The Morris Manor Farm:
A History and A Memoire

By Warren Ryther, 2015

Largely derived from Google searches. Little attempt has been made to conform to rigid scholarship standards, although the author has striven to be accurate. It is merely offered to pique the interest of the casual student of local history, and perhaps it will serve as a starting point for those inclined to delve deeper.

THE MORRIS MANOR FARM: a HISTORY and a MEMOIRE

More than fifty years have passed since I spent two summers, and later a fall, working on the Morris Manor Farm, starting in 1964, after graduation from high school. Even then the place was an anachronism, a throwback to an earlier time, and aside from the Clark Estates in Cooperstown, rather unique. Despite a rich history that stretches back more than two hundred years, remarkably little has been written about the place. I had no way of knowing then that the Manor as it had been for so long was in its twilight years; after all it had been a single-family enterprise for at least seven generations. My memory dims with every passing year. I'm surely not the best one to tackle it, but with respect to the historical void I shall attempt to record the background of the place, and, with some help from frie11ds to bolster my memory, I shall record what I remember of life there in the 1960's. The goal is to preserve recollections of an enterprise that no longer exists.

I do not pretend that my memories are fully accurate, and I am not the most scrupulous scholar. Everyone has a different perspective. I would welcome corrections and additions. A final note: My experience at the Manor Farm was positive, and I am grateful to the Morris family for affording the experience. I have no agenda other than presenting the facts as culled from the historical record.

My personal story as relates to the Manor begins at age 14 with three successive year for summertime work on the Vance and Delores Bird dairy farm in West Laurens. The Birds struggled financially, as most small-scale farmers did back then, they still needed to hire a little extra help in the summer. As their first employee, my weekly starting pay was a paltry $20, but they also fed me lunch, their big meal of the day: meat and potatoes and the wonderful pies that Deloris baked. They liked my work, and the pay rose to $25 the second season. Having been raised in a village, unschooled in farming, here I learned haying, fencing, barn cleaning and to operate the Ford tractors (and to my dismay they also assigned lawn mowing and garden weeding). All of this put me in good stead when I applied to the Manor Farm, a place known for hiring kids needing money for college. When interviewed by J. L. Miller, the manager, I requested placement on the farm crew (as opposed to the less-manly, I thought, garden crew or with the stables or paint shop) where my friend Paul worked and his dad was the foreman. I got that position, with a first-year weekly pay of $95. Putting in the required 56 hours of work per week, that came to about $1.70 per hour, and I felt flush.

The Manor Farm was patterned on the great English estates, and it was necessary to have a huge fortune and high social status to properly pull it off.

THE BACK STORY

We could travel further back with the illustrious Morris family, but for the purpose of this narrative we'll start with Staats Long Morris, who before the American Revolution had achieved high rank in the British Anny. He had been raised on the vast estate of his wealthy and influential family, a place called Morrisamia, situated north of the City of New York, in what was Westchester County then and The Bronx today.

After 1760 large grants of unsettled land were made available by New York Colony, and only elites could apply. Royal officials and military officers were given preference. The land wasn't exactly free, as grantees had to pay transaction fees which enriched the Royal Governor, and there was an expectation that an effort would be made, at least to some degree, to develop the land. Some of these new tracts were situated in the vast wilderness to the west of the Hudson, but none were permitted past the Unadilla River. The 1768 Treaty Line of Fort Stanwix stipulated that the lands west of the Unadilla were reserved for the Iroquois, allies of the British in the recently concluded French and Indian War, while those to the east were deeded by the Indians to the Crown. Aristocrats were generally interested in these properties not as places upon which to settle themselves; rather, they were seen as investment opportunities. They speculated that their personal wealth could be enhanced by subdivision and sales, and there already existed considerable population pressure, especially from New England, to push back the frontier.

In 1769 Staats Morris obtained a patent of 30,000 acres on the Butternut Creek. That may seem excessively large, but it actually was close to the norm. Some of the other nearby patents were obtained by the following: George Crogan in 1769 (the Cooperstown area), John Hartwick in 1761, David Schuyler in 1735, Sir William Johnson in 1770 (the Unadilla-Otego-Oneonta corridor along the Susquehanna River), Charles Reade and Thomas Wharton in 1770, and Clotsworthy Upton in 1770. Some of the surnames are very familiar to us today because they were lent to towns and waterways.

In 1769 Staats and his wife, the dowager Duchess of Gordon, traveled by horseback to his new lands, starting at Catskill, crossing the Schoharie, and then fording the Susquehanna at what is now Colliersville. In that year he also purchased almost a thousand acres near Morristown, New Jersey.

Soon, however, the forces and tensions began to brew which led to the hostilities of the Revolutionary War. Many of the long-established gentry in New York's Hudson Valley favored independence, while the upwardly mobile, persons who relied on royal patronage, tended to remain loyal to the King. The Morris family was divided: already a brigadier general then, Staats remained in the British Army, while brothers Richard and Lewis and half-brother Gouverneur were ardent patriots. In fact, Lewis was named a delegate to the Continental Congress and in that capacity was a signer of the Declaration oflndependence. Later, Gouverneur would replace Lewis as a New York delegate to Congress; and, after the war, when the new country was governed pursuant to the Articles of Confederation, Gouverneur was a Pennsylvania delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Not only was he very active in those debates, he was named to a committee charged with the task of drafting the language of the proposed US Constitution. He is credited with largely writing the preamble and much of the text of that document.

Meanwhile, Staats Morris was a member of the British Parliament from 1774 to 1784 (the duration of the war), and from 1797 to his death in 1800 he was appointed governor of the Quebec garrison, with the rank of full general. According to one source, he offered to resign his commission at the start of the Revolution rather than bear arms against kinsmen, but the King declined to accept it and let him sit out the conflict. During the occupation of New York City and environs during the war, the Morrisania estate was was largely destroyed by the British, looted and burned. (Ironically, upon the death of his step mother, in 1787 Staats would still inherit the estate, but he sold it right away to

Gouverneur.) Because he had taken the wrong side in the conflict, and as reparation to the family, in 1785 his Butternut patent was reassigned by the state to Richard and Lewis.

Lewis Morris had three sons who served with the Continental Army during the war. The second eldest was Jacob, who at the age of nineteen became an aide-de-camp on the staff of Gen. Charles Lee. Although early in the war Lee was second in rank only to George Washington (yet was very resentful because he thought he was the more experienced) and enjoyed great popularity, a couple of miscues derailed his reputation and career. First, one night in December of 1776 he recklessly left the main body of the army under his command, and with a small detachment of men went in search of female sociability (he being a bit of a rake). He ended up three miles away at White's Tavern in Basking Ridge, NJ. It was there that a British cavalry patrol happened upon the scene the next morning, and he was carted off in his night clothes for captivity in New York. Eventually, in 1778, his release was negotiated by exchanging him for a captured British general. During his captivity, Major Jacob Morris appears to have served as a liaison between the two armies. In that capacity Jacob wrote letters to, and received replies from, Gen. Washington. (Letter from J. M. to G.W. dated 26 March 1778: "I parted with Genl Lee yesterday at the Enemy's lines near Philada in good health and spirits-he acquainted me by a note, before I Left the picket that as soon as Coil Campbell & the Hessian officers arrive Sir Wm Howe had informed Mr. Loring that he should be able to come out.")

Upon his release, Lee was given back his command, but at the Battle of Monmouth (NJ) in June of 1778 he performed so poorly-retreating when Washington had ordered him to attack-that afterwards he was court-martialed, found guilty of disobeying orders and insubordination, and by way of sentence relieved of command for one year. Lee then appealed directly to Congress, but that body closed the affair by informing him it no longer had need of his services. Jacob remained loyal to Lee to the end; and he was rewarded for that fealty when Lee, who died in 1782, left him a one-third share of his landed estate ("to my dear friend Jacob Morris..."). Indeed, as late as 1823 Jacob attempted to rehabilitate Lee's reputation by printing at his own expense a transcript ofthe court-martial proceeding. From Jacob's preface, "...General Lee was harshly dealt by.... [T]he sentence emanated from feelings in the members of that court, not very friendly towards him. I was on the fields of Monmouth with General Lee's division, attached to a troop of Light Dragoons, under Captain John Heard, commanding the cavalry of the State of New Jersey, and saw enough to impress me with a belief [in the words of another present] 'that the conduct of General Lee , on the 28^{111} of June, 1778, shewed great generalship, and that he deserved credit, not censure.'" [A rare copy of this book was recently put up for sale for $8,500.]

While Lee was in captivity, Jacob was offered a commission by a New York regiment, and after first accepting it, he found the position not to his liking and abruptly resigned. Upon returning to the army stationed at Philadelphia, he was ridiculed by fellow officers. Thus it came about that, at the age of 22, he wrote to General Washington to explain himself. He had quit because,"...the Corps of officers [in that NY regiment] are men of very low Births, & no educations, men who I am very consious are totally ignorant in military affairs who have not sufficient abilities to improve, & who I shou'd be suspicious in time of action might desert me, & thereby leave both my life & Character to be sacrificed, are to me capital objections— after this let me be impertinent

enough to ask whether your Excellency can suppose I shou'd be able to bring that Regiment to any order of perfection-their deficiency in which wou'd fall on my shoulders…." Washington's curt reply concludes, "Under these circumstances cou'd your sudden resignation immediately upon your return from New York fail setting the imagination to Work; for notwithstanding your plea of long Service (which I believe is little more than a years standing) I can assure you, that a Majority [i.e. the rank of major] in one of the established Regiments is thought (by your warmest friends) to be a very handsome, and honorable appointment for a Gentleman of your years."

While serving under Lee, by all accounts Jacob acquitted himself honorably at the battles of Monmouth (NJ) and Fort Moultrie (SC). As for the rest of the war, after Lee's departure, it is commonly said that he served on the staff of General Nathanael Greene, who waged a successful southern campaign. That may well be the case, but there a couple of problems. First, being away at the front seems inconsistent with the fact he got married in Philadelphia and sired three children during those particular war years. Second, we know for a fact that older brother Lewis II did serve under Greene in that campaign, as a colonel, and he sent letters home to father and Jacob which seem to imply that, for at least part of the time in question, Jacob was in Philadelphia. (The Morris family retreated to that city while New York was occupied by the British.)

Whatever the case, it is clear he did not leave the Continental Army as a "general" as he would style himself for the rest of his long life. How or when he first came by that rank we don't know. It likely was conferred by a state or local militia, such as had been the case with his father, who was named a general by the Westchester militia. Well after the war, in 1798, a formal organization of previously detached militia companies took place in Cooperstown, and Jacob Morris of Butternuts was named the first Brigadier General of the new unit. Still later, during the War of 1812, Jacob was listed as the general of a company of militia formed in Otego. Of course, in the regular army a company-sized unit would be commanded by a captain or perhaps a major. (George Washington, for one, was known to be frustrated by the way officers were chosen in militias and by their inflated ranks.)

After the war, Jacob returned to New York with his young family and engaged in business, which had been his father's plan for him before the war intervened. He also served stints in the Senate and Assembly of the New York Legislature.

Then in 1787, when he was 33, for reasons not known, Jacob gave up city life and settled on a thousand acres of his father's and uncle's Butternut patent. Even in the late 1770's such lands could not be safely homesteaded due to the Indian threat. For example, the Cherry Valley Massacre took place in 1778, and the Butternuts area was even more remote than settlement. In 1779, however, the Sullivan-Clinton retaliatory expedition was launched, and in the General Clinton phase of it an army set forth down the Susquehanna and thence westward, in the process methodically destroying the infrastructure of the Iroquois nations which had sided with the British and terrorized settlements. After the war, all ofupstate New York would be open to white settlers (although technically lands had to be purchased fairly from the Indians, something often not done.)

In his trek Jacob may have been accompanied by Abijah Gilbert, who also had acquired lands in the Butternut patent and settled there at about the same time. (They were not the first to settle in the Butternut Valley. In 1773 the Benjamin Lull family and others carved out farms in the wilderness, a few miles north of the present village of

Morris, although they were driven away for a period during the war by Indians and loyalists.) To reach his destination Jacob first made his way to Otsego Lake, and then he followed the Susquehanna south, on the way falling in with commissioners on a mission to chart the border line between New York and Pennsylvania. In a published letter, he said that about twenty miles out he encountered one of the Cullys, whom he had previously engaged to visit the Butternut Creek and report on his lands. From him he purchased a bateau for eight gallons ofrum. On June 14[111] he arrived with his goods at the mouth of the Unadilla River (present-day Sidney). From there he proceeded up the Unadilla about eight miles (to present-day Mt. Upton), and then he went up the Butternut Creek about two miles before pausing for the night, "being the first white man that ever attempted its navigation," which certainly was not accurate. "I solemnly declare," he is reported to have exclaimed, "it is the handsomest navigable creek I have ever laid my eyes on."

(In 2007 a letter was discovered in the scrapbook of Jacob's eleven year old granddaughter, Julia Kean. It was written by George Washington in Philadelphia in May of 1787 while he was attending the Constitutional Convention and was addressed to Jacob Morris, who at that moment must have been busy preparing for his move to the Butternut Valley. The letter is brief and says this in part, "The happiness of this Country depend much upon the deliberations of the federal Convention which is now sitting. It, however can only lay the foundation— the community at large must raise the edifice." Why this letter was sent to Jacob we do not know. Another letter to Jacob, this one sent by William Cooper, in New Jersey in July of 1787: "by the by [I] am Determined to take up my Abode at Lake Otsego." Cooper had visited the area previously but had yet to move there.)

It is doubtful that Jacob was accompanied by wife and children on this initial trip. By then he had five children, the oldest being nine. The youngest was under two, and that child died in December ofthat year and was not interred in the Butternut Valley.

Jacob immediately busied himself with obtaining shelter and with clearing his forested land. He'd have needed more help than just his own two hands, and evidently he had at least some slave labor. (Many aristocrats back then owned slaves, including Jacob's father, though they were not as numerous or visible as was seen in the south. It is recorded that in 1820 there was a colored man named William Derrick living in Unadilla Center who had formerly been a slave owned by General Jacob Morris.) Jacob had brought with him a saw mill, and he built what was perhaps the first frame house in the valley. In building such a structure he rejected the traditional first abode of wilderness homesteads, the log cabin. He said those humble homes were "eternally out of repair, sinking on the door and window frames and always a dirty house." It was not until 1805 that work commenced on the Manor House. It would be modified and enlarged several times over the years.

Jacob had married Mary Cox in Philadelphia in 1777. She was 18 and he 22. Twelve children were born to the union.

1. Lewis Lee (1778-1853). He married Elizabeth Gilbert in 1805, she being the daughter of Abijah Gilbert, pioneer settler of Gilbertsville. Through primogeniture Lewis would one day inherit the Manor Farm, but he had a long wait. His father lived to 88.

2. John Cox (1781-1849). Living to 68, he never married. He attended Dartmouth, read law at Whitesboro, practiced law in New York City in 1806 and 1807, and then returned to the Butternut Valley. He eventually became Otsego County Judge.
3. Richard (1782-1865). He married Frances Upton in 1817. Her father, Francis Upton, was a captain in the British Navy, and her grandfather was Clotsworthy Upton, the first Baron Templeton, and the owner of a 20,000 acre patent adjacent to the Morris lands. Richard and Frances built a home there. In 1818 Richard engaged in a friendly wrestling match (not an uncommon diversion among adults in those days) with sister Mary's husband, Isaac Cooper, and Isaac died of accidental injuries sustained. Evidently no hard feelings: years later Richard was asked to be a pall bearer at the 1851 funeral of Isaac's famous brother, James Fenimore Cooper.
4. Mary Ann (1784-1872). She married Judge Cooper's son Isaac in 1804. In 1818 this couple took up residence in the Edgewater mansion on Otsego Lake (built 1810-1812), a landmark of Cooperstown to this day. As noted above, Isaac died that same year.
5. George (1786-1787).
6. Sarah Sabina (1788-1878). She was the first of the Morris children to be born in the Butternut Valley. In 1813 Sarah married Peter Kean, a descendant of William Livingston, the governor of New Jersey during the Revolution. Peter and Sarah were the grandparents of Hamilton Fish, who became a New York governor, a US senator, and for eight years the Secretary of State under President Grant. A political dynasty started with the senior Fish: Hamilton II, Hamilton III, and Hamilton IV all represented New York in the House of Representatives, for a total of 53 years.
7. Cesna (1791-1791). She died at two months of age and hers is the oldest grave in the family cemetery, adjacent to All Saints Chapel.
8. Jacob Walton (1792-1885). He married Serena Burgess in 1823, and nothing else seems to be recorded about them.
9. Catherine Cox (1795-1818). She married John Holmes Prentiss in 1815 and had two children before her early demise. Prentiss had been brought to Cooperstown to print Judge Cooper's partisan *The Impartial Observer*. That newspaper became the more appropriately named *The Cooperstown Federalist* in 1809, and then he became the owner and printer of *The Freeman's Journal* in 1818. Prentiss served in the US House of Representatives 1837-1841.
10. William Augustus (1796-1820). The circumstances of his untimely death are unknown.
11. James Elliott. (1800-1802).
12. Charles Valentine (1802-1887). He married Eliza Moseley of Whitesboro in 1831. Charles entered the US Navy as a midshipman at age 14 and continued in the service until retired for age. He was 59 at the onset of the Civil War. He volunteered his services then, was initially turned down, and eventually given back a commission. He is said to have commanded a vessel.

Mary seems to have adapted well to rural life. A letter to Jacob from his mother states, "I am glad to hear Polly [Mary] is learning how to spin, and that she is taking an interest in the chickens." It is a testament to Mary that her children did so well, despite the privations of a new settlement. They apparently were sufficiently educated and mannered to be able to obtain socially advantageous marriages. It would help that fast-growing Cooperstown was reasonably close. For example, in 1797, the first year Episcopal services were organized in Cooperstown, the Morris' went to the trouble (the roads must have been horrendous then) of having Catherine and William baptized there (in the court house because a church had yet to be built). The Morris family became particularly close to the Coopers; after Judge Cooper finished the construction of his grand mansion, Otsego Hall, in 1799, Mary Ann Morris, for one, became a regular: she spent part of the winter of 1800 there.

Nothing underscores the interconnectedness of the two clans as does the tragedy that took place in 1800. (There are several versions of what happened. This is as plausible as any.) "Miss [Hannah] Cooper, accompanied by several ladies and gentlemen, all on horse back, set out from Cooperstown early on the morning of September lOth, on a visit to the family of Gen eral Morris, 25 miles from that town, she being with a gentleman, some distance in advance of the others, when her horse shied at the barking of a dog which ran out from a farm house, and threw her." Hannah was killed instantly. She was 22 years of age, and by all accounts she was attractive, spirited and charming.

The accident took place about a mile from the Morris place, and at that very location a white marble monument with engraved sentimental inscriptions was erected by an anonymous donor in January of 1801. The donor's name has been the subject of speculation ever since, one contender being John Cox Morris, who never married. But at 19 he'd have been too young to pull off the logistics of having it made and transported to the site, in the winter no less. Some think it was Moss Kent, 34, who was very smitten with Hannah and likewise never married. He went on to serve in the NY Legislature and Congress. The evidence most strongly points to J. H. Imlay, from a town in New Jersey near Philadelphia, where the monument was produced. He fell in love with Hannah in the summer of 1800 and was known to still pine for her years later. He wrote a letter to R.F. Cooper in 1810 upon the death of Judge Cooper, and in it he related a conversation with Hannah in which she articulated a premonition of early death. Imlay went on to have a career in the New Jersey Legislature.

The Cooper and Morris families were connected in ways other than social. In 1789 Otsego was one of three new counties split off from Montgomery, and, among other appointments, in1791 Gov. George Clinton named Jacob Morris Otsego's first County Clerk and William Cooper the Chief Judge. Jacob and Judge Cooper were allies in what were known as "the political wars of Otsego County," which mirrored national politics. They were the local leaders of the Federalist Party, and their worthy opponent was the Democratic-Republican leader, Jedediah Peck of Burlington. (Despite the lack of a formal education and an unpolished mien, Peck became influential in state politics and is known today as the father of the common school system in New York State. His outspoken opposition to President John Adams led to his arrest, engineered by Judge Cooper, pursuant to the notorious Alien and Sedition Acts. Massive arrests by Peck's supporters led to his release without trial.)

One history describes Cooper as thoroughly democratic in his views— he respected the industry and the fortitude and even the independence of the new settlers- but when it came to politics he held to the Hamiltonian line that the rich and well-born should govern. Jacob no doubt shared those views. The two were just a year apart in age, and although Jacob arrived in the area slightly ahead of his friend, thereafter he was often a step or two behind. So it was that Cooper finished his mansion in 1799, and Jacob started his in 1805. Cooper donated land for Christ Episcopal Church in 1806, and Jacob did likewise for Zion Episcopal Church in 1818. There were, of course, differences between them: Cooper came from a modest background, was a self-made man, and was very aggressive in land speculation and politics (two terms in Congress); while Jacob was born to wealth and privilege but seems to have had a less-forceful personality. Records make almost no mention of it, but Jacob must have been a land agent, too. Selling patent lands on behalf of his family would been a source of income and given him an elevated status with respect to other settlers who had to wrest a living solely from their farm labors.

In the end Jeffersonian policies won out over the Federalists, both nationally and locally, and Jacob lost the County Clerk position. There exists a letter he wrote to Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer in 1812 in which he urges the general to use his influence to seek Jacob's reappointment to that position, which never came to pass. Jacob was also the Town of Butternuts Supervisor 1802-1808 and again in 1824. (The Town of Morris, named for Jacob, was not split off from Butternuts until 1849, five years after his death. Originally called Louisville by early French settlers, the Village of Morris was created in 1870 when incorporation took place, and a need was seen to distinguish it from another Louisville, NY.)

When in 1795 it was decided to build an academy in Cooperstown and to solicit funds for that purpose, Judge Cooper was by far the largest donor. Jacob Morris was a distant second but still gave more than any resident of that village other than the Judge. That new building was the scene of a gala affair two days after Christmas in 1796. The Free Masons held a religious service, followed by a dinner and a ball. Present was Jacob Morris, who afterwards wrote this: "The brilliancy exhibited at Cooperstown last Tuesday-the Masonic festival-was the admiration of all beholders. Upwards of eighty people sat down to one table-some very excellent toasts were drunk and the greatest decency and decorum was observed... In the evening we had a splendid ball, sixty couple, thirty in a set, both sets on the floor at the same time, pleasant manners and good dancing." Remarkable, considering only the beginnings of a settlement were there ten years prevwus.

After Judge Cooper died in 1810, the Manis and Cooper families remained close. In 1817 James Fennimore Cooper was the force behind forming the Otsego County Agricultural Society, i.e. a county fair, and he thought Jacob would be a good choice for president. To broach that idea he invited Jacob to dinner, and evidently he underscored the pitch when soon thereafter he stopped at the Manor House while en route to Binghamton. Jacob brought along Pascal Franchot of Louisville when he attended the inaugural meeting of the new society. Jacob was in fact elected the first president and Cooper the corresponding secretary.

J. F. Cooper is the author of the historical novel, *Wyandotte*. It is set in a remote valley in Otsego County before the Revolutionary War, on a "hutted knoll" above a small

creek. Cooper is known to have scouted locations, and the story "owes something to the Morris family of Butternuts," according to one history.

On another cultural note, back when Jacob and Mary were living in Philadelphia during the war, they sat for miniature portraits (watercolor on ivory, 2 x 1.5 in.). They were painted by Charles Wilson Peale, best remembered for his portraits of the leading figures of the American Revolution. (In 2005 a full-length portrait of George Washington by Peale sold for a record $21.3 million.)

Mary died at the age of 68 in 1827. At the age of 74 Jacob married again, this time to Sarah Pringle, 32, of Richfield. They had one son. Sarah died in 1863 in Madison, Wisconsin.

It is reported that Jacob meticulously maintained records in the family Bible: births, baptisms, godparents, marriages and deaths.

A centennial history of Cooperstown had this to say of Jacob: "He was distinguished for his high culture, sound judgment, courteous manners and manly bearing. He was prominent in all the early enterprises in founding the religious and literary institutions in the South part of the county."

Not much appears to be recorded about the development of the Morris estate in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It no doubt was a prosperous farm, but not to the degree it could support the burgeoning number of descendants of Jacob. Most had to move elsewhere to make a living, especially if they didn't want to farm. Lewis Lee Morris followed his father as proprietor, but he had to wait until 1844. Lewis died in 1853 and was eventually succeeded by James Rutherford Morris (1827-1903). It is telling that he was the sixth oldest son of Lewis; presumably his older siblings didn't want the place. It is recorded that James himself had lived elsewhere, in Chicago, where he was engaged in the milling business. He was ruined by a financial crash in 1857, whereupon he returned to the Butternut Valley and took over the farm from his widowed mother. The notable achievement of his tenure was the construction of the Gothic-Revival-Style All Saints Chapel, started in 1866, an attractive edifice situated next to the Morris-family cemetery. (An aside: A sister of Jacob was Helena, who married John Rutherford, a future US Senator from New Jersey. A cousin of James Rutherford Morris was Lewis Morris Rutherford, a pioneering astrophotographer and an original member of the National Academy of Sciences. The name "Rutherford" is used frequently by this family.)

We now come to Lewis Rutherford Morris. Born on the Manor Farm, he was one of those who had moved elsewhere to make a life, and we can speculate that he might not have come back at all had the trajectory of his life not made a sudden radical tum. His obituary informs us that he was a physician whose list of patients included members of the most prominent families of New York City. We don't know how he was educated except he was trained at Bellevue Hospital. When he was 38 and she 25, he married Katherine Clark, daughter of one of the richest men in the world.

By any standard that 1900 wedding at St. Thomas Church in New York was a lavish affair. Six thousand invitations were issued. The bride's father spent $1,121,000 on the wedding and honeymoon and gave them $3 million as a wedding gift (almost $25

million in 2016 dollars). The honeymoon was a private yacht trip to the American south, followed by a steam-yacht trip in European waters.

William Clark was Katherine's father. Born in poverty in Pennsylvania, by the age of 24 he was living in Montana and trying his hand at gold-rush mining. That didn't pan out, so to speak, so he switched to supplying the miners and then switched again to banking. He repossessed mining properties when owners defaulted on their loans, getting involved in the mining industry. He subsequently branched out to smelters, power companies, newspapers, railroads and other enterprises. He became known as one of the three "Copper Kings" of Butte. Enormous wealth was not enough for him, though; and at a time when US Senators were elected by their state legislatures, he gained notoriety by bribing Montana politicians to attain that office. Under these circumstances the US Senate refused to seat him. (The scandal was a factor in the 1913 passage of the 17th amendment to the Constitution: the election of senators by the people.) Undaunted, he went on to win election fairly, serving one term (1901-1907). Clark is reported to have said, "I never bought a man who wasn't for sale." In a 1907 essay Mark Twain portrayed Clark as the very embodiment of Gilded Age excess and corruption ("as rotten a human being as can be found under the flag").

A 1907 survey by the *New York Times* of the richest men in America placed John D. Rockefeller at the top of the list, but, noting the difficulty in appraising the value of ores yet to be extracted, allowed that Sen. Clark might eventually prove to be the richest. Another assessment of his wealth, this one at the time of his death in 1925, was $150 million (over $2 billion in 2016 dollars). That sum was estimated to be 1/609 of the US GNP. He was not a major philanthropist, but he left his vast collection of art to the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, and he paid for a new addition to that institution, the Clark Wing. He also left 135 acres to the Girl Scouts for a camp after the untimely death of daughter Andree. Another legacy was the City of Las Vegas, established as a maintenance stop for his San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad.

When Clark died, his estate was divided among the five surviving children. Three of the four from his first marriage were portrayed in the press as caricatures: there was thrice-divorced Mary with her flamboyant Manhattan parties and busy love .life; spendthrift Charlie's splurges on his racing stables and his battles with creditors; and culture maven Will Jr.'s collection of rare books and manuscripts (a special interest in Oscar Wilde) and his founding of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Katherine Clark Morris was the sole modest, unassuming heir. In New York high society she did not seek the spotlight or ostentatiously display her wealth. Her grandson's wife, Erica Hall, recalled that she would wear mended gloves to the Philharmonic, and, while she had wonderful jewelry, she wore it only for the family, not to impress people. "She was immensely private. She hated publicity." So anonymous and forgotten was she that if one were to read a Wikipedia entry on her father in 2016, you would learn (erroneously) that she died "c. 1933."

It can be assumed that the infusion of great wealth at the tum of the century reinvigorated the Manor Farm, that it then morphed from a modest, pleasant, sleepy farmstead to country estate in the fullest sense. I haven't taken the time to quantify the changes, but surely many of the structures on the premises now date from that era: employee housing, barns, stables, greenhouse, out buildings, tennis courts, annex building with bowling alley, the dam and pond on Morris Brook. I recall that in the

1960's the Farm Manager's office had framed photographs on the walls portraying the huge staffs employed decades back. Stowed away in barns then were things that evoked the opulent life style before Dr. Morris died, things such as fancy cages for transporting the hounds and containers used for shipping fresh Manor Farm produce to their winter home in the city.

We can guess that Dr. Morris had little incentive to continue his medical practice. In the city he was a member of a number of private clubs, which afforded status: Calumet, Metropolitan, NY Athletic, Century, National Arts, and NY Yacht. Life was tied to an annual schedule: summers in the Butternut Valley, fall and spring in their New York (Fifth Avenue?) apartment, and the coldest months at their South Carolina retreat, Pleasant Hill Plantation. (This winter home was on the market in 2015, listed for $2.98 million.) He (they?) traveled widely, too; prior to his death he had spent a few weeks in Canada fishing for salmon.

Dr. Morris had at least one business venture. He owned the Unadilla Valley Railroad. He had a plan to connect that line to the D&H and the Ulster & Delaware Railroads in Oneonta by means of a new line extending from New Berlin to Morris to Oneonta. When that venture fell through, he donated land he had purchased for an interchange yard to the City of Oneonta. He declined to have the parcel named for him, and instead an Indian name was chosen. Today Neahwa Park is probably the most-used public recreation area in the city. As for other philanthropies, he and his wife contributed heavily to a remodeling of Chenango Memorial Hospital in Norwich, they contributed to the construction of a chapel in South New Berlin, and they paid for half the construction expense of the Lewis Rutherford Morris Central School. The latter largess enabled the school to be a cut above average, for example allowing it to have a formal auditorium.

Dr. Morris died in 1936 at the age of 74. Mrs. Morris would survive him by 38 years, dying at the age of 99 in 1974. She never varied the routine of spending summers at the Manor Farm. She was very reclusive; even on the Farm, in later years she was seldom seen out and about. She maintained the estate as if her high standards could be maintained for ever and ever, but alas that was not to be. She and her husband had only one child, Katherine Elizabeth Clark Morris Hall (1902-1968), and mother outlived daughter.

It fell to three grandchildren to inherit the property: John Hall, Jr. (1926-1999), Lewis Rutherford Hall (1929-2014), and Katherine Elizabeth Morris Hall (1932-1996). While they continued to maintain summer residences there, and even expanded the acreage to accommodate a Charolais beef venture, clearly there were no longer the resources to keep the estate intact, with all the overhead that entailed. They eventually sold the Manor House complex, while retaining most of the original estate acreage. In 1995 the Manor House itself was heavily damaged in a fire, but the new owners nicely restored it. Subsequently it was placed on the market again with an asking price of $4.5 million (apparently reduced to $3.95 million). The real estate agent describes it as an equestrian estate with 10 outbuildings, 12 stalls, tack room, groom and caretaker house, carriage building, large workshop, greenhouse with potting shed and recreation building with bowling alley and fire place. The Manor House has 9,800 sq. ft. with original finely crafted architectural details, six large bedrooms with fireplaces (indeed the house has 10 fireplaces), etc.

In 2005 Erica Hall, who inherited Manor lands from husband John, donated 1130 acres to the State of New York for creation of the General Jacob Morris State Forest. In 2012 Lewis Hall placed over 4,500 ft. of frontage along the Butternut Creek in a land trust, which places it out of reach of development in perpetuity. Thus the Morris Manor Farm is a shadow of what it used to be, but it still carries on.

Here would have been the logical place to end this historical sketch, but the recent bizarre story of Huguette Clark demands to be told. She was Mrs. Morris' half sister, a product of William Clark's second marriage. She was born in France in 1906, or six years after the marriage of Dr. and Mrs. Morris. She lived to be just shy of 105, dying in 2011. Hugette had enormous wealth, and she was extremely reclusive. The last published photo of her during her lifetime was taken in 1928. The last contact with anyone from the Morris family was in 1968, upon the death of Mrs. Hall, her half niece. An investigation of her circumstances began in 2010 when it was learned that the caretakers of her three residences hadn't seen her in decades. Those residences were palatial estates in Santa Barbara (23 acres) and New Canaan, CT (52 acres) and a three-apartment complex at 907 Fifth Avenue. It turned out that she had left the New York apartment by ambulance in 1988, frail and with skin cancer— but nothing immediately life-threatening, and she lived in hospitals for the next 17 years, mostly at Beth Israel Medical Center. She lived under pseudonyms in a guarded room, attended by private nurses. The investigations (eventually there were several) further revealed the appearance of irregularities on the part of her attorney and accountant. When she died, her fortune was estimated to be $300 million. Her will provided that seventy-five percent go to charity, but of the balance there were questionable bequeaths, most glaringly $30 million going to her longtime nurse. Further, some of her assets had disappeared before her death.

It thus came about that a coalition of 19 distant relatives, some of whom had never seen her, filed suit against the estate. The outcome was a settlement in which those relatives, some of them descendants of Mrs. Morris, got to divide $34 million. The nurse ended up with nothing.

The disposal of estate assets gave a clearer sense of what this huge fortune consisted of. The three Fifth Avenue apartments fetched a total of $54.8 million and the Connecticut mansion, empty for over 60 years, went for $14.3 million. Following her wishes, the California property was gifted to a new foundation to be used as an art institute, along with $8 million in cash. Her personal jewelry brought a total of over $20 million at an auction sale. Stolen from her apartment but eventually recovered was a Degas pastel worth $10 million; it was donated to a Kansas City Museum. And of course other art works, her furniture and antiquities added to the total worth of the estate.

Omnia mars aequat. (Death levels all things.)