

The Mansion at Fort Chiswell History

[Website – Step into History at the Mansion at Fort Chiswell](#)

The Mansion at Fort Chiswell, also known as the McGavock Mansion, is a historic property in Wythe County, Virginia, constructed between 1839 and 1840 by brothers Stephen and Joseph Cloyd McGavock. The McGavock family were prominent landowners and operated a large plantation, which, like many in the antebellum South, relied on enslaved labor.

Slave Records: [Slaves of Stephen and Cloyd McGavock](#)

Detailed records from the era provide insights into the lives of the enslaved individuals on the McGavock plantation. **The 1860 Slave Schedule indicates that Stephen and Cloyd McGavock owned 52 enslaved people in Wythe County.** Following the Civil War, the 1866 cohabitation records of Wythe County document formerly enslaved individuals who identified Stephen McGavock as their last owner. These records list names and approximate birth years, offering a glimpse into the personal histories of those who lived and labored on the plantation.

The McGavock Family Papers: [UVA Archival Resources of the Virginias](#)

The McGavock Family Papers, spanning from 1751 to 1961, are housed at the University of Virginia. This collection encompasses a wide range of documents, including information on land acquisition, agriculture, slavery, and personal correspondence, providing a comprehensive view of the family's history and their interactions with the enslaved community.

While these records shed light on the existence and identities of the enslaved individuals at the Fort Chiswell Mansion, detailed personal narratives remain limited. Ongoing research and exploration of historical archives continue to be essential in uncovering and honoring the stories of those who endured enslavement on the McGavock plantation.

Slave Duties

The 52 enslaved individuals at Fort Chiswell Mansion likely worked in a combination of agricultural, domestic, and skilled labor roles. Their work supported both the wealth of the McGavock family and the broader plantation economy. Historical records, such as the 1866 cohabitation records, provide limited personal details, but their contributions were crucial to the plantation's operation.

Given the time period (pre-Civil War) and the location (Wythe County, Virginia), the enslaved individuals owned by the McGavock family at Fort Chiswell Mansion likely had a range of responsibilities that supported the plantation economy and the household. Their duties would have fallen into several key categories:

1. Agricultural Labor

Wythe County, Virginia, had a mixed agricultural economy. The McGavock plantation likely produced cash crops and foodstuffs, meaning enslaved laborers were involved in:

- **Tobacco cultivation** – A major crop in Virginia at the time, requiring intensive labor for planting, weeding, and curing.
- **Wheat, corn, and livestock farming** – Many Virginia plantations also grew grain crops and raised cattle, pigs, and horses.
- **General farm maintenance** – Enslaved workers would have been responsible for plowing fields, harvesting crops, repairing fences, and managing livestock.

2. Domestic Work

The McGavock family was wealthy, so they likely had house slaves responsible for:

- **Cooking and food preparation** – Preparing meals for the family and possibly overseeing food storage and preservation.
- **Cleaning and laundry** – Maintaining the mansion's cleanliness and washing clothes.
- **Childcare** – Taking care of the McGavock children and possibly serving as wet nurses.
- **Personal attendants** – Serving meals, dressing family members, and providing other personal services.

3. Skilled Labor & Trades

Larger plantations often had enslaved individuals with specialized skills, such as:

- **Blacksmithing** – Making and repairing tools, horseshoes, and farm equipment.
- **Carpentry** – Constructing and maintaining buildings, fences, and furniture.
- **Masonry** – Building and repairing chimneys, stone walls, or other structures.
- **Textile work** – Spinning, weaving, and sewing clothing or household goods.

4. Transportation & Overseer Assistance

Some enslaved men may have worked with horses and wagons, transporting goods and assisting overseers with managing other enslaved laborers. Others may have worked as stable hands, caring for horses and livestock.

5. Iron Industry Labor (Possibly)

Fort Chiswell was known for its proximity to iron production. Some plantations in Southwest Virginia leased enslaved laborers to work in iron furnaces, forges, or salt mines. It's possible that some of the McGavocks' enslaved individuals were involved in this type of labor.

The jail in the basement of the McGavock mansion at Fort Chiswell likely served multiple purposes, given the mansion's role in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some possible reasons people were held there include:

1. **Temporary Holding for Criminals** – Fort Chiswell was a key transportation hub in Virginia, and law enforcement may have used the jail to detain individuals accused of crimes while awaiting transport to a larger facility or trial.
2. **Runaway Enslaved People** – The McGavock family, like many wealthy landowners of the time, enslaved people. The basement jail may have been used to detain those attempting to escape or those captured by slave catchers.
3. **Debtors or Indentured Servants** – In early American history, debtors or indentured servants who had not fulfilled their contracts might have been confined until arrangements were made for repayment or labor.
4. **Military or Civilian Prisoners** – During times of conflict, such as the Revolutionary War or Civil War, the jail could have held prisoners of war, spies, or individuals accused of aiding the enemy.
5. **Local Law Enforcement Use** – Given Fort Chiswell's strategic location, the jail may have been a holding area for those involved in disputes, theft, or other legal issues until they could be dealt with by authorities.

Article

Located in the picturesque Appalachian Mountains of Southwest Virginia, Wythe County was originally a part of Augusta County and later a part of the short-lived Fincastle County. In 1776 Fincastle County was extinguished and three distinct counties formed its territory: Kentucky, Washington, and Montgomery. Nearly 12,000 square miles were included in what was then Montgomery County. Wythe County was formed in 1790 and named in honor of George Wythe, signer of the Declaration of Independence and designer of the seal of Virginia. Wythe County and the Fort Chiswell area in particular is situated along Interstates 81 and 77 and U.S. 11, two highways that follow closely the Old Wilderness Trail used by pioneers who either settled or passed through this area on their way to Kentucky.

The early pioneers were mainly of German and Scotch-Irish origin. After arriving in America, they traveled southward from Pennsylvania, through the Valley of Virginia, and established homes here. These people became more or less isolated from other cultures and retained customs, which may exist in some forms today.

Daniel Boone passed through this area on his way through the Cumberland Gap to Kentucky. Other prominent men settled in this area, established homes, and resisted the Indians so that the early settlers could survive. Some of the early settlers were Colonel William Preston, Major Andrew Lewis, William Christian, Colonel William Byrd, and Evan Shelby.

Many places of historical interest are found in this community. Fort Chiswell, one of a chain of forts, was established under the leadership of Colonel William Byrd in 1761. Fort Chiswell was

named in honor of Colonel John Chiswell, who discovered lead and zinc deposits along the New River near Austinville. Prior to 1800, approximately 6,000 pioneers passed through the fort going to the west. It was near Fort Chiswell in 1792 that Reverend T. E. Birch established a school of oratory called the Anchor of Hope Academy.

When Fincastle County was formed out of Augusta County in 1772, "The Lead Mines," now Austinville, became the county seat. A monument now marks the spot where the old courthouse was located. In this courthouse, in 1775, fifteen patriots met, drafted, and signed "The Fincastle Resolutions." These resolutions, a forerunner to the Declaration of Independence, were sent to Virginia's delegation at the Continental Congress and represented the feelings and determination of the western frontiersman in never surrendering their rights and privileges granted to them as Virginians.

In 1807, Thomas Jackson built the Shot Tower on the banks of the New River. This tower was used to manufacture lead shot which early settlers used in their fowling pieces. The old tower, one of three of its kind in the United States, still stands on the banks of New River near Jackson's Ferry.

Near the Fort Chiswell exit, stands the Fort Chiswell Mansion. Captain John Montgomery, a signer of the Fincastle Resolutions, is buried near the mansion grounds.

The New River, which belies its name geologically, is the second oldest river in the world. New River flows through the eastern section of Wythe County. In the late 1800's and early 1900's waterpower from New River was used to operate charcoal furnaces.

A small town in the community, Max Meadows, was named for one of the early settlers. William Mack came here around 1745 and settled the bottom land in eastern Wythe County. Max (Mack's) Meadows was named for him.

Another early resident was Stephen Austin. This gentleman later moved to Texas where the city of Austin is named for him. The town of Austinville was named for the Austins. This small town was originally called "The Lead Mines" and was the county seat of Fincastle County.

Virginia Destinations Forge a Trail of Freedom

This summer, many U.S. travelers are connecting with their country's heritage by visiting patriotic sites across the country. The most populous and prosperous of the original 13 colonies, Virginia offers visitors opportunities to learn, experience and savor the nation's fight for liberty and democracy.

America's road to freedom begins at Jamestown. where the first permanent English colony in the New World took root, and where the first representative general assembly in the western hemisphere met in 1619. Two sites located next to each other showcase artifacts from the original 1607 settlement. The Jamestown Colonial National Historical Park allows visitors to watch archeological excavation of the original fort in Historic Jamestown. At neighboring

Jamestown Settlement, visitors can tour the re-created fort, witness musket firings, watch Indians prepare food, and board replicas of the Susan Constant, the Godspeed and the Discovery, the three tiny ships that crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the New World in 1607.

From here, the roots of democracy took hold when Virginia's government moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg in 1699. Thomas Jefferson! George Washington, Patrick Henry and others plotted to free the colonies from Great Britain. Today, travelers to Colonial Williamsburg literally step back into the 18th-century in the world's largest living-history museum. Colonial Williamsburg offers a multi-sensory experience where visitors are immersed in the 1700s through tours of more than 500 original and reconstructed public buildings, homes, taverns and shops musical performances; carriage rides; militia drills; and numerous opportunities for interaction with costumed interpreters who never stray from their 18th-century characters. Colonial Williamsburg's motto, "That the future may learn from the past" is timely and appropriate at any juncture in history.

The final stop in the historic triangle is Yorktown. In 1781 General George Washington's Continental soldiers; joined by French forces, defeated British troops in the last major battle of the Revolutionary War and secured independence for the 13 colonies. Tour the Colonial- era village with historic homes and shops, and examine the earthworks and cannon at the Yorktown battlefield. The Yorktown Victory Center is a living history museum where costumed interpreters re-create a working army encampment and farm life in the 1780s.

An hour's drive west, visitors can tour St. John's Church in Richmond's Church Hill neighborhood and see where Patrick Henry's famous "give-me-liberty-or-give-me-death" speech in 1775 still echoes in the air; re-enactments of the debate that took place at the Second Virginia Convention in the church are staged on Sundays at 2 p.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day. In neighboring Hanover County, tour Scotchtown. one of the oldest plantation houses in Virginia and Henry's home during his most politically active years. Farther southwest in Brookneal is Red Hill Plantation, where Henry retired in 1794 and where he and his second wife, Dorothea Dandridge-granddaughter of British Royal Governor Alexander Spotswood--are buried. Though the house was destroyed by fire in 1919, the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation reconstructed the original portion in 1957. Today visitors can tour the Red Hill Visitors Center that boasts the largest collection of Patrick Henry memorabilia in the world including fetters, personal items, documents, musical instruments and furniture. The site also has reconstructed servant quarters, carriage house and stables. Patrick Henry died at Red Hill in 1799.

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, declined to be remembered as President of the United States on his tombstone at Monticello, preferring instead to be remembered for these two important documents and the rounding of the University of Virginia. Visitors to Virginia gain insight into his life through what he called his "essay in architecture," Monticello. Built atop a small mountain outside of Charlottesville, this treasure stands much as it did more than 250 years ago and is the only house in America named on the United Nations' World Heritage list.

Travelers should consider beginning their visit at the Monticello Visitors' Center on Route 20f exit-121 off I-64; the center houses more than 400 artifacts, drawings and models from Jefferson's domestic life. Then retrace Jefferson's life through the rooms at Monticello, where he and his family lived, studied, entertained and dined. Stroll the gardens that have been restored to their authentic appearance, which includes many of the original species grown during Jefferson's time. Visitors can also learn about the lives of the enslaved men, women and children who made up the plantation community on "Mulberry Row."

Script for Mansion Tour by David McGavock Davis (Oct. 2009)

OUTSIDE HOUSE

Welcome to Fort Chiswell Mansion. This is a historic spot of ground. It was first surveyed and called "Great Buffalo Lick" in the 1740's by the explorer Dr. Thomas Walker, for whom Big Walker Mountain is named and who discovered and named the Cumberland Gap that led into Kentucky. There were wild herds of buffalo here then.

In the 1750's, it was known as Sayer's Mill. Alexander Sayers, the owner, ended up drowning in New River.

Fort Chiswell was built during the French and Indian War in 1760. There were 651 soldiers stationed at the fort. Important Cherokee leaders like Little Carpenter came here for peace talks and trade. Col. William Byrd III named it Fort Chiswell after his friend Col. John Chiswell who discovered and owned the lead mines 8 miles to the south.

James McGavock arrived and bought the land and buildings at Fort Chiswell just before the Revolution. McGavock was an Irish immigrant who ran an ordinary [inn?] at the fort, which was combination frontier restaurant and motel. He also ran a supplies store, a blacksmith shop, livery stable, and a courthouse jail. McGavock became active in the Revolutionary War as "keeper of the lead" as Patrick Henry addressed him in a letter. The lead from the lead mines was stored at Fort Chiswell along with gunpowder, salt and other supplies.

James McGavock was one of the 15 signers of the Fincastle Resolutions that gave the King of England an ultimatum to protect American rights or Americans would protect their own rights even if it meant sacrificing their lives.

Eventually the courthouse for Montgomery County stood here, and Tory* (*Tories were colonists who wanted the King of England to remain in control of the colonies) trials occurred with McGavock serving as one of the justices. The Tories in the area threatened McGavock's life, and armed guards had to be placed around his home for a while.

After American independence was won, McGavock continued business as usual at Ft. Chiswell. Before moving here he had married Mary Cloyd, who was Virginia born and Indians scalped her mother just 4 years after Mary's marriage. The McGavock's had a total of 10 children, and one was James, Jr., who married Polly Crockett. They set-up housekeeping in his father's log cabin at Ft. Chiswell after the old father retired to a new log cabin in Max Meadows where he died in

1812. (The Max Meadows cabin is now in Northern Ireland in a park on Irish Immigration to America.)

James, Jr. continued in his father's profitable business at Fort Chiswell as at least 60,000 settlers passed through by 1800 on their way west. James, Jr. and Polly had 12 children, two of whom, Stephen and Cloyd - both bachelors - build this house.

It was started in the 1830's and completed by 1840.

Third, fourth, and fifth generations of the McGavocks lived here over about 80 years and the house is close to 170 years old. The actual contract called for Lorain Thorn and John Johnson "to make 300,000 sand bricks at \$2.75 per thousand and lay them in handsome style including rounded joints, arches, doors and windows." Fingerprints can still be seen in some of the bricks which are laid in Flemish bond on much of the house, but American bond in some areas [diagonal versus straight?] The limestone foundation is 3 feet thick. Ceilings are 13 feet high in spacious rooms. There are 18 rooms, not counting the attic, and three large halls. There are 11 fireplaces in the main house and 3c more in the adjoining kitchen. People from 25 states and 5 foreign countries have visited here. Notice a long front porch has been removed to restore the original appearance of the house that had only the 2 story portico at its entrance with the Doric columns topped by a fan shaped window. There are unusual 2 story Palladian windows on each side of the house between stepped gable walls. The design of the fan windows is similar to some designed by Jefferson at the University of Virginia. By the way, when Thomas Jefferson purchased National Bridge from King George III in 1774 two years before he wrote the Declaration of Independence, the grandfather (James McGavock) of the two young men who built the house, was listed in that deed as an adjoining land owner.

MAIN HALL

Here in the main lower hall, you see a New York made rosewood piano with matching stool original to the house that dates before the Civil War. Among other family members, it would have been played by Stephen and Cloyd McGavock's sister-in-law Abie McGavock, who taught piano music and French to young ladies in her private school in Wytheville. She married the McGavock's older brother Ephraim the year this house was finished, and Ephraim was Wytheville's first postmaster and town treasurer, as well as owner of a store. The pictures on the wall are photographs of the portraits of Stephen and Cloyd that once hung in the house. Both have a somewhat severe expression and beards underneath their chins and no mustache-all the style of the 1840's. Stephen had dark red hair and was all business it seems from family papers and letters, but generous in supporting the education of nieces and nephews. He could well afford to since in addition to being a co-owner of this farm of between 4,000 to 5,000 acres, he was president and a stockholder of the bank in Wytheville. Cloyd, the dark brown haired brother, believed in having some fun. He sponsored dances at spring hotels in the area, enjoyed playing "9 pins", an outdoor bowling game, as well as the indoor board game "backgammon" with a younger cousin from Tennessee who recorded these activities in his diary. The younger cousin, Randal W. McGavock, later published a book about his travels abroad after graduating from Harvard and dining occasionally at the White House with President and Mrs. Polk, who were

among his friends. The same cousin was later Mayor of Nashville, the second McGavock to serve in that office, and eventually killed in the Civil War. Stephen and Cloyd contributed to the war effort by buying \$40,000 worth of Confederate bonds, which necessitated them receiving separate but identical presidential pardons from President Andrew Johnson after the war. They still displayed large oval pictures of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson in this hall however. They made sure the war didn't hurt them too badly financially either, by paying off one particularly large debt owed to a cousin in Confederate cash just before the war ended. The cousin reportedly threw the money in the fireplace after they left.

The doorbell on the front door was patented in 1860, and the large lock with a key about 6 inches long is said to have been made in London. The floorboards are yellow pine and the hand carved rail of the staircase is walnut.

SITTING ROOM

This was the sitting room of the family and would have been used for informal company as well. Several unmarried siblings of Stephen and Cloyd lived here until they married or died. One attractive sister named Betsie, did marry in her 40's and moved, but came back in 1859 to nurse her sick sister Polly who had "quinsy" - a sore throat and bronchial infection. Both sisters ended up dying only a few weeks apart, and Betsie actually caught it from her sister, and died first. Stephen and Cloyd's oldest sister Cynthia was an old maid who lived here and faithfully read and marked her Bible during the Civil War period. A visiting Confederate officer, Capt. Edward Guerrant, mentioned the two old bachelors and their old maid sister who were the surviving members of the family at the time of the war when his brigade camped around the house in 1864. He described the McGavock home as "a magnificent residence with 5,000 acres of splendid land and 150 negroes and everything." The soldiers marched on after camping here two days. The McGavocks owned a large library that included a variety of books, and also had large wall maps of the country hanging perhaps in this room. Stephen McGavock owned the entire set of American State Papers, about 12 volumes - published before Jefferson died in the 1820's and Jefferson's name is written inside the cover of one volume. Jim McGavock, a nephew who inherited the house, raised four boys here, and their books included fairytales, and Uncle Remus Tales of Brer Rabbit. In Stephen McGavock's collection was also the complete works of Washington Irving in leather bound volumes. One can imagine Stephen or Cloyd McGavock sitting in this room late at night reading "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" by candlelight.

Notice the original window valance of the McGavock's over the window frame.

NEW DINING ROOM

Eventually, this was used by the family as a new dining room, but the original dining room is in the basement directly below us. An interesting feature of this room is the signature in the windowpane with a diamond ring of a young lady named Alice. She was a great niece of the McGavock's. As odd and inappropriate as it sounds today, when relatives visited they sometimes scratched their names in windowpanes in the 1700 and 1800's. Also, sometimes, they wrote their names in the smooth mortar between the bricks on the outside porches and other areas, which is true there on the front of the main house and the back of the adjoining kitchen. The McGavocks

added a modern kitchen beside this room in about 1910, but it has been removed now to restore the original porch space. The floor in this room and the sitting room next door are the only ones not original to the house. Mrs. Brown, a recent owner of the home, used to hide a valuable piece of jewelry somewhere inside this mantel and supposedly it was never found after she died. Speaking of jewelry, the McGavock's owned some interesting pieces [where are these pieces today?] including a woman's tiny and delicately designed pin with black onyx stones and interwoven locks of some loved one's light brown hair preserved under a covering of glass, as well as a man's plain gold ring with a purplish red garnet stone and an 18 karat solid gold pocket watch with works made in Lynchburg and the gold case made in Nashville.

THE PARLOR

This room was known as the parlor. Though now decorated with a dining room table, it was originally the reception room for the formal company, and is 20 feet by 30 feet. In pioneer days the McGavocks entertained such people as George Rogers Clark who stopped at Fort Chiswell to re-supply his army. The future king of France, Louis- Philippe, stopped in 1797 to have his horse re-shoed and mentioned in his diary that the big fort had been torn down since the peace with the Indians. Andrew Jackson also stopped at the McGavock's log cabin occasionally on his trips from Nashville to Washington, and was a friend of Stephen and Cloyd's father James, Jr. and also of the McGavock's who had moved to Nashville. Stephen and Cloyd did have a brother, Andrew Jackson, who died in an accident on the farm and was named for the President even before he was the hero of New Orleans in 1815. One of the McGavocks served as a pallbearer when Andrew Jackson died. There is no record of Jackson ever visiting here, but it's very possible that he did.

One prominent person, who did visit this house, was Jacob McGavock Dickenson, the U.S. Secretary of War under President Taft. In 1910 he arrived in Max Meadows in his own private rail car and left behind here [where is it today?] an autographed photo that the family framed and hung on the wall. Dickenson owned the famous Bell-Meade Mansion in Nashville, another McGavock connected home. Another apparent visitor here was Jeb Stuart, the famous general killed in the Civil War who as a young man in the 1840's attended a dance at the McGavock house while attending school in Draper's Valley. He unfortunately had borrowed a young schoolmate's jacket without permission and the young man showed up and demanded his jacket back! Not one of Jeb's better moments. Incidentally, a nephew of Jeb's is buried in the McGavock cemetery.

Robert Hicks, author of a best seller called *Widow of the South* in 2005, visited here years before he wrote the novel, which is based on the true story of the McGavocks of

Franklin, TN. Their house was called "Carnton" and was used as a hospital during and after the terrible Battle of Franklin. The resulting cemetery in their backyard is the largest private Confederate cemetery in the nation.

The book has drawn people from all over the world to that McGavock home built by Stephen and Cloyd's Uncle Randal in the 1820's. Even actor Johnny Depp went there with his wife and

children after reading the book. One not so illustrious visitor and even a temporary resident here, was a man named Van Hobbs - smooth talking Wytheville radio announcer, alias bigamist and wanted criminal. He won over Mrs. Brown, the owner of the house in the 1980's, and convinced her to rent him a room. Van Hobbs soon moved on, and was captured in Texas after being recognized on T.V. in an episode of the program "America's Most Wanted" much to Mrs. Brown's shock and dismay! She was used to dealing with dangerous types however, since she once shot a man in the restaurant and nightclub she once ran in Maryland.

In this room, notice the pressed tiles of the fireplace with soft colors of green, brown and yellow that is original to the house. The mirror above the mantel was purchased by Chris Disibbio to replace the original one that was very similar and was removed and auctioned when the house was last sold. The windows in this room are 5 feet wide and 11 feet tall. [Are all the windows original glass-throughout the house?].

SIDE HALL

This is the side entrance to the house. The Victorian style porch may have been added in the 1800's. It has a good deal of gingerbread type decoration and matches the long front porch, which has been removed. Outside the door that has an interesting knocker, a metal plate identifies the house as being registered as a Virginia Historic Landmark, and that same year (1971) it was placed on the National Register. An outside brick walk with a herringbone pattern almost surrounds the house, and on this side extends to a dead-end between two rows of tall cedars and was nicknamed "Ghost Lane" at some point. Hurricane Hugo toppled several of the cedars a few years ago. Chris Disibbio has copied and restored the original staircase, and a secret panel is used to hide a modern bathroom behind and underneath these stairs. The room beside the hall was originally a bedroom, but has been referred to as the office in recent years. This room has given the house a reputation for being haunted due to a short in the light fixture, which definitely has a mind of its own! The lights go on and off at very odd moments and in strange patterns, and electrical repairs in the past seem unable to repair the problem. Both previous owners of the house, the Mables and the Browns, attest to the light fixture's odd behavior as well as strange sounds at night.

One young cousin of the McGavock's in the early 1900's was terrified when she was temporarily stranded here without a ride home and thought she would have to spend the night.

After Mr. and Mrs. Brown bought the house in the 1970's, they were kept awake so badly at night by sounds they described as being like chairs going up and down the wooden stairs. They decided to finally carpet the entire 5 feet wide staircase from top to bottom - 3 stories and 53 stairs. They finally got a good night's rest! When the Mables have been asked about details of what they had seen and heard here, they simply said, "Don't ask!"

Before we go upstairs, it might be interesting to note that there is an old bullet hole here in the woodwork near the doorway to the main hall. It is in line with the outside rear door that was never repaired by the family. Jim McGavock, the nephew who inherited the house, had a particularly bad disposition at times and the gunshot resulted from an argument he had with another man.

TOP OF SIDE OF STAIRCASE

We are passing another bedroom at the top of the stairs on the left, and a large modern bathroom added at the top of the landing. Through the bathroom window, you can see one of the pairs of dark green louvered shutters that originally graced every window of the house. Chris Disbbio has reproduced several of these that were missing including the ones you see here. On the outside of the house are large pairs of stepped brick walls with slightly protruding chimneystacks that cover each gable. The chimney on this corner of the house is fake; it was built only to complete the architectural symmetry on the outside of the house. It has no fireplaces while the other 3 chimneys on each side and the chimney on the "L" each carry 3 fireplaces for the basement, first floor, and second floors. The two rooms on the 3rd floor have no fireplaces and were not heated. Obviously, the main halls of the house would have been very cold in the winter. One McGavock relative joked that he spent a whole winter here in one night! [How cold were winters back then? Any idea of the amount of snow?]