

Tennessee Valley Texas
1851 – 1951



Ann Joseph

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all those descendants who graciously shared their memories and photos of family and neighbor, to their ancestors whose courage and contributions inspired this modest memorial to the pioneer spirit, and to my parents, Cecil and Mae Francis, whose love of the land and its people was passed on to their children.

*Austin, Texas
August, 1985*

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This is an excerpt from Ann Joseph's book – the chapter with information on James Edward Morgan – pieced together by Tom Edwards August 2, 2021, with two photos added at the end.

MORGAN-NORMAND

“In the beginning there were three brothers who came from Wales —”. So began a 1949 letter from Frank Morgan, son of James Edward Morgan of Tennessee Valley, written to his nephew John Morgan (son of X. William Morgan). An oath of allegiance to King George II signed by Col. Morgan Morgan in 1727 placed the family in West Virginia as the earliest of settlers in that state. A bridge over the Monongahela River in Fairmont, West Virginia, was dedicated in 1979 to David Morgan, son of Morgan Morgan. Evan, the grandson of David, settled in Arkansas where his son James Edward lived until he reached the age of 18 and made the move to Texas.

His boyhood home encompassed what was later to become the Civil War battlefield called Pea Ridge — now Garfield, Arkansas. James Edward (born June 2, 1831, in Illinois en-route to Arkansas) was descended from the Morgan ap Morgan who was born in Wales, educated in London, immigrated to Delaware as a merchant and tailor, and who succeeded in acquiring 1,000 acres in West Virginia to make his fortune in America by 1730.

His great-great-grandson, James Edward, came to Corsicana in 1849, worked in a saw mill in East Texas, served as a justice of the peace for Beat No. 17 of Houston in 1860, and then operated a post office and saw mill on Buffalo Bayou west of Houston where he married on February 14, 1861.

Eliza Normand (1839-1922) was the daughter of James Normand (originally Norman, but the “d” was added in London to distinguish their family from others of the same name). Her father was a successful silk merchant who migrated to Houston in 1852, settling at Buffalo Bayou with his wife and five children: James, George, Charles, Eliza, and Maria. They remained there as their property in San Saba County was endangered by Indians. Brother George made hauling trips and cattle drives to Nebraska and stopped in Belton with the Burk family who introduced him to his future wife, Mary Spratt.

It was with encouragement from his brother-in-law and the enticing stories of the clear waters of Bell County that convinced James and Eliza to move to north of the Cowhouse Creek with the Burks for one winter. James had returned from three years of duty in Louisiana and Mississippi as a Civil War Captain, burdened with chills and fever (signs of malaria). He sold the two lots and house he had built in Houston at a cost of \$915.71; and the next year, 1872, he purchased the wooded land in Tennessee Valley. His account book chronicles his activities in the Valley (the 125-year-old ledger was hidden in a desk preserved by grand-daughter Jessie Winans of Dripping Springs, Texas).

His major interest was in building a grange hall and schoolhouse which he began in 1874 by selling stock to himself, T. T. Havens, L. F. Noll, E. M. Clark, E. Havens, E. P. Edington, Ramsey Cox, James Denis, J. C. Whiteley, H. K. Moore, James

Allen, W. F. Breedlove, W. W. Manghum, Ed Flint, Ridley Thomas, W. S. Garner, and W. F. Miller. It was “a unanimous vote for school, for church use,” said his ledger entry. The structure was located in Tanyard Hollow (where his family had a small house still in use on the Morgan property owned by Bill Gibson since 1965). It was designed with similar specifications as the Bird Creek Grange Hall and Cooperative. The attempt was successful and the Tennessee Valley Grange No. 378 for September 18, 1871, showed abundant crops of 194 acres of corn (4,169 bushels), 137 acres of cotton (33 bales), 51 acres of wheat (569 bushels), and sorghum (475 gallons) from only 8 members reporting. Likewise, the school prospered, and the first teacher, Annie Carll, was paid \$1.50 per pupil per month to teach.

His building efforts had only begun, for in 1884 the famous stone Morgan house named “Stonewall” after Stonewall Jackson was undertaken and completed on James Morgan’s fifty-fourth birthday: June 2, 1885. Expenses included blasting powder (2 1/2 lb. for \$1.50), 200 bushels of lime (\$80), 360 loads of rock (\$200), lumber, doors, and windows (\$224), and labor for himself, his boys, John and George, and Peter Cook (Koch) for a six-month total of \$831. The rock was quarried off the south side of Tanyard Springs, and soft limestone was burned in a homemade pit to make mortar. The home had five fireplaces, three porches, and a basement for storing meat and canned goods. Rumors abounded that the first two girls of three who died as children were buried in this basement, but the family was amused by gossip that always surrounded the Morgan name. A cistern in the screen porch was supplied by spring rain water and conserved by pouring back into the well any of the bucket’s unused contents!

The family raised cattle, farmed, and harvested two miles of riverfront populated by large pecan trees. The children attended first the Tanyard Hollow School and then Thomasville School, riding mules the longer distance to Tennessee Valley to attend church services only.

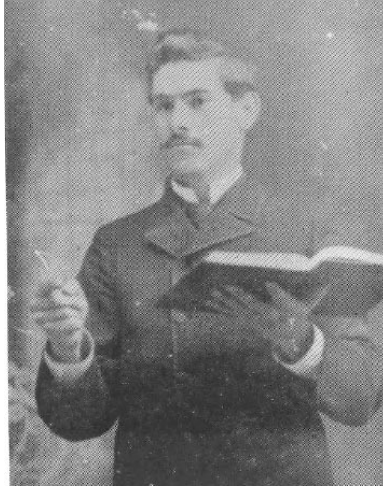
James Edward purchased hardware, paints, and farm implements from P. T. Morey of Belton and general supplies from J. W. Embree at 107 East Ave. in Belton. His total bill for 1882 charged at Embree's was \$109.23 which included various items: parasol (75 cents), 6 boys' hats (\$6), 1 lb. tea (\$1), 100 lb. flour (\$5.50), potash (\$1), blueing (25 cents), starch (50 cents), 2 lb. tobacco (\$1.50), 8 yards ticking (\$1), 8 yards ducking (\$2), 7 yards linen (\$1.75), 1 dozen goblets (\$1.50).

It was no small expenditure to outfit seven boys: John (Feb. 5, 1866-1936), James Evan (Dec. 12, 1868-?), George Charles (Dec. 6, 1869), Xenophen William (June 19, 1874-1935), Joseph (May 4, 1876-?), Edmund (Dec. 18, 1878-1956), and

Franklin Pinckney (August 6, 1880-1957). Their three girls all died as small children: Susan Eliza (1861-1864), Daughter (1873-1873), and Ethel Zo (1883-1885). Their home's cornerstone was laid on June 2, 1885, with 1885 newspapers, magazines, personal letters of congratulations, drawings, sea shells and coins. The last ledger entry by James Morgan was March 1887, listing expenses for a bee house he was building for additional income other than cotton. In October of that year he died, leaving the boys to care for Eliza who lived another 35 years.

When the lake was impounded, Bob Eubanks and Frank Morgan moved the house stone by numbered stone up the mountain and rebuilt. The cornerstone was opened May 3, 1953, by Frank and Ed and most of the contents of the gallon glass jar

were found to be intact and were replaced and sealed in the reconstructed house now located at Morgan's Point Resort. The developers from Corpus Christi who purchased the Morgan property in 1960 were also named Morgan and gave that name to the subdivision. Three years before, Frank Morgan declined to sell the land which was now all in his name. In December of 1957, he was found burned to death in his own field. His gun and boots and a gas can were found nearby, and the only identification possible was by dental records. The aura of mystery that accompanied the Morgans of the Valley still invokes speculation and many unanswered questions, but the reputation and esteem they held in the community speaks for itself.



Xenophen William Morgan 1873-1935
(Church of Christ Minister)



"Stonewall", 1985
Residence of Bill Gibson

Original Stonewall Home circa 1922 with oldest son John Morgan





*Valentine Day Picnic, Tanyard Springs, 1898 —
Back row, l. to r.: Hint Atwood, Mrs. Cardie Gar-
ner, Jake Garner, Lee Milwe, Etta Atwood, Ed
Morgan, Australia Anderson, Frank Morgan,
Charlie Phillips, D. R. (Doc) Walton, Alice Black,*

*Roland Fulwiler, Frank Tarrant, Frank Gerner
on horse, Annie Belle Herring. Front row, l. to r.:
Etta Parker, Harriet Garner, Jake Garner's baby,
Vernon Parker, Joe Morgan, Gid Cowan, John
Morgan, Bettie Thompson, Fannie Cowan, Gent
Carpenter.*

Photo includes three of James Edward Morgan's sons: Frank, Joe and John