

# James W. Robison

1831-1909



Born in Scotland on March 19, 1831, to James and Isabell Robertson, James W. Robison immigrated to America with his parents when he was little more than one year old.

James Robertson was a railroad contractor who, in America, engaged in railroad construction. He helped build the first railway in Michigan, along with lines in Pennsylvania and Illinois. The family settled in Tazewell County, Illinois about 1835, on a large body of land given to him in partial payment of his services.

Grants to these lands were made out in the name of James Robison; rather than go through the lengthy process of making a spelling correction with the land office, the Robertson's chose to retain the new spelling of their name. Mr. Robertson became one of the wealthy, influential and honored citizens of central Illinois.

James W. Robison was educated in the public schools of Tremont, Illinois, followed by the Illinois College at Jacksonville. Farming successfully in Illinois for thirty years, he was known as a progressive thinker, giving close attention to the latest scientific information in agriculture.

J.W. married Sarah A. Woodrow on March 28, 1860. Nine children were born to this union, all boys. Three of their sons died in infancy.

As a charter member of Illinois State Horticultural Society, Robison served on the executive committee and for one term as president. He also served in the senate of Illinois from 1875-1879, and was president of the Illinois Board of Horticulture for several years. He was on the board of the Farmer's National Bank of Pekin, Illinois.

Robison moved the family to Kansas in 1884, having previously purchased a large body of land. He became one of the most influential men in the agricultural development of his adopted state, as well as a horse breeder of national reputation.

The success of Whitewater Falls was built not only on prize-winning Percherons, but also on hospitality. Every visitor or prospective buyer was expected to stay for at least one meal in the Robison's large and inviting home.

In 1888, J.W. and his wife moved to El Dorado, making their home on the northwest corner of Denver and Pine. He made an equitable division of his estate among his surviving sons and grandchildren in 1908.

Robison served as president of the Kansas Cattleman's Association and was a member of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, where he served two terms as president; he was on the board of directors at the time of his death. He was also a member of the State Board of Railroad Commissioners of Kansas, serving for two years as chairman of the board.

Active in organizing the Kansas State Cattle Shippers' Association, he served as president of that body. In addition, he was a trustee of Washburn College at Topeka.

On July 2, 1909, J.W. Robison passed away quite unexpectedly, due to a hemorrhage of the brain.