

Diggers say 'so long' to lost adobe

By ADRIANA REYNERI

After four years of excavating the "lost adobe" of Mission Hill, Cabrillo College students are burying the remains once again and leaving the ruins with many secrets still inside.

A ceremony held Saturday at the site marked the end of the dig in Santa Cruz. Archaeology students wearing "Raiders of the Lost Adobe" T-shirts, their professor, Rob Edwards, and a small crowd of onlookers filled a time capsule with 20th Century artifacts.

A Donald Duck night light, a Revlon lipstick "used for ornamenting women's lips as an enhancement to beauty circa 1984," a paperback copy of "Indiana Jones and the Curse of Horror Island," and a list from the Santa Cruz Archaeological Society containing names of members with currently paid dues will soon lie buried alongside fragments of mission tile and glass trading beads.

Saturday was also one of the last chances to work at the site. As visitors milled around the exposed foundation, students took final measurements of partially-protruding grinding stones and sketched profiles of the excavation walls containing fragments of tile, foundation stone and sea shells.

The dig has turned up Native

American trading beads, buttons made to commemorate Napoleon, and a doll in crucifix form that the missionaries may have used to teach the Indians.

The site has yielded more than 15,000 artifacts. The next step, Edwards said, is to stop gathering pieces and start thinking about what they might mean.

"You reach a time in archaeology when you gather so many facts and you have to write the story," Edwards said. "We need to analyze that (the artifacts) to find what stories we can tell and what we need to ask next."

The artifacts and observations may help answer questions about life at the adobe, Edwards said.

They may hold information about systems of trade, preparing food, diet, and the relationship between the missionaries and the Native Americans, he said.

Edwards hopes to be able to interpret the artifacts before Mission Hill's bicentennial celebration in 1991.

The adobe was discovered in 1977 when a bulldozer crew exposed remains of a building while digging a foundation for the Adobe Condominiums development.

The building became known

as the "lost adobe" because there's no mention of it in any histories, Edwards said.

Cabrillo College students and volunteers, led by Edwards, have been excavating the site since the summer of 1981.

The excavation has attracted amateur archaeologists, professors from UC-Santa Cruz and other universities, local historical societies, Watsonville High School summer students, and Native Americans living in Santa Cruz County. "It's drawn people from all over the county although it's focused on Santa Cruz," Edwards said.

Statements given by Ruby

Tefertiller, whose great-grandmother came to Mission Hill in 1843, have helped historians and archaeologists learn more about the area.

Tefertiller's great-grandmother told her the hill was "filled with invisible footprints" and "the land was a sacred land."

Although no excavations are likely to take place at the "Lost Adobe" in the next five years, the area may be reopened when there are new questions to ask, Edwards said.

"I'd love to go back," Edwards said. "There are obviously questions that remain to be answered."

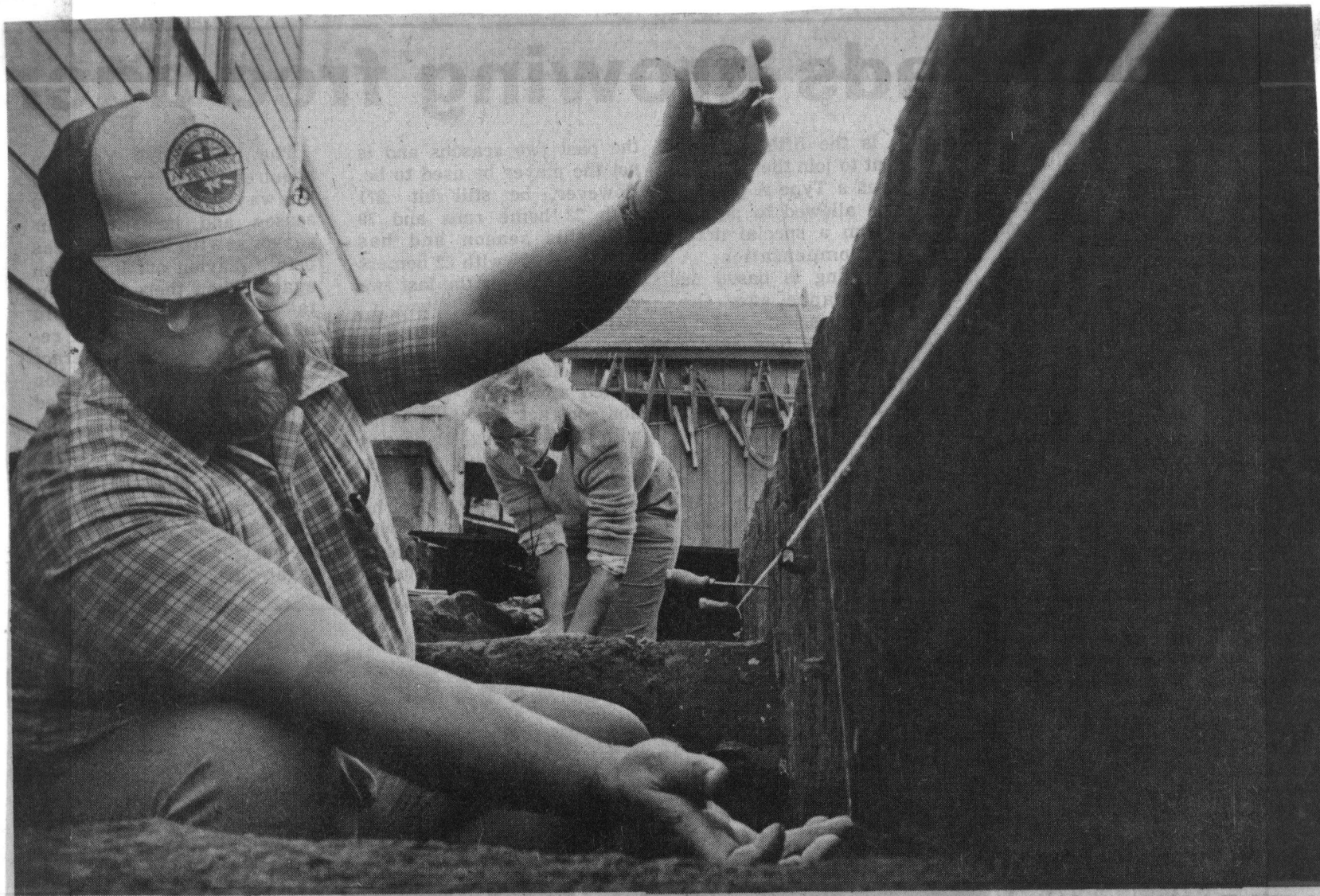


Photo by Kurt Ellison

Rob Edwards measures an adobe sidewall while Charr Smith takes brick samples in background.