

Morgan, Maria

by Bridget Hourican

Morgan, Maria (1828–92), journalist, was elder of at least two daughters of James Morgan of Prospect, Carrigrohane, Co. Cork; nothing is known of her mother. In 1865, accompanied by her younger sister, Jane, she went to Rome, where Jane studied art and Maria obtained a commission from King Victor Emmanuel to buy saddle horses in Ireland. In 1867 both sisters left for New York, where they remained for the rest of their lives. Maria was on the regular staff of the *New York Herald* as the reporter of cattle markets and fairs. She is described as more than six feet (1.83 m) in height and was known to associates as 'Midy Morgan'.

Both sisters were of singular and eccentric character. They designed and built for themselves an extraordinary house at Livingston, Staten Island, where they lived alone, occupying the upper floor only, to which they gained access by a ladder. The house had elaborate precautions against burglars. Jane decorated the walls and ceilings with carving and inlaid panelling, which took her over five years of constant labour. Maria died there in July 1892, and Jane in April 1899. The property passed to their nephew, Mr Hodder, who sold the pictures and panelling to Col. Hickman Morgan, who removed them to his house, Hollybrook, near Skibbereen, Co. Cork, where he had rooms specially built for the decorative panelling.

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Boase; Strickland (on sister)