



THE FRIENDS OF
TWO RIVERS
MANSION

NEWSLETTER Number 25

July - August 2015

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

Message from Board President, Phil Claiborne - Summer has just begun and things at the Mansion are bursting out like summer blooms. Since the last newsletter was published we have had well over 2,000 folks visit the Mansion for one reason or another and we have just scratched the surface of all the great things that are scheduled for the summer of 2015. I encourage you to sit down with this communication and your calendar and mark the coming events so you won't miss out on any of them. After all, everything is FREE when you show your membership card. I also would ask that you consider inviting your friends to come along with you and encourage them to become members also. It's going to be a great summer and I look forward to seeing you more than once.

Mansion History - Recently I came into the possession of a paper that was presented to the Park Board of Metropolitan Nashville on June 1, 1968. It was prepared by Hugh F. Walker who is identified as the County Historian. The 640 acre Two Rivers estate was purchased by the newly consolidated Metropolitan government in 1965 for \$924,066 with the intent to develop it as park space. This paper seems to have been prepared for the purpose of educating the Park Board members on the history of the acreage, including the Mansion, and to make recommendations as to its use as a public property. In subsequent issues of the newsletter I would like to share portions of Mr. Walker's paper; specifically the information related to the early history of the property and the surrounding area.

"For more than a century the Two Rivers Mansion has stood guard at the entrance to Pennington Bend. The ante-bellum home overlooks the confluence of the Stone's Rivers and the Cumberland.

This section of Davidson County is known for its beauty, its history and the fertility of the soil. The bend is a part of the Hermitage-Clover Bottom neighborhood, praised by Willoughby Williams in his "recollections" as the richest section of the county.

Some of the few remaining farms in the bend are now in bluegrass, but in former years the land produced fine stands of wheat. In the first half of the last century farmer Andrew Jackson and others grew cotton in this vicinity.

Two hundred years ago this year (1768) the first Englishman arrived at the junction of the two rivers. He was Thomas Hutchins, who surveyed the Cumberland from the mouth of the Stone's River to the Ohio. Hutchins drew the first map of this area, which is reproduced with a part of his journal in Williams' "Early Travels in the Tennessee Country".

The fertile bend was first named for Samuel McSpadden, who settled in the area in 1797. Later it too the name of another land owner, John W. Pennington, who arrived in the early 1800's. The Cumberland was given its name by Dr. Thomas Walker, who named it for the Duke of Cumberland. Stone's River was named for Uriah Stone, an early hunter and settler.

Stone may have been the first white man to make his home in this area, but if so he was soon followed by Col John Donelson, for whom the Donelson community is named, and whose descendants still live near by.

Today new homes and streets are edging into Pennington Bend, but perhaps 50 percent of its 3,465 acres is still in farm land. Briley Parkway is being extended up through the bend from the bridge at Old Haysborough, splitting through the farm land and angling toward the western curved of the Cumberland. The Bend is four miles deep, and just over one and one-half miles wide at its widest point.

As might be expected in a wealthy and stable community, the people of Pennington Bend and the Donelson area have long had an interest in public and private education. We are indebted to the Crew and Woolridge History of Nashville, Miss Jane Thomas' "Old Days in Nashville" and private

researches by Nashville attorney William Walker for an account of schools in the bend.”

Nashville Symphony Returns to the Mansion - On Thursday evening June 18 close to 1200 folks brought their coolers, lawn chairs and blanket to hear the Nashville Symphony perform on the south side lawn at the Mansion. The program included selections by Saint-Saens, Rossini, Seibelius, de Falla, Brahms and Bernstein under the direction of Asst Conductor, Vinay Parameswaran



ariel photo courtesy of Derek Bousa

This was the second year for the Symphony to appear at the Mansion as part of their Music in the Parks Summer Tour which is a collaboration between Metro Parks and the Symphony. If we're fortunate enough to have them back again in 2016 you won't want to miss it.

Phil the House - The May 17th Phil the House event marked the 5th anniversary of the first event hosted by Friends in 2010. This year's event was focused on the dedication of the restored boxwood garden and angel fountain at its center. The highlight of the afternoon was the dedication of the fountain to Mary Louise Bransford McGavock (cousin and the last McGavock widow), Kathrine Higgins-Blundin (mother) and Elizabeth Bransford (grandmother) of Mr. William Blundin who gifted the money necessary for the restoration work to take place late last fall.



Music at the Mansion - Before the next newsletter hits your inbox two Music at the Mansion events will have taken place. The next opportunity to stake out a section of the lawn will be on Saturday, July 18th when the Moonlighter's Big Band Orchestra oc-



cupies the lower veranda.

The Moonlighters is a 20 piece band based in Nashville. The group is a non-profit organization that's been performing in the Nashville area for over 25 years and all the members play strictly for the fun of playing. From waltz to two step and fox trot to swing, they play a wide variety of favorites from the era when swing was king. If you like Dorsey, Glen Miller, Sinatra, or Bobby Darin, then you'll love their music. For this event a dance floor is placed on the lawn so polish up those dancing shoes and get ready for a great evening under the stars with the Moonlighters.

As an added feature of this particular evening the Mansion will be open for tours from 6 pm to 7 pm. The admission price for the tour is \$10 per person and is not included in the admission for the music performance. Friends members are admitted free upon presentation of a current membership card.

The second musical event on Saturday evening, August 15 will mark the 5th

anniversary of Music at the Mansion with the folks that have made all of the previous August events a rocking experience. Two groups from the Nashville



Blues Society will take the veranda stage and you can be sure that feet will be tapping on the grass to the R and B tempos that will fill the night air. A September Music event is planned for this year also and it will take place on Friday evening, September 18th and will feature the Tennessee Mafia Jug Band.

All Music at the Mansion events begin at 7:30 pm and the admission is \$5 per person or \$20 max for a car. Admission is FREE to Friends members who present their membership card.

Historic tours of the Mansion - As of the first of June the Mansion has been open for tours on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Tours begin on the hour at noon 1, 2, 3 and 4 o'clock and last approximately 50 minutes. For the first time the Friends group is paying for two docents to staff the daily tours and we are fortunate to have two great ladies in that role. Linda Patrick and Linda Phifer are excited to be part of the Two Rivers experience and they would love to relate the history of the property and the families for you beginning in the 1802 House where the story begins and walking through the decades of the 1800 and 1900's.

This opportunity would also be a great outing for a club or social group outing. Admission is \$10 per person and, as always, free to Friends members upon of a current membership card.

On a trial basis the Mansion will be open for tours from 6 pm to 7 pm on July 18th prior to the Moonlighters Music at the Mansion performance.



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 or \$3,000 for two years. All membership fees are considered donations and are, therefore, tax deductible. The Basic are listed below and anyone interested in using the Mansion for an event can choose from one of Event Membership or Supporting 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 .

All Friends events are free to members so the cost of membership is more than covered if you attend all the events that are offered during the year. Memberships also make a great gifts for friends and relatives.

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 \$ _____ gtfor my tax-deductible membership.

Checks should be made payable to Friends of Two Rivers Mansion and mailed to: The Friends of Two Rives Mansion, 3130 McGavock, Nashville, TN 37214

Phil Claiborne

Founder and President
Two Rivers Mansion
A 501 (c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization

