

A History of Morland

Morland Platted

Morland was platted as Fremont, April 18, 1890. The tax roll at Morland in 1891 included the names of: S. Horton, Wm. Peterson, Marie M. Luse, Henry Morgan, G. W. Stober, B. P. Waggoner, G. D. Kenny, W. P. McDonald, T. F. Goff, Arthur Thomas, Florence Murphy, Peter Weida, Isabella Lindsey, W. H. Cole, Thomas Armstrong, F. M. Jobe, Ed McUulty, Henry Prewitt, D. S. Wiggins, Fred Grimm, James Stone, Mahala Trosper, J. E. Langely, John Chadsey, James P. Pomeroy, W. H. Cotton and S. N. Coder. The tax roll of 1895 listed the town as Morland instead of Fremont.

Morland, a city with a population of 237 in 1980, is located in the western part of Graham County. It is in a beautiful location, being surrounded by fertile fields and pastures and with the south fork of the Solomon River flowing through the City. Morland, however, has a most unusual history.

It was first known as Fremont, probably named for General John C. Fremont, noted explorer. Fremont had been established as government townsite when Probate Judge James Gordon filed Declaratory Statement No. 18000 "Kirwin Series" on February 24, 1881 on the NE¼, of Sec. 23 and SE ¼ of 14-8-25. The first postmaster, Chas. H. Morgan, was appointed May 11, 1881, continuing until March 19, 1883 when Edward Atkin was appointed postmaster.

There is no doubt that the first years of Fremont were a struggle for the families living there and that Fremont was nearly abandoned. The plat of Fremont was not filed with the Register of Deeds until Oct. 17, 1884 by J. B. Smith and Mr. Smith at that time stated he was the founder of the town of Fremont. The survey of the townsite showed improvements of one dwelling house 12 x 16 ft.; foundation for a frame store building, lumber on premises for same 12 x 20 ft. and one well of water.

On January 14, 1898, several years later the Graham Gem would state: "During the first settlement of the townsite on the north side of the river, there was one time when the town had dwindled down to one family, that of C. H. Morgan, and about 1000 prairie dogs."

A letter to the Government land office of March 2, 1885, written by Chas. H. Morgan stated he had been the postmaster of Fremont and had a merchandise business, but the post office had been moved away and he now owned the only improvements on half of the townsite. He asked if he could open his half of the townsite for settlement if he saw fit to do so.

Fremont was experiencing a "boom" in 1886 with the following businesses listed:

- Drug Store owned by J. B. Smith;
- Dry Goods, Groceries, etc. H. M. Morgan;
- Brown's Investment Co.;
- The Fremont Weekly Star newspaper: Star Land Agency;
- S. E. Leinbach, Blacksmith and Veterinary Surgeon;

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- Fremont House;
- J. S. Deerholt, Barber Shop;
- E. M. Bright, coal;
- W. H. Reasoner, Agricultural implements, buggies and wagons;
- Coder and Horton, General Store;
- Stone livery stable;
- "K" House
- Mr. Trosper was planning to start the Fremont Bank with a capital stock of \$15,000.

The newspaper in their publicity stated "The town is beautifully situated on both sides of the South Solomon river at the Junction of Antelope. Fremont is laid out in 56 blocks, each block containing 24 lots, each lot 25 x 150 feet. It contains a market square, college square and a large south park. An inexhaustible supply of splendid water can be obtained anywhere on the townsite at a depth of from ten to forty feet."

All was not well however as on October 27, 1886 Hiram Bundy filed an affidavit of contest alleging that the Fremont townsite had been wholly abandoned for more than six months and said tract was not settled upon and occupied as a townsite as required by law.

Also in 1886 a petition was signed asking for the formation of Solomon township. Approval was given by the commissioners to be effective Jan. 1, 1887.

As long as Fremont was considered a government townsite, there was no charge for the lots and people continued to come and choose their building lots. 1887 was a period of rapid growth. Among those purchasing property were T. M. Walker, who opened a Bank in June and Mr. G. W. Stober for a general store which would open in November. It was newsworthy that twelve teams were counted at one time on the streets of Fremont. Railroad surveyors were surveying south of the river and hopes were high for a railroad in the near future.

In April of 1887, hearings were held in Oberlin on Hiram Bundy's claim of abandonment. Witnesses in the hearing were Martin McDowell, T. S. Endicott, Edward Atkin, Willis Ellsworth, D. M. Armstrong, Hiram Bundy, D. C. Kay, Chas. Morgan and Deat Owen after which the hearing was closed to await a decision. The decision would later be made that 48 inhabitants were living on this land with businesses being carried on with a value of \$9,000.00 and this suit should be held void and be stricken from the records of the Department. Mr. Bundy however was persistent and appealed the decision of the Oberlin Land Office.

Meanwhile the Fremont Town Company had been formed to assist newcomers in securing lots. Great was the excitement at Fremont when word was received from the Acting Commissioner of the Department of the Interior in Washington, D. C. that Mr. Bundy's case had been dismissed March 29, 1888.

In May of 1888, the people of Solomon township voted in favor of the bond issue for the railroad by a majority of 38 and the Depot was to be located at Fremont. In July, of 1888, Mr.

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Bundy again appealed the decision of his suit vs. the Fremont townsite. In August, railroad officials changed the name to "Kalula" although the post office remained "Fremont." The reason given for changing the name was that there was already one Fremont on the U. P. system. The first train passed through Fremont in October of 1888.

Because the railroad refused to build a depot or supply a station or station agent until Fremont could give them a deed, residents wrote the Secretary of Interior, Washington, D. C. in July 1889 asking him to bring the contest by Hiram Bundy to a final decision as speedily as possible. The decision of Geo. Chandler, Acting Secretary of the Department was to dismiss the appeal on August 16, 1889.

Mr. Grover Walker and his clerk went to Hoxie to be with the Sheridan county bank so Fremont was left without a bank in September, 1889. Also in September, Mr. Bundy asked for another review and reconsideration of his appeal. Mr. Bundy had protested the action of the citizens in proving up on the Fremont townsite but in March, 1890, after three years of hearings and appeal, the final proof was decided in favor of Fremont. Witnesses to prove occupancy, habitation and continuous residence upon the townsite were D. C. Kay, W. H. Cole, J. B. Smith and Jones Stone all of Fremont. Fremont was no longer a government townsite and arrangements were made for the surveying and laying out of blocks and lots. See Exhibit D.

Mr. Bundy continued to ask for reconsiderations and on November 20, 1891 filed an application for a homestead on the S¹/₂ of the SE¹/₄ of 14 and the N¹/₂ of the NE¹/₄ of 23-8-25. A final decision was made in 1895 by the Department of Interior to dismiss the case.

The citizens of Fremont had never cared for the name of Kalula and in April of 1892 the post office and railroad was named Morland. This change of name was to cause legal problems concerning transfer of lots on the townsite for year to come. One case, W. W. Goodrow vs. G. W. Stober would be decided in 1909 by the Supreme Court of Kansas.

Despite the problems, Morland continued to grow and in March of 1901 consisted of four general stores, two lumber and coal yards, two hotels, two livery barns, two physicians, two stock and grain buyers, and one each of the following: drug store, furniture store, newspaper, meat market, barber shop, blacksmith and wagon shop, carpenter, creamery station, photo gallery, confectionery, harness shop, two church organizations and three lodges.

The Morland State Bank was organized in 1904. After the resignation of Mr. H. C. Hamilton, the first cashier, Mr. D. C. Kay was elected cashier by the Board of Directors in April 1904. Other officials were G. W. Collins, President and W. C. Brown, vice-president.

New elevators, a new mill and a new bank, as well as other businesses had been built in 1906 so it was felt the time had come for Morland to be incorporated. 48 persons signed the Petition and it was published in the Advance. The commissioners gave their consent to incorporate the City of Morland as a City of the third class. The first officers elected at the city election were: A. T. Mitchell, Mayor, G. W. Stober, D. C. Kay, James Ellis, Cy Jamison and J. D. Trosper, councilmen, W. W. Goodrow, clerk and C. A. Cain, Police Judge. As with most

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governing bodies, they immediately passed several ordinances, the first providing for the levy of city taxes, the second prohibiting the running at large of animals and the third concerning disturbances.

The deputy bank commissioner instituted the Citizen's State Bank in 1907 and it was reported they opened with the youngest cashier in the State and the first depositor, Ira Connor's son, was one of the youngest in the State.

The Morland Commercial Club entertained the Kansas City Commercial Club in November, 1908. A letter of introduction gave the following information about Morland. Graham County is, you know, located in the so called "Short Grass" region. You may be interested in knowing that "Short Grass" over six feet high can be found growing on top of the hills surrounding Morland. It is of further interest to eastern folk that another species of "short grass" has two big ears to the stalk and grows in profusion hereabouts. Still another species grows which when threshed goes 25 bushels to the acre and makes excellent bread for Kansas City. "Short Grass" makes fat cattle, too--ask Armour when you get back home.

Now about Morland, herself. We claim 350 souls--the sort of people who make Kansas a good place to live--just kind, honest, straightforward sort of people. We have two churches--well kept, better attended. We aren't so proud of our school buildings but we are proud of the kind of work done in our little "school house on the hill." Morland requires two banks to look after the financial part of her life. If you K.C. people don't quit buying our "short grass" products, we'll have to have two more.

There are four general stores here and you can buy any old thing from a spring chicken to an automobile. We have a drug store, too. We don't ship all our "short grass" wheat, not by a great deal. Did you notice that mill by the depot? Did you notice that it takes three elevators to handle the grain we have to spare?

Graham County farmers certainly do buy implements and hardware. Just look over the stock the three dealers carry. Do you know that one firm has sold fifty buggies to these "wild and wooly" westerners this fall? We have only one furniture store to supply beds for the living and coffins for the dead. It is painfully healthy here, too -but it ought to be as we have three doctors.

These new farm houses are built from lumber bought at home. Our lumber yard is hard to beat, Better write down the names of our real estate dealers. They are like the rest of the people -dependable.

Our post office is up-to-date; but then it has to be; it belongs to Uncle Sam and Morland. Speaking of a busy place, we do wish you could visit our blacksmith and machine shop. It takes two phone systems to keep the farmers posted on the Kansas City markets.

That awful racket you heard is our "Kid band", but just wait until you come next year--it will surprise you in another way then. We have two hotels and a restaurant. Two live barbers shave you while you wait; one dealer buys and ships butter and eggs in car load lots. One dentist

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relieves the aching molars; one shoemaker makes "Life's Walk easy." One lawyer settles the doubtful points and six carpenters build our houses.

We could go on and on, but what's the use? You'd have to live here years before you'd know us.

WE'RE GLAD YOU CAME--COME AGAIN. The Morland Commercial Club."

The ladies of Morland in March of 1920 decided to beautify the city park for the acceptance of a gift of a public water fountain. A committee of Mrs. Ethel Kay, Chairman, Freeda Moore, Secretary, Mrs. Oakey Brooks and Mrs. Anna Smith was appointed to request help from other organizations and March 30th was designated "Park Day." Promptly at the hour agreed upon, March 30, men, teams and wagons appeared upon the place appointed to begin operations for preparing the ground of the city park.

According to the Morland Monitor everyone was in a cheerful mood, ready and willing to work. Many teams arrived from the adjoining country districts. Railroad officials were present and certain plans and procedures were agreed upon. A certain number of men with shovels went to the hill near the school house, and there filled the waiting wagons. The loads were duly delivered at the park and under the direction of competent engineers, workmen with shovels; hoes and rakes spread and leveled the soil brought from the hillside. Teams were plowing ahead of the work and workmen with pruning knives and saw, trimmed and pruned the trees.

The ladies had gathered at the opera house and at the noon hour a feast was spread for the hungry and thirsty laborers, all volunteers, and they were fed free of charge. After an hour's rest for men and teams, again they started working and worked until 6 o'clock. There were 15 teams and one truck hauling dirt and the loaders and spreaders were upward of 60 men.

The park contained an entire city block and it was covered with a coating of additional soil of about six inches for more than three-fourths of a block. It was stated this is a sample of Morland's spirit, working and striving for a specific, useful object. The boys certainly did well in the field, the ladies in the kitchen, and together all did well in the dining hall.

A second park day was held April 6 to complete the work. It was stated they were busy until the noon hour where they again gathered at the opera house and there did justice to an ample spread prepared by the energetic ladies. This was not a common affair, for during the entire time of the feast; an orchestra of piano and other instruments and vocal music gave the diners a regal serenade.

The Hauling Teams:	The Shovellers Teams:	
Bud Holmes, Kemp Moore,	Theron Smith, Art Collins,	Rev. Greene, R. J. Coop,

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Roger Sullivan, Ibe Jobe, John Sullivan, J. E. Dodd, Lee Minium, Bill Huntington, Claude Fortune, Fred Jamison, Ed Dalton, Alfred Cummings, Theron Smith, Chris McGuire, D. M. Seltzer, H. M. Saunder, E. L. Harrold, Ora McAtee, V. R. Prout Jesse Covalt	M. E. Goodrow, Jim Prout, Alva Hurlbut, Claude Fortune, Earl Guffey, Ernest Webber, - Klingensmith, B. W. St. John, Jr., Ernest Dean, F. S. Kay, Will Covalt, Roy Guffey, Arthur Waters, B. W. St. John, Clifford Miller, Earl Huntington, J. A. Dowty, Jess Richardson, Fred Jamison, H. W. Cunningham, Avon Harris, Glenn Minium, Roy Baskins, Mike English, John Waters,	Dr. Cook, Gat Shearer, J. M Rinderknecht, J. H. Ferguson, R. A. Tobyne, R. V. Davis, Wm. Stebens, Albert Kobler, Tom Heath, John Dawson, Sam Herron, Si Huntington, Dr. Webber, Ed Dalton, Roy Prout, T. Walts, Bob Baird, David Baird, Bert Born, Melvin Prout, Leu and Vic Blazier, Harry Saunders, Mark Loyd, O. A. Hunsicker, N. J. Cummings, Ross St. John, Cecil Smith, Arthur Harrold.
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Morland residents were quite excited at the prospect of oil in the vicinity when a test oil well was drilled on the St. John farm in September, 1930. While oil showings were encouraging, drilling was stopped at a depth of 5037 feet. The operators had agreed to drill a test well of 4000 feet when they came.

The following description of Morland and its businesses appeared in the October 19, 1933 issue. "Ross Brooks is in the general merchandising, as is also A. R. Collins. Bill White is street commissioner; Hugh Cunningham is our butcher and sells groceries on the side and also has near beer. Ernie Nicholson runs the U. S. 40 North garage; O. M. Harris and Cecil Bird, the Morland Garage. Bob Belveal has one, too; and Albert Kobler sells pills and manages a mighty good drug store. Lester Webber has a drug store and there are two bankers, Kay and Hunsicker and they both have banks. B. W. St. John has the only lumber yard in town. He would probably have two if the town was big enough. Ludlow & Co. are hardwaremen; Joe Nichols is also in the hardware business and in connection sells furniture and will sell you the last thing you need on this earth--

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a coffin. Gat Shearer sells about everything produced from grain but bread, and our baker next door west does that and more--cookies, doughnuts, rolls etc. Damon Hedgpeth is our Sinclair oil man and has a fully equipped station. Tom Born manages the K. T. filling station. Izzie Richmeier handles the Farmers Union gas and oils and his brother, John, runs the business end of the Farmers Union elevator and stock-buying. L. L. Everly manages the Robinson elevator and ships hogs to California: Bill Stebens is one of five cream and produce buyers; others are Mrs. Otta, A. A. Rome, Ingham and John Tebo. Ma, Joe Pearson and Les Favinger each manage good places to eat. G. B. Harrell is our Palace Clothing man who sells to dress the men and Miss Edna Hedge has the Toggery and sells to dress the ladies. Her dad, C. W. runs the Gideon Inn and her brother, Clayton, is manager and owner of the opera house. "Big Ben" Smith with his good wife to do most of the work, has what is known as Smith the Cleaners, and will make your old clothes look like new. J. E. Prout is our blacksmith: Dal Jamison our contractor and builder. Mrs. Prettyman and Mrs. Spurrier have beauty parlors. Ben Murphy runs the tonsorial parlor. Rowley runs a club room and A. R. Spurrier publishes the Monitor. We almost forgot that Lovell runs the hatchery. The Electric shop is under the management of Raymond Ingstrand, an efficient young man. There is the Tire Shop and two shoe repair shops that make 'em last another year and Diamond Dick the jeweler. Theron Smith and Joe Rinderknecht are our principle dairymen, with several little fellows on the side. We have good churches and good preachers; good schools and swell teachers. In fact We have a good town with lots of good people. Oh, we almost forgot Orvil Seig, who sells the Standard Oil products.

If you are a knocker and dissatisfied with our town, we have a good highway that leads to either coast and a railroad, too, if you choose, and R. R. Dollarhide will sell you a ticket so you can save the leather in your shoes.

If there is anything we've forgotten we offer an apology from the bottom of our heart, except to the bootleggers, whom we did not intend to mention from the start."

Many men and women of the Morland area served their country in time of war. In May of 1942 Philip Wayne Prout was listed as "missing in action." In a letter to his father, J. E. Prout, the War Department stated Private Philip W. Prout was serving in the Philippine Islands at the time of final surrender. Mr. Prout was told that persons serving in the Philippine Island were considered as missing in action from the date of the surrender of Corregidor May 7, 1942 until definite information is received to the contrary.

The Morland Monitor of May 25; 1944 had the following article: "The U. S. War Department has officially declared that Wayne Prout is dead. He was the son of J. E. Prout of Morland. Wayne was with the U. S. forces stationed in the Philippines at the outbreak of the war and was reported "missing in action" following the close of the Philippine campaign when the Japs captured the Islands. Thus Wayne was the first Graham County casualty of this war."

The following information was contained in his obituary: Private Philip Wayne Prout was born in Wallace, Kansas, June 9, 1906 and officially declared dead May 8, 1944. Wayne enlisted in the army in 1941. From Ft. Logan, Colorado, he was sent to Angel Island, California where he was in charge of the new recruits that were sailing for the Philippine Islands as this was his

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second enlistment.

He was stationed in Manila, Luzon Island, in the Philippines and was with General Douglas McArthur's troops at Corregidor and Bataan. He was reported missing in action from Company M, 31st Infantry.

Wayne had served 3 years of Army service here in the United States, having been stationed at Ft. Warren, Wyoming. He had been in extensive maneuvers in Louisiana and Georgia, where he received trophies for expert marksmanship. He was head machine gunner of his regiment.

"This is Morland" described the community in January of 1946. "There are some towns on the western prairies that have not been able to withstand the competition of the larger cities and have almost gone out of existence, but not so with Morland. In case you don't know it, we have an up-to-date city which will rate with many twice its' size.

For a city with 300 population, we have two good banks serving a radius of about 324 square miles; two good hardware stores, three busy grocery stores, a drug store packed with almost everything the public needs for everyday use, one feed store, two garages with welding and blacksmithing equipment, two filling stations, and another just on the highway, a men's furnishing store that draws its customers from miles around, a full time barber shop, and the Morland Cafe which serves its customers seven days a week, an elevator which ships out loads of grain and ships in feed and other farm necessities.

And when you need your shoes repaired, Elmer is on the job all the week; a telephone operator gives efficient service day and night. On top of these, we have a good high school, fully accredited and well equipped, and a grade school where dinners are served to the children. Our Gideon hotel, which has weathered the storms of years, is in full swing and takes care of many weary travelers every night.

And don't forget we are well supplied with churches where the ministers work Sunday and week days to build up a Christian citizenship. A post office which serves both Democrats and Republicans on an equal basis, is so busy that extra help has to be called in at times.

We are not so well equipped with doctors, but Dr. Grace Brown, who is a chiropractor, serves the community with efficiency. And very soon we will have our Locker plant in full working order. The work is progressing and will be ready for business in a few weeks.

And of course, everybody knows we have a weekly newspaper, the Morland Monitor, which goes all over the county and into many states of the union. If we have forgotten anyone, come and tell us. That will show us that you read the Monitor."

For a town the size of Morland, it has a surprising number of thriving businesses, some of long standing and some just getting on their feet and beginning to look like they are here to stay.

Darrel Minium is engaged in drilling water wells, both for irrigation and home use; there is

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Keith's Country Kitchen owned by Wilma and John Keith; Helberg oil well drilling company owned by Swede and Jerry Helberg. Jerry Helberg also has a law office in Morland; Hazel Engleman's Pizza Place; Clark's Tavern and Recreation; Dale Griffin's welding shop; Lester Ray's Barber Shop; Ms. Bird's Beauty Shop owned by Joyce Bird; Wava Skipper's Hair Hut; Skipper's Country Store is owned by Gary and Wava Skipper. These businesses are located on the north side of Main street.

On the south side of Main street is Charley Minium's Sinclair Station; Minium's Dry Goods owned by Patty Minium Bean and Opal Minium; next is the Citizens State Bank; the Unified School District #280; Chritchfield's New and Used Furniture; the U. S. Post Office; Chalky Bell's Welding; David Goff's Welding.

The other businesses are scattered around Morland. There is Roy Bird's Repair; Borger's building and construction; Don Boss's Construction; the Co-op gas station; Co-op Elevator; Harry Minium's elevator; Goodrow's Kansas Hog Company; Goodrow's custom cutting; Evan's Spraying Service; Drew Poer Insurance; Jim Dinkel's auto repair; C & S Tank Service run by Bill Nichols; Cecil and Larry King's well service; Archie Edgell's building and construction. The city also hires a maintenance man. We also have women who deal in party products, such as Stanley, AmWay, Tupperware and Avon.

Other Morland Historical Resources:

- [1886 Petition](#) for creation on a new township.
- [1906 Petition](#) for Incorporation of Morland.
- History of the [Schools](#) in Morland.
- History of the [Morland Assembly of God](#)
- History of the [Morland Methodist Church](#)
- A List of [Morland Methodist Ministers Since 1893](#)
- Morland [High School Alumni](#)
- Morland [Cemetery Index](#)
- History of the [Graham County United Methodist Parish](#)
- [Genealogical Information](#) for Graham County is available on Blue Skyways.
- [Historical images](#) of Morland from the Special Collections at WSU's Ablah Library are available online.
- Morland was mentioned in *Kansas, A Cyclopedia Of State History* by Frank W. Blackmar (1912).
- Morland appears on a county map in the *History of Kansas* by Noble L. Prentis published in 1899.

From the *Morland Centennial* (1981)
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