

News Release



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"Bring Back the Victorians"

Original Furniture Sought For Leland Stanford Mansion

SACRAMENTO -- The Leland Stanford Mansion Foundation and California State Parks are seeking the return of original pieces of furniture that once filled this 1857 mansion, a state historic park that next year will begin serving as a protocol center for California governors and other elected officials.

"It's in the spirit of returning this fine home to its former glory that we are looking for the return of several pieces of original furniture that we believe have found a home elsewhere," said Foundation Chair Susan Peters. "We are calling this campaign, 'Bring Back the Victorians.'"

Peters said that several pieces of furniture reportedly were either sold or given away to benefactors after the turn of the century when the mansion was under church ownership and money was needed.

When the rehabilitation of the mansion is completed sometime in late 2004, it will return to public service as the center for the state's highest level protocol meetings hosted by the Governor and Leadership of the Legislature, as well as a historic tour venue which in part recreates the 1860-1872 interpretive period. The final interior design incorporates the Stanford's original Victorian "Renaissance Revival" furnishings, as well as other period items.

State Parks and the Foundation recently forwarded 61 actual Stanford furniture items to a professional conservator who will restore the items over the next six to eight months. They will be returned to the Mansion and placed in their new settings.

Although reproduction furniture could be constructed according to historic photographs that were taken under the direction of the Stanfords, State Parks and the Foundation prefer having actual Stanford furniture rather than manufacturing pieces to look like they came from the period.

The Stanford House was originally built between 1856 and 1857 as a two-story home for merchant Shelton Fogus. It was purchased by Central Pacific Railroad co-founder and President, Leland Stanford, in 1861 just before he became California's eighth governor.

In 1861 Stanford added a separate governor's office, and in 1872 expanded the home to four stories and 19,000 square feet to better meet the needs of his expanded family and enhanced stature. His son, in whose memory Stanford University would be founded, was born in the home in 1868. In 1900, Jane Lathrop Stanford, whose husband and son were both deceased, gave the home to the Bishop of Sacramento as a home for "friendless children." From that time until 1985, hundreds of children received care there.

During the late 1980s the children's home relocated; the historic structure was sold to the state and became the Leland Stanford Mansion State Historic Park. In 1987, the Mansion was officially designated as a National Historic Landmark.

This overall building rehabilitation and furnishings restoration project is an outstanding example of an effective public/private partnership led by the Department of Parks and the Leland Stanford Mansion Foundation, representing private donors. That innovative partnership is the first of its kind for State Parks and is the only way that this complex project could have been accomplished.

The mansion is located in downtown Sacramento at 8th and N Streets, just a few blocks from the State Capitol.

Any person who wants further information about the Mansion or the furniture may contact the Foundation at 2012 H Street, Suite 203, Sacramento 95814, (916) 442-4419.

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