

## Uncle Bill Morris to Some--“Daddy-Bill” to Me

by his Great Granddaughter, Nancy (Morris) Boyd



**Nancy (Morris) Boyd**

*Nancy (Morris) Boyd and her husband, Curt, have operated the century-old Boyd family farm in southwestern Iowa near the Missouri River for many years. Over the past decade, Nancy took advantage of the internet in her spare time to learn more about her father’s ancestors than earlier genealogists would have believed possible.*

*Nancy did not get to know her Douglas County based Morris kin when she was growing up--that has helped to motivate her to learn as much about the Morris family as possible. Nancy was raised by her parents in Omaha, Nebraska, and she only remembers being to Douglas County about three times in her life.*

*Nancy remembers the family referring to her Great Grandfather William F. Morris as “Daddy Bill.” Locally, in Ava, he was known widely as “Uncle Bill Morris.” Paul Barker, son of W. I. Barker, remembers the family because the Morris home was directly across the street from the Barker home in south Ava during the 1930s and 1940’s.*

### The Family of Uncle Bill “Daddy Bill” Morris

My Great Grandfather William Franklin Morris was the fourth of five children born to John W. Morris and Martha Embry. He was born February 22, 1872, near Forsyth, Taney County, and died August 23, 1947 in Ava.

Daddy-Bill’s parents were married on October 4, 1866, in Webster County, Missouri. Several of his siblings by this marriage remained in Douglas County and surrounding counties. They raised their families and lived out their lives in southern Missouri:

- Mary Jane was born in 1867. In 1885, she married William Deckard from the Rome area.
- Sarah E. was born in 1869. She married Joseph (Babe) Walker from south of Ava in 1898.
- Rebecca was born in 1871. She married William Marler in 1886.
- William Franklin was born in 1872. He married Martha Malissa Spurlock Manning in 1898.
- Lucinda Alice was born in 1876 and married Clark Williams. Her birth, marriage and death occurred in Webster County.

During or shortly after the birth of Lucinda Alice, Daddy-Bill’s mother, Martha, died. Fairly soon after, John W. Morris married Caroline Honeycutt.

Caroline’s roots were in both Webster and Ozark County. Most of the Honeycutts from those counties are her kin.

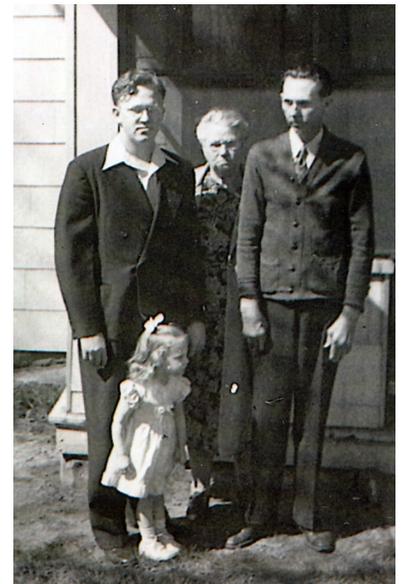
Because of his mother’s early death, Daddy-Bill and his siblings were raised by Caroline, and she proceeded to have ten children as well by Daddy-Bill’s father, John W. Morris.

Daddy-Bill (William F. Morris) married my Great-Grandmother, Martha Malissa Spurlock Manning in December 1898, in Ozark Co. Missouri. Their children were:

- William Earl Morris was born on August 10, 1900, and died July 3, 1955, at Ava. He married Pearl Agnes Chance on August 31, 1920, in Wright County.
- Eva Morris was born in 1906. She married a Hutchinson.
- Jessie Morris was born in 1910. She married long-time Ava dairyman, Lawrence Croslin.
- Bertha Morris was born in 1912. She married an Atchley.
- Every Morris was born on an unknown date and died young
- A pair of twins died at birth.



**William F. “Uncle Bill” Morris  
(b. 1872 - d. 1947)  
Nancy’s Great-Grandfather**



**L-R: Nancy’s Father, Charles Morris; Great-Grandmother, Martha (Spurlock) Morris; Grandfather, Earl Morris; and her older sister Jacqueline in front.**

### My Grandfather, Earl Morris

William Earl Morris and Pearl Agnes Chance had one child, Charles Ray Morris, born February 2, 1922 in Wichita Falls, Texas. Charles died August 11, 1980 in Omaha, Nebraska. Charles was sent to Omaha to live with his Aunt Clella Chance Byers after his parents divorced around 1930. Grandma Pearl would follow at a later time. As a result, my sister, Jacqueline, and I were raised in Omaha.

I did not have the opportunity to know my extended Morris family. Daddy-Bill died in 1947 before I was born.



On the right: my parents, Charles and Pearl (Chance) Morris with my great-grandmother, Martha (Spurlock) Morris on the left.

My grandfather, William Earl, died on July 3, 1955, three days after my fifth birthday. On a 1964 vacation with my paternal Grandmother Pearl Chance Morris Mercer, I was able to meet very briefly, my great-grandmother, Martha Morris. I feel sure that my great-



Morris Family -- Almagordo, NM (ca 1920s) L-R: Martha, Bertha, Eva (with adopted son), Earl and his wife Pearl, Jessie, William F (in hat) and an unidentified man.

grandmother had seen me as a baby when she and Grandpa Earl visited the family in Omaha, Nebraska.

My dad remained in contact with his father, Earl, and his grandparents during his lifetime. Earl and Grandmother Martha had visited my dad in Omaha on various occasions. Also my dad had visited his Morris kin in Missouri during his school years and after his graduation from High School.

Being older, my sister remembered the visits, and I was just a baby when they came up for a visit. She remembered sitting on her Grandfather Earl's lap and steering the car down the street.

Sadly a family rift occurred in the final years of William Earl's life in the 1950s, and remained until the day my dad died in 1980, despite attempts by him to right matters before his death. But through my search I have made contact with Morris family members who have been a great resource in filling me in on my Morris kin in Douglas Co. Missouri.

Publication of this article might help me identify others, like neighbor, Paul Barker, who remember the family and perhaps have information to share.

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The Morris Home in south Ava in the late 1930s. This photo was taken from the upstairs bedroom of a teenage Paul Barker whose family home was across the street. Photo provided by Paul Barker



Pearl (Chance) Morris with a young Charles Morris at Wilson's Mill east of Ava in the 1930s