

## CANAWLERS AT REST

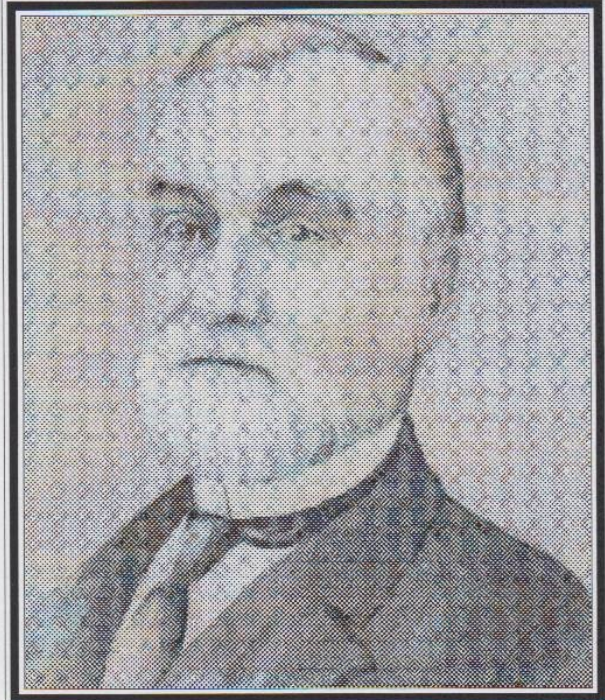
### OLIVER P. MORGAN

**b. February 29, 1824**

**d. October 24, 1900**

**By Sue Simerman**

**Painting by Morris R. Perry  
cousely of  
Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood**



**Elizabeth Lotz Morgan (1823-1851)**

One of Fort Wayne's best citizens Oliver P. (O.P.) Morgan was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana in 1824. He came to Fort Wayne in 1832 at the age of 8 years with his father, Joseph. Joseph was in the mercantile business and had a general store on Columbia Street. This is where Oliver acquired his business knowledge. For several years he studied under M. F. Barbour. While working for his father he continued studies on his own amassing a great deal of knowledge.

Joseph Morgan later became the second mayor of Fort Wayne. George Wood resigned his position during his second year and Joseph was elected to fill the vacancy until the election of 1843. This gave Oliver a taste of political life.

Oliver entered the employ of the Wabash & Erie Canal Company sometime in the 1840s. The 1850 Census shows him 26 years old and the collector of tolls. We do not know how many years he held this position. The 1864-65 city directory shows Mr. A. C. Probasco was the toll collector. The canal office was located at the NW corner of Columbia and Clinton Streets. From this position Oliver rapidly rose to others of prominence and trust.

For half a century Oliver was active in the business, social and educational life of the city. He served on the city council for many years. He also served Fort Wayne as clerk, treasurer, recorder and was on the board of school trustees.

Elizabeth Lotz was born October 11, 1823 in Pennsylvania. She married Oliver on December 26, 1847. The 1850 Census shows her being 27 years of age. She died March 12, 1851 at the age of 28. She was first buried in the Broadway Cemetery and moved to Lindenwood Cemetery, Ft. Wayne, IN close to her father Henry Lotz on November 11, 1860. The Morgan family grave plots are next to Elizabeth's grave.

Henry Lotz followed Joseph Morgan as elected mayor of Fort Wayne in 1843. He gave up this office because of his travels and other duties. He was the general contractor for the first canal aqueduct to span the St. Mary's River in Fort Wayne and the Gronauer Lock. He was born in 1797 and died on April 6, 1845.

In 1845, Oliver was the clerk (his obituary says recorder) of Fort Wayne. That year Sterns Fisher was chosen superintendent of the Wabash & Erie Canal with headquarters at Fort Wayne. Then in 1848 and 1850 O.P. was reelected city clerk.

**Clara Harrison Morgan (1824-1883)**

Clara Harrison, Oliver's second wife, was born July 9, 1824 in Vincennes, IN. She was the daughter of the oldest son (John Harrison) of William Henry Harrison and her mother was Clarissa Pike, the oldest daughter of General Zebulon Pike. Clara Morgan was the mother of at least four children. Harry age 11 months 27 days



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old died on July 27, 1855 and Pike age 10 months and 7 days old died on June 11, 1859. There are also graves of a daughter and two boys, probably sons, in the same row of graves. Clara died at the age of 58 years 9 months and 12 days on April 21, 1883.

In 1856 Oliver returned to the hardware business. Morgan & Beach became a widely known hardware house.

During the 1840s and 1850s a portion of northern Indiana was terrorized by a gang. Their bold crimes became so terrible that the 1856 Indiana legislature appealed to law abiding citizens to organize into bands of "regulators." In 1858 Oliver joined the Kekionga Guards, which formed that year. Among those in this group were Jesse Lynch Williams, Hugh McCulloch, Pliny Hoagland, Samuel Edsall, and others who later attained renown in the state and nation.

In 1864-65 he lived at 54 E. Washington St. In 1873 he lived at 40 E. Washington St. This is in part of the Fort Wayne downtown business district. The houses were removed many years ago.

As a school trustee from 1861 to 1894 (33 years) Oliver made an outstanding civic contribution. During these years the public schools grew from one to sixteen schoolhouses with 200 teachers.

Oliver Morgan, prominent in insurance and banking circles, was a director of the Fort Wayne National Bank in 1865. There he worked with the following men: Jesse Lynch Williams, president; Pliny Hoagland, vice-president; Jared Bond, cashier, Montgomery Hamilton and Stephen B. Bond were other directors. Jesse Lynch Williams was the chief engineer of all of Indiana's Canals. Pliny Hoagland and Benjamin Tower rebuilt the Gronauer Lock.

Oliver was president of the Fort Wayne Drug Company. In 1867 he was elected a city councilman for Fort Wayne and was reelected in 1873.

O. P. Morgan was also an incorporator of Lindenwood Cemetery located on the west side of Fort Wayne. He was its second president from 1891 until his death in 1900. The first president was Isaac D. G. Nelson, who served from 1860 to 1891.

In 1887, the original horse-drawn street car line founded in 1871 and known as the Citizens' Street Railway Company had its mortgage of \$22,000 foreclosed. Oliver P. Morgan and Edward P. Williams executed it. It was purchased by Stephen B. Bond and John H. Bass for the Fort Wayne Street Railroad Company. In 1892 it was converted to an electric system and was incorporated as the Fort Wayne Electric Railway Company.

#### Susan Fowler Morgan (d. 1919)

Susan Fowler became Oliver's third wife. She was born in New York and her last residence was in Los Angeles, California. She died September 11, 1919 and was buried beside her husband.

In 1893 Oliver was one of the speakers for the dedication of the new City Hall building located on E. Berry St. at Barr St. This building now houses the History Center of Fort Wayne, Allen County.

Oliver P. Morgan suffered a heart attack while at Rome City, IN, approximately three years before his death. He spent the summer of 1900 at Bay View and Alma, Michigan in hopes of restoring his health but returned no better. Four weeks later he had a recurrence and from then on could not leave his bed. He died Oct. 24, 1900. He was 76 years, 7 months, and 24 days old. He is buried at Lindenwood Cemetery, Section H Lot 25. His obituary in the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette follows:



Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette

October 25, 1900

## Oliver P. Morgan

In 1856 he purchased the hardware business founded by Horace Durie, in 1843, on E. Columbia St. on the site of the building now occupied by the Fort Wayne Drug Co. and the S. Freiburger and Co. Here he engaged in a retail business, and four years afterward, forming a partnership with Mr. Fred Beach, the firm became Morgan & Beach. With Mr. Beach's death in 1895? it became Morgan & Co. and continued as both a retail and wholesale business until, in 1897, the building was destroyed by fire. Mr. Morgan then decided not to rebuild, and retired from active mercantile life. He was also a director of the Fort Wayne Drug Co., and a heavy shareholder in the same.

### IN BANKING CIRCLES

He was largely interested in banks in the city, and was for years a director of the Fort Wayne National Bank, and continued until death as Vice President and a director of the Old National Bank, which replaced the former. His connection with the firm of S. C. Lumbard and Co., dates from the death of Mr. Lumbard, two years ago.

### HIS PUBLIC LIFE

Publicly, his life was a busy as his private career. His first public position was that of city recorder (clerk), to which he was elected in 1845. At this time Mr. John M. Wallace was mayor, and the late O. W. Jeffords was city treasurer. In 1847 Mr. Morgan succeeded Mr. Jeffords in that office.

In 1859 he was chosen school trustee, and in this position his services to the city and public in general were invaluable. Associated with him on the board were Messrs. Samuel Edsall, Charles Sturgis, Thomas Tigar and R. E. Fleming. The Hon. Franklin P. Randall was then mayor. Mr. Morgan held the unprecedented record of thirty-seven years as school trustee. An unfailing evidence of his worth, and which enabled him to learn so much about the city's needs and to exercise his knowledge...in this respect in a way that lives to this day.

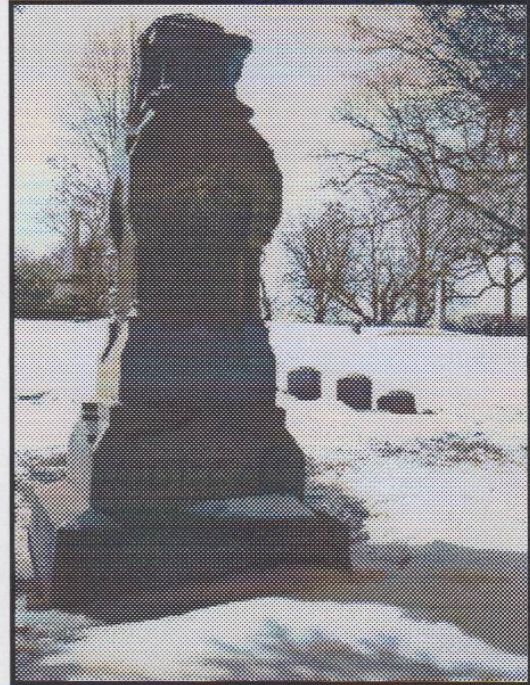
### MARKS OF RESPECT

The hardware men held a meeting last evening at the Randall Hotel, and appointed a committee to draft resolutions of respect for the deceased. This committee will report this evening.

The school board held a meeting last evening, and ordered the flags over all school buildings in the city floated at half mast on the day of the funeral, and had it not been held on Sat., the schools would have been closed as a mark of respect to the deceased.

### THE FUNERAL

The funeral services will be held from the residence. Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock the Rev. D. W. Moffat, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, officiates. The internment at Lindenwood will be private.

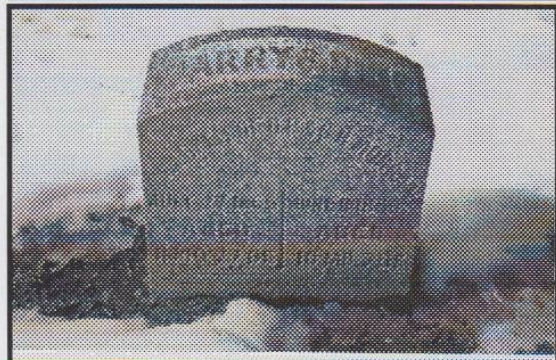


Lindenwood Cemetery, Ft. Wayne, IN

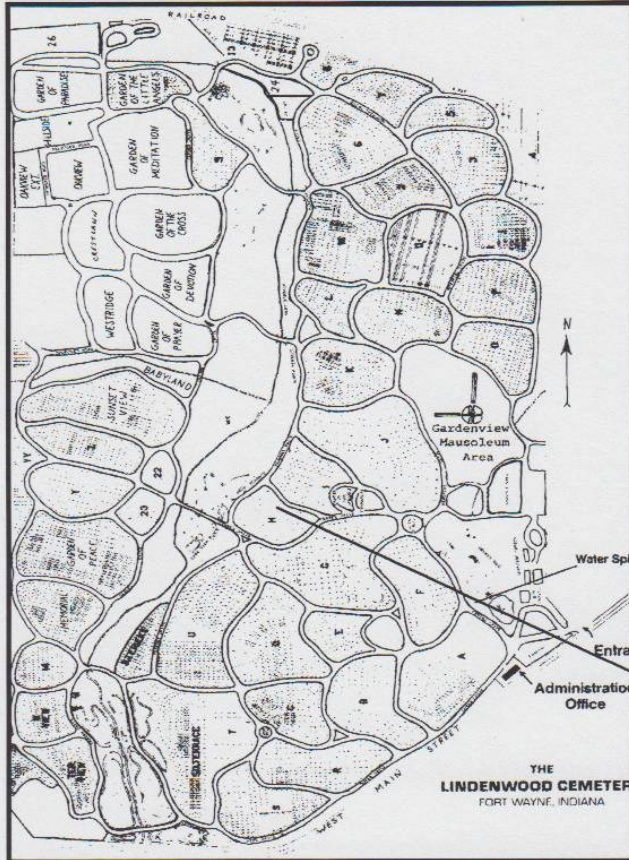
Above: The Morgan family monument stands above smaller stones. The shortest stone is that of O.P. Morgan. His first wife Elizabeth Lotz is out of view on the left. His second wife Clara Harrison and his sons Harry and Pike are out of view to the right. His third wife Susan Fowler is beside him on the left. Below Top: Susan Fowler & O.P. Morgan (Section H Lot 25) Bottom: Harry & Pike infant children of O.P. & C. H. Morgan



Photos by Sue Simerman







**Sources:**

1850 Census of Allen County

1862 Fort Wayne city directory (advertisement)

1864-65 Fort Wayne city directory

1873 Fort Wayne city directory

Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette (obituary) October 25, 1900

Fort Wayne News-Sentinel Sept. 12, 1919, p. 8 col. 7.

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**Oliver P. Morgan's Grave  
Lindenwood Cemetery  
Ft. Wayne, IN**

**American Canal Society**  
By Carolyn Schmidt

The American Canal Society's board of directors met on April 10, 2003 in Billerica, MA near Lowell, MA for their annual meeting. CSI members present were Bob & Carolyn Schmidt and Mike Morthorst. Ballots were sent to members ahead of time to elect one third of the board to serve for a three year period. Bob as chairman of the nominating committee reported that all current directors were reelected and that Dan McCain of Delphi, IN was newly elected to fill a board vacancy. The board also voted to ask canal groups to donate and send information to the National Canal Museum for a central website, which has information on American canals and links to the various groups' sites. They will match the total of all donations up to \$2,000. The next meeting will be at the World Canal Conference in St.

Catharines, Ontario, Canada in June 2004.

The meeting took place during the bicentennial of the Middlesex Canal. That weekend many programs about the canals of Massachusetts were given at different venues. In Lowell, we learned about the canals underground. There the Pawtucket canal, a transportation canal around the falls, had several branch canals built from it that provided water to turn the wheels of industry. Lowell had ten textile mill complexes. The Lowell National Park has a visitors center, which explains the mills of Lowell and buildings associated with them. The loom room, where about 7 of the 30 or more looms operate, is so noisy that visitors wear ear plugs. Girls from nearby farms once ran these looms. They were housed in corporate owned boardinghouses adjacent to the mills. They had little

room in which to sleep and very little space in which to dine or study. They worked in lint filled air and extreme heat in the summer, but they earned the much needed money to help support their families. Later immigrants replaced them.

The Middlesex Canal was a 27+ mile long transportation canal running from the Merrimack River at Middlesex (Lowell) to Charlestown (Boston). The Concord River fed the canal at the summit level. In 1821-22 merchants from Boston wanted to harness the water power of the 32 foot drop over the Pawtucket Falls to run their looms. After the success of a water-powered mill built in 1814 in Waltham, MA, which carried out all the steps of carding, spinning and weaving, a larger enterprise led to the establishment of Lowell. By 1850 Lowell had a population of 33,000, the second largest in Massachusetts, and employed 10,000 people.