

FLEETWOOD, C. A., (MRS.)
BRADSHAW, ROY, (MRS.)
HART, EBLEN, (MRS.)

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Effie S. Jackson,
 Investigator,
 December 3, 1937.

GIDEON MORGAN--PIONEER

Interviews with his daughter, Mrs. C. A. Fleetwood, 1705 South Norfolk; a niece, Mrs. Roy Bradshaw, 1628 South Victor; and a granddaughter, Mrs. Eblen Hart, 1612 East 12th, all of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Gideon Morgan was a direct descendant of Aganasta, "ground-hog", a Cherokee Indian Chief who lived from 1708-1810, according to one report, and a direct descendant from Oolootsa, a full blood Cherokee Indian Chief, from another report, (the latter is verified by his descent from the Seviars). Gideon Morgan was the descendant of two of the oldest families of Connecticut and Virginia. His father, George Washington Morgan, was a member of the famous Morgan family, known as the "Southern Pie-eating Morgans" of New England. George Washington Morgan was a Captain in the Mexican War under Scott and was Major of his own (Morgan's) regiment, Second Kentucky Cavalry, in the Civil War. He was wounded in the War, died later (1862) and was buried at Lexington, where there is a Confederate monument to his memory.

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Gideon Morgan's mother was the granddaughter of John Sevier, the first governor of Tennessee. She also was related to Ambrose Sevier, first United States Senator from Arkansas, who is buried in Arkansas (Little Rock). Gideon Morgan was born at Athens, Tennessee, Monroe County, April, 1851. He went to battle in the Civil War when he was only ten years old, accompanying his father, Major George Washington Morgan. He went to Winchester and remained with the army until after the battle of Manassas. In September, 1862, he was sent home with an attack of measles. His father was wounded in battle, and died during the same year. Morgan remained in Sitico, Tennessee, until he was seventeen years old.

In 1871, during the Reconstruction Period, Morgan accompanied by his youngest brother and three little sisters, the youngest eleven, set out for what was to them the "new west world". They were orphans and an emigrant ticket brought them to the end of the railroad line at that time, Gibson Station, Indian Territory. His brother, Frank, two years younger than he had an opportunity to go to school

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in Nashville, Tennessee, and remained there. An aunt, Elizabeth Morgan Eblin and her husband had already established a home in the high hills west of Tahlequah.

Mr. Morgan tells of his first experience in his adopted land. The end of the railroad, of course, meant a constant coming of strangers and the "con" man was there to meet them. Gideon and his last \$25.00 fell into the hands of one of them. A shell game left him penniless but taught him a lesson he said he never forgot and that was never "to play the other fellow's game".

He often related the suffering and hardships of those first winters. The crude log house was not proof against the cold and snow. One of the sisters died; also, the youngest brother. His brother, Frank, in later years, became a leading citizen of Fort Smith and his sister, Ella, married John Stapler of Tahlequah (mother of Mrs. Roy Bradshaw). In 1874, Morgan married Mary Llewellyn Payne of Fort Smith. She was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Houston Payne and Martha Ann Moffett.

After their marriage, the Morgans moved four miles

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east of Fort Smith. He and his brother Frank, established the first steam ferry on the Arkansas River at Fort Smith. They named the boat "The George W. Mayo" for their maternal grandfather. At that time Mr. Morgan often said Arkansas seemed like the United States, and, across it, the territory of the Indians was like a foreign land. As he said, the running of the ferry was an interesting and dangerous business in those days, taking officers across with criminals, or those who were hunting after criminals, forced sometimes to take the criminals themselves, having drunk Indians exhibit their marksmanship while on the boat, or rush some wounded person to the doctor--all in a day's work.

It proved to be a dangerous business as far as Mr. Morgan was concerned. Once he shot a man for trespassing, and since the case involved an Indian and a white, Mr. Morgan was tried on the charge with intent to kill before the "hanging" Judge Parker. He was acquitted, Parker stating "an Indian must protect himself against these carpet-baggers".

Morgan said the shot he fired was the shot that almost moved Judge Parker's court. While he was waiting for his

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case to be called, he came in contact with numerous prisoners and witnesses. The court had jurisdiction as far as New Mexico. Morgan said he found that oftentimes the witnesses and prisoners had to stay as long as a year waiting to be called on their respective cases. The distance they came and the period of waiting were not conducive to good morals. There were no amusements or healthy recreation. So he wrote of conditions to his cousin, Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama. Senator Morgan accompanied by Senator Dawes, later head of the Dawes Commission, came to Fort Smith to investigate. Senator Morgan said, "The Court will have to move and become a moving court". Judge Parker said, "That's not respectable nonsense. You couldn't get a jury". "But", Morgan said, "It's time to educate those west of the river to be citizens. You hold one term one hundred miles west and let them become acquainted with customs and usage of the Court". Parker said, "I must be excused. If I crossed the river, I would be shot". Then Senator Morgan said, "Do I understand you to say, Judge, that holding your position, that this government

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can't protect you one hundred miles. The Court is going".

The major part of Mr. Morgan's political life was spent in Tahlequah. There he raised his large family; six daughters and one son. He also cared for two children belonging to his dead brother, Washington, and an orphan white girl, Mary Carlile. Mr. Morgan was one of the three commissioners who built the Female Seminary at Tahlequah about 1890, and afterward ^{was} on the Board of Trustees with Johnson Thompson and James Stapler. He was a delegate to Washington when tribal lands were allotted.

He was permanent chairman of the convention of delegates from Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory which resolved to come into the Union as the State of Oklahoma. Mr. Morgan says he was in close touch with his cousin, Senator Morgan, at this time, and used his influence, on the advice of Senator Morgan, who wrote him that Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory would never be admitted as separate states, that would give two senators from each, and that only through union of the territories was there chance for admission as a state.

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As a member of the Oklahoma State Legislature, he secured the passage of a bill which permitted the building of the bridge over the Grand River at Salina by a township. This brought about a unique situation. The eastern part of the district fought the building of the bridge fearing it would take away some of their trade; even got out an injunction. The result was that the bridge was built and paid for by Morgan's own township. Even to this day (according to Mrs. Hart), Mayes County cannot vote bonds unless they arrange some way to take their share of payment for this bridge. The bridge proved to be a profitable venture for the whole district.

Nell Morgan Fleetwood (Mrs. C.A.) says she christened the bridge with a bottle of Grand River water. It was a very auspicious occasion for the whole community, friend and foe.

Mr. Morgan had long had his farm which became Morgan's Inn during his residence in Tahlequah. This farm was nine miles east of Pryor on the Grand River. There he had built a sort of a hunting lodge on the river, remote and picturesque.

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The late Judge W. H. Randolph and Dr. A. W. Roth of Tulsa were among the first to suggest a permanent hunting lodge and resort. The present Inn was built about 1916, and additions made at intervals. It has housed many notables in its twenty years of service, but always "Gid" Morgan was the hub of the wheel, a colorful character and gracious host.

Gideon Morgan died March 23, 1937, at the age of eighty-five. He left a widow, six daughters and one sister. Mrs. Gideon Morgan and her daughters, Miss Lelia, Miss Elizabeth, and Mrs. Frank Bell still live at Morgan's Inn. Mrs. W. L. (Cullus) Mayes lives in Spavinaw, Mrs. C. A. Fleetwood in Tulsa, and Mrs. E. V. Kinsey in Tarlton, Oklahoma. The sister, Mrs. John Stapler, lives in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

History and genealogy were Mr. Morgan's hobbies, and he was considered an authority on Cherokee history. The aged man remembered seeing Tulsa when the site was occupied solely by a cabin of a family of Creek Indians.

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Note: From files, personal association and copious notes taken during the life time of Gideon Morgan, his daughter, Mrs. C. A. Fleetwood, Mrs. Roy Bradshaw, niece, and granddaughter, Mrs. Eblen Hart, have compiled the story of Gideon Morgan and his times.

The Fort Smith period in Mr. Morgan's life was taken directly from longhand notes taken by Martha Mayes Hart (Mrs. Eblen Hart), his granddaughter, in her frequent conversations with him. She has a note-book filled with stories of her grandfather's life as he told them to her. Mrs. Hart's notes also contain a statement made by Mr. Morgan about the Statehood question.--Investigator.