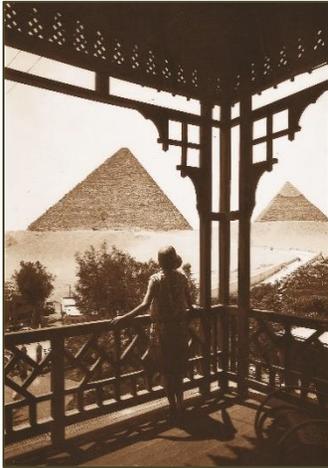




# Western Monroe Historical Society

## Morgan-Manning House

### MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER



*The Mena House Hotel, from  
Vintage Egypt, by Alain  
Blottière*

**GREETINGS** – Here I am back in wintery Brockport after a sunny and warm stay in Egypt in early February. This year, I had the privilege to stay at three historic hotels, where wealthy European and American tourists used to spend their winter to escape the dreary weather of their homeland. The first one I visited was the **Mena House Cairo Hotel**, overlooking the

Great Pyramid of Giza, which started as a hunting lodge for the Egyptian king Ismael Pasha. It eventually opened as a hotel in 1886. Cruising down the Nile, south of the Luxor temple, is the **Winter Palace** built by the British in 1886 on the banks of the Nile. It continues to be the hotel of choice for travelers wishing to visit the tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings.



*Old Cataract Hotel viewed from Elephantine Island*

Finally, my personal favorite was the **Old Cataract Hotel**, in the southern city of Aswan. Described as

having “old world charm with a delightful old world elegance,” it opened its doors in 1889. Built on a rocky outcrop across from Elephantine Island, it was designed to house European travelers who wished to benefit from the perfect climate of Southern Egypt. Agatha Christie was inspired by this location for her novel, *Death on the Nile*, and several scenes from the 1978 movie were filmed on location.

Around the same time as these hotels were erected in Egypt, one member of the Morgan family decided to pack his trunks and go on his own adventure. In 1891–1892, **George Morgan** spent several months with his friend Walter Smith traveling across Europe, the Mediterranean, and Northern Africa. Thanks to the assiduous transcription work of one of my students, Ann Marie Hummel, I can share with you some details of George’s journey.

In a letter dated November 31, 1891 that he wrote to his mother Susan from the Normandy Hotel in Paris, he outlined his trip as follows:

*“From Heidelberg we will go direct to London stopping at Canterbury to see the cathedral there which I understand is one of the first in Eng. will probably be in London for two weeks + then circle to the east + south stopping at Brussels- Antwerp- Amsterdam- Berlin- Dresden- Prague Vienna- Munich etc to Nice on Mediterranean where expect to remain some time.”*



George  
Morgan



While not going as far east as Egypt, he did reach Algiers and Tunis. On February 13, 1892, he wrote from the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Nice:

*“We have to day arranged for our tickets as follows Nice to Marseille then via boat Marseille to Algiers by cars Algiers to Tunis, stopping at Constantine via boat from Tunis to Malta then via boat to Syracuse in Sicily via cars across Sicily to Palermo then boat to Naples and from there through Italy to Rome.”*

The traveling habits of the Morgan family will be highlighted in the new Museum Room that is under construction on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Morgan-Manning House. As I hear the cold wind blowing in the trees in front of my window, it is a pleasant escape to think of cruising the Mediterranean Sea or trekking through Northern Algeria and Tunisia!

*Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, Historian*

**FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK** – As I write this document the sun is shining brightly and today’s high temperature will nudge fifty degrees. It’s about time! Activities at the House have continued but at a slower pace than most of the rest of the year. Great programs, work on the Display Room, new phone and internet connection, and a camera surveillance system for grounds are all things happening since the last newsletter was mailed. Of course we are starting to plan for future events such as the English Tea, the July 4 celebration, and the Annual Society Meeting in May. I’d like to present a tentative plan for the Society Meeting. Attendance by members has dwindled in the last few years to an alarming low point. We’ve been discussing some ideas to bolster participation at this event. Here are some ideas being presented:

1. Have food available so no one has to prepare a “dish to pass.”
2. Move the date of the event to a weekend time slot so more people can attend.
3. Combine our annual business meeting (voting on a new slate of Board Members) with a celebration of our volunteers. We need to honor our many helping hands who have donated countless hours to keep our “House” functioning in the manner that it does.

At this time the above ideas are in the planning stage. Any ideas or contributions would be greatly appreciated. Call (637-3645) or e-mail the House

(morganmanninghouse@gmail.com) with any ideas you may have and they will be carefully reviewed.

I’m off to England, France and Switzerland for a few weeks but will return in mid-March, hopefully to Spring!

*Gordon Fox, President*

## IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY AT THE MMH:

While the cold and snowy weather of this season forces us to have fewer activities at the House, we nevertheless continuously strive to provide the community with insightful historical programs.

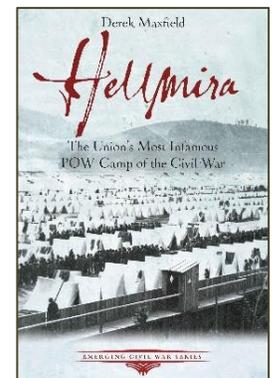


On **January 15**, resident artist **Sarah Hart** shared with us how she and fellow Brockporter Helen Hastings (1871–1953) have a lot in common. These two local artists, a century apart, were trained in the same “Sight-Size” method of drawing. According to

*The Artist Network*: “Sight-size refers to a method in which the artist makes a drawing the same height as the subject being rendered, as it would appear on either the left or right of the drawing board. From a determined view spot, this allows the artist to see his subject and drawing side by side with both appearing the same size. In this manner, the artist is able to make very objective comparisons of shape and proportions. It’s a great learning tool because it helps the student to see objectively how what he or she has drawn compares directly to nature.”

Thanks to Sarah’s expertise, members of the audience were able to better appreciate Helen Hastings’ paintings, which she made as a student at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts.

Civil War enthusiasts were in for a treat on **February 20**, with WMHS trustee and History professor **Derek Maxfield** presenting his new book *Hellmira. The Union’s Most Infamous POW Camp of the Civil War*. Long called by some the “Andersonville of the North,” the prisoner of war camp in



Elmira, New York, only existed for one year—from the summer of 1864 to July 1865—and became the site of a great humanitarian crisis. Around 3,000 prisoners died of malnutrition, exposure, and disease during this dreadful year. Derek, who grew up near Elmira, also highlighted how this city struggled to forget this dark episode of their history. As Derek stated, “only recently has this trend been reversed.”

### UPCOMING PROGRAM & EVENT:

★ **Thursday, March 19 – “Naturalist, Artist, Taxidermist: The Many Talents of David Bruce” presented by Chris Hunt & Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer**

**David Bruce** (1833-1903), originally from Scotland, settled in Brockport in the late 1870s. He is best known as a taxidermist—the Morgan-Manning House owns several of the bird displays he prepared. However, he was also a renowned naturalist and an accomplished artist. He not only did the interior decorating of St Luke's church but also painted murals, which still adorn several homes in Sweden, Brockport, and Clarkson. During this program, Chris Hunt will tell us how she re-discovered some of David Bruce's masterpieces in her home, at the White Farm.



*David Bruce exquisite mural adorning the dining room of the White Farm. The artist painted a group of herons and egrets feeding at sunset.*

The program will start at **7pm**. It is free and open to the public. The WMHS invites everyone to stay for refreshments after the presentations.

★ **Sunday, April 26 – English Tea:**

This will be the 8<sup>th</sup> year for our English Tea. If you have never attended, consider joining us this year. It features tea sandwiches, scones, fruit and tempting desserts, all served in the parlors, reception

room and library of the beautiful Morgan-Manning House. It sells out quickly so make your reservations soon by calling Sandy at 637-3645.

*Peggy Fox, Chair of the English Tea Committee*



**INTERESTED IN JOINING THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WMHS?** A few seats will soon be vacant on the board of trustees of the Western Monroe Historical Society (WMHS). If you are interested in being a part of the board, please contact Sandy in the Office (637-3645) and she will inform the Nominating Committee. Thank you for your support and commitment to the Morgan-Manning House!

**MEMBERS IN THE NEWS** – We are proud to report that two of our members have been the recipients of awards to honor their leadership and impact in our community.

- **Dr. Heidi MacPherson** received the ATHENA International Award, in recognition of her achievements as a professional female leader, who has demonstrated significant achievements in community service and the professional advancement of women. Dr. MacPherson is the 7<sup>th</sup> president of The College at Brockport and the first woman to hold this role.
- **Donald Grentzinger** is the recipient of the 2019 Monica W. Andrews Creative Volunteer Leadership Award for his work and leadership at the Sweden Farmers Museum, as well as his commitment to showcase the impact farming had throughout the area's history.

Congratulations, Heidi and Don!

**THANK YOU** to:

- Ann Welch and Michael Raff for their donations **in memory of Eugenia Cabiedes, Alicia Fink's sister.**
- Roger & Ingrid Lamont for their donation **in memory of Art Harrington.**
- Norm and Char Wright for their donation **in memory of Dean Wright, Norm's brother.**
- Ann and Dick Frey for their donation expressing **gratitude to Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer** for her continuous effort to work on the monthly newsletter and her role as MMH's Historian.

**MARCH CALENDAR**

March 4 – Wed – Quilters

March 10 – Tues – 7pm – Board Meeting

March 18 – Wed – 10am – Quilters

March 19 – Thurs – 7pm – Program: *Naturalist, Artist, Taxidermist: The Many Talents of David Bruce*, presented by Chris Hunt and Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer

March 24 – Tues – 10am – Spinners

**SAVE THE DATE**

April 19 – Thurs – 7pm – Program: *Henry Selden, the Political Leader*, presented by Bill Andrews

April 20 – Mon – All monies must be in to cover reservations made for English Tea

April 26 – Sun – 2 pm – English Tea – Reservations required. No tickets will be sold at the door

May 21 – Thurs – 7pm – Program, part of "Low Bridge/High Water"

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

**The Western Monroe Historical Society is committed to educating the community and future generations on the history of the Morgan-Manning House, celebrating our heritage, and preserving this local landmark that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

---

Western Monroe Historical Society - Morgan Manning House  
151 Main Street, Brockport, NY 14420-1909  
Office Hours Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 1:30 pm 585-637-3645  
www.morganmanninghouse.org E-mail: [morganmanninghouse@gmail.com](mailto:morganmanninghouse@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Western-Monroe-Historical-Society](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Western-Monroe-Historical-Society)