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 IN THE MID 1960'S

WHAT I RECALL, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

First, an overview is in order. An organizational chart of the Manor Farm, if there ever was one, would have had J. L. Miller, the farm manager, perched on top. Reporting to him were the various component parts of the operation: the garden and grounds crew, the farm crew, the stables, the dairy and poultry crew, and the maintenance staff-the painter, the carpenter and the mechanic. There also was the chauffer. There was a large household staff, but I don't know the degree they fell under his purview because he remained behind when they returned to New York City with Mrs. Morris in the fall.

As for the physical layout, below the road were the creamery, the ice house, the truck sheds, the granary, the carpentry shop, the paint shop, the poultry barn and two houses, the maids' quarters and a double house for the farm crew foreman on one side and the Manor's houseman on the other. Above the road was the Manor complex, consisting, besides the Manor House itself, of the stables (with housing above), the garage (with housing above), the mechanic's shop, the indoor riding rink (75' x 150'), the greenhouse and potting shed, the tennis court, and the annex building, which included a bowling alley. To the north along Route 51 were the farm manager's house, the dairy barn and adjacent house for the herdsman, the garden crew foreman's house, and the butler's house. To the south along Route 51 were the large Hartman house, occupied by grandson John Hall and family, two employee homes and the large Hartman barn below the road, used for hay storage. The Blackman farm (for sheep, steers and pigs) with adjacent farmhouse was a couple miles up Dimock Hollow. Of course, across the road from the manor House was the chapel and cemetery.

Despite his short stature, Mr. Miller (and one didn't address him any other way) was an august figure. On the surface always polite and usually affable, that mien disguised *his* firmness in how things were to be done. The place was to run the way it always had been run, like it or move on. I recall being told what his response was when anyone tried to leverage a raise: "If there's a place where you can better yourself, then that's the place you ought to be." In an organization full of employees who had been on the payroll for decades and decades, he had been around probably the longest. He started in the 1920's, and perhaps it was upon Dr. Morris' death in 1936 that he made the promise to Mrs. Morris that he would not quit the Manor's employ until after her death. He'd been around for about 40 years when I worked there, and he was a man of his word. She lived to 99, dying in 1974, and so his tenure stretched to about 50 years.

Mr. Miller did a circuit of his domain every day, starting with the farm crew at precisely 7 AM., in order to be sure there was no laxness in getting started on time. In what order he visited everyone else I don't know, but I do recall that his perambulation was so unvarying that the path from his house to our reporting place, the truck sheds, traversing a field, was foot-worn and narrow. Surprise visits might happen at any time, and we neophytes in the workforce were instructed in how to behave if suddenly he was there and one was not busy working: don't flinch and assume the air of one entitled to a well-

earned break. There was at least one instance during my time there that a kid was fired for getting caught sleeping on the job.

To my knowledge J.L. never married, but he had a long, long relationship with a woman named Goldie, who lived about an hour away. He spent every weekend with her as well as every Wednesday, the latter a well-deserved indulgence by the Manor, considering his devotion to duty.

In those days before computers and payroll services, Mr. Miller evidently kept all the books manually, writing dozens of weekly paychecks and I presume paying all of the bills. He was very much on top of his books, too. After I lazily just put aside my paychecks for several weeks, not bothering to cash them, he approached me to ask why. It made things untidy for his books. Not much got by him.

J.L. was a charter member of the Morris Rotary Club and was for many years its secretary. I mention this because three of his foremen were induced to belong, too; I'm not sure it was the natural inclination of a couple of them.

The Manor was very generous in its summer hiring practices. Not all the guys (never a female then, to my knowledge) were college bound, but many were. It was a big financial help for us. As for the permanent staff, as noted above long tenures were the norm, and they were usually natives of the area. I don't think anyone had a long commute. I recall one instance of a compassionate hire on the farm crew, a man who should have been in retirement for age and physical issues and who really couldn't do the work; he was kept on for a short while, presumably for financial assistance.

Mr. Miller was given housing on the premises, and there he employed a live-in housekeeper, Roy Bartlett. It was an amusing sight seeing Roy in an apron ironing Mr. Miller's shirts. In a time when gays were kept in the closet, Roy's proclivities were known by all but seldom discussed. Roy had a dignified air, and, possessed of a considerable art talent, he could as easily hobnob with the Morris family elites as he could interact with us peons. He was exempt from the usual social constraints. To my knowledge he was the only Manor employee with a college degree (Mechanics Institute, now known as RPI). He ran a catering business on the side, and he was the community arbiter of social conventions and protocols. He'd let you know if you weren't doing a formal affair properly (as sadly I'd come to find out years later). At the end of his life he was a local institution, very widely known and respected. He worked at the Manor for forty years.

THE FARM CREW. John Kogut headed the farm crew, and my first summer there, in 1964, he had 9 men under him: Lyman Olds, Jack Breffle, Al Guegel, Perry Dixson, Rene Valentine, Barry Valentine, John's son Paul Kogut, Hank Decker and me. Burt Davis split his time with us and the dairy barn. John recalls a time when the crew consisted of 14 men.

Regarding the temporary hires, Rene, the son in law of Guy Rathbun, the stables head, was during the academic year in charge of the physical education department at Jefferson County Community College. Brother Barry would enlist in the Navy after this summer. Paul and I, high school classmates of Barry, would be heading off to college. Hank was just out of the Army; tall and very robust, in my view he should have stayed in the service-it was his natural metier.

I vaguely knew that John was a WW II vet. It wasn't until many years later I learned he was the belly gunner in a B 25 bomber (the epitome of a dangerous job!) and that twice his plane was shot down, once requiring a bail-out over the English Channel and once limping into neutral Swiss territory, whereupon he was placed in an internment camp for several months. WW II vets seldom or never talked about their experiences, and he was no exception. Anyway, he was firmly in control of his men at the Manor. He and wife Lois lived in housing on the Manor estate. John was to work there 35 years, and he never made more than $10,000 in a year.

Several of the staff, John being one, got free housing as part oftheir compensation package, and that benefit included heat, electric and telephone. They also got each year farm-raised meat: a pig, a quarter of beef, a turkey and parts of lamb and veal that the main house didn't want. In addition, they got milk and two pounds of butter each week. On the other hand, nobody got health insurance or pension benefits, a situation typical of farm employment then; and Social Security contributions were not made until a complaint was made and estate lawyers advised Mr. Miller that it had to be done. It certainly wasn't a lavish life for Manor employees, but the turnover rate was low, and many chose to spend entire careers there. One might guess that part of the recompense was pride in being a part of this meticulously-maintained enterprise, helping to maintain tradition and high standards.

Perry Dixson was the tractor man that first year. When I returned the next summer, he was gone, having taken a better-paying job with the Town of Morris Highway Department. There he eventually became the highway superintendent. Paul replaced him as the tractor man.

Lime, as we'd call him, was the twin brother of Lewis Olds, the chauffer. Aside from both being diminutive in size, the two couldn't have been more different. As befitting a chauffer, Lewis was spotlessly clean and always comported himself with dignity. Lime, on the other hand, might start a day clean, but by the end of it he'd typically look as though he'd wrestled a pig, which just might have been the case. Without exaggeration I say that Lime was one of the major influences on my life. Nobody worked harder than he. If a dirty job had to be done, he'd be the first to volunteer. He evinced a modest pride in giving his utmost to every task, a work ethic I've never seen surpassed, and he was very loyal. All of which is not to say he was perfect. He and drinking buddy Al had many an amusing-or disgusting, depending on your point of view--episode together. They were both in their 50's then, old enough to know better. Lime and his wife Bernice got company housing, too, at the Blackman farm in Dimock Hollow. He took care of the livestock there: sheep, veal, pigs and steers. If anyone was under paid, it was he. John once tried to negotiate a raise on his behalf, but Mr. Miller firmly denied the request.

Al had German heritage and was a transplant from New York City, where he'd been a grave digger. He had bought a small farm in Dimock Hollow and moved his young family there in the 1950's. It was disgraceful that local cattle and equipment dealers took advantage of his initial ignorance of farming and cheated him almost to the point of destitution. Their first winter here the impoverished family of six struggled to stay warm, occupying just one room in their farmhouse. But they hung on and readily adapted to rural life, and the things to remember about Al were that he was highly intelligent, very proud

and possessed of a thinly-disguised bitterness— extremely right-wing was his outlook. I believe that two of his three sons were liberally educated at Columbia and NYU (the third ran the farm). His wife, Frieda, was a devout, teetotaler Methodist, and in that same vein his daughter went to Bob Jones College. There were lots of curious dichotomies in this family. Anyway, Al could stay sober all week, but after payday he and Lime would buy the cheapest beer they could find (quarts of Topper, I recall) and get wasted. He once passed out on the Dimock Hollow Road and drove his car into the Morris Brook pond. He and Lime once tried out their theory that the fluid at the bottom of a silo was fermented alcohol and potable; lucky it didn't kill them. Al was hung over Monday mornings, yet his work ethic was strong, and he was assigned tasks requiring a higher level of skill (e.g. stone-wall masonry).

Jack Breffle was in his 40's then, a WWII veteran, having dropped out of high school to enlist in the Navy, and he was preceded at the Manor by his father or grandfather, I can't recall which. (There is a Breffle grave in the Morris-family cemetery, one of the few outsiders.) Jack in his prime was a mountain of a man, tall and extremely strong. He was of an era, thankfully long past, when young men would hang at taverns, such as the Morris Inn, on Saturday nights, and besides getting sloshed would seek excuses for initiating fist fights. Jack was seldom bested. I was in awe of him, and getting his validation as being competent in the physical challenges of farm labor meant a lot to me. Pitching bales could be rather competitive. I caught a ride to work with him every day; he charged a dollar a week. He and John didn't get along, a dynamic I chose to stay out of. He and Lime would playfully taunt each other, and it often ended up with Jack lifting him off the ground by the back of his bib overalls, Lime kicking and yelling helplessly. Jack had an unhappy marriage and no children. While he was fun to work with—there was always a friendly banter—I sensed an underlying sadness with his lot in life. He had a modest art talent. (Many years later Jack had a live-with relationship with a widow, an old high school flame, and I believe that was fulfilling for him.)

The Manor Farm favored manpower over mechanization. Most tasks were intentionally made very labor intensive. When I worked there, I believe we put in roughly 20,000 square bales of hay each summer (that number went much higher when additional land was purchased and a Charolais beef venture was started), and every bale had to be picked off the ground and loaded on one of the two ton-and-a-half trucks. That meant one man was baling, two were driving the trucks, four were tossing bales on the trucks and two were stacking. The tenth man was probably raking hay ahead of the bailer. Then the trucks were driven to the big Hartman bam, where there was just one elevator to move the bales up to the mow. One man loaded the hay on to the elevator, and then a human chain distributed it. A long hay-dryer cage snaked the length of the barn, and every single bale was tightly stacked, always cut side toward the dryer. (The idea was to have the fans force air through the bales and thereby reduce the threat of spontaneous combustion.) A typical day might have us processing a thousand bales, and each man would probably handle each one more than once on average. We worked fast and hard to finish ahead of the 5 PM quitting time.

Now contrast that routine to that of the average local dairy farmer. He didn't have a lot of labor available, maybe just his wife and kids. Round bales had yet to be introduced,

but he'd likely have a kicker bailer. He needed help only to drive hay wagons to the bam and unload them. Some outfits didn't even stack the hay in the mow; a series of elevators haphazardly distributed the bales. And the typical farmer worked until dark, or later.

Of course everything is relative. John Kogut recalls that when he first arrived at the Manor in the early 1950's there still were two teams of work horses on the place, no longer used, but they harkened back to days of even more labor-intensive haying, bringing it in loose. I've seen a photo of the haying crew in those earlier days, and there must have been three dozen men depicted. Lime could remember those days; he often said he felt more comfortable with horses than with machines.

To me, one of the most remarkable facts about the Manor back then was that they had only one tractor. A jeep was used to rake hay, but that was it for additional horse power. Even small-scale farms usually had at least two.

So what did the farm crew do beside hay it? One task after a field was mown was to use hand scythes to trim perimeters, to tidy the job and keep brush at bay. This was really anachronistic: we called this tool an idiot stick because one had to be an idiot to use one. Actually, it took quite a bit of skill to use one effectively. Sometimes large wet areas or fields too small to cut hay off were assigned, and several men would trail each other, each cutting a three- or four-foot swath, circling the piece until the job was done. The scene was positively medieval. Then huge piles of firewood, blocked up during the winter, had to be split; as was the case with the hay, this would be sold as a cash crop. Of course, the splitting was done by axe-even if they had hydraulic wood splitters back then, it is doubtful the Manor would have bought one. Dairy farms were required to paint or white wash barn interiors every year, and 99.9% of them, I would guess, took the white wash option, which was performed by a contractor and could be completed in a couple of hours. The Manor, in its labor-intensive way of doing things, elected to paint, and that meant on rainy days we would scrape by hand the caked-on manure off every square inch of surface. Once, John asked for volunteers to help Lime tag sheep. That sounded like an interesting change of pace, but I should have been suspicious when none of the old timers stepped forward. It turned out that "tagging" was shaving the manure- caked wool off their butts. Then there was the time the summer temps were assigned to a dredging of the duck pond, which hadn't been cleaned in years. The stench couldn't be erased from clothes or any part of skin the muck touched, and we were pretty much covered in it. We toiled at lots of mundane tasks, too, but the rotten jobs stick in one's memory.

The permanent staff spent much of the winter in the woods, logging and splitting firewood. They related to me that each man worked separately-one cutting trees and limbing them, one dragging the logs out of the woods by tractor, one blocking up the logs and splitting-often in deep snow and bitter cold, having no contact with each other for hours at a time. Also in the winter they cut ice on Morris Pond; moved to the ice house and packed it in sawdust, it would last all summer. The sole purpose of that extravagant use of labor was to make ice cream for Mrs. Morris in the summer, probably the most expensively-produced ice cream in the world. To my knowledge, no other outfit did this; after electrification, there was no need. It was a nearly lost art. They hung a thousand sap buckets and made maple syrup in late winter. They also trimmed high-up branches in the pine plantations in preparation for a commercial harvest. Again, they performed lots of other tasks, too.

The Manor butchered and cut up all the meat they raised, jobs usually done by John Kogut or the poultry man, Bill Barton.

We had half an hour for lunch, and the lunch room was upstairs in the creamery building. Everybody had a lunch pail, and I could, at the age of 17, gobble down three sandwiches and a store-bought mini-pie in about ten minutes. The older guys were slower; Al might take the full thirty minutes. While we ate, we'd be viciously engaged in a game of cards, usually pitch, and winning meant bragging rights for the day.

THE GROUNDS AND GARDEN CREW. The thing that really set the Manor Farm apart from other estates was the beauty of its grounds. Today the signature tall hemlock hedges remain, but they are a far remove from the perfectly manicured ones of fifty years ago. The grounds still look nice, but once they were stunning, as well they should have been, what with a large staff devoted to their care.

I worked on the garden crew for a couple of months in the fall of 1968, as one of the compassionate hires I alluded to above. I had returned from Vietnam badly wounded, and after a few months in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, I returned to Morris needing something rehabilitative. I don't exactly know why he did so, except that it was a very decent thing to do, but Mr. Miller offered me my old job back. I was too banged up to work on the farm crew again, so I was placed with the garden crew, where my lack of a meaningful contribution was kindly overlooked. After a few weeks, my confidence back, I was ready to return to college.

I didn't get to know the garden guys as well because the summer hires were gone by the time I started. Only Ray Hyde, Sr. and Stuart Strait worked year around. Jack Light and Dick Fields were permanent hires but were laid off in the winter. The summer hires were many, and besides probably forgetting a couple, I can't recall the exact years they were there. They included: Carl Deming, Jody Hughes, Wes Hyde, Jim Palmer, Rick Rendo, Dave Payton, Pete Gould and Doug George.

Ray Hyde, the foreman, would work there 43 years, starting in 1947. He was a pleasant, affable man but must have been firm with underlings because of the exacting standards. At one time he was president of the local school board. He and wife Vivian had Manor housing just past the dairy bam.

Stuart Strait was about 60 when I was there and had had a career in the Merchant Marine. He was wiry and very strong: once he challenged Jody Hughes, a stand-out athlete, to a friendly wrestling match, and he bested him. Stuart had a lot of skills and common sense.

Jack Light was a gentle, amiable giant of a man, a hard and conscientious worker, but he had disabilities, among them very poor eyesight and epilepsy. The latter problem would flare when he was under stress, and eventually it was his undoing. He was kept on later than usual the fall I worked there, and he participated in the ice harvest. Standing on the ice next to open water is dangerous and stressful, and he had a seizure. He went into the frigid water, and with boots full of water it was very difficult to haul him out. Mr. Miller, or perhaps the estate's lawyers, then made the decision it was too much a liability to keep him on the payroll, and he was permanently laid off. For Jack, whose identity was so closely tied to pride in job performance, it was a devastating blow, one he never recovered from. It certainly shortened his life.

Dick Fields, or "Crow" as he was known, was another diligent worker. He had a speech impediment, and the guys delighted in telling the story of him guiding a truck as it was backing up. The driver only heard "row, row, row" when Crow was trying to say "whoa, whoa, whoa." Crash! I don't mean to mock him; he worked as hard as anyone. I was astonished to watch him eat a jar of olives at lunch.

There was another man, Roger (the last name escapes me), who was another of the semi-permanent hires. I believe he was kept on as long as possible while suffering from brain cancer, the least they could do in the absence of health coverage.

My classmate and close friend Carl Deming, a summer hire, was the garden boy. (He jokes that his overseer, Stuart, was the "garden man." They were assisted at times by Jody.) The Manor had vast vegetable gardens, and he toiled on his knees pulling weeds or wielding a hoe to make them immaculate and productive. There were also strawberries, raspberries and blueberries to attend to. The broad expanses of lawn were cut with a big power mower, but a fleet of hand mowers was used to cut around the many trees. Each man carried clippers in his back pocket, and they were used to trim every blade of glass next to the trees (what a weed eater would be used for today). On Saturday mornings the crew would be dispatched to perfectly groom the gravel on the paths and driveways. Of course, this work would include the chapel and cemetery grounds. I don't know all the jobs the summer guys did. On rainy days they would stay under cover and split butternuts (with labor added, as expensive a farm product here as the ice).

In the fall or winter the hedges had to be trimmed. They devised a special mobile rig to reach the vast expanse that had to be covered: from the ground on one side and over the top to the ground on the other side was a distance of 50 feet. In all, the hedges must have been a thousand feet long.

THE STABLES. Guy Rathbun arrived at the Manor in 1934 with the title of "overseer of the stables and hunting dogs," and he held that position until 1972, when he succeeded Mr. Miller as estate manager. As manager, he presided over a gradual shrinkage of operations, apparently necessitated by the owners' need to control expenses. He finally retired in 1995, a remarkable run of 61 years, probably surpassing the tenure of anyone else, non-family, affiliated with the Manor in the preceding 200 years.

Guy had the bonhomie of a natural politician, which he was. He was first a Town of Morris Supervisor, and then, after a reorganization of the county government, he became a representative of the towns of Morris and Butternuts. In fact, he was the first chairman of the Otsego County Board of Representatives, a post he held with characteristic finesse and dignity. In latter years he lived in the Village of Morris, where today a park is named for him.

The stables had twelve stalls and a tack room, and Guy and wife Dora lived in an apartment above. It was Guy's duty to care for and exercise the horses each day. Tinka Hall was very much into expensive show horses, and perhaps due to her influence a 75' x 150' indoor riding rink was constructed. (John Kogut recalls helping to build it.) Alas, many years later the roof would collapse and the building was demolished. Guy was given help in the stables. I recall that my friend Tom Lyon did it one summer, and that he got bit by a nag that didn't want to let go.

THE DAIRY AND POULTRY OPERATIONS. The dairy bam held about 40 Guernsey cows, a breed not as productive as Holsteins, but the Manor was more into looks and, I would guess, higher butterfat content in the milk. Leon Wayand was the herdsman, and he wife Harriet lived in the adjacent farmhouse. Leon was assisted by Gordon Moore and Burt Davis. That was a lot of labor for a crew that didn't have to do field work, but the place was expected to be a show place and cleaner than usual. If they had the time, Gordon and Burt were supposed to help the farm crew, but I don't recall that they did very often. Burt was given housing near the Hartman place.

I know very little about the poultry operation, which included chickens, ducks and turkeys. Bill Barton ran it when I was there, succeeded I believe by Roy Rendo. I once was assigned to help him butcher turkeys. I recall him making cottage cheese in the creamery, and so it was probably he who made the butter.

THE MAINTENANCE STAFF AND CHAUFFEUR.

Henry Richards was the painter. A short, always-cheerful man, Henry worked on the manor into his 70's, putting in more than 40 years. There were a lot of buildings to be maintained, inside and out, and he was sometimes given extra help in the summer. I don't recall extra hires when I was there, but a couple years later my brother Dick and Ralph Emerson were put on. Henry was up in years then and naturally assigned the dangerous tasks to them. Thus it came about that Dick once fell through the glass on the greenhouse roof and landed in a bed of chrysanthemums. He was lucky: had the fall been a couple feet over, he'd have landed on staked-up roses, which would have impaled and torn him to shreds. As it was, he was taken away by ambulance, but he wasn't seriously hurt. Ralph was once painting the cow bam roof, very high up and steeply pitched, when his ladder came loose from its mooring. Dick could hear Ralph's fingernails screech on the metal as he fought to stop his descent. He was hanging over the edge when Dick got to him with a ladder. Had he fallen, a distance of probably at least 30 feet, it would have seriously hurt or killed him.

Earl Dixson, the carpenter, was likewise long-tenured and up in years. He was a low-key, always-pleasant man. He usually worked alone, and his shop had all the lathes and other machines needed to fashion what he had to do. Our crew once lent him a hand when he rebuilt a barn bridgeway, and the result was a structure bound to hold up for a millennium. He was thorough.

Perry Hoag was the mechanic; he kept all the machines on the place in running order. The Manor seems to have selected for congenial men because he was yet another example. I believe he retired after my first year there, and the house he lived in on the place was given over to Burt Davis. Apparently Perry was not replaced. His machine shop harkened to another era: pulleys and belts ran this way and that, the purpose of all the machinery I don't know. We'd go to his shop to get our hand scythe blades ground razor sharp.

Louis Olds' function was to keep the two cars, a Cadillac and a Pontiac, shined and spotlessly clean and to transport Mrs. Morris wherever she had to go, which in latter years wasn't far. He and wife Virginia lived in an apartment above the garage. I recall that driving the maids to church on Sunday was one of the things he did. As mentioned above, he always comported himself with dignity.

On the topic of maintenance, I am told that Mrs. Morris would call upon each of the families living on the estate once a year. She would sit down and visit with them. However, as she got into her nineties, she still came but didn't get out of the car. Beside the polite social aspect, she must have been inspecting the state of her properties.

HOUSEHOLD STAFF. I had very little contact with the household staff and never set foot inside the Manor House. What follows is what I was told about how things ran there. Steve Hammond seems to have run the house. Houseman was apparently his title. He had been Dr. Morris' valet, and after the doctor's death in 1936 he was kept on in this role. He and his wife lived in half of the double house next to the Koguts. Steve is said to have related stories about the big lawn parties the Morris' hosted in the 1920's and 1930's. The Hammonds returned to New York in the fall with Mrs. Morris.

Warren English, if he had a title, was an errand or grocery man. He was up in years in the mid 1960's, a Mr. Peepers sort of man. He and his wife lived in a house behind the Hartman place.

I know nothing about the butler. He was provided a house at the northern end of the estate. I don't even recall ever seeing him.

There were about six maids, maybe four of whom were Irish or English and lived in a house below the road. (That house was eventually sold and moved by the new owner a couple miles south.) Mrs. Toby from Gilbertsville was a downstairs maid. A German woman was Mrs. Morris' personal aide.

There of course was a cook, but I don't know who she was.

Some employee wives worked in the big house part or full time. Mrs. English was a kitchen aide, Vivian Hyde was a kitchen aide in latter years, and Virginia Olds was a laundress at one point. Mrs. Morris arrived back in the valley on Memorial Day each year, and an annual ritual was to begin spring cleaning of the Manor starting the Monday after Easter. Bernice Olds, Mrs. Toby and Virginia Olds had that job. Remember that there was no retirement provision, and so employees who had lived on the place for decades had to make provision for housing after they had to move on. Extra income must have been welcome.

On a final note, I mention the annual Manor lawn party for all the employees and their families. While a nice affair with good food, Mrs. Morris in attendance, it was controversial among employees because it wasn't catered. If you wished to attend, you had to work: as a cook, as a waiter, in cleaning up, etc. I vividly recall Al Guegel angrily swearing he'd have no part of this kind of patronization.

I titled this work a memoir because it relies so heavily on my memory. At nearly 70 years of age that memory is not as good as it once was. Readers who knew the Manor in those far off days will surely detect omissions and errors. I welcome feedback. But whatever the state of my scholarship, I hope that my goal of portraying the scale and ethos of the operation has been made somewhat comprehensible. I know that people toil hard today to keep the estate looking respectable, and it is, but it can hardly hold a candle to what it once was. Indeed, the place must have peaked way back in the Roaring 20's, when Dr. and Mrs. Morris were healthy and vigorous and their fortune incomprehensibly immense. What would

it have been like to attend one of their lawn parties? Did they ride the horses and run the hounds? That world couldn't last forever. I'm lucky that I caught the latter stages of it, before the slow, inexorable decline began.

I'm grateful to the Morris family for the experience. I likewise cherish the memory of all the fine people with whom I worked. In those formative years they shaped me in ways I hope others will deem positive.