

HISTORY

Revisited Savannah, Georgia

IN NEW WORLD TERMS, SAVANNAH, Georgia, is an ancient city. With its historic homes and tree-lined streets,

it oozes a magical aura that embodies the old South, and with its gorgeous piazzas and enveloping trees, the home at 126 West Harris St. exemplifies Old World charm.

The house was built in 1839 for Dr. Theodosius Bartow. His son, Francis Stebbins Bartow, for whom the home is named, graduated from the University of Georgia with honors in 1835 and was a respected physician in Savannah. He also studied law at Yale, and, though he did not earn a degree, was admitted to the Georgia bar in 1837 and was involved in local politics.

Bartow, who married the daughter of John Macpherson Berrien, served

two terms in the Georgia House of Representatives and one term in the state Senate. A member of the committee that drew up Georgia's ordinance of secession, he also served in the Confederate Congress as chairman of the Military Committee. Eventually Bartow spurned his legislative duties to fight on the front line, leading the Oglethorpe Light Infantry to Virginia over the objections of the governor of Georgia, rising to the rank of colonel and losing his life at the Battle of Manassas.

Bartow's legacy lives on in many ways. After being honored by the Confederate Congress in Richmond, his body was returned to Savannah for burial at Laurel Grove Cemetery. A bust of Col. Bartow adorns Forsyth Park in Savannah, and Cass County, Georgia, was renamed Bartow County in his honor in 1861. And, of

course, his home at 126 West Harris St. is a well-preserved historic gem gracing the city of Savannah.

The home, originally only one story with a brick basement, is situated on Savannah's historic Pulaski Square. Today it is three stories tall, not including the basement, and has large porches, or piazzas, on the side overlooking a mature garden, a feature uncommon in Savannah and more reminiscent of historic Charleston architecture. The home's front entrance sits to the side, offsetting the three windows on the ground floor. Original features include black marble on some of the fireplaces, plaster moldings and medallions.

The Bartow house was remodeled for the first of several times in 1884, when John Gammell purchased the lot next to the home. When he built a two-story brick building on lot 15, it



Photos provided by John McBay.

marked the first time lots 15 and 16 were recorded as separate. The home was purchased in the 1960s by the Historic Savannah Foundation, which restored it and sold it to Col. Lindsey P. Henderson in 1968. Henderson continued renovations and repaired damage done to the inside of the home after a fire was set on the main floor, allegedly by derelicts.

Henderson was linked to the home by ancestry and his great interest in military history. The furniture inside the house when Henderson bought it was crafted by his great-grandfather, Thomas Henderson. In addition to being an accomplished furniture maker, Thomas Henderson directed the funeral service for Francis Bartow.

The home, listed by realtor Cora Bett Thomas, is on the market today for \$2.495 million. The estate includes a separate carriage house that

has been converted into a two-bedroom apartment and a two-bedroom garden apartment. The eight-bedroom, 8,910-square-foot home has seven wood-burning fireplaces. The second floor is the master suite, with a sitting room, a fireplace, an oversized closet and an updated bathroom. The home has a gourmet kitchen, a separate dining room, a formal living room and a family room that opens onto the oversized porch. 🍍

The home at 126 West Harris St. offers comfortable modern living and a piece of history that has withstood the test of time. The author would like to give special thanks to Daniel Carey at the Historic Savannah Foundation and to Nora Lewis at the Georgia Historical Society for their prompt and efficient help in researching the history of the home.



The home at 126 West Harris was once owned by a member of the Confederate Congress.



The eight-bedroom home has seven wood-burning fireplaces.



The home's large porches are reminiscent of typical Charleston, rather than Savannah, architecture.