

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Visitors taking the Save the Mansion Tour Saturday will see the 1884 dining room in the Barnes Hiscock Mansion. (Photos by Mike Greenstar/mjgreenstar@syracuse.com)

HISTORY WAS MADE HERE

Home of Syracuse abolitionist George Barnes will be open for tours Saturday



Visitors entering the front foyer will see the stairs to the second floor.

By Kevin Tampone
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A piece of Syracuse's history will be open for tours this week.

The annual Save the Mansion Tour organized by the George and Rebecca Barnes Foundation starts at 10 a.m. Saturday. The event benefits the Barnes Hiscock Mansion at 930 James St.

Several other homes in the city's Sedgwick neighborhood will be featured as well.

The Barnes Hiscock Mansion was built in 1853 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The home's original owner, George Barnes, was a prominent abolitionist, said Arlene Stewart, founder of the Barnes Foundation.

The Barnes family would often hold anti-slavery meetings at the home. Barnes also played a role in the city's famous Jerry Rescue.

Federal marshals and the Syracuse police arrested William "Jerry" Henry under the Fugitive Slave Law, but a crowd later rescued him.

Barnes put up \$4,000 in bail money for two people who tried to help Jerry during the rescue.

Barnes ran for mayor of Syracuse at one point and lost by just 68 votes, Stewart said.

"This house is about history and what they did in this community," she said.



The mansion, at 930 James St. in Syracuse, was built in 1853 and is included on the National Register of Historic Places.

U.S. President William Howard Taft was a visitor to the Barnes home and stayed there overnight. He was a close friend of the second owner of the house, Frank Hiscock, who was married to Barnes' daughter Bessie.

Hiscock was a chief justice of the New York State Court of Appeals.

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The foundation that owns the Barnes Hiscock Mansion plans to eventually open the building to the public. Groups can now make appointments for tours. (Photos by Mike Greenberg / mgreenber@nytimes.com)

Proceeds will help pay for upkeep of mansion

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New to this year's tour of the mansion is period furniture donated by Hiscock and Barnes descendants, Stewart said. Two rooms at the home are now completely furnished with items from the 1800s.
Frank Hiscock's bed is on display along with silver owned by the families over the years.
Money from the tour goes to pay for the home's maintenance.
The house has one of the city's oldest elevators, which dates to 1894. The system needs regular work to keep it going, Stewart said.
The mansion needs a new roof as well. The foundation, formed in 2004, plans to apply for grants to pay for that work.

The group's goal is to open the house to the public. Right now, tours are available for schools and other groups by appointment.

Along with the tour on Saturday, the foundation will host a reception at 6 p.m. Friday. Re-enactors from the Onondaga Historical Association will portray friends and neighbors of the Barnes family at the event.

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A portrait of Lucy Bridgeman-Hiscock hangs over the fireplace in the formal parlor.



President William Howard Taft slept in this bedroom during a visit. He was a close friend of Frank Hiscock.



The Hiscock and Barnes families have donated period furniture. Among the pieces is the bed used by Judge Frank Hiscock, who served as chief justice of the state Court of Appeals.