

Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe State Historic Park Teacher Resource Guide



Castro Adobe Resources

This document provides teachers with information on the Castro Adobe that includes background on the historical Indigenous people who lived in the area, the Spanish and Mexican eras, and the beginning of the American era when California joined the United States. We have divided these pages into four sections: Background for Teachers, Curriculum Resources for Teachers, Stories and Novels, and Resources for Students. Each section includes information or resources to enhance school visits to Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe State Historic Park.

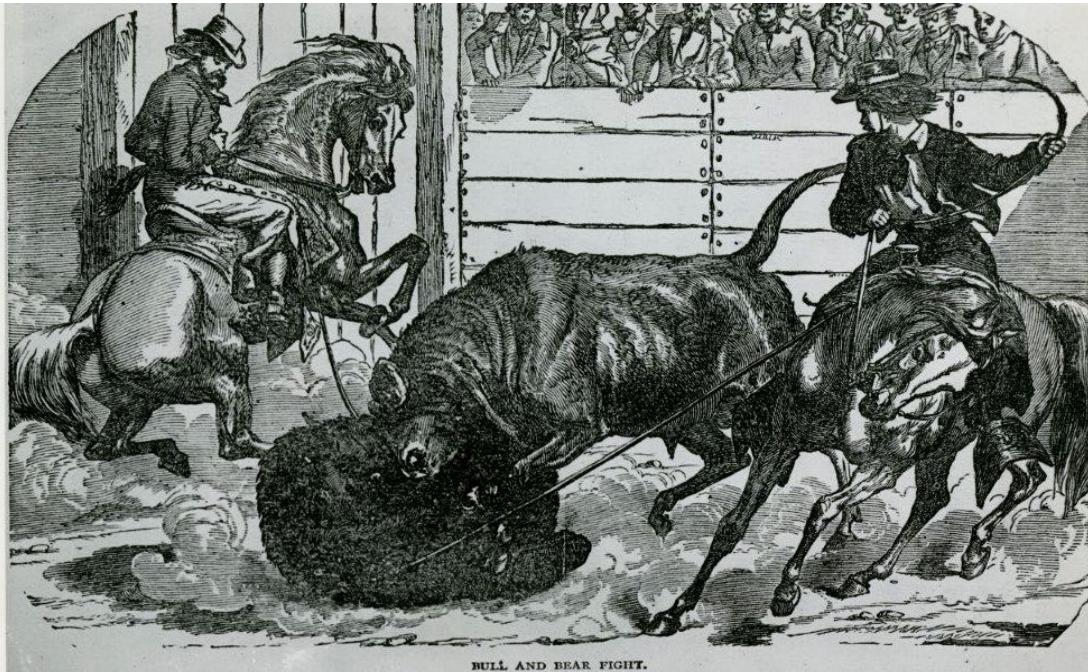
OVERVIEW

The Mexican Rancho Period lasted from 1821-1850; during this time, California was under Mexican rule. The Castro Adobe was constructed between 1849-50 during a time of transition from Mexican to American rule. The ranchos thrived on cattle ranching—mainly producing hides and tallow that were transported by ship from local embarcaderos (wharf, pier or landing place) to the east coast of the United States. Vaqueros (cowboys) tended vast herds on open range, while families grew grains, orchards, and gardens for food. Merchant ships carried hides and tallow out and brought cloth, tools, and other manufactured goods in.

Preceding the Rancho Period was the Mission Period which lasted from 1769-1834. During this time the California missions were established, changing forever the lives of the Indigenous people who had lived in California since time immemorial. Information provided here includes background on the Ohlone peoples and the Mission Period but is primarily focused on the Mexican Rancho Period when Juan Jose and Rita Pinto Castro's family lived in the Castro Adobe on Rancho San Andrés in Watsonville.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe State Historic Park is in the unceded homelands of the Awaswas-speaking Ohlone tribe known as the Aptos, who stewarded these lands since time immemorial. Centuries of colonial violence led to the removal and displacement of the Aptos, and now there are no known Aptos people. Today, neighboring tribes continue their stewardship and presence here to honor the Aptos and ensure that they are never forgotten.



A Bull and Bear Fight in California by Charles Nahl. Credit: California Historical Society

Castro Adobe Background for Teachers

[Castro Adobe State Historic Park Webpage](#): California State Parks' webpage for Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe State Historic Park

[Castro Adobe Timeline](#): An overview of the history of the site and larger area including the Castro family, Rancho San Andrés and the evolution of the Castro Adobe property

[Historic Structure Report for Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe](#): Detailed history of the Castro family and the 2003 building conditions before restoration

[Twenty Years of Labor and Love](#): Video produced by Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks about the Castro Adobe and its restoration

[Matterport Virtual Tour](#): An interior and exterior 360 tour of the Castro Adobe, produced by Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

[Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks' Castro Adobe Project](#): Webpage highlighting the Castro Adobe's history and restoration

[Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks' Castro Adobe Blog](#): Blog focused on the restoration work of the historic adobe building as well as historical furnishings for display inside the adobe



Detail of illustration from the book *Two Years Before the Mast* written by Richard Henry Dana, Jr.

Field Trip Educational Standards

Academic Content Standards—Subject Areas: social studies, ELA, and math

Grade Levels: 3-4

Specific Standards:

SOCIAL STUDIES 4.2 (Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-contact societies to the Spanish Mission and Mexican Rancho Periods.)

ELA: Reading Informational Text RI 3.1-9; 4.1-9

ELA: Speaking and Listening: SL 3.2, 3.3; 4.2, 4.3

ELA: Writing: 3.2, 3.3, 3.4; 4.2, 4.3, 4.7

MATH: Measurement and Data: 3.4, 3.5, 3.6; 4.3; *5.6



Photo of room now interpreted as the vaquero room in the Castro Adobe

Curriculum Resources for Teachers

[Castro Adobe Virtual Field Trip](#): Schedule a free, 45-minute Zoom presentation with a State Park staff member before or after your class's in-person visit.

[Santa Cruz County History Gallery](#): Local history resources provided by Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History

[Ranchos in California: The Spanish and Mexican Eras](#): An extensive discussion of ranchos in the Spanish and Mexican periods

[Adobe Buildings in Santa Cruz County](#): Visit Santa Cruz County's collection of facts and history about the four remaining adobe buildings in Santa Cruz County including the Castro Adobe

[Hide and Tallow Trade](#): This short video describes how the trade in hides and tallow linked California during the rancho period with the industrial revolution of the United States.

[Amah Mutsun Tribal Band's History](#): All members of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band are the direct descendants of the aboriginal Tribal groups whose villages and territories fell under the sphere of influence of Missions San Juan Bautista (Mutsun) and Santa Cruz (Awaswas) during the late 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, which includes the Aptos people who lived on the land that became Rancho San Andrés. This webpage provides a detailed history of the Amah Mutsun ancestors.

[We Are Not Animals](#): by Dr. Martin Rizzo-Martinez: This scholarly book illuminates the stories of Indigenous individuals and families impacted by Mission Santa Cruz to reveal how Indigenous politics informed each of their choices within a context of immense loss and violent disruption, with detailed research from historical records, Indigenous oral histories, and archaeology, anthropology, psychology, and ecology studies.



Illustration by David Rickman for the Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe State Historic Park

Stories and Novels

[How Hummingbird Got Fire](#): Video of a traditional Rumsien Ohlone story read by Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Chairman Val Lopez

[Two Years Before the Mast](#) by Richard Henry Dana Jr.: Dana's memoir describes his experiences as an American sailor on a merchant ship traveling to California from Boston, Massachusetts, as part of the Californio hides and tallow trade.

[The Red Dove of Monterey](#) by Stephen Bly: A young adult fiction book about a woman who is a confident entrepreneur in a man's world, seeking to fulfill her calling on a cattle ranch during California's transition from the Mexican Rancho Period to American statehood.



Monterey, California Rancho Scene by Alfred Sully, circa 1849. Credit: The Oakland Museum of California

Student Resources

[Settlers on the California frontier: Californios](#): What type of culture developed among settlers in Alta California? What did they call themselves? How did they live under Mexico and Spain? And how did they respond to American rule?

[Mexican War of Independence](#): Mexico gains its independence from Spain and marks the beginning of the Mexican Rancho Period of California history

[Mexican American War](#): Mexico loses California to the United States and marks the end of the Mexican Rancho Period

[California Native American Survival and Resilience During the Mission Period](#): An inquiry lesson using primary and secondary sources created by the National Museum of the American Indian

[All About Adobe Bricks](#): The history of the building material that was used to construct the Castro Adobe

[Making Adobe Bricks](#): Video by Monterey State Historic Park showing students how to make an adobe brick

[Diseño Project](#): Explains what a diseño is, its relevance in the Mexican Rancho Period and how to draw one in student-friendly language

[The Anza Expedition](#): A 24-minute National Park Service documentary about the Anza Expedition which brought the first Castro, Joaquin Isidro, to Alta California

Vocabulary Words and Terms

Adobe: a mixture of dirt, straw, and water formed into bricks and dried in the sun, used for building houses and other structures

Alta California: former Spanish, later Mexican, province comprising the present state of California

Anza Expedition: the second Anza Expedition (1775-1776) explored Alta California for Spain. The expedition traveled from Mexico to San Francisco.

Brasero: a flat surface cook top made of adobe bricks that is fueled with wood or coal

Branding: the act of marking cattle with a unique design, called a brand, to show ownership—the metal branding iron is heated in a fire until it's red hot and then applied to the cattle's skins

Caldera: Spanish word for cauldron; a large pot for cooking

Californios: descendants of Spanish-speaking settlers who came to California in 1769

Cocina: Spanish word for kitchen

Comal: a flat ceramic or metal disc used over a flame to cook tortillas, seeds, chilies, and other foods

Diseño: a hand drawn map of land grants

Embarcadero: landing place; pier or wharf

Fandango: dance party; various kinds of Mexican dances

Fiestas: Spanish word for parties

Frijoles: Spanish word for beans

Land grants: land given to settlers in Alta California

Mano y metate: Spanish words for mortar and pestle; the metate is a portable stone surface used for grinding corn, chilies, and other spices. The mano is the tool used to grind food on the metate.

Matanza: the yearly selection of cattle killed for their hides and tallow

Nopales: a cactus with flat "leaves" that bears fruit called tuna. Both the leaves and fruit are edible

Molinillo: a carved wooden tool used for whipping Mexican chocolate

Olla de barro: a special pot used when making Mexican hot chocolate

Padres: Spanish word for priests

Rancho: Spanish word for cattle ranch

Ranchero: a man who owned a rancho

Reatas: lassos, also called lariats

Rodeo: a roundup of cattle on a ranch for counting and branding; an exhibition or contest in which vaqueros show their skill at riding horses and roping calves or wild bulls

Secularization: the end of ownership by the Catholic church of the missions

Tallow: the hard fat of animals, such as cattle, used to make soap and candles

Vaquero: Spanish word for cowboy

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access@parks.ca.gov