

KASTLE WINE MAY FLOW AGAIN

BY JANET CLAYTON

Times Staff Writer

SANTA ANA — At a time when Santa Ana was virtually a collection of mustard patches, young August Reuter came here and envisioned a castle similar to those in his native Germany. So in the 1880s he built Reuter Kastle on 15 acres of raw land.

Less than an acre of that land is left today, but instead of following other historic homes into oblivion, the castle has been given a new lease on life.

Lee Falco, Jr., the new owner of the castle and president of Old House Restaurants Inc., has announced that his corporation plans to restore the castle to its original form. The renovated house will then be converted into a Victorian-style restaurant.

"It will be like stepping back into time 100 years," Falco said. "All furnishings will be reproductions of that era. It will be very authentic."

Falco recently acquired the castle from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Angle of Anaheim. Angle was a cousin of the late Elsa Reuter



August Reuter

Armstrong, August Reuter's only child.

The Angles inherited the property upon her death in 1974.

In her will, she requested that the house be restored. Mrs. Angle said that wish is the reason why she and her husband refused to sell the house to other prospective buyers.

"Most of them wanted to tear it

down and build apartments — we probably could have gotten \$30,000 or \$40,000 more for it that way," she said. "But we feel confident that Mr. Falco will retain the history of the house. That is, you know, very important."

The two-story castle, complete with crenellated turret for viewing, is made of redwood, finished to resemble the stone facade of many German castles.

When Reuter Kastle was built, the present Grand Ave. carried the name Barlett Ave. in honor of a prominent local banker in the 1880s. At that time, about 1,500 persons lived in Santa Ana, which was still a part of Los Angeles County, said James Sleeper, a local historian. A three-hour train ride on the Southern Pacific was the only way to reach the big city of Los Angeles — then with a population of 11,183.

Transportation to the neighboring towns of Tustin and Orange was provided by the "Orange Dummy" — a streetcar pulled by a mule. To this affluent farming community came Au-

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Reuter Kastle Gets New Chance

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gust Reuter, a wealthy Bavarian whose mother had been a lady-in-waiting to the queen of Prussia.

Born in 1850, Reuter came to New York in 1867 — probably in search of adventure, said Mrs. Angle. He gradually trekked westward, until he landed in Santa Ana in 1876.

No one seems sure why August settled in this city. But once here, he bought 15 acres of mustard patches and eventually converted the land into a grape orchard, a walnut grove, and a vineyard.

For several years, the focus of the outdoor acreage was the vineyards. August and his younger brother Ludwig owned Reuter Brothers Winery, the only one within city limits. That distinction is what put them out of business in 1902, when local option laws prohibited them from selling their wine within the city, said Sleeper.

Mrs. Angle said that the old copper tubing that ran wine from the winery to the cellar still exists today. Reuter had set it up so that he could simply turn the spigot and get wine, like water from a faucet.

Reuter undoubtedly found many occasions to serve his wine to his many houseguests. Mrs. Angle said that during its glory years, several prominent persons dined at the castle — local notables such as William Spurgeon, founder of Santa Ana; and international celebrities such as Madam Helena Modjeska, the Shakespearean actress from Poland.

Sleeper said that when Reuter died of a ruptured appendix in 1902, the estate was worth \$20,000 — an appreciable sum at that time. Mrs. Reuter, her toddler daughter Elsa, and Mrs. Reuter's parents continued to live in the castle until 1907, according to county records.

The house changed owners outside of the family several times until the early 1950s, when Mrs. Elsa Reuter Armstrong, bought it back to prevent it from being torn down. Martha MacFarlane, a onetime neighbor of Mrs. Armstrong, said Reuter's daughter held a strong fascination and devotion for the castle, even when she was not living there.

"Sometimes she would go over there for days at a time, and only leave it to eat or come feed her cats at her other house," she said. "Finally she just moved back into the castle altogether."

By the time she moved back into the castle in the early 1960s, Mrs. Armstrong was widowed, elderly, and frail. Friends say that she only lived in two rooms of the six-room house. It further deteriorated after her death in 1974.

Mrs. Angle said vandals attacked the vacant castle about 15 times — setting fires, smashing windows, and yanking off doorknobs. Finally the Angles had the redwood doors removed and placed in a basement for safekeeping.

In recent years the castle has remained shrouded and obscured by overgrown trees and shrubbery. Some motorists driving down Grand might miss it completely.

But Lee Falco saw it. He noticed the castle while driving one day last June, and within a few days, he had contacted the Angles about buying the house. The key factor in making the purchase, he said, was that he assured the Angles that he would preserve the historical importance of the house.



RESTAURATEURS—Chandra McNary and Lee Falco Jr. of Old House Restaurants Inc. check the interior of Reuter Kastle. Firm plans to turn the Victorian-style home into a dining establishment.

Times photo

"I'm a businessman, but I love history too," he said. "Not one wall will be removed."

Falco has enlisted the aid of several experts, including Myrt Purkiss, a local landscape architect. Purkiss designed the Roaring 20s and airfield sections of Knott's Berry Farm, in addition to the Victorian-style Heritage House at California State University, Fullerton.

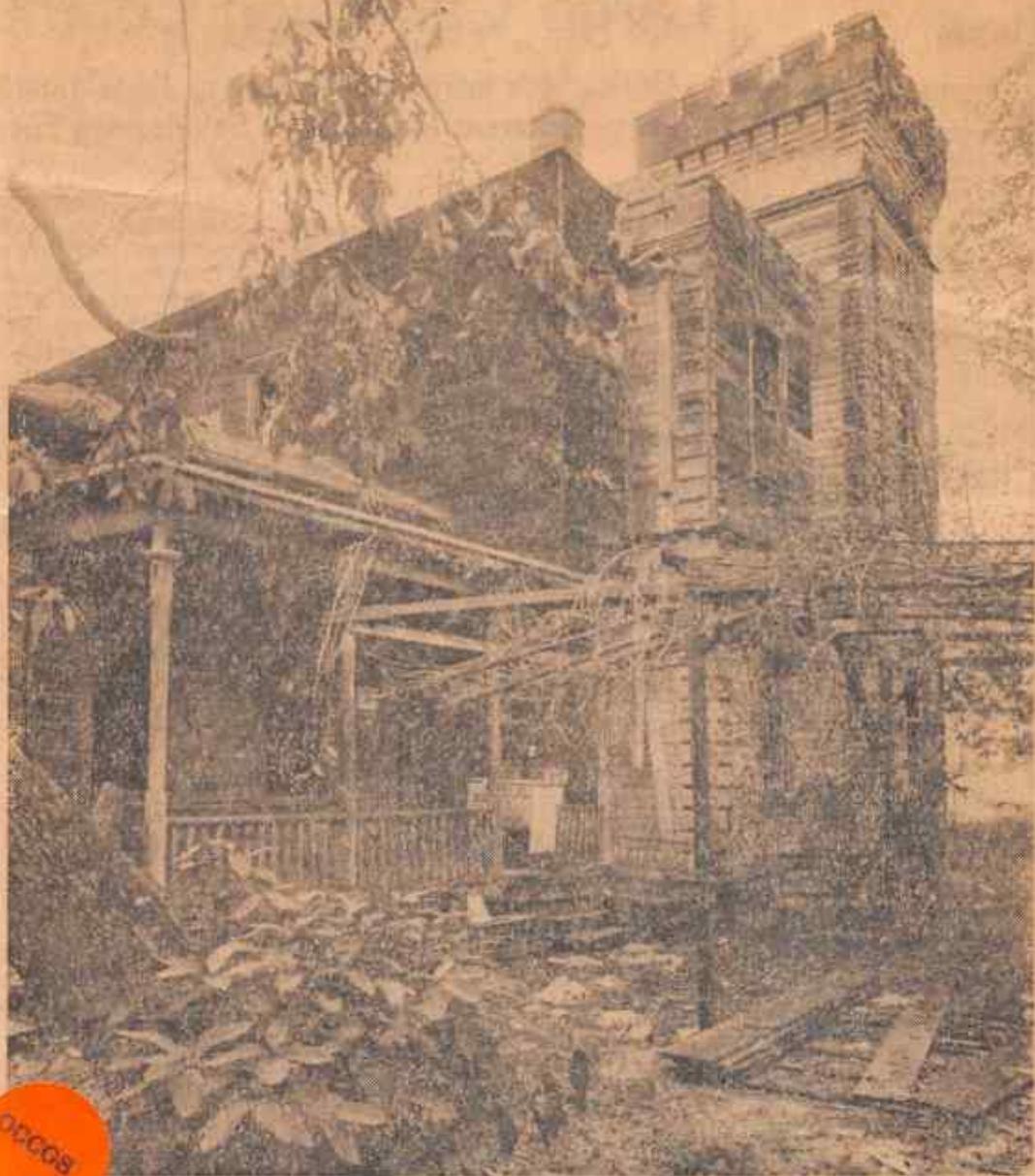
"The Victorians regarded buildings as symbols and worked hard to make them fitting," he said. "We're working on designs to restore the castle garden to the friendly country look of the period."

Mrs. Weston Walker, executive secretary of the Santa Ana Historical Preservation Society, and Sleeper, chairman of the Santa Ana Cultural Heritage Committee, have expressed enthusiasm for the project.

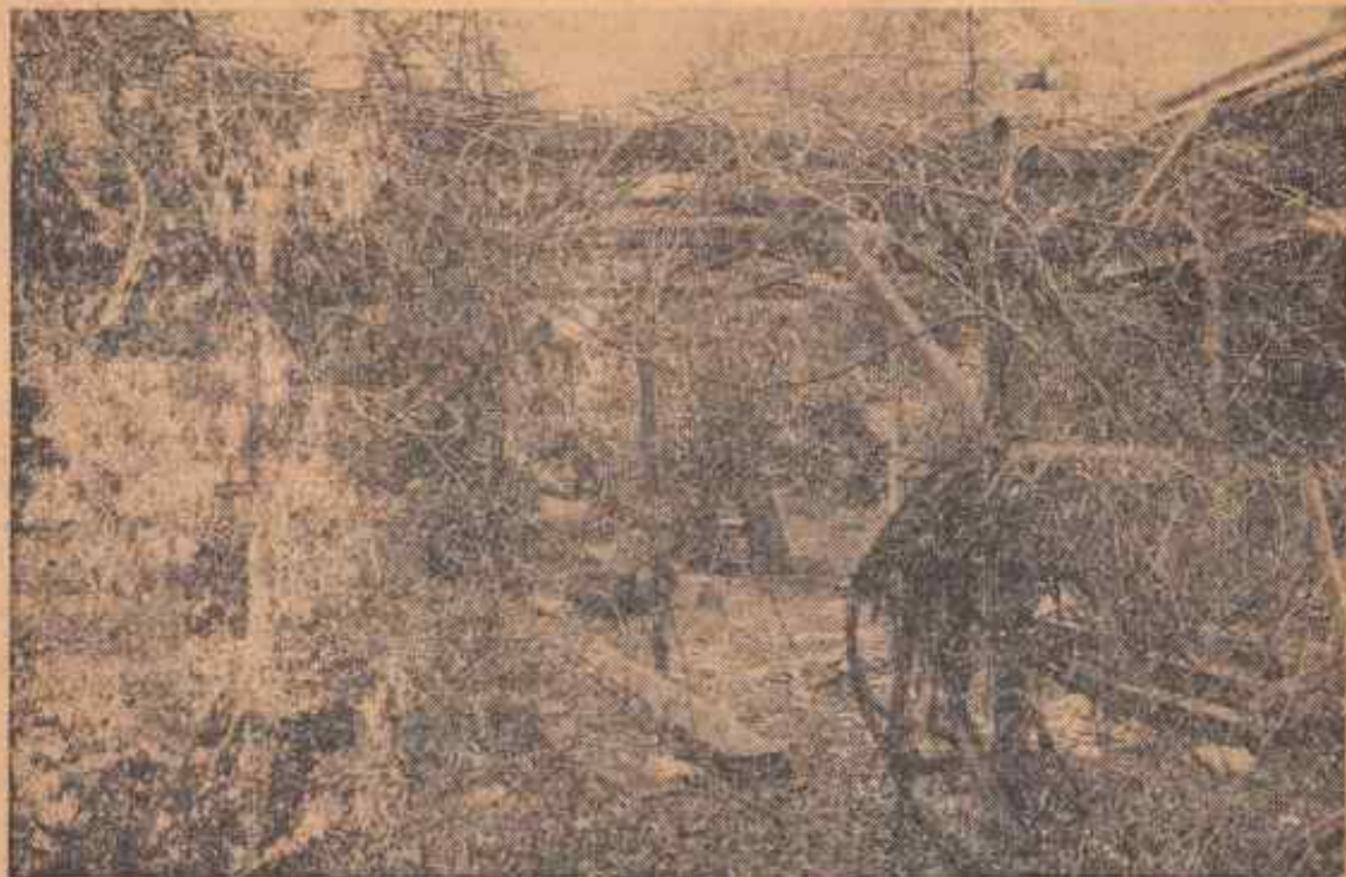
But one family member, who declined to be identified, commented, "It seems like it's a monetary deal, not historical. I guess Elsa wanted the house restored, but I don't know if she'd want it to be a restaurant."

Nevertheless, renovation is scheduled to begin next week, and workers are aiming for a July completion date. Not all materials are available locally. Purkiss said he may have to send to San Francisco for Victorian hardware.

"We'd like all of it to be right," he said. "This house represents a sort of folk architecture."



80008



DETERIORATION—Tumbledown garden of Reuter Kastle may be splendid once again.

Times photos by Cliff Otto

Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills
HOLLAND, Leah
 Groman Mortuary, directors
HOUGH, Richard James, passed away January 18, 1978. Beloved husband of Betty Hough of Flintridge; father of Frank R. Hough of Los Angeles and James H. Hough of Flintridge; brother of Royce Hough of Lakewood and Gordon Hough of Hillsborough.
 Memorial service today, 4 p.m. at St. George's Episcopal Church, La Canada. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to American Heart Association, Turner & Stevens Co., Pasadena, directors.

KAPLAN, Roc
 Mount Sinai Mortuary
LEACH, Elizabeth M.
 Forest Lawn-Glendale
LEON, Sophie
 Groman Mortuary, directors
MANUS, Ann
 Malinow & Silverman Mortuary

MARLETT, Gertrude Morchand
 Mount Sinai Mortuary
NETTIO, Arthur J., retired security officer, North American Rockwell. Beloved brother of Mrs. Clara V. Barton; also survived by step-son, Rollman Prince; step-grandsons, Rick and Ron Prince; step-brother, Roger Weirough.

Service 1:30 p.m., Wednesday at the Church of the Hills, Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills.
FOREST LAWN MORTUARY
PADDEN, Nadine W.
 Graveside service Tuesday, 2:30 p.m. in Valhalla Memorial Park, 19621 Victory Blvd., North Hollywood. Pierce Brothers' Valhalla, directors (763-9121).

PIEPER, Martha
 McNerney's—Lomita
PURDY, Purvie G.
 Steen-Hegert-Mitchell, N.H.
RICHARDS, E. Edith
 Malinow & Silverman Mortuary
SAWYER, Adabel H.

boards.
 The California State Employees Assn. was the sixth biggest spender of all with \$601,721, while the CTA was 14th with \$376,290.
 The League of California Cities and the County Supervisors Assn. of California, which line up opposite public employes on a number of issues, were 12th and 17th.
 What that money gets public employes is at least the ear of public officials, although it doesn't guarantee success, legislators and their aides say.

"I think it makes legislators aware of them certainly," said Sen. Albert Rodda, a

to take Nickson up in the plane ride, deputies said.

Witnesses told deputies that as plane flew over the lake bed, it appeared to go out of control at about 800 feet, meted to about 300 feet where that the pilot briefly regained control.

The craft then plunged nose-down into the dry lake bed. There was no explosion or fire. Both the pilot and Nickson were pronounced dead at the scene.

The identity of the original pilot aboard the plane was not immediately available.

Deaths, Funeral Announcements

TUCHMINTZ, Nettie, devoted mother of Sam Tucker and Dr. Adele Zeman (wife of the late Fred Zeman); beloved grandmother of Steven and Helene Zeman, Robert, Craig, Bonnie and Jeffrey Tucker; great-grandmother of Jason and Nicole.
 Services and interment Monday, at Detroit, Mich. Family will be gathering at the residence of Sam and Florence Tucker, 2711 S. Beverly Dr., Los Angeles, Calif.

WACHHOLZ, Anna R., beloved mother of Mrs. Bertha Fleischer, Mrs. Caroline Dress and Laurence Wachholz; also survived by 3 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren; sister of Richard Pickel and Miss Elizabeth Pickel.
 Service 2 p.m., Tuesday at Bethany Lutheran Church (Sunset at Alexandria, Los Angeles). Interment in Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills.

IN MEMORIAM

MAX ORENBACH
 January 21, 1972
 Beloved husband, devoted father
 Loving brother, uncle, brother-in-law
 and dear friend.

Funeral Directors

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Los Angeles Valley
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