

# Plan plans to restore author's home

By T.L. Stanley  
Daily News Staff Writer

BURBANK — When author and screenwriter James M. Cain was searching for a place to live in the early 1930s, the house on East 10th Street rented for \$45 a month. He snapped it up, moved in with his wife and started writing.

The novel he created there would become one of his most famous works. "The Postman Always Rings Twice" — which spawned two Hollywood films — celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

And the house, built in 1920 on what is now called Bel Aire Drive, is celebrating a kind of renaissance of its own. A free-lance writer has bought the 2,300-square-foot home and its ¾-acre lot and plans to restore it to its original state.

"The first time I saw the house it appealed to me," Ken Green said. "One of the real estate write-ups said Cain had lived here. It wasn't what drew me to the house, but it's a nice bonus."

Green was never a big fan of Cain's work. Until now, that is. Green has become well-versed on the Irish author's short stories, novels and scripts and has collected old copies of "Postman" and set



Ken Green keeps a biography of James M. Cain, open to pages with photos of Cain, in a glass case in the house.

up a display case for the books in his living room.

Green has scoured Cain's work, along with biographies on the novelist, for any mention of the house. He found a photo of the home in one of the biographies on Cain and found the address handwritten by Cain on the manuscript for "The Postman Always Rings Twice," originally titled "Bar-B-Q."

The one-story California Crafts-

man-style home — surrounded by palms, magnolias and fruit trees — had fallen into disrepair over the years, said Green, who added that he paid "about half" of the original \$600,000 asking price.

It has hardwood floors that Green said he plans to refinish, original light fixtures, art deco black-and-white bathroom tile, cove moldings and an ornate wrought-iron fence around the front yard.

A guest house that doubles as a writing studio sits in the back, not far from an old chicken coop. In years past, when much of Burbank was farm country, owners raised chickens on the property.

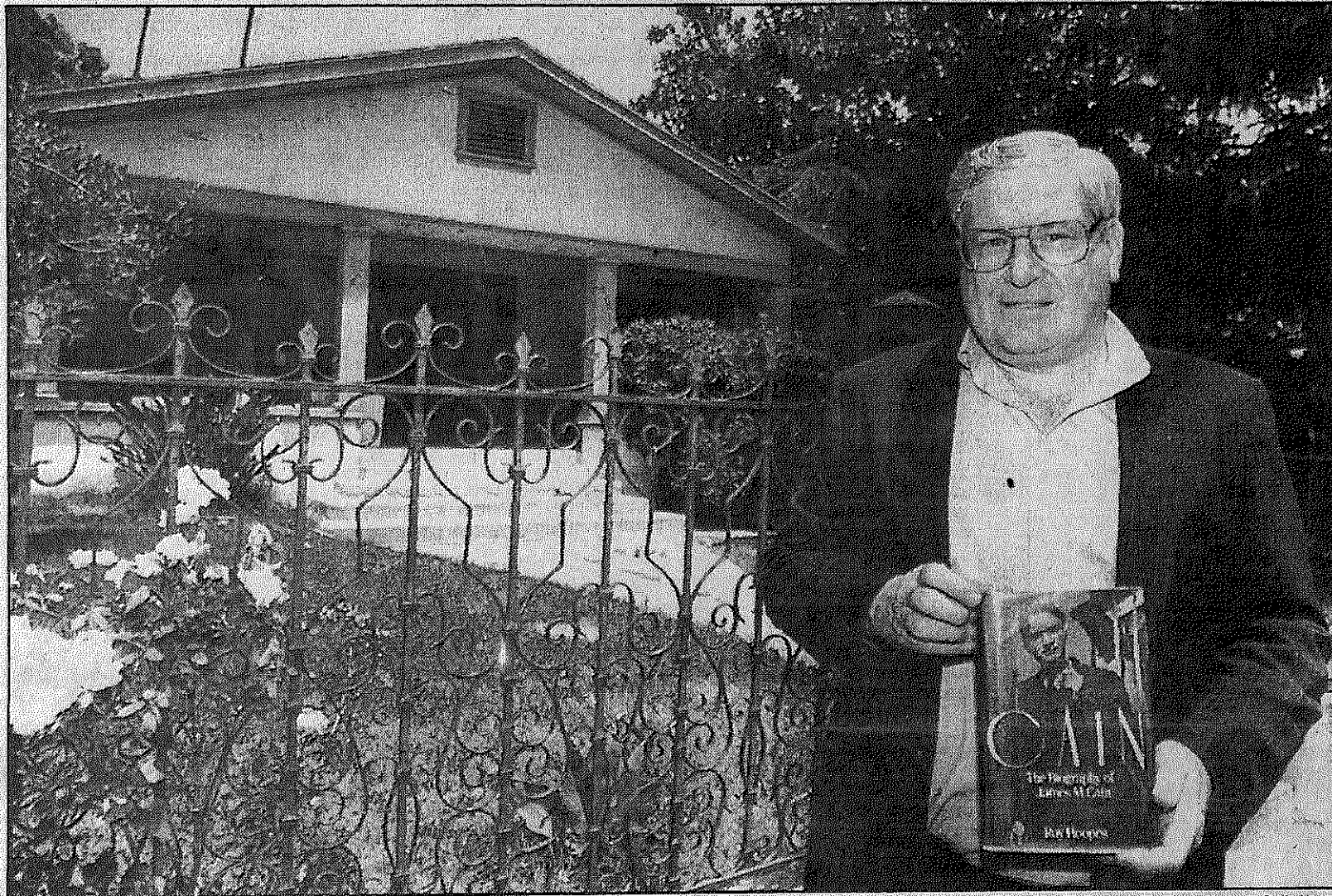
Green said he wants to trace the ownership of the house from the time it was built. He also said he would like to give annual tours as part of city historical programs.

The home is included in a listing of about 100 historically significant houses in the city, said Theodore X. Garcia, president of the Burbank Historical Society.

Garcia said he would like to delve more deeply into the history of many of the houses on the list — some that date back to the 1880s. He is working with city leaders and Chamber of Commerce officials on forming a commission to protect the city's heritage.

While Green has researched the house, he also has learned a great deal about Cain, who lived there from 1932-34. The author, who also penned the screenplay for "Postman," wrote scripts for other popular Hollywood films, including "Mildred Pierce," "Double Indemnity" and "Serenade."

"He was not as famous as some of his literary contemporaries like Steinbeck and Hemingway," Green said.



Gene Blevins / Special to the Daily News

Ken Green has bought the former home of novelist and screenwriter James M. Cain in Burbank. He plans to restore the property.