The Cook-Hill House in Grand Cane was donated to the Historic Grand Cane Association and is being restored.

**Restoration of 19th century house to help tourism economy for town**

By MARGARET MARTIN  
**The Shreveport Times**

GRAND CANE (AP) — A house built in the mid-1800s brings hope for an economic tourist boom to tiny, historic Grand Cane.

The Cook-Hill House is being restored and is scheduled to open next fall.

One of the village's founders built the house, which was donated by Bill Cook and his wife of Lafayette to the Historic Grand Cane Association. The Cook family bought it in 1890.

The house's restoration will tie in with work being done downtown. The association already has raised funds and used volunteer hours to reclaim buildings along Grand Cane's Main Street downtown.

The group also built the Village Park, where the community holds of some of its celebrations and festivals.

Eight buildings in the Grand Cane Historic District are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The HCCA's plans for the Cook-Hill House call for renting the building and gardens for weddings, parties or meetings and opening two shops, a museum that features town artifacts and a bed-and-breakfast.

Organizers predict the house will draw friends and fans of Cook's brother, businessman Lon Cook of Beverly Hills, Calif., who grew up there and who is an LSU supporter. He is co-chair of Global Crossing, Ltd., which owns the largest fleet of cable-laying and maintenance vessels in the world. He is former chairman-chef executive officer of Atlantic Richfield Co. In 1995, upon appointment by the Queen of England, he was knighted by the Prince of Wales.

Lon Cook said that Grand Cane was a booming small town when he was growing up and then became just a bedroom community.

"Grand Cane is reinventing itself as a historic site. Otherwise there is nothing much going on," said Cook, in a telephone interview from his Beverly Hills office.

"All of that development is new version of Grand Cane that I find exciting," he said.

Officials plan to have the house ready by fall for rental, with a bed and breakfast open by fall 2002.

When built, the house was the first permanent structure in Grand Cane. The architectural style is called Country Queen Anne, said advisory committee member Andrea Gallagher-Mitchell, owner of Mitchell Appraisal Co. of Shreveport.

"With full restoration, it will be something to see. They are planning to put all the gingerbread back on and repair and replace woodwork," said Mitchell.

The house has already drawn people and money to Grand Cane.

"It was on a December home tour and 270 people were in town for two hours. They shopped and ran by the restaurant for lunch or coffee," said Edith H. Herring.

Even unfinished, the property is drawing requests for its use. The DeSoto Chapter of the LSU Association rented it for a May 24 cook-out that promotes LSU and honors local scholarship recipients, said Gil Rew of Mansfield.

Glen Davis, co-owner of a new Grand cane business, Grand Cane Station, welcomes the restoration.

"It will help our business. We are the only convenience store with gasoline. Anything that draws people into town means business for us. When they come to town, they buy gas," Davis said.