



THE FRIENDS OF
TWO RIVERS
MANSION

NEWSLETTER Number 39

November - December 2017

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

President Marilyn Swing's Remarks - 2017 has flown by, and no sooner than we have put away the painted pumpkins from our huge Halloween at the Mansion event, then it will be time to begin decking the halls for our Holiday Historic Tours in December that showcase the Mansion in its seasonal finest!

It has been a busy and productive year for Friends, from the addition of attractive new signage and fencing along the property frontage to approval by Metro Government of funding for initial stages of constructing an events center on the property. This will relieve much of wear-and-tear on the beautiful historic Mansion. Even more importantly, educational programming on the history of the property and its early inhabitants has been developed and field trips have already begun by students at nearby Donelson schools to learn the history of their neighborhood.

It has been an honor for me to serve as president of the Friends organization in this important year, and I urge each of you to continue your commitment and support in preserving and promoting this historical treasure and crown jewel of the Donelson community.

Editor's note: Marilyn has served in the President's role during a pivotal transition period this past year as the organization is moving from it's formative years into a more solid destination venue. There is still work to be done in this regard but Marilyn's efforts have been invaluable in addressing some of the issues associated with this transition process. Our thanks and gratitude for her service can't be measured in mere words but on behalf of the Board and membership, let me say a simple thank you for a job well done.)

Property History - The history of the Two Rivers Mansion property is really the story of two families: the Hardings and the McGavocks. The land in the bend was awarded, acquired, bought, sold and traded numerous times between 1784 and 1965. The following is an inventory of those transactions.

Nicholas Coonrad (1784-1794) Nicholas was the first to own the 640 tract west of the confluence of the Stones and Cumberland rivers. He received the property from a North Carolina land grant made to the earliest Cumberland settlement pioneers who stayed in the area, after the initial Indian unrest caused havoc in the area during the first decade. 1,500 North Carolina land grants were issued to 858 men and women in the years following the American Revolution. Coonrad was a signer of the Cumberland Compact in 1780. The Compact created a simple form of governing for the settlement. There is no evidence that he ever lived on the property in the bend six miles upstream from the French Like station (Nashville). He also acquired several other tracts in Davidson County. In the early 1790's, Coonrad moved to what would become Robertson County, near Miles' Station, where he served as the first Postmaster of the county.

David Buchanan (1794-1812) David Buchanan migrated to Nashville in 1793 from Augusta County, Virginia, with his wife, Margaret, and three of their children. At the time, he was 29 years old. Buchanan's mother, Joanna, was a first generation American, having emigrated from Ireland in 1740. He purchased the 640 acre tract below Spey's Spring for Nicholas Conrad in 1794. The spring is under the north parking lot at Opry Mills Mall today.

There remain few records of his life in the Nashville area, so how the property was managed in the first ten years is unknown. In 1805, however, Buchanan was forced to sell part of his holdings, 164 acres, to pay off a \$640 debt to John Caffery. More of the property was sold in 1808, this time to John Edmondson to pay off a debt of \$1000. Edmondson traded his land to Andrew Jackson. Finally, in 1812, Buchanan relinquished 175 acres along the Stones River to John Arnold to settle another debt of \$1359 before moving to Lincoln County, Tennessee. He did, however, vote in Davidson County in the election of 1812. The county was first divided into militia companies or military districts for the purpose of legal representation, voting and taxation and the practice continued until 1835 when there was a change to numerical districts. In Lincoln county, Buchanan purchased 1900 acres along Cane Creek near Fayetteville.

The 1802 House is the oldest structure on the Two Rivers site. The location of the original house the Buchanan family lived in when he purchased the property in 1794, however, is unclear but David is currently credited with building the 1802 House. No primary source documentation has been uncovered to reveal the exact date of the building's construction. One secondary reference calls the structure the 1820 House. Another has called it the Harding House. William Harding did not purchase the property until 1819 and does not move to the site until 1823.

There may have been two structures on the Buchanan property. One house, possibly built when Buchanan first moved to the site in 1794, may have existed where Two Rivers Middle School is today. When Belmont Domestic Academy opened in 1815 near today's middle school site, the academy was said to have operated in a large, "one-story frame house" once owned by David Buchanan (not a brick structure). Thus, the 1802 House may be a second house built by Buchanan or by William Harding after he acquired the site.

Archeological Work - As part of the planning and design work for an event center that's to be constructed in the wooded area immediately behind the Mansion, archeological work will be taking place during the month of November. The Friends group has retained the services of Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research and the work will be done under the direction of TVAR Director,



Hunter Johnson. Based on the finding of sample pits that will be dug in the wooded area, the location of the event structure and related infrastructure will be properly positioned to not damage any reventant area(s) or findings. The results of this work studied in the



Huntsville, AL lab and will be published in a report to be presented to the Parks Department and the Friends group in approximately 5 to 6 weeks.

Halloween at the Mansion - This year's Halloween at the Mansion was underwritten by a contribution from CedarStone Bank in Donelson. Their generosity made it possible for the Friends group to provide the candy that table sponsors on the Candy Trail used for Trick or Treats in addition to helping with some of the other costs associated with providing this event for the community.

In addition to CedarStone as a presentation sponsor of the event, the success of this year's event also is shared with a number of Candy Trail table sponsors including: Metro Nashville Airport Authority, Ryman Hospitality Partners, Stones River Woman's Club, Friends of State Representative Darren Jernigan, Hip Donelson, Donelson Church of the Nazarene, The Donelson Fellowship, Great Clips of Donelson, Exchange Club of Middle Tennessee, Stay & Play After School Care, State Farm insurance agent Shank Kothare, Zoo Crew Pediatric Dentistry, Benne Estate Sales, Serra Chevrolet Buick & GMC, Friends of Scott Tift, Bambini Montessori, and Marilyn & Joe Swing. Scenes from this event are included at the end of the newsletter.

Pickler and Ben - Pickler and Ben is a locally produced TV show that featured a Halloween visit to Two Rivers. The visit was part of the Halloween morning show on WTVF Channel 5. The segment involved a visit by host and hostess, Kelly Pickler and Ben Aaron, along with Adam Berry and Amy Bruni from the TLC series 'Kindred Spirits'. The goal was to see if they could find evidence to substantiate the claims of kindred spirits on in either the Mansion or the 1802 House. This is the first time any such investigation has been done at Two Rivers and there is reason, based on the visit, that the claims might be true.

Christmas at the Mansion - Once again this year the Mansion will be decorated for Christmas and tours will be conducted during the hours of 1 to 5 pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, December 8-9-10 and 15-16-17. These adjusted hours will allow for easier access to the Mansion by avoiding the late evening traffic generated by all the activity in Music Valley.

A new element of this event will be introduced this year in the form of a Gingerbread House competition. Entries will be taken in several categories including children, youth and adult and a cash prize will be awarded the winner of each category. All entries will be on display during the tour dates and judging for the winners will be done by those attending the Mansion for tours. More information will be published later in mid November

Volunteer Opportunities - One of the recommendations of the Master Plan for Two Rivers was to provide educational opportunities for school students in the area. As just mentioned, two areas have been identified as priorities and have now been formalized with teacher materials. In order to offer field trip experiences during the school year, volunteers will be needed to assist Friend's Board members in the conduct these experiences. Before offering these experiences to the larger Metro area they will be limited to the immediate Donelson area public and private grade schools. This will give the Friends staff an opportunity to learn as we go. Volunteers will assist in monitoring groups during presentations and also during hands on experiences. Total time involvement is projected to be a maximum of 2 - 3 hours.

If you have an interest in helping with this type of learning experience we invite you to make your interest known by replying to this newsletter e-mail. Please provide your name and phone number for a follow up contact.

Membership - Membership with the Friends of Two Rivers Mansion is one of the best deals in Nashville. Memberships 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. Friends members are admitted free at all Friends sponsored events at the Mansion upon presentation of a current membership card. Those events include, but are not limited to, the winter antique show in the Mansion, all Music at the Mansion programs, Halloween at the Mansion and historic

tours of the property. Admission to these events range from \$5 to \$10 per person so its easy to see that a basic membership cost far less than the combined admissions. Parking is free and traffic is not a problem, and, your support enables the organization to continue offering more opportunities, while at the same time, continuing the restoration and preservation work that's at the heart of our mission statement.

The Basic categories are listed below and anyone interested in using the Mansion for a wedding or other large event can choose from one of Event Membership or Supporting Membership categories which will be determined at a time of a consultation with the Two Rivers Mansion Events Coordinator, Laura Carrillo. She can be reached at 615-885-1112 or laura.carrillo@nashville.gov . The membership form below can also be used to secure a membership. The Friends of Two Rivers is a 501c3 organization which means that membership are tax deductible gifts to the organization.

BASIC Membership for Friends of Two Rivers Mansion includes:

Senior citizen or Student - \$20 annual or \$55 for 3 years

Individual - \$25 annual or \$65 for 3 years

Family - \$50 or \$125 for 3 years

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ gift for 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

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