



Castro Adobe FAQ

What is the Castro Adobe?

The two-story Castro Adobe is one of the finest examples of a rancho hacienda in the Monterey Bay area and is one of four remaining adobe structures in Santa Cruz County. Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is working hard in partnership with California State Parks to open the Castro Adobe as a State Historic Park. Friends undertook restoration of the Castro Adobe in order to preserve and interpret for the public the only remaining building of the Rancho era in the Pajaro Valley. Castro Adobe State Historic Park will serve visitors interested in early California history (including adobe architecture and preservation), as well as 4th graders studying the Mexican Rancho Period and 3rd graders studying local history.

Where is the Castro Adobe?

The Castro Adobe is located in Larkin Valley, a rural area northwest of Watsonville in south Santa Cruz County.

How big is the Castro property? How many acres?

The Castro Adobe sits on a 1-acre parcel that is owned by California State Parks. Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks has acquired the 8.2-acre Kimbro parcel to the north and the 1.12-acre McClune parcel to the south. Eventually, combined together under State Parks ownership, the three parcels will comprise the Castro Adobe State Historic Park. The Castro Adobe was built on the family's land grant, Rancho San Andres, which once spread over approximately 8,800 acres.

When did the Castro Adobe become a State Parks property and what was Friends' role in that acquisition?

There had been talk of public acquisition of the Castro Adobe since the 1950s. The State finally acquired the Castro Adobe from the Kimbro family in 2002 for \$950,000, thanks in large part to the work of then-Assemblymember Fred Keeley and the lobbying efforts of Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks and Friends of the Castro Adobe.

Who were the previous owners of the Castro Adobe?

The Castro Adobe was built between 1848-1850 by Juan Jose Castro on his family's land grant, Rancho San Andres. Hans Hansen purchased the property when the Castro family lost title to the land. The property passed through other owners, including David and Elizabeth Potter, who commissioned the Potter-Church Garden. Noted adobe conservationist Edna Kimbro and her husband Joe purchased the property in 1988. The Kimbros lived in the Castro until the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. They advocated for restoration of the Castro and, eventually, sold it to the state in 2002.

Why is this property important to Friends and worth restoration?

The unique cultural resources of the Castro Adobe, including the historic adobe building itself and the overall historic rural setting, provide the opportunity to interpret the Mexican Rancho period in Santa Cruz County through the lens of the Castro family and their experiences in 1840s California. The

property also provides a window into the *Californio* experience during the cultural transition after statehood, a period that is under-represented in interpretation offerings in Santa Cruz County.

What areas of the Castro are being restored?

The Castro restoration has focused on four main areas: brick making, second-floor stabilization, the *cocina* and the garden.

- More than 150 volunteers helped make 2,500 bricks, each weighing 85 pounds, to replace walls on both ends of the building, including one that supports the *cocina*, that were severely damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake.
- The second floor of the Castro Adobe was used for *fandangos*, which were social events full of dancing, music and feasting during the Rancho era. The area requires stabilization and access improvements so it is safe and available for public access.
- Restoration of the *cocina* will allow visitors to experience daily life at a Mexican rancho, including food preparation in the *cocina* and women's roles in *Californio* culture, as well as overall life at the Castro Adobe including how the family used the building and site.
- The Potter-Church garden is a unique outdoor space designed by noted landscape architect Thomas Church. Restoration work includes landscaping, paths, drainage and irrigation, lighting, and fence and gate repairs.

Does Friends own other properties in Santa Cruz County?

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks supports the operations of more than 30 State Parks and Beaches in Santa Cruz County and coastal San Mateo County. The two parcels of the Castro Adobe State Historic Park, however, are the only property the organization owns.

How is the Castro project funded, including restoration efforts as well as the acquisition of the Kimbro and McClune properties?

Funding comes from securing grants, monetary gifts, in-kind donations and revenue from visitation to local State Parks and Beaches. The success of the Castro restoration effort is thanks to passionate community support and strong partnership with California State Parks. Progress on the project is especially meaningful, given the extremely challenging budget crises that have affected California's State Parks for many years.

When will the Castro become a State Park? Will there be public access before it becomes a State Park?

The Castro Adobe is already a unit of California State Parks. The property will be opened as a State Historic Park in phases over the next several years, beginning in 2014 by appointment only, followed by Common Core instruction-aligned tours for Pajaro Valley school children in the 2014-2015 school year. A schedule of public open days/hours is anticipated in 2015. There is a public open house on June 7, 2014 from 12-2 p.m.

When was the last State Park created? Which one was it?

Fort Ord Dunes State Park in Monterey County opened in 2009. The park includes a boardwalk, a path to the beach, a 4-mile road for walking and biking, and interpretive exhibits describing its former use as a military training area.

How will the Castro serve the community?

The Castro Adobe State Historic Park will serve visitors interested in early California history (especially including adobe architecture and preservation), as well as 4th graders studying the Mexican Rancho Period and 3rd graders studying local history. In the *cocina*, the link between Latino traditions of today and our *Californio* heritage will be tangible as students experience tortillas, beans and *nopales*, which

were produced in the Rancho period and are still enjoyed today. The Edna Kimbro Library and Archives – Center for Early California Studies will be opened to serve scholars and other visitors in the study of the cultural heritage of early California.

Is there another State Park in South County?

There are State Beaches in South Santa Cruz County. However, the Castro Adobe will be the first State Park in South County and only the second State Historic Park in Santa Cruz County (the first being Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park).

Are there other adobe buildings in Santa Cruz County? Where?

The Castro Adobe is one of four remaining adobes in the county. Three of the four adobes are located on State Parks properties and are accessible to the public: the Bolcoff Adobe at Wilder Ranch State Park, the Santa Cruz Mission Adobe and the Castro. The fourth adobe is a private residence on Branciforte Drive in Santa Cruz.

How many people have volunteered to restore the Castro?

Hundreds of dedicated volunteers have worked to restore the Castro over the past decade, including a 150-person brick-making crew, the Castro Committee, Castro descendants and others.

Why is Friends hosting Open Houses for the Castro before it is officially a State Park?

The Open House will bring the community into the process of the Castro Adobe becoming a State Park. It also will be a time when community members can see progress on the restoration and an opportunity to introduce more people to the Castro Adobe.

Where do I go to learn more?

Go to www.ThatsMyPark.org/projects/castro-adobe/ to explore the Castro project and history, get project updates, donate and become involved, and purchase Castro-related merchandise.