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## STANFORD HOME IS PERPETUAL MEMORIAL TO GOVERNOR'S SON

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Almost 100 years ago, a boy was born in Stanford Home at 800 N Street – on May 14, 1868. Had he lived to manhood instead of dying from the effects of typhoid fever at age 16 in Florence, Italy, the stately mansion today might not be the oldest structure in the city of Sacramento now serving the Catholic Church. True, it did not become a church facility until the beginning of this century, but it was first built in the 1850s by S.C. Fogus, an early day pioneer.

### Gift to Diocese

In 1899, the widow of Leland Stanford, Jane Lathrop Stanford, deeded the home to the Diocese of Sacramento with the stipulation that it be used as an orphanage for children in need as a memorial to her son.

Sacramento's Bishop Grace called on the services of the Sisters of Mercy to staff the home, a function they continued until 1936, when the Sisters of Social Service arrived here and took over the direction of the home. Under the Mercy tutelage, the residence was used for little girls, from grades one through eight, who attended St Joseph School. There were even a few high school girls in residence too.

### High School Girls

In 1936, when the Social Service Nuns arrived, the new St Patrick's Home had been constructed in Sacramento, so Stanford Home was converted into a residence for high school girls. It also provided the base for a settlement program in the West End sector of the city.

In 1861, the same year he was elected governor of California, Leland Stanford purchased the home and property site from Fogus for \$8,000. Almost immediately he elevated the residence and added another story.

The Stanfords had been married 18 years when young Leland was born in 1868. Some weeks later, the infant was presented to guests assembled for a dinner party, lying on a silver tray banked with blossoms. The tray and the rest of the silver tea service still are in use at the home.

### Chronicle's Report

An issue of the San Francisco Chronicle dated February 7, 1872, reports as follows on the historic home: "Recently the mansion has been thoroughly renovated, a mansard roof added and its stately proportions increased by the addition of several wings. It contains 44 rooms, all most elaborately and luxuriously furnished and fitted up. Good taste and cultured imaginations have been exhausted in furnishing the establishment. Magnificent and costly furniture in every

room; lace curtains of the finest fabric; carpets that receive with noiseless tread the footfall; frescoes beautiful in design and exquisite in artistic perfection, adorn the walls and ceilings.”



Photo by John E Boll 2012

**The Stanford Mansion was gifted to the Diocese of Sacramento in 1899**

The public portions of the house today, which are available to view, retain the same furnishings used when the Stanfords were the residents, only the drapes and carpets are reproductions.

Although they left many items of furniture, the Stanfords transported their elaborate gift furniture trimmed in red satin, oil paintings and gift mirrors to San Francisco when they moved there in 1874. That residence was destroyed in the great fire of 1906.

Today, Stanford Home has become a historical landmark in Sacramento. It continues as a memorial of a beloved son whose parents sorrowfully remarked at the time of his death: "The children of California shall now be our children."