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# School Street Adobe Is One Building That Stays

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The old adobe is a skittish as a bride. She won't "tell" her age.

Even with her roof off and her ribs exposed, her exact number of years is a mystery.

A plaque says the adobe was built in 1794. Another educated guess puts it at 1810. One fact no one can argue is that the School street adobe was a part of the original Santa Cruz Mission compound.

The Mission (built of stone and adobe) was built in 1793, dedicated in 1794, and stood very near the site of today's replica. There had been a first small temporary chapel built down on the "flat" presumably about where Pacific avenue, Mission, Front and Water streets come together at the lower plaza.

## AT CHINA LAKE

Navy Fireman Apprentice Michael McKeon, son of Mr. and Mrs. George McKeon of 242-25th avenue, is currently serving at the Naval Ordnance Test station, China Lake, Calif.

(Editor's Note: The School street adobe is one historic Santa Cruz building which WILL be saved. The state's purchase of it makes that an accomplished fact. In the future it is to be completely restored for use by the public as a historic monument. Highlights of the old adobe's story appear here in conjunction with the efforts by SCOPE and the Santa Cruz Historical Society to arouse public interest in the city's historic homes and buildings. It is the seventh in a Sunday Sentinel series on old structures.)

This very first chapel is described as being built of rough wood palings thrust into the ground. It was demolished by a flood and the first real Mission was then built "up on the hill."

If the exact date of the School street adobe's construction is a mystery, so is its original use. It is known that detached adobe buildings in its general area housed a school, Indian sleeping quar-

ters and the guard house. Which was it used for? It is believed by many to have been the guard house.

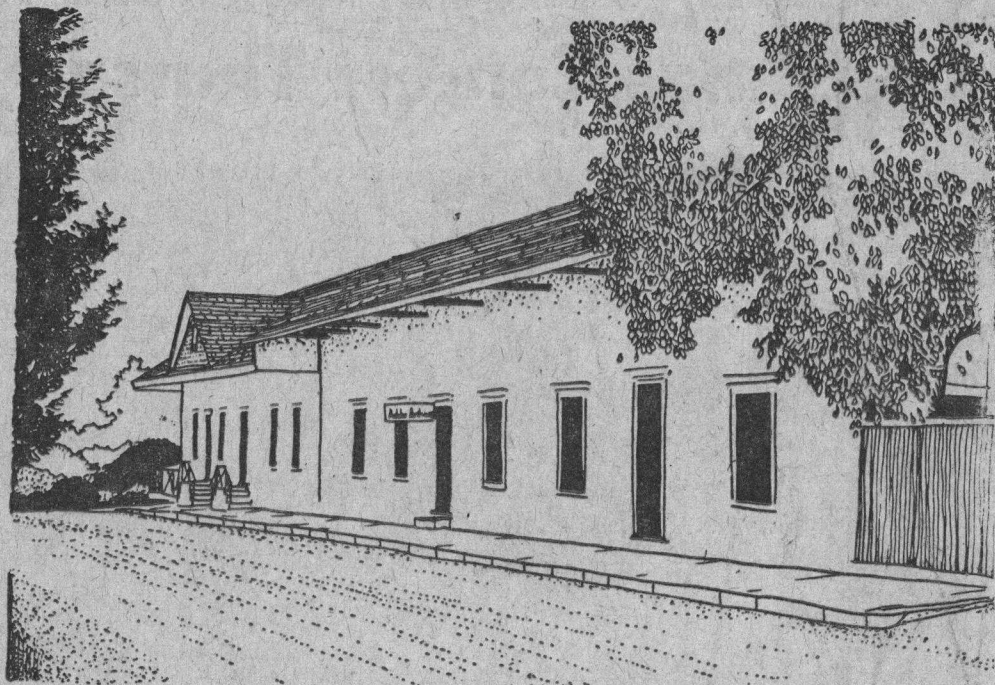
Down School street flowed an open ditch of water — Santa Cruz' first water system. The city's first reservoir was dug out of the chalk rock cliff near the edge of the bluff, beyond the old adobe.

When Santa Cruz Mission was secularized and turned over to civil authorities in 1834-36, some of the church property was divided among the few remaining Mission Indians.

The School street adobe and a few surrounding acres were bought from Indians in 1838 for two cows and two mules. Purchaser was Jose de la Rodriguez, a foster great-grandparent of Mrs. Cornelia Hopcroft. She yet lives in her half of the adobe.

The other half of the old building was sold in 1865 to Patrick Neary, ancestor of Miss Alice Neary.

An important "first" for the adobe was the organization of Santa Cruz Masonic lodge in 1854, upstairs in the Neary portion.



School street view of the only remaining building of the original Santa Cruz Mission compound. The ancient adobe was actually two separate

homes, divided by a thick adobe wall. Mystery surrounds its original use and age. Artist Will Shepherd made the pen and ink drawing of

the city's most valuable historic building. It is to be preserved by the State of California, thanks to Santa Cruz Historical society.

The Rodriguez and Neary families retained their halves of the adobe (separated by a five-foot thick adobe wall) until 1957 when the State of California purchased the historic building. Leading the campaign to preserve it as a State Historical Monument were members of Santa Cruz Historical society who first

got the ball rolling and followed it through to completion. The legislature was drawn up by the late Assemblyman Glenn Coolidge.

Mrs. Hoperoft was given a life tenancy in her half of the building. Recently the State Division of Beaches and Parks re-roofed the Neary portion (western end) which houses an an-

tiques shop. During the repair job strong evidence was uncovered that the Neary adobe was originally a one-story adobe. And so the mysteries accumulate.

In the meanwhile the old adobe sits on one of the oldest streets in Santa Cruz, a relic of yesterday, waiting for tomorrow to happen.