

HISTORY  
OF  
WASHINGTON COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA,  
WITH  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF MANY OF ITS  
PIONEERS AND PROMINENT MEN.

EDITED BY  
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ILLUSTRATED.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
L. H. EVERTS & CO.  
1882.

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PRESS OF J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., PHILADELPHIA.

#### The Morganza Tract and Morgan Family.—

When the proprietaries' land-office was opened, April 3, 1769, there were three thousand two hundred applications on file, and on these warrants were issued in the order of the dates of applications. The first warrant issued for lands in this county was No. 517 to William Preston, and three others were issued immediately afterwards for tracts contiguous to Preston's, and all adjoining each other, forming a body of land of nearly eleven hundred and forty acres, all in the township of North Strabane. These tracts were all surveyed Nov. 3, 1769, as follows: William Preston, warrant No. 517, "Leicester," 374 acres; Robert Harrison, warrant No. 549, "Norfolk," 273 acres, 3 roods, and 33 perches; Paul Fooks, warrant No. 1916,

"Shrewsbury," 288 acres, 3 roods, and 3 perches; David Evans, warrant No. 1969, "Leeds," 201 acres, 3 roods, and 26 perches. The original survey is now in possession of D. T. Morgan, Washington, Pa.

The tract of William Preston was in the forks of the East and West Branches of Chartiers Creek, and lay on both those streams. The land of Robert Harrison and Paul Fooks was on the East Branch, the former adjoining Preston, the latter adjoining Harrison, and being the southernmost. David Evans' tract was on the West Branch south of Preston, west of Harrison, and north of Fooks.

Dr. John Morgan, of Philadelphia, had become interested with others in the purchase of large tracts of land in the Western country, and purchased these four tracts lying in the valley of the Chartiers, containing eleven hundred and thirty-eight acres two roods and twenty-two perches, with six per cent. allowance. The Preston, Harrison, and Fooks tracts were deeded to him May 1, 1769, and the Evans tract May 1, 1771.

A certain William Wilson had settled upon a part of these lands, and had made some improvements, and by an article executed Oct. 18, 1774, between Morgan and Wilson, the former agreed to purchase Wilson's improvements at such valuation as should be put upon them by referees agreed on by the two parties. Beyond the making of these betterments and their purchase by Dr. Morgan, nothing is known of the progress made in the improvement of these lands until they came into possession of Col. George Morgan, a brother of Dr. John Morgan. The latter died in 1789, and in his will, made July 22, 1788, and probated Dec. 23, 1769, he devised to his brother, Col. George Morgan, all his estate, real and personal, except such bequests as are otherwise mentioned. The lands in the valley of Chartiers were still in the possession of Dr. Morgan, and by this will the title became vested in Col. George Morgan. His relations with the government as Indian agent at Pittsburgh from 1775 to 1779 brought him into this section of country, and it is quite probable that he then visited those lands at that time, but nothing definite is known.

He came to the property in 1789, and from an advertisement issued in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, bearing date Nov. 26, 1796, it is evident that the land had been pretty well improved, and that settlers, or rather tenants, had been living upon it some time. The

time that Col. George Morgan removed to the Western country to reside has been a matter of dispute, but one which a letter written to his son in 1796 and the advertisement hereafter given definitely settled. His son George, when sixteen years of age, was attending school at Princeton, preparatory to a three years' course at college. The letter referred to is written from Prospect (where he resided), a short distance from Princeton, and was written for the purpose of ascertaining whether George would prefer remaining at school, finish his course, and prepare himself for a profession, or to go West with the family. He says, "The resolution I have long since formed to leave New Jersey has now become necessary to be executed. . . . As there are good schools in Pennsylvania, I shall take Tom with me. I hope to leave Prospect next October." It is evident he removed at the time he intended, as on the 26th of November, 1796, he published an advertisement in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, in which he said,—

"I have six farms in and adjoining the forks of Chartiers Creek, twelve or thirteen miles due south from Pittsburgh, which I will rent for one year or a term of years, taking a share, or cash, or a certain quantity of produce in payment. On each farm are buildings with from forty to eighty acres of clear land under fence, with a proportion of good meadow. On one of them is an orchard of one hundred bearing apple trees, and on two of them are distill houses. . . . Lots will be ceded on easy terms to those who wish to build for themselves, which may be done as cheap in stone and lime as in wood. . . . One able to erect suitable buildings here for an inn to accommodate travelers will meet particular encouragement, as the great number passing the route stand in daily and hourly need of supplies and accommodations here.

"Mr. Moses Coe's saw and grist mill adjoin Morganza, about nine hundred yards down the Little Chartiers from the Cross-Roads, and Mr. J. Struthers' Fulling Saw and Grist Mills adjoin it on the West, one mile from the intersection of the above-mentioned public roads, from whence it is two miles to Mr. McMillan's Presbyterian Meeting-House, three miles to Canonsburg, and nine miles to the county town of Washington. . . ."

The advertisement was dated "Morganza, Nov. 26, 1796," this being the first mention found of the name which Col. Morgan gave to his great tract, the name "Morganza," which is still well known as applied to these lands.

It was evidently Col. Morgan's intention to make extensive improvements at Morganza. On the William Preston tract, "Leicester," he built a large frame house, about fifty feet square, two stories high, with an extensive wing on each end. In the rear of these buildings was a frame barn one hundred and thirty by one hundred and fifty feet. The main road passed on the south side of the house, and along this he planted trees. He brought with him from Prospect many articles of comfort and elegance, and was surrounded with much of culture and taste. Upon this farm he lived with his family till his death.

In the fall of 1806, Col. Aaron Burr (with whom Col. Morgan had long been acquainted) visited him at Morganza, with the purpose (as it afterwards became evident) of enlisting Morgan with him in his scheme for the founding of a Southwestern government. At Col. Morgan's dinner-table the subject of

a dismemberment of the Union was adroitly brought up by Col. Burr, who remarked that, so weak was the government, two hundred men could drive Congress into the Potomac, with the President at their head; also, that with five hundred men he could take possession of the city of New York. To this remark Thomas replied that he would be d—d if the little town of Canonsburg could be taken with that number of men. To all his specious arguments and overtures Col. Morgan turned a deaf ear, and Col. Burr left baffled, and with his companion, Col. Dupeistre (De 'Peyster?), left the next morning, and proceeded to Wheeling. When Col. Burr was afterwards tried for treason at Richmond, Va., Col. George Morgan and two of his sons, John and Thomas, were called as witnesses, and related the circumstances of Burr's visit at their home, and the conversation that there took place. It was while at Richmond on this occasion that Thomas Morgan, son of Col. George, became acquainted with Catharine Duane, daughter of Col. William Duane, of Philadelphia, who not long afterwards became his wife. Mrs. Catharine Duane Morgan was a woman of remarkable talent, and one whose name was for many years a familiar one in Washington County.

Col. George Morgan lived but a few years after that time, and died in 1810. His wife survived him fifteen years. They were both buried in the family ground at Morganza.

On the 24th of October, 1764, Col. George Morgan was married by the Rev. George Whitefield, at Philadelphia, to Miss Mary Boynton. Their children were John, Ann, George, Thomas, and Maria.

John Morgan was born in 1770, was educated at Princeton College, married Margaret, the only daughter of James Bunyan, of New York City, in 1795. He removed to this place with his father's family. His father-in-law, James Bunyan, also came to this section and purchased land on Chartiers Creek, opposite Morganza, in Cecil township. Col. John Morgan lived on this property, and died there in 1819, leaving five sons and three daughters. The only survivors are Col. James B. Morgan, of Pittsburgh, and Mrs. Barker, wife of Major Barker, of Washington, D. C. Thomas Gibbs Morgan, a son of Col. John Morgan, emigrated to New Orleans about 1824, where he resided until his death. He was one of the leading lawyers of the State. His son, Philip Gibbs Morgan, also an attorney, is now minister to Mexico.

Ann Morgan, the eldest daughter of Col. George Morgan, was born in 1772, and became the wife of Thomas S. Gibbs, of John's Island, S. C., in 1793. He died in 1798, leaving three sons and one daughter. Later she married John Gibbs, a brother of her first husband.

George Morgan was born in May, 1780, educated at Princeton College, came West after he had finished his studies, and attended to his father's business. He

had charge of the saw- and grist-mill built across the creek in Cecil township. After the division and sale of the property he went to Bower Hill, Allegheny County, where he resided on a farm of about five hundred acres. His children were David T. Morgan, Mary B., Elizabeth, Nancy, Maria, George, Matilda, William McK., and Lauretta. Of these, David T., George, Maria (Mrs. James Watson), and Lauretta are living in Washington, Pa. William McKennan Morgan became a physician, studied medicine with Dr. F. J. Le Moynes, practiced in Pittsburgh, and died about 1854.

Thomas Morgan, the youngest son of Col. George Morgan, was born Aug. 25, 1784. Came to Morganza with his brother's family in 1796. Studied law in Pittsburgh, and was admitted to practice in Washington County in 1813. He was elected to the Legislature of the State in 1814-15, was prothonotary from 1821-23, postmaster at Washington, Pa., from 1829 to 1839. He was prominent in the organization of the Franklin Bank (now the First National), and of the Washington Female Seminary: He died July 19, 1855, aged seventy-one years. He married Catharine Duane, as before mentioned. She survived him eight years, and died March 23, 1863, at the age of seventy-six years. Their children were Thomas J., William D., George W., and Anna. Thomas J. Morgan was born at Morganza April 3, 1815, and died Nov. 30, 1850. He commenced the study of law with Isaac Leet. He established a newspaper at Washington called *Our Country*, which he published a few years. In the summer of 1836 he raised a company of men for the war in Texas. In December of 1837 he was located at Columbus, Ohio, and received the appointment of chief clerk in the post-office of that city. In 1841 he completed his study of the law in Columbus with Noah H. Swayne. Was clerk of the Senate of Ohio in 1841-42. In the spring of 1846 he was appointed law clerk in the office of the solicitor of the treasury of the United States. In the spring of 1847 he was appointed secretary of legation at Brazil, under Governor David Todd, of Ohio. He died of yellow fever at Rio de Janeiro, March 30, 1850.

William Duane Morgan, son of Thomas, is now living at Newark, Ohio. Gen. George W. Morgan resides at Mount Vernon, Ohio, and Miss Anna Morgan is still a resident of Washington, Pa.

Maria Morgan, the youngest child of Col. George Morgan, was born in 1787, and became the wife of Dudley Woodbridge, of Marietta, Ohio, where she settled. Their descendants are numerous in that place.

About 1818 a division took place of the Morganza tract, which later was sold in parcels to several different purchasers. It is now owned by Samuel Vaneman, William Pollock, McClelland Brothers, and John McConnell. The old homestead is owned by William Pollock, who married a daughter of James Murray, by whom it was purchased from the heirs.