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Duke wed beer heiress, built a 'castle'

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



DUKE WED BEER HEIRESS, BUILT A 'CASTLE'

TITUSVILLE --- A truly distinctive East Coast landmark is being preserved in a public park here, although it was displaced from its original setting on Merritt Island by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

It is the odd, octagonally-shaped "Duke's Castle," once the social center of the famed Dummitt Grove. History buffs in Brevard County had the cypress home moved when the property was taken over for the Spaceport expansion.

The Castle was built by Eicole Tamajo, Duke of Castellucia, an Italian nobleman who had married Jennie Anheuser of the Budweiser beer family, after he acquired the pioneer grove in 1881. The couple entertained lavishly for awhile, but reportedly they did not live happily ever after. In fact, they had such a severe argument, they separated. The Duke went back to Italy. He died in 1892. The house meantime had been partitioned, one side for the nobleman and the other side for the American heiress.

Some of the material for the 22-room, two-story mansion came from the sailing ship Santa Cruz which had run aground near Daytona Beach. For instance, each of the two spiral stairways utilized ship masts for a center post. Planking on the outside is 30 feet long and 10 inches wide.

Most of the rooms, like the house itself, are octagonal in shape. The house design was adopted as a streamlining measure against gales and hurricanes.

The Dummitt Grove was planted by Douglas D. Dummitt in the early 1830's, using budwood from stock originally brought to Florida by the Spanish.

