



THE FRIENDS OF  
**TWO RIVERS**  
**MANSION**

NEWSLETTER Number 45

November - December 2018

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

**Message from Board President Larry Weber** - When you get to my age, time goes by pretty quickly; and this year has certainly sped by faster than I could have imagined. This will be my last opportunity in a newsletter to say thank you for the opportunity to serve as president of the Friend's group in 2018, and to express my appreciation for all the amazing support that our board provides. Next year you will be served by Mary Hart, who will lead as your president for 2019. Mary is a worker of the first magnitude. Also, I can't say enough about the dedicated and consistent guidance of our founder, Phil Claiborne. His leadership and work ethic propel our Friends group toward meaningful contributions to our Donelson community. Thank you Phil, and thanks to all the board members and committee members who give of their time and talent to make Two Rivers Mansion a wonderful place to visit. As we approach Thanksgiving and the Christmas season, I hope each of you will have someone to hold, a special place called home and something to give away as a gift - even if it is only a smile. Let's make 2019 the best year yet for Two Rivers Mansion; we can do it with your help.

**Mansion History: The McGavocks** - Frank McGavock was the third child of David McGavock, and was two years old when he arrived with his family from Virginia. He, like his brothers, eventually acquired property with his father in Nashville. Along with other landed gentry in the vicinity, he studied under Dr. James Priestly at Cumberland College. Frank married John Harding's eldest daughter, Amanda, in 1823. That union brought him valuable land along Richland

Creek in west Nashville adjacent to his father-in-law's Belle Meade plantation. The estate was called Cliff Lawn.

David Harding McGavock, was the second oldest child of Frank and Amanda. He was born September 1, 1826 in Nashville and little is known of his early life except that he graduated from the University of Nashville in 1845 along with his older brother John Harding McGavock. John went on to attend Harvard then moved to Arkansas. After school, David moved to Arkansas as well where his brother had established a cotton plantation on property given to him by his grandfather, John Harding, at Plum Point bend in Mississippi County just above Memphis and bordered on the east by the Mississippi River. The site is just across the river from what eventually became Fort Pillow (Civil War). The Harding, McGavock and Felix Grundy families owned over 20,000 acres in the county. David spent four years in Arkansas, before returning to Nashville in 1849.

The following year, David, H. McGavock met and married Willie Elizabeth Harding. Willie was a student at the Nashville Female Academy. The wedding took place on May 23, 1850, in Memphis, the home of her mother and step-father. The diamonds on her bridal veil were later the source of funding to create the McGavock Bible Institute in Shanghai, China. David and Willie moved to Nashville where the couple initially lived at Cliff Lawn, with David's parents.

On September 25, 1851, Willie gave birth to Frank P. McGavock, the couple's first child. The family probably didn't move for Cliff Lawn to Two Rivers until after the child was born. Though David had control of the property, it does not necessarily mean they relocated immediately. Once at Two Rivers, it's believed the young family lived in the 1802 House. The birth of Frank took a toll on Willie's health and she began to suffer from a form of asthma. For part of the year, it was reported, she ventured alone to the white Mountains in Bethlehem, New Hampshire where the mild climate helped ease her condition. Years later she wrote that "contact with these hoary-crowned, grandly beautiful mountains induces retrospection and introspection. How strange are the changes in human life." As she grew older her health continued to deteriorate.

**Christmas at the Mansion** - The next event at the Mansion will take place on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 7-8-9 and 14-15-16, These are the dates for Christmas tours in the Mansion. These tours include all the

information given during the summer tours but they take place at a time when the Mansion is decorated for the holidays. A majority of those who come during this time will be individuals, couples or family groups, but, larger groups can be accommodated also. An advanced contact to 615-885-1112 is requested in order to make sure a sufficient number of docents are available to handle a larger group.

**Halloween at the Mansion** - Every year since the formation of the Friends group a family friendly Halloween event has been held at the Mansion. This year's event took place on Saturday, October 27th from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. and it was without a doubt the largest Friends event in our 8 year history. Early arrivals were there even before set up was complete and the hayride line was active well after all other activity had ceased. Projections are between 5,000-6,000 people on property in a five hour window, and some think that's a conservative number. One lesson learned is that discussions will be necessary prior to next year's event, and adjustments will be necessary for handling a crowd more than twice as large as any crowd on site in the past.

**Consider Being a Volunteer** - As a member of the Friends of Two Rivers Mansion, your membership and participation in our community events help support work that is so important in keeping this historic property maintained and functional. But there are other ways, fun ways, by which you could do more by volunteering to help. Many of our events, like Halloween at the Mansion, require manpower to assist with various tasks like set up, directing parking, greeting guests, moving equipment, and everyone's favorite - clean up. If you find that you could spare a few hours to assist with an event, you can learn more and volunteer by calling or emailing Events Coordinator, Laura Carrillo. She can be reached at 615-885-1112 or [laura.carrillo@nashville.gov](mailto:laura.carrillo@nashville.gov).

**Program Speakers Available** - During the summer and Christmas holiday period the Friend's group is proud to provide the opportunity for visitors to come for tours that include the 1802 House and the main floor and second story of the Mansion. During this process the history of the plantation, and three McGavock families who made the Mansion their home is explained. In an effort to make the history and stories of Two Rivers and the McGavocks more accessible the Friends now offer speakers that will come to your club, social or civic group to not only speak to the history but also to current goals and plans for future

programs and development at the Mansion. Anyone wishing more information, or to book a speaker, should contact Laura Carrillo at 615-885-1112 or via e-mail at [laura.carrillo@nashville.gov](mailto:laura.carrillo@nashville.gov), or Phil Claiborne at 615-889-2907 or via e-mail at [sgt08@bellsouth.net](mailto:sgt08@bellsouth.net). There is not cost to your organization for this service.

**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 to a non-profit organization and are, therefore, tax deductible. The Basic membership levels 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](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 \$\_\_\_\_\_ 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*

Founder

Friends of Two Rivers Mansion

a 501c3 tax exempt organization