



Western Monroe Historical Society

Morgan-Manning House



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear Members,

I hope that all of our members are doing well as we look forward to fall. The pandemic has created some new situations, and we all deserve a pat on the back for dealing with it as well as we have.

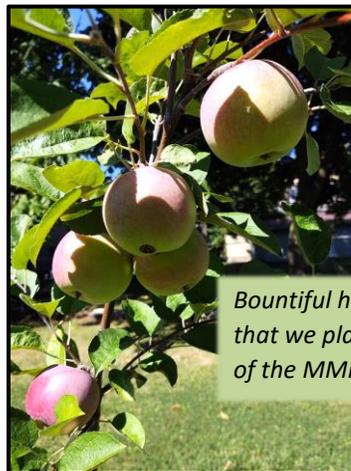
August was an interesting month at the Morgan-Manning House. Marilyn and Lisa, our building and collections assessors, made their long-awaited visit. Their insights were very interesting. The grant-funded assessments were to evaluate the conditions of our property and its contents, not the monetary value (see below for more details in the **Curator's Notes**). Lisa came with samples of acid-free materials, book recommendations for collections health and safety, and a vacuum cleaner that she highly recommends. She does not get a commission on any of these items, but she cares deeply about preservation of materials. Marilyn climbed on various roof surfaces. She looked at windows, the basement, the brick and foundation work. She enjoyed conversations with Gordy about his care for the house and carriage house structures over the years.



Marilyn on the roof inspecting the chimneys.

We obviously anticipated, and wanted, their expert opinions and advice. It was rewarding to hear their praises. The house was grander than they had expected from photos. There was less apparent pest damage than expected. Many more details were attended to than they experienced in other assessments. Many of the negatives were expected. We expected the concerns about roofs and basement areas. We were aware that our collections needed more space and climate control. Some of their suggestions were surprising. Almost all suggested actions are costly, but not all have to be tackled immediately. Their preliminary reports will come in October, and the final reports in December.

Work on the grounds has been continuing, with new plantings consistent with the 1897 plan going in a few at a time. Cindy Graves is our gardener, and she has worked diligently during this hot summer to accomplish amazing results. We are pleased to have decided to hire Bell Design and Landscaping to clean up the northwest corner of the property, with the help of our own Dan Hawken.



Bountiful harvest in the orchard that we planted on the north lawn of the MMH grounds in June 2019.

Membership letters are finally out. Please renew, and consider gifts for others. We will be looking at ways to make joining and donating even easier for everyone. We are also interested in knowing what you think about the Western Monroe Historical Society, what we can do in the future, and how to involve you, your family, and others.

Best wishes to all,

Mary Lynne Turner, Acting President

CURATOR'S CORNER - You may have noticed that I have recently been signing my entries in the newsletter as Curator/Historian. My title has indeed changed last May, and I am now the **Curator of the Morgan-Manning House**. This change has been instituted to follow the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) of the Education Department. Since the Western Monroe Historical Society (WMHS) owns a collection of historical artifacts, the largest and most important of which is the Morgan-Manning House itself, our institution is required to have a curator on staff. I am delighted to don this new hat, as I have experience working in a museum setting. While living in Chicago, I worked as Curator at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and was hired as a consultant by the Art Institute of Chicago to study their collection of Egyptian artifacts.

As Curator of the WMHS collection, I will be in charge of Collection Care and Management. In particular, it will be my role “to develop and implement policies and procedures to protect the long-term integrity of objects, artifacts, records, and specimens, as well as their associated data and documentation, for use in research, education, and exhibits,” as listed in the NYCRR. It will also be my responsibility “to foster the preservation, accessibility, and utility of the institution’s collections and associated data.”

To help me follow best practices in this new position, I will greatly benefit from the collections assessment reports we are expecting to receive this year. As we had reported in May 2020, Erica Linden successfully wrote two grant proposals, which are allowing us to benefit from the advice of experts in

Heritage Preservation. On **July 29**, Archives Specialist **Kate Philipson** conducted a virtual **Archives Needs Assessment** through the **Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY)**. Via Zoom, Kate and I reviewed and discussed a series of photos showing the current state of our archival collection. We expect to receive Kate’s complete report in late October. I look forward to reading her recommendations on how to best preserve the documents entrusted to our care, on how to write new policies for archival use, collection digitization, and a plan for emergency preparedness.

On **August 20 & 21**, **Marilyn Kaplan**, Architect, and **Lisa Goldberg**, Objects Conservator, spent two days fully reviewing the building, facilities, and our collections of artifacts as part of a **Collections Assessment for Preservation Program**, or CAP, offered by the **Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC)**. Mary Lynne, Gordy, and I answered their many questions regarding the functioning of the Society, the maintenance, and the restoration work conducted on the House since the 1964 fire. We discussed the policies that we have in place, as well as the practices that we follow to display and care for the objects forming our collection. As Mary Lynne mentioned, Marilyn did not hesitate to go on the roof to check its integrity and the state of the chimneys. She also crawled into tight spaces to check the masonry. As for Lisa, she took a multitude of photographs, measured the light levels in each room, opened drawers, closets, and boxes to check how our collection fared.

At the end of their review, Marilyn and Lisa shared with members of the Board some preliminary comments and recommendations.



Safe debriefing on the grounds of the MMH: Lisa (left) and Marilyn (right) gave members of the Board a summary of their preliminary findings.

It is undeniable that the Morgan-Manning House has benefited from the great care of volunteers, most especially Gordy, during the past few decades. Yet, our dear House is in need of some serious TLC. We will need to invest significant time and resources to fix the moisture problem in the basement and make this project a top priority. Likewise, Lisa clearly indicated that we do not have appropriate storage rooms for our collections. We expect to receive a joint report in December. This important document will be instrumental in helping the Society devise a strategic plan, with a clear priority list of projects and fundraising needs for the next few years.

Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, Curator/Historian

SANDY IS BACK! Office Manager Sandy Wright is back in the office **five days per week, Mon-Friday 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM** if you need to call (585-637-3645). Please be advised that masks are required to enter the building (we have a few spare masks at your disposal if you forgot to bring yours). Thank you for your cooperation in keeping us all safe!

SAD NEWS - We were sad to learn of the passing of long-time Society member **Betty Dunn (1925-2020)**. Betty was an active member of the community and often attended functions at the House. Our sympathies go out to her husband George, her children, and grandchildren.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER CALENDAR

September 7 – Tues – 7pm – Board Meeting

October 13 – Tues – 7pm – Board Meeting

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



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

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