

Area's solitary adobe dates to 1833

On a hill overlooking the Pajaro Valley stands the one remaining adobe in Watsonville — the Castro Adobe in Larkin Valley.

Don Jose Joaquin Castro acquired the San Andreas (Andres) Rancho in 1833, granted to him by Governor Figueroa. Joaquin had been a soldier and a settler of Branciforte (Santa Cruz). His first wife was Antonia Amado, who was to die in 1832. His second wife was 17-year-old Rosaria Briones and it was

That was Watsonville

for her that he built the adobe around 1833. It measured 30 by 100 feet and was made of adobe bricks, which were made by wetting clay, mixing it into the shape of a brick. These were put out to dry and then used for building a house. The Castro adobe was two stories high with an outdoor staircase and a tile roof. On the upper floor there was a 50 by 20 foot ballroom.

The grant contained 8,900 acres and was bounded by the ocean, the slough west of town, the Corralitos Creek to the bridge on the old Santa Cruz Road, and one mile west of Whiskey Hill, now Freedom. From this point the boundary was a line running due west to the ocean. Any land grant over 1,000 acres was considered a rancho.

Joaquin Castro was to die in 1838 and his widow married a member of the Espinosa family and continued living in the adobe with two of Joaquin's sons. In 1880, a family by the name of Hansen purchased the property and lived in the adobe until just after the earthquake of 1905, when they moved next door

In 1948 Mr. and Mrs. William Nelson of San Francisco purchased the adobe and used it for a summer home, modernizing it to some extent including an indoor stairway to



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the second floor, a new electrical system and replacing the tile roof with a shake roof.

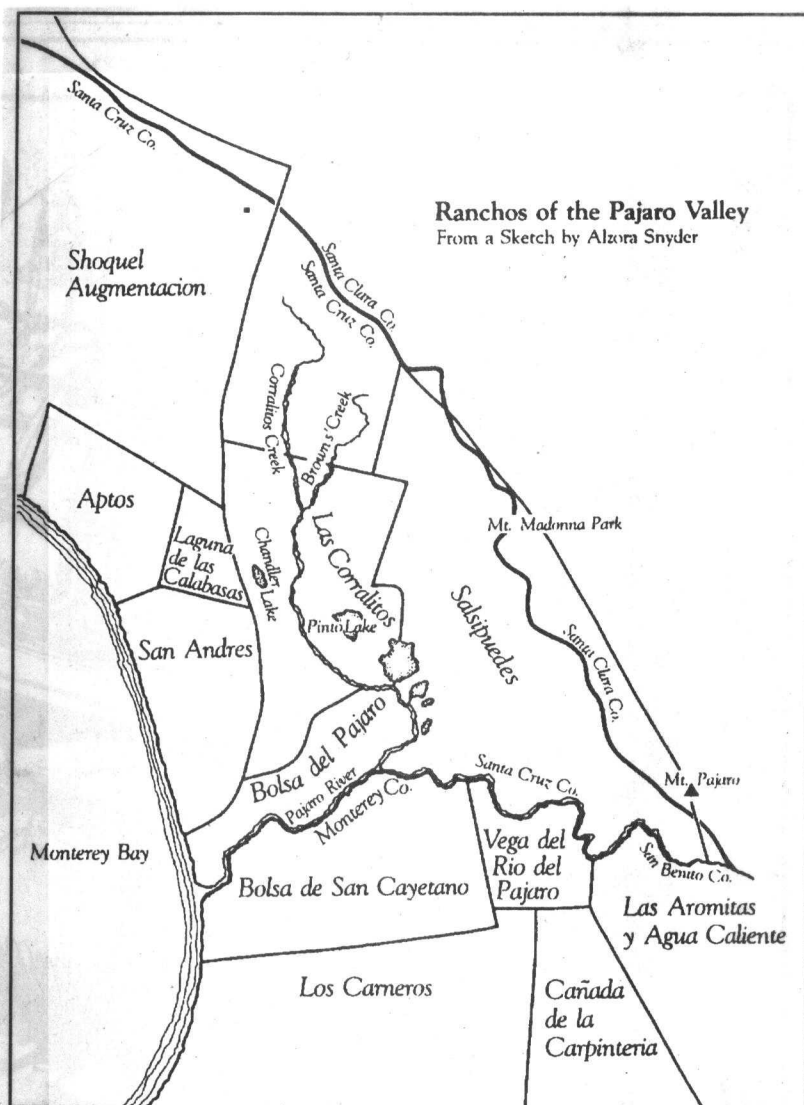
One writer has the titles being sold for use at a railroad station and another says they went to Hollywood. However, they would have been very expensive to replace as they were originally hand-made by roofers shaping the clay over their thighs.

In 1959, the adobe was sold to Mr. and Mrs. John Palzia, who had to restore the gallery supports that were termite-ridden and in so doing had to cut down the old grapevine, which had covered the entire front of the adobe for over 100 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Victor Jowers became the new owners in 1963 and by now three more bedrooms had been added to the second floor portion of the adobe along with a new sitting room, thus replacing the old ballroom.

Mr. and Mrs. David Potter of San Francisco purchased the adobe and also used it for a vacation home. It was purchased in 1988 by historic preservation consultant Edna Kimbro and her husband and has been in the process of being restored since the 1989 earthquake.

Fred Atkinson noted in his book "100 Years In the Pajaro Valley" the following: "Among the most influential of the early California families, and certainly the most numerous, were the Castros. It is impossible to get all the relationships straight, and because the same giv-



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The last surviving adobe, located on a hill overlooking the Pajaro Valley, was built by Don Jose Joaquin Castro, the owner of the old San Andres Rancho.

en names appear over and over again in the records, there is much confusion as to the identity of several members of the clan."

This last remaining adobe, which stood on land granted to Joaquin Castro in 1833 and confirmed by the

United States District Court to his eldest son, Guadeloupe Castro, in 1876, is an intricate part of the Pajaro Valley and its early beginnings. Thank goodness we still have one of these historic adobes left in our valley.