



Western Monroe Historical Society

Morgan-Manning House



NOVEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Greetings, One and All!

Uncertainty and surprise are constants in my life. Uncertainty seems to come in two forms. One is mathematical odds, as in a coin flip or roll of the dice. The other is the very random way that the physical world and human nature impact outcomes. Uncertainty can fill me with dread or eager anticipation. The word often seems negative, but it does not have to be.

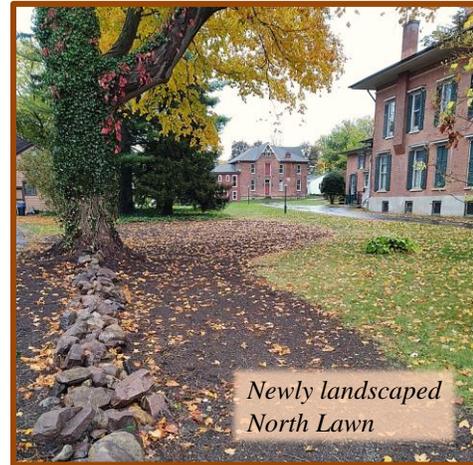
Surprises can be pleasant or unpleasant, the result of an uncertainty or a bolt from the blue. An unexpected call or card from a friend is a nice surprise. The COVID situation has been a less joyful surprise to us all. As individuals struggle with health, social, and financial issues, organizations like ours have also suffered. The lack of traditional fundraisers has been an unexpected blow. Many of our members reached out and sent a “a little extra,” surprises that reaffirm our faith in others.

The work on our grounds this year had several uncertain turns, but I am very happy with the results. Cindy Graves, Dan Hawken, Gordy Fox, Benton Hart, and Bell Design & Landscaping made things happen to forward the plans of the Historic Preservation Board. Thanks to them all!

Sadly, several of our active members have passed away so far in 2020. You will find tributes to three of them in this newsletter. Their contributions were valuable in different ways, and they will be remembered. These have been unhappy surprises, and I miss these friends already.

Be safe and be well!

Mary Lynne Turner, Acting President



*Newly landscaped
North Lawn*

CURATOR'S CORNER:

Brockport Community Museum Panel Dedication



I hope that our members residing in Brockport have had a chance to view the new Interpretive Panel that is now installed on Main Street in front of the Morgan-Manning House. Perhaps you have also read the article in the Westside News highlighting the panel's dedication

(<https://westsidenewsny.com/features/2020-10-26/the-morgan-manning-house-is-now-included-on-the-trail-of-brockport-community-museum-interpretive-panels/>). It is now with mixed feelings that I read this

article. Of course, I am terribly pleased and proud to see the House featured on the front page of this newspaper. At the same time, it is a sad reminder that Doug Hickerson had asked me to write this article since he could not be present himself. He wanted to make sure the event would get the recognition he felt it deserved. Even though he was not well, he gave me time and support during the writing process. This article is posthumously dedicated to him.

I want to thank one more time all the members of the community and of the Morgan family, who attended the event. It was a joyful, albeit windy, celebration and the culmination of many months of collaborative work between the Brockport Community Museum and the Western Monroe Historical Society. Thank you also to Lori Skoog for documenting the event with her wonderful photos.



A socially distant gathering to listen to our introductory speeches

Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, Curator

INTERNSHIP AT THE MMH – The House is quieter than usual this semester as not many students can work with me. The Museum Studies course I usually teach in the Fall was unfortunately canceled because of the pandemic. Nevertheless, I have one intern: **Jeffrey Crane**, a junior in the History Department and recent transfer to SUNY Brockport. I will let him introduce himself and share with you his experience:

“My name is Jeffrey Crane. I am a History major and a Museum Studies minor. Due to my experience at the Morgan-Manning House (MMH) and other classes, I plan on changing my major to Anthropology. During my time at the MMH, I have been tasked with different projects ranging from transcriptions of the Morgan

family’s letters to a large-scale cataloging project of the house’s Summer Kitchen. Through these different projects, I have been able to get a good feel for how museum work goes and have found that, overall, I do not see myself doing museum work in the future. Even though this is the case, I have still enjoyed this opportunity that I have been given and I encourage any other students or community members to volunteer their time at MMH to get hands-on experience in museum and to give a helping hand to a museum staff that is strongly dedicated to their work.”

As Jeff himself comments, he realized during this internship that archaeological fieldwork is more in line with his current interests than work in a museum setting. One of the aims of internship is, after all, to evaluate whether certain professions are a good fit or not. In this case, it is not. This did not prevent Jeff from accomplishing a lot during the past two months. He will be coming to the House until Thanksgiving week, after which time all instruction will be on line for the rest of the semester.

CHRISTMAS PHOTOS: A MORGAN-MANNING HOUSE TRADITION



© Pat Kirkingburg

A few years back, on a snowy December day, my friend Julie Wilson and I were in the parlor rooms entertaining kids as their parents awaited the moment when their family could visit with Mr. & Mrs. Santa Clause and have their picture taken. Julie read to the kids, while I showed the older ones how to make snowflakes. I realized what a fixture this event had become when one mom pulled me aside saying that her parents brought the family to the Morgan Manning House for pictures when she was young. The holiday

photos are not just about a moment; they are about building lifelong memories.

On **December 6, 2020 (Sunday)** from **11:00 am** to **3:00 pm**, we will continue this tradition with a few changes to ensure the safety of the visitors and those who volunteer. This will be the first time the doors to the house will be open since March, and we want to ensure that the positive tradition is carried on. Visitors will be welcomed on 10-minute intervals. These 10-minute slots are by reservation only. Reservations for your family to take pictures can be made by calling the Morgan Manning House at 637-3645. Due to COVID safety, Mr. & Mrs. Clause will not be at the house. We are asking that all who enter the house wear a mask. The mask may be removed for photographs. Three fully decorated locations in the house will be available for photographs.

We hope many families will come and enjoy the magnificence of the house during this holiday season.

Christopher Albrecht

REMEMBERING SUE, IRENE, AND DOUG:

This past year has been hard on us in too many ways to count. Recently, it has been especially difficult to reckon with the loss of several dear members of the Society. These are challenging times indeed. Yet, these friends would not want us to remain mournful. Rather, they would wish for us to continue our important role in the community and this is what we will strive to do in their memory:



 **Susan E. Edmunds** passed away peacefully on Wednesday September 2, 2020 at the age of 88.

Sue was instrumental in the success of many projects at the Morgan-Manning House. When her health allowed her to do so, she gave much of her time to serve on the Board of Trustees and to join several of the Society's committees. She was also involved in many other institutions in the Village, such as the First Baptist Church, the Seymour Library, and SUNY Brockport. You may remember when she was an Associate Professor in the College's

Department of Music. She was also a supporter of the Greater Brockport Area Historical Preservation. A plaque is now on display in the Red Room of the Morgan-Manning House in her honor.



The parlors were filled with friends to celebrate Sue Edmunds. In his role as President of the Society, Gordy Fox presented her with flowers and the dedicatory plaque honoring all her contributions (November 2019).

Sandy Wright, our Office Manager, knew Sue quite well and shared this lovely note with me: *“My Mom and I shared a table with Sue at one to the English Teas, and also at some functions at the Baptist church. Even though she had health problems, Sue was always cheerful and had a great sense of humor. She was a warm and delightful human being.”*



 On Thursday September 24, 2020, “our community lost one of its pillars: **Irene R. D'Agostino** passed away from acute respiratory failure due to pneumonia...” Irene's obituary beautifully summarizes her

impact on the village with this introductory sentence. A physical education teacher for 20 years, Irene was frequently in the newspaper, as evidenced by all the articles that Eunice Chesnut had gathered and kept in the Society's Archives. A member of the Niagara District Masters Swimming community for more than 35 years, she won numerous local, regional, and National titles until she was 89 years old. She was also a very active member of the Society, attending most events and always being one of the first volunteers to call the office to help. Our programs will

not be the same without her friendly presence. Several of her friends wanted to share a few memories:

“We enjoyed her company, especially sitting with her at Brockport College football games, which she faithfully attended. She supported all Brockport functions, and was especially proud of all of her husband’s football players who would visit her. She possessed tenacity and a quiet grace. She will be missed.” Mike & Lin Schaffer.



Irene, left, with her fellow swimmers proudly wearing the medals they won at the 1989 Empire Games.

“Irene was a great supporter of Brockport athletics, and in particular, the football team. I spent many a Saturday afternoon with her sitting on the 50-yard, half-way up from the playing field, rooting on the Golden Eagles. She also could be counted on to have cookies to share with those who sat nearby. She took special pleasure in having people over to her house for dinner. They were always well planned, tasty, and served with much love. ... Irene was a gentle, warm-hearted, caring, independent woman whom we will terribly miss.” Merrill & Shoshanna Melnick



Dianne & Doug Hickerson and Irene D’Agostino attending a program at the MMH.



It is hard to believe that there will no longer be any new article written by **Doug Hickerson** in the

Westside News. Even after leaving Brockport last year to move to Virginia to be closer to family, he continued to write about a community he dearly loved. Christopher Albrecht’s heartfelt tribute of Doug’s contributions to the Society and the village highlights how much he will be missed by all:

Thank You Doug - A Friend of the Morgan Manning House, by Christopher Albrecht

I was first introduced to Doug Hickerson when he was covering an evening presentation at the Morgan Manning House. His wife, Dianne, always with a camera, was at his side ready to capture the image to compliment Doug’s writing. And, write he did.

For years, Doug had a knack for finding the silver lining in our town of Brockport. He was able to capture events and people in their natural state doing extraordinary things to enrich where we live. If you had the good fortune to be contacted by Doug, he grew entranced in capturing your story in a newspaper article, beautifying our souls with words about everything that is right with the world. Doug never profited a cent from his work. His gratuity came in the form of the vicarious joy he felt when positive aspects of our community were shared.

The Morgan Manning House was a frequent beneficiary of Doug’s articles. Meticulous in detail, Doug advertised upcoming events and reported on the many happenings at our house. He brought pride to the Morgan Manning House, its volunteers and membership, and the surrounding community.

I enjoyed the many conversations I had with Doug. On October 21, Doug wrote his final chapter and succumbed to an aging heart. That heart gave him so many miles as his many articles brought so much life to our community. Thank you, Doug!



THANK YOU TO:

- Norm and Char Wright for their donation **thanking Gordy Fox** for all he does for the Morgan-Manning House, and telling him to go have a beer and relax.
- Helen Hemmer for her donation **thanking Mary Lynne Turner** for her devoted service and involvement in WMHS over the years.
- **Tom Nesbitt** and **Dan Hawken** & his team for re-sealing the front and turnaround sections of our driveway.
- The anonymous donors for their donation **in memory of Harry Sentiff**, who was president of WMHS from 1965 to 1968.
- Eugene Korber for the donation **in memory of his wife, Janie W. Korber**.
- Christ Community Church; Rich & Joan Fenton; Peggy & Gordy Fox; Roger & Bonnie Howlett; Wayne Smith, Kasey Perkins and Kristen Fitzgerald; for their donation **in memory of Doug Hickerson**.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Nov 14 – Tues – 7 pm – Board Meeting



Nov 26 – Thurs – **Happy Thanksgiving!** Office Closed

Reminder: Tours of the MMH are possible by appointment only and limited to 6 guests.



SAVE THE DATE

Dec 6 – Sun – 11 am-3 pm – Christmas Photos at the Morgan-Manning House

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
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Bateman Orthodontics - Dr. Bateman
Bittersweet
Brad's Northside Service
Brockport Animal Hospital
Brockport Auxiliary
Brockport Custom Carpet
Brockport Optometry - Dr. Raff
Carriage Place & Antique Co-op
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