



NEWSLETTER Number 16

January – February 2014

The Friends of Two Rivers Mansion, a 501(c)(3) organization 3130 - McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214

**Message from Jeff Syracuse, New Board President** - Happy New Year to each of you and your families. As we look ahead to another great year of working to restore, preserve, and raise community awareness of the Two Rivers Mansion and surrounding 14-acres, I look back briefly on the incredible progress that has been made in just two full years as the Friends of Two Rivers Mansion. After an almost \$1.3 million renovation that earned a Metro Historical Preservation Award in 2013 and consistently growing antique, art, music, and community events that have resulted in thousands of visitors to the mansion from all around the country, we are propelled into 2014 with great momentum to continue these efforts at bringing new life and vitality to the pre-Civil War mansion. I am honored to take the reins as President of the Friends group this year and extend my sincere thanks to my predecessors, Phil Claiborne and Phil Howard, for their leadership and talents to build the foundation of a truly remarkable group of board members that exhibit true dedication and commitment to achieving the mission of the organization. Be sure to visit our website and the "Events" page for a full listing of the dates for our 2014 events and stay tuned for announcements of increased availability for historic tours.

For those on Facebook, I encourage you to find our Two Rivers Mansion page and like it. We are approaching 1,000 fans of our Facebook page and it is another great way to keep in touch. I look forward to seeing you soon at the mansion!

**Phase 5 Restoration Complete** – With the coming of the New Year the restoration project that was begun in the fall of 2011 is now complete. The work has included a new roof and restoration of the exterior surfaces of the 1802 House in addition to a complete restoration of the exterior of the Mansion and the addition of digital lighting for the front façade. The last phase of the work has focused on the interior of the Mansion and has addressed plaster and wall paper repairs as well as newly painted woodwork on the main floor. As a companion project the Stone's River Woman's Club completed a redecoration project in the Gentleman's lounge that included painting the walls and woodwork after the removal of the pink wallpaper. The room also has new carpet and a new window treatment. The total cost of work done over the last 2 years is now approaching the 1.3 million dollar mark and the Mansion has never

looked better than when it was first inhabited in 1859. If you didn't get a chance to visit during December that should certainly be one of your New Year's resolutions. I can promise you, you won't be disappointed.

### **Mansion History –**

In the last installment of the Mansion history hard times had fallen on the Two Rivers Stock Farm due to a number of financial considerations and failure after failure to make good on the loans combined with the acquisition of additional debt resulted in a Chancery Court ruling in February 1898 which set a deadline for all encumbrances to be cleared or the farm would be advertised for sale on the Courthouse steps. That sale took place on October 29, 1898 but by the end of the year all the outstanding debt leading up to the sale had been repaid and the McGavocks were still living at Two Rivers. The 1900 census showed Frank and Clara living at the Mansion along with Clara's sister and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wright and their four children who were listed as boarders.

Frank's wife Clara quit her medical practice and sold it when she married Frank and moved to Two Rivers in 1896. At the time she was aware of Frank's financial problems and he signed a prenuptial agreement designed to protect her real and personal property from his creditors on the day of their wedding. While there is no concrete proof that Clara's money was used to save Two Rivers it seems logical that's what happened since Frank had come to the end of his resources to access more money and the bank had stepped in to liquidate the property for the debt.

Clara died at Two Rivers on January 24, 1904 and Frank continued to manage what was left of the farming operation until he transferred ownership of the farm to his son, Spence McGavock, in 1907. Spence leased the property out while he worked as a salesman in the north until he returned to live there when he married in 1928. Frank continued to live at the Mansion and died on Oct 17, 1920.

(Credit for the research that's abbreviated in this and the previous installment is given to Barbara Franklin and Carolyn Sullivan who co-authored a booklet entitled *Dr. Clara C. Plimpton McGavock: An Unlikely Mistress of Two Rivers*. Their book is available for purchase at any Friends of Two Rivers events.)

**February Two Hearts Antiques and Craft Show** – The first event at the Mansion for 2014 will be the Two Hearts Antiques and Crafts Show. The dates and times are: February 13 and 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., February 15 from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. The weekend will feature items from twenty antique, art and craft dealers in addition to a coffee Shoppe. If you have items you've always wondered about the worth of you can bring them in to have an appraiser take a look and tell you if you really have a treasure. A per item charge will apply for this service. As always the parking is free and the admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. Friend's members will be admitted free by presenting a current membership card.

**Calendar of Events for 2014** – Once again the calendar is full of exciting events at the Mansion and grounds. Dates are locked in and a number of individuals and groups have already been confirmed for year. The events listed below are also available on the Events Page of our website at [www.thefriendsoftworivers.org](http://www.thefriendsoftworivers.org).

Two Hearts Antique and Craft Show – February 13. 14. 15

Phil the House With Art and Friends – May 18 (featured artist this year is Pat Johnson)

Music at the Mansion –

Saturday, June 21 – The Moonlighters big band orchestra does an encore at the Mansion

Saturday, July 19 – TBA

Saturday, August 16 – The Nashville Blues Society returns for a third season

Saturday, Sept 20 – TBA

These are outdoor events and attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs/blankets for the lawn. Coolers and snacks are allowed but excellent on site catered food is also available from RoseMary Lane Catering. Admission to each of these music events is \$5 per person or \$20 maximum per car. These are must dates for every calendar and don't forget; admission is free for Friends members who show a current membership card.

**Historic tours of the Mansion** – During last year's summer months and for one weekend in December historic tours of the Mansion were offered on a limited basis. The response to the opportunity to learn about the history of the property as well as the three generations of McGavocks who lived at the Mansion was very positive. Visitors from a number of states as well as various communities in the greater Nashville area took advantage of the chance to come into the Mansion to discover its past. By the time the next edition of this newsletter is published an expanded schedule of tour dates and times will have been confirmed. One of the big challenges to providing multiple dates and times for Mansion tours hinges on the availability of knowledgeable guides to staff the schedule. Docent training is available for those who would like to get involved with the Friends in this way and anyone interested in receiving this docent training can contact Phil Claiborne for details. The e-mail for contact for information is [phil.claiborne@nashville.gov](mailto:phil.claiborne@nashville.gov) or you can call 889-2907 for information.

**2014 Board of Directors** – At the November Friends Board meeting the list of Board members was confirmed as follows:

Jerry Allen - Retiree, Ford Motor Company

Joe Carrillo – Avertest Lab

Sherrri Forrest – Southern Pharmacy Cooperative

Todd Henry – Asst Chief, Metro Police Dept

Phil Howard – Retiree, Kroger Mid South

Willie McDonald – Cedarstone Bank

Cathy Randall – Free Lance Writer

Shannon Sullivan – Ryman Hospitality Partners

Jeff Syracuse - BMI

Jan Brown - Co-owner, Sir Speedy Printing

Phil Claiborne – District 15 Councilman

Jane Greenway – Jane Greenway Interiors

John C. Hobbs – ReMax Carriage House

Bill Lafolette – CEO, Sycamores Terrace

Beverly Oakley – Mary Kay Director

Carolyn Sullivan – Stones River Woman's Club

Marilyn Swing – Retired Metropolitan Clerk

Harriett Warren - Stones River Woman's Club

Officers for the 2014 year were named as follows:

President – Jeff Syracuse, Secretary – Marilyn Swing, Treasurer – Willie McDonald

Ex-Officio members of the Board include:

Tommy Lynch – Director, Metro Parks and Tim Walker – Director, Metro Historic Commission

**Friends of Two Rivers Merchandise** – Friends related merchandise is available at all Friend’s sponsored events as well as from the website. Items available for purchase includes prints of the Mansion and 1802 House, note cards, Friends of Two Rivers T-shirts in a variety of colors, tote bags as well as a number of salvaged items from the restoration. The recently published booklet entitled *Dr. Clara C. Plimpton McGavock: An Unlikely Mistress of Two Rivers* is also now available. The proceeds from the sale of these items goes to support the work of the Friends of Two Rivers and all purchases are tax deductible.

**Memberships** – Memberships for “The Friends of Two Rivers” are available in categories that range from a minimum of \$20 a year up to corporate memberships of \$2,000 a year. **All membership fees are considered donations and are, therefore, tax deductible.** The **Basic Memberships** are listed below and anyone that might be interested in using the Mansion for an event can choose from one of **Event Membership** categories which will be determined at a time of consultation with the Two Rivers Mansion Events Coordinator, Laura Carrillo. She can be reached at 615-885-1112 or [laura.carrillo@nashville.gov](mailto:laura.carrillo@nashville.gov) .

**BASIC Membership** for Friends of Two Rivers Mansion includes:

- I. Senior citizen or Student - \$20 annual or \$55 for 3 years
- II. Individual - \$25 annual or \$65 for 3 years
- III. Family - \$50 or \$125 for 3 years

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for my tax-deductible membership.

Make check payable to: The Friends of Two Rivers

Mail check to: 3130 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214

**Personal Thanks** – December 31, 2013 marks the end of the second full year of existence for The Friends of Two Rivers Mansion and it’s hard to comprehend just how much has been accomplished in those two years. Needless to say it takes a lot of dedicated effort to make such a success a reality and much of the credit for that success goes to the members of the Board and to out-going President, Phil Howard. A successful organization is also dependent on a loyal and supportive membership and the “Friends” have certainly demonstrated those qualities during these first two formative years. It seems awfully small in relation to all that’s been accomplished but I would just like to say a simple THANK YOU to everyone that’s had a part making our success possible.

*Phil Claiborne*

Founder