

A photograph of the Morris-Jumel Mansion, a large white neoclassical building with a portico supported by four columns and a balcony on the second floor.

Monthly Mansion Minute

News from the Morris-Jumel Mansion



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Letter from the Executive Director

Hello everyone,

The daffodils and tulips arrival announced spring with bursts of color around Roger Morris Park, though with some chilly winds. I, for one, am ready for May and its promise of sun and the warmth it will bring to the enveloping greenery.

Chilly winds notwithstanding, visitors have been knocking on Morris-Jumel Mansion's front door. We have been enjoying some busy days, especially on weekends. And that is before the start of the many events we are hosting in May and June, including those detailed in this newsletter. Don't miss out! Make sure to keep up with our calendar, which is available on our website and sent via email, and on our social media posts.

We know the Exterior Restoration and Accessibility Project is of keen interest, and we hosted our second public update on the Project on April 17 – a link to the recording is on our website and in an article in this newsletter. Feedback to the virtual event has been very positive. Participants seemed especially happy to hear from a representative of PACA, the project architect, Eric DiFronzo, and see photos of the investigations into the Mansion's wood structure.

We are also wrapping up our Spring Membership Drive, and hope you will renew your membership and recommend it to your family and friends, or give a gift membership. Be a part of history and support this unique landmark!

Yours,
Catherine Hughes



What's New at the Mansion

Please join us in welcoming Danielle Gaita as our new Public Programs and Visitor Services Manager! Danielle joins us after more than four years working in museums in the Washington, DC area. Some highlights of her time there include working at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park, and helping to open the new Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum, working in the Education and Operations departments. With an educational background in Anthropology, Danielle takes an audience-based approach to ensure visitors will have the best experience possible. Danielle is happy to be back in the NYC-Metro area, where she was born and raised, and to join the team at MJM!





by Susan Arnot Heaney
Member, Board of Trustees

April was a productive time for the exterior of the Morris-Jumel Mansion. Visible to all are the blooming Roger Morris Park gardens. Less visible is progress towards restoring the Mansion to a condition befitting a national and city landmark. The careful restoration project exemplifies the adage “it takes a village.” Roger Morris Park is managed by New York City Parks Department (NYC Parks), while the Mansion is owned by City of New York under jurisdiction of NYC Parks, which is responsible for maintenance and restoration. The Mansion is a member of New York City Historic House Trust, (HHT) which is managing the restoration. Project architect is Page Ayers Cowley Architects (PACA). The Mansion operates as an Historic House Museum by the nonprofit Morris-Jumel Mansion, Inc., which includes the staff and Board of Trustees.

Supporters can be confident in the expertise and talent committed to this first major exterior restoration of the Mansion since 1990. Much behind the scenes work is complete. Contractor bids were submitted mid-April and HHT is negotiating with interested contractors. PACA completed the hands-on site investigation and assessment. Construction commences later this summer – exact date to be finalized – including repair or replacement of all siding, windows, roof, and porch columns. An accessibility ramp will be added to the east entrance and the first floor bathroom will be made ADA compliant. The Mansion and grounds will remain open during the work. In our commitment to transparency, a second public Virtual Parlor Chat on April 17 featured representatives of MJM, HHT, and NYC Parks along with NYC Council Member Carmen De La Rosa, NY State Senator Robert Jackson, and Eric DiFronzo AIA, of Project Architect PACA. Click the link above to review the recording.



Click here to watch the December Virtual Parlor Chat about the restoration.



Click here to watch the April Virtual Parlor Chat about the restoration.

Calendar



Virtual Parlor Chat

Inspired by the Harlem Renaissance, a View from the Heights - John Reddick

Wednesday, May 15 7:00-8:00 PM

This presentation and conversation with Harlem historian John T. Reddick will focus on a variety of Harlem players.

Free Registration [Here](#)



ConEd Family and Community Day

Paper Lantern Making

Saturday, May 11 1:00-3:00 PM

We will be making our own colorful paper basket lanterns and lighting them with glow sticks and LED candles.

Free, No Registration Required



The Grand Tour: Historic Dance Program

Saturday, May 25 5:30-6:30 PM

Promenade as you watch this historical dance performance move throughout the Morris-Jumel Mansion

Free Registration [Here](#)

Mansion Minute

Education Station

by Kiowa Pratt-Gordon, School & Community Programs Manager

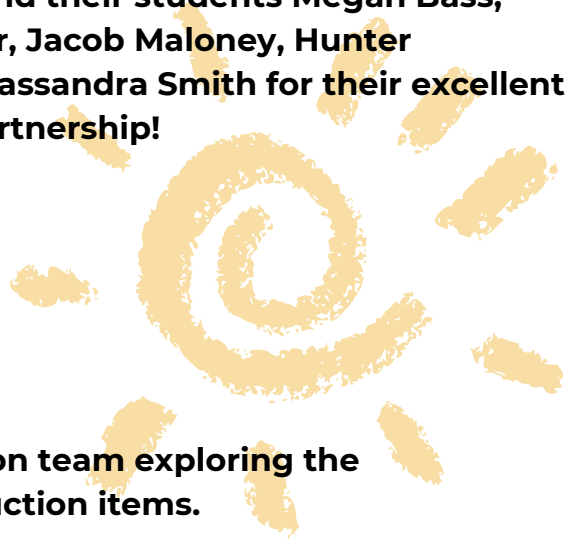
The Education Department at MJM recently partnered with the Cooperstown (NY) Graduate Program in Museum Studies at SUNY-Oneonta in a grant-funded Accessibility and Innovation Initiative through the Historic House Trust. The goal of the initiative was to work with three historic houses in New York City: Alice Austen House in Staten Island; Dyckman Farmhouse in Inwood; and Morris-Jumel Mansion, to assist in creating more accessible programming for differently-abled audiences.

At Morris-Jumel, we focused on ways to improve school programs for these audiences. After meeting with us, the graduate students assigned to work with MJM recommended providing high-quality reproductions that can be handled and studied by students, and a paired series of associated lesson plans to enhance MJM's existing "The Mansion During the American Revolution" school program. The grant paid for providing MJM with these items. These great historic reproduction items, clothing, and lesson plans will provide students with low vision or hearing impairments with a richer, more engaging experience during their time at the Mansion. The objects and the themes they illuminate connect to New York City Public School - Department of Education learning standards, both for K-3 and 4-6 grade ranges, to ensure programs support a variety of grade levels.



Thank you to Dr. Cindy Falk, Kathryn Boardman and their students Megan Bass, Daniel Carter, Jacob Maloney, Hunter Sakowsky, Cassandra Smith for their excellent work and partnership!

The Education team exploring the new reproduction items.



Mansion Minute

Spotlight On Archeology

Archaeological Discoveries at Morris-Jumel Mansion

By Presley Rodriguez, Administrative Coordinator

Archaeology is the study of human history through the excavation of sites and the study of artifacts and other physical remains. Findings from excavations provide valuable clues about the past, whether they are tools, coins, jewelry, pottery, weapons, or even human bones. Professional archaeologists have conducted digs in the land surrounding the Mansion over the past few decades, leading to exciting discoveries about the site's history reaching back 3,000 years.

In 1984, archaeologists found two projectile points and stone tool fragments by the north end of the Mansion. No ceramics were found nearby, leading the researchers to believe that their findings dated to the pre-ceramic Late Archaic Period (between 1,000 B.C. to A.D. 700). From this, archaeologists concluded that one or more Native American sites were present beneath today's Roger Morris Park. The high elevation point would have made the location a useful hunting/lookout camp.

Archaeologists in 1994 discovered a historic cobble walkway by the east side of the house, and nearby artifacts indicate it was laid in the late-nineteenth century. It was likely a reconstruction of an earlier walkway.

Another investigation led archaeologists in 2000 to confirm what earlier projects found, which is that no middens, or historic trash dumps, were present in the current park. It is possible that middens, which are also archaeological treasure troves, are in unstudied areas of the property, or located outside of the park's borders. One archaeologist suggested that trash may have been thrown off the edge of the bluff east of the house. In any case, there are more discoveries for future archaeologists to make at the Mansion!



Mansion Minute



JOIN US FOR THE 2024 MORRIS-JUMEL MANSION GEORGE WASHINGTON DINNER

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024
6:00 - 9:00 PM



Liberty · Equality · Brotherhood
Liberté · Égalité · Fraternité

The George Washington Dinner is an elegant and fun evening commemorating a dinner hosted by President Washington in July 1790 for his Cabinet. This year it takes place on Bastille Day, the French National Day, and we celebrate the principles of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. Individual tickets and tables of 10 are available. Learn more about this unique event that takes place in the historic Mansion and on the beautiful grounds.

TICKETS

Contact Catherine Hughes chughes@morrisjumel.org for information on sponsorships ranging from \$750 to \$20,000.

Mansion Minute

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