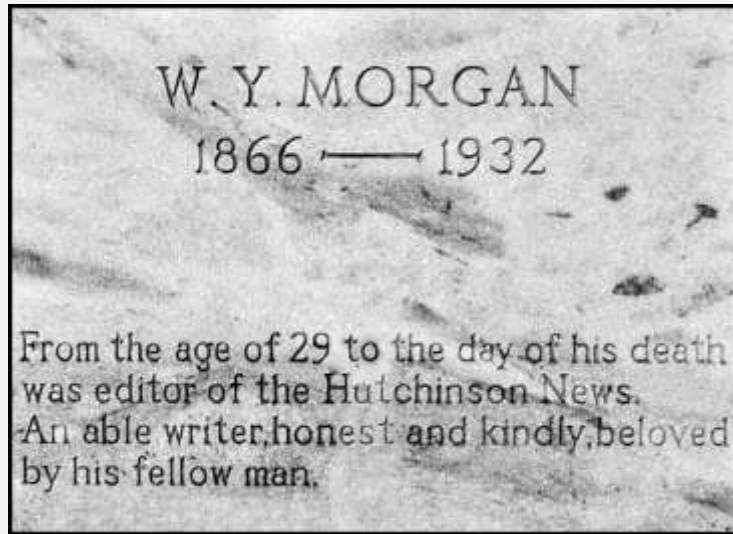
William Morgan worked as a journalist, and in 1914, he was elected as Lieutenant Governor of Kansas. He was re-elected and served out his term, ending in 1918. He was the author of three books: *A Journey of a Jayhawker*, *A Jayhawker in Europe*, and *The Near East*.

William Y. Morgan passed away on 17 Feb 1932 in Hutchinson, Reno County, Kansas. His wife, Colie, died there on 20 Dec 1958. They were buried at the Memorial Park Cemetery in Hutchinson.



The Hutchinson News, 4 Jul 1972

*W. Y. MORGAN, editor of The News from 1895 to 1932,
He also served as Lieutenant Governor and was a member of the state board of regents.*



MEMORIAL PARK CEMETERY
HEADSTONES
Hutchinson, Reno County, Kansas
Photographs provided by W. MacArthur

