

Santa Cruz man finds adobe roots

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The last time Jeff Wyant visited the mission adobe, he peeked over the fence and wondered when he would be able to tour the historic building.

If Wyant knew then what he knows now, he might have been even more anxious.

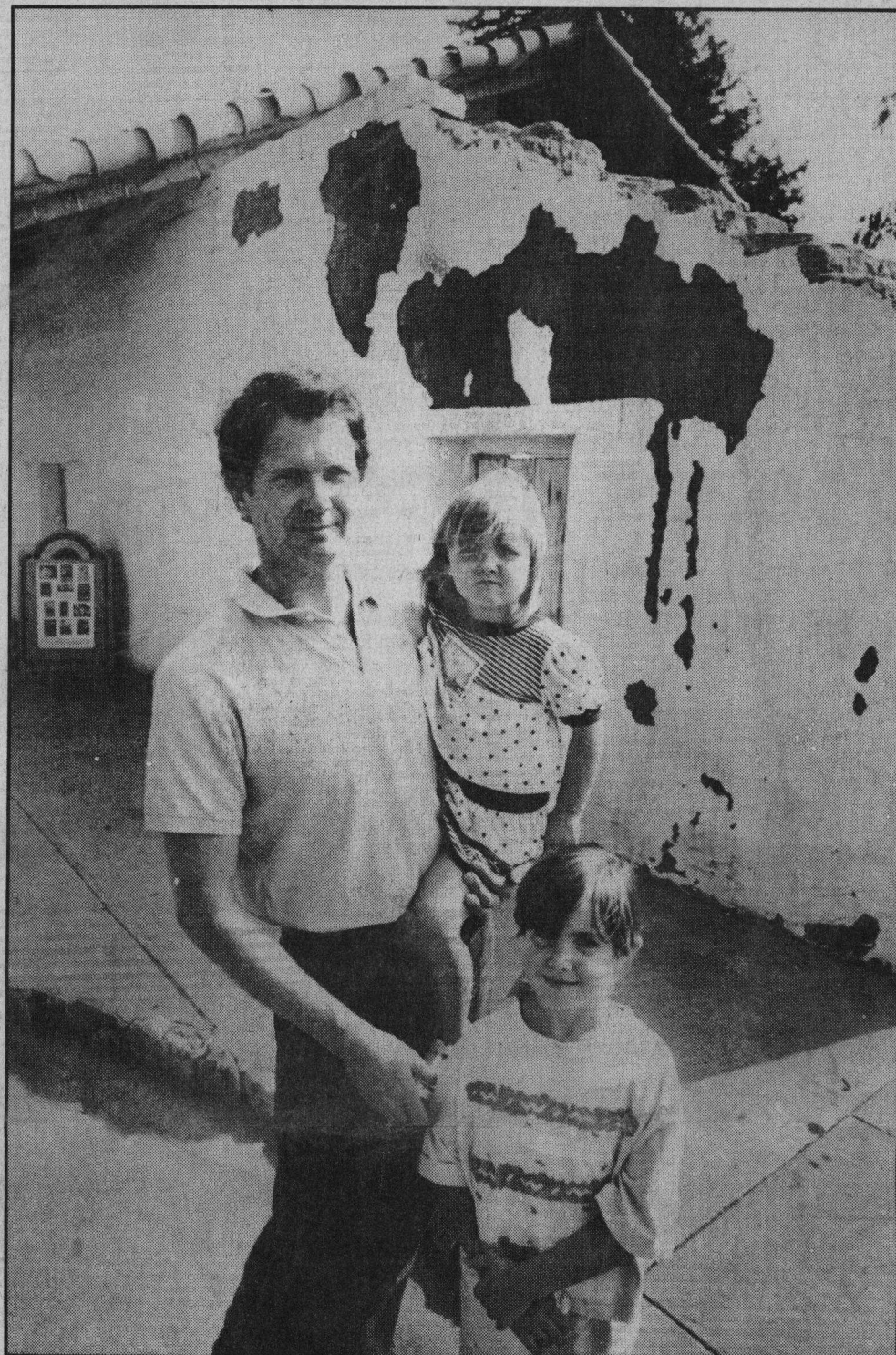
Wyant, who moved to Santa Cruz in 1978, discovered his adobe roots in an article that ran in the Sentinel last Sunday.

It turns out Wyant is the great-great-great grandson of Felipe Armas, who bought part of what once was a 17-room adobe that housed the Santa Cruz Mission's Indian workers.

"I didn't have the slightest idea," said Wyant. "I knew of Felipe as Philip Armas, who lived in Pescadero and was a relative of ours."

According to local historian Edna Kimbro, Armas moved his family to Pescadero in 1865 after the growing Americanization of Santa Cruz left him without the influence he once enjoyed.

Please see ARMAS — A6 Felipe Armas kin Jeff Wyant with daughters Rachele and Jessica.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Parade kicks off a weekend of celebration

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — If you don't like parades, music, crafts, food, history, fireworks, lighted boats, dances, sea lions, surfers, runners, swimmers or bicyclists — put down the paper and leave town now.

Otherwise, it's likely you won't be happy living in Santa Cruz for the next two days.

After nine months of planning — and \$35,000 in contributions from the city, county, individuals

and businesses — bicentennial weekend has arrived.

"(This) is our chance as a community to celebrate the uniqueness of Santa Cruz, its history and diversity, as well as its bright future," said Lisa McGinnis, the city's special events coordinator who has spearheaded bicentennial planning.

As with any good celebration, the bicentennial revs up with a parade.

Stepping off at 10:30 a.m. today, the 135-entry parade is expected

to take two hours to wind its way from Cedar and Cathcart streets to San Lorenzo Park.

Along Cedar between Lincoln and Union streets, vendors will hawk food and drinks, and jugglers will entertain the crowd. There also will be three sets of grandstands for viewers.

The grand marshal, Rep. Leon Panetta, D-Monterey, will ride in the Wells Fargo Stagecoach.

In addition to leading the parade, Panetta will help dedicate the newly renovated adobe on

Mission Hill at 2 p.m.

From noon to 4 p.m. at the adobe, docents will offer tours, as well as demonstrations of Native American and Hispanic crafts.

Buses will shuttle visitors between Mission Hill and San Lorenzo Park, where a celebration is set for 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Music, arts and crafts booths, food and drink will be available throughout the park. At 2 p.m. on Duck Island, winners of the parade awards will be announced.

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Armas kin discovers roots

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"Philip is an Americanization of Felipe," said Kimbro. She believes the man who is Wyant's forebear and who is buried as Philip Armas in Pescadero is the same person who was the first Californio to live in the mission adobe.

"The whole thing is kind of spooky," said Wyant, who, with his father, uncle and grandfather, will attend the adobe's dedication at 2 p.m. today as part of the city's bicentennial celebration.

The celebration marks the European birth of Santa Cruz, which was so-named on Aug. 28, 1791, when a group of Spaniards planted a cross and celebrated Mass on the lowlands by the San Lorenzo River.

Their makeshift mission town was flooded that winter and the settlement was moved to what became known as Mission Hill.

The adobe, built between 1822 and 1824, is the last original structure from the mission complex.

"I used to walk by the adobe and wonder, 'When are we going to be able to see the inside?'" said Wyant. "We are excited about seeing the opening. ... Now it's going to make that (the dedication) much more special to us."

Armas bought five rooms of the adobe in 1848, and lived there until 1865. A re-creation of the family's living room is featured in one of the rooms that will be opened to the public.

Armas came to Santa Cruz from Hawaii, where he had two daughters with his first wife, according to Kimbro.

One of those daughters was named Luisa, who Wyant thinks is the Lucy Armas Pico who was his great-great grandmother.

Lucy Pico had several children, including Thresea, who married Joe Wyant. One of their children was Raymond Wyant, who son is R. Paul Wyant — Jeff's father.

Wyant was born in San Mateo,

but his family camped in Pescadero when he was a youngster.

About 20 years ago, said Wyant, he found Philip Armas's grave in the Pescadero cemetery. It showed Armas died in 1876 at the age of 66.

That tallies with Kimbro's history, although she had never learned when Armas died until Wyant called her Sunday afternoon.

From a newspaper article one of his great-aunts gave him after he talked with Kimbro, Wyant learned Felipe Armas was one of Pescadero's early school teacher and built its first school.

"It's spooky, I guess, just to think there was a tie to Santa Cruz after all these years," said Wyant. "I was going (to the adobe dedication) anyway, but I wasn't going to get the whole family excited until I found out about this."

Wyant is a software development manager for a San Jose firm. He and his wife, Kristi, have two daughters, Jessica, 6, and Rachele, 3.

Bicentennial celebration features variety of events

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At 7:30 p.m., a fireworks show over the bay at Main Beach will help cap Day 1 of the birthday bash.

Sponsored by Plantronics Inc., the city of Santa Cruz and the Seaside Co., the \$20,000 show will be followed by a lighted boat parade.

The Santa Cruz Yacht Club has invited all boaters to decorate their crafts with lights and sail from the harbor around the wharf.

Another cap will be the Bicentennial Ball at the Civic Auditorium, which begins at 9 p.m. and will last until 1 a.m.

The ball features the 15-member Zasu Pitts Memorial Orchestra, named after Santa Cruz silent screen comic actress Zasu Pitts.

The group performs Motown and R&B songs from the '50s and '60s.

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12.50 at the door. Proceeds benefit Friends of Parks and Recreation.

On Sunday, Day 2 begins with the Ninth Annual Sentinel Triathlon at 8 a.m. around the wharf for the swimming portion of the event.

Music scheduled in the park

The entertainment scheduled for today at San Lorenzo Park:

Main Stage:

11 a.m. — URJ
Noon — Taiko Drummers
12:30 p.m. — Worlds Collide
1:30 p.m. — Mariachi Nuevo
2:30 p.m. — Orquesta Gitano
3:30 p.m. — Ohlone Dancers
4:15 p.m. — Santa Cruz Steel

Duck Island:

1 p.m. — Santa Cruz Brass Quintet
2 p.m. — Parade Awards
2:30 p.m. — Santa Cruz Brass Quintet

Children's Stage:

11:30 a.m. — Willow Pullan
12:30 p.m. — Peace Child Chorus of Santa Cruz County
1:30 p.m. — Jim Marshall
2:30 p.m. — Vicki Neville
4 p.m. — Bob Reid and the Dads

Running along the coast, followed by a bicycle ride to Davenport concludes the three-sport test.

Historical bus tours depart on Sunday from Loudon Nelson at 10 a.m., and from the County Courthouse at 11:45 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

The tours, led by John Lane, a staff member of the city's museum, will trace the routes of padres and

pioneers, as well as teach about early industries, railroads and summer beach tourists.

Historical walks on Sunday around the mission grounds and downtown Santa Cruz begin at 10 a.m. and noon.

Local historian and author Ross Gibson will lead the tours, which are sponsored by the Historical Trust.

Also at 10 a.m., the gates open on the Long Marine Lab Open House and Fall Fish Festival.

The event runs through 4 p.m. at the lab, 100 Schaffer Road.

At noon, the Surfing Museum at Lighthouse Field will have a special open house to celebrate the bicentennial, as well as its own fifth birthday.