In 1896, Elbert M. and Margaret Morton left Springfield, Missouri with their six children and arrived in Katy. They purchased 160 acres of land and began farming rice and raising cattle. This year, a Morton family member will have operated the Morton Farm for 120 years. Some Morton family members still live in Katy or its surrounding areas.

**Family History**

According to Elbert’s grandson, 85-year-old James Morton, they traveled after receiving a promotion from the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) railroad, which was nicknamed “the Katy” and is how the City of Katy got its name.

Pamela McGowan, James’ daughter says, “I think back to my great-grandparents coming to Texas in the late 1890’s and what hardships they encountered to have a better life.” After the powerful storm of 1900, the Morton home was destroyed. James relates that most of the family took shelter in the kitchen, which was separate from the house and remained intact.

Later, Elbert’s son Charles, his family, and the farm faced more difficulties. After nearly starving to death starting a homestead in Colorado, Charles and his wife Beulah returned to Katy in 1927, and they began saving money for the future to purchase land. This land helped their family survive one of the hardest periods in U.S. history for farmers: the Great Depression. “When you think about what my mama and daddy did, it was amazing,” says James. From his own childhood, James recalls Katy’s war bond drives during World War II. He says, “The main thing that drew crowds was the Katy High School band’s concert. You bought a bond to get in.”
The Morton family has been farming in Katy for over 100 years

 instances was when Monroe played on the first football team in Katy. Since the dedication of Morton Ranch High School, five scholarships have been given to graduating seniors there in honor of Monroe Morton and George Dickerson. In addition, Pamela works for Katy ISD purchasing all consumable supplies for the district. To date, four Morton generations have attended Katy ISD schools, and a fifth generation is in line to graduate from Katy ISD schools.

**Commitment and Tradition**


The Mortons passed down more than farming or living in Katy. Ida Morton, James’ wife, says, “We have a wonderful Christian heritage, and we must teach our kids to share that with their children and grandchildren.” Pamela adds, “This family has always had high standards of honesty, loyalty, and commitment to any task they undertake. I am proud to see my children and all their cousins continue this tradition.”

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LACEY KUPER WULF is a wife, mother of twin boys, and writer. She loves reading about her own family history and hearing others’ stories too.

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- Pamela McGowan