Public Uses of Household Spaces: Archaeological Data Recovery of Room 102 at Rancho San Andres Castro Adobe

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) in collaboration with California State Parks is currently restoring the Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe, Watsonville, California (CA-SCR-209H). Access to and strengthening of the second floor fandango room is of considerable importance to the interpretation of the historic Adobe. To meet these goals, Friends installed an Americans with Disabilities Act compliant lift, and interior staircase (Project), and a reinforced wood floor within Room 102. This Project required excavations within the significant archaeological resource that is Room 102 of the Castro Adobe, a California Historical Landmark, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These recent excavations suggest that the Castro Adobe represents Mexican Period rancho architecture, with cobble foundations, adobe walls, and a prepared adobe floor. Above the adobe floor a layer of loose cultural fill was identified, containing artifacts dating from the Mexican Period through the Modern Era. This strata was likely created by soil and artifacts falling between the wood floor boards within the room, and by rodent activities. Analysis of recovered artifacts suggests that Room 102 was more than just a bedroom for Castro boys (Kimbro, et al. 2003). While we did identify artifacts likely used by children, including puzzle pieces, checkers, doll parts, and marbles, there were also a number of artifacts that were likely made and used by other members of the Castro community. In particular, the assemblage included artifacts likely related to indigenous practices, providing a lens into understanding the often undocumented experiences of indigenous rancho laborers. While Castro boys may have been sleeping in Room 102, during the day the room was used by the diverse community living and working at Rancho San Andrés, illustrating the very public nature of the Castro Adobe.

Students enrolled in -- or thinking about enrolling in -- ANTH 189 (Archaeology Field Methods) for Spring 2017 are highly encouraged to attend this talk.