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## 1850s Syracuse cottage vacant for decades may be renovated

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By **Dick Case, Post-Standard columnist**



Stephen D. Cannerelli / The Post-Standard

This is how the Gothic cottage at 1631 S. Salina St. in Syracuse looks these days.

It looks like the 1850s Gothic cottage at 1631 S. Salina St. may have a future, after all.

The building is one of the last of its style of architecture left in Syracuse. It's been falling down for years.

We've told that last month the Common Council approved an application by Syracuse Model Neighborhood Corp. to apply for a state Urban Initiative [Grant](#) of \$200,000 to renovate the house as a one-family dwelling. No city matching money is required.

Tom Francis, executive director of Model Neighborhood, expressed caution because the

grant has not been approved by the state Department of Housing and Community Renewal – a decision could come in in as little as three weeks – but Tom told me the house “is worth salvaging” because of its history.

Technically, the house still is owned by its next door neighbor, New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ. The church bought it 30 years ago intending to turn it into a center for the congregation but never did. In 2004, when I spoke to the pastor, the Rev. James T. Jones, he suggested the city ought to demolish the house.

Under the present plan, the city would seize the Gothic for [back taxes](#) – the church owes about \$179,000 in unpaid levies – and sell it to Model Neighborhood.



In 2002, Model Neighborhood, which works in this part of the city, came up with a plan to rehabilitate No. 1631 as a one-family home, but the agency finally decided it couldn't justify spending the estimated \$260,000 it would cost to save the landmark. This time around, Model Neighborhood has its own crew of carpenters, which cuts back on some of those costs, Tom Francis explained.



Onondaga Historical Association

This is how the Gothic cottage at 1631 S. Salina St. in Syracuse looked in the 1940s.



Dennis Nett/The Post-Standard, [file](#) photo, 2001

This is a staircase inside a cottage at 1631 S. Salina St. in Syracuse.

"We'd like to restore the gingerbread," he said. The decoration is typical of this type of house.

Historians date the house to 1850 to 1855. We aren't sure who built it but it's believed the [Lynch](#) family, who lived there for more than 30 years in the early 1900s, bought it from the Longstreet family.

This part of the city was the village of Danforth, named for Asa Danforth, a city pioneer, from 1874 to 1887.

In 2005, with the help of Dennis Connors, curator of history at Onondaga Historical Association, I wrote a column about the Lynch family, who lived in the cottage when it was part of a "doctor's row" on South Salina Street.

I spoke to Irene Lynch at her home in Florida. She grew up in the cottage, her father's home.

She told me the house had four bedrooms, a spiral staircase to the second floor, and fireplaces with marble mantels. Irene's father was Dr. George Lynch, who moved into No. 1631 with his wife, Irene, in 1917. They stayed until 1948.

George Lynch was a doctor in general practice. His office was on the south side of the house. Patients entered through a side porch.

Irene rhapsodized about the large yard, where her father had fruit trees and a grape arbor.

"We had pears, apples, and peaches. There was a rose arbor along the driveway, a flag pole and a big space to play baseball," she explained. George Lynch sold the home to a chiropractor when he retired in 1948.

"It was such a pretty place," Irene Lynch said of her girlhood home. "It breaks my heart to see it now."

Tom Francis, of Model Neighborhood, said he's optimistic about the restoration project because he's already heard from someone interested in buying a rehabilitated Gothic.

Deacon speaking; Milton Sernett, a prolific author about such varied topics as the abolition movement and New York State cheese, has a new project: a biography of Jared Van Wagenen Jr., who wrote the classic "Golden Age of Homespun" book.

The new book deals with Van Wagenen's many years as host of "Farm Paper of the Air," a weekday show on radio station WGY in Schenectady.

Milton said he wants to cite an example of a local farm program, the "Wired Woodshed" series on WSYR radio, with Robert "Deacon" Doubleday. Robert died in 1971.

The author has found a mention of the broadcaster that claims his real name was Elliot Apodnoz.

He'd like to hear from anyone who might know if this was Doubleday's real name.

Contact Milton Sernett at 5300 Ridge Rd., Cazenovia, N.Y. 13035. His phone number is 655-4166.

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