

History:*The Dawning of California*

Spain claimed California in 1542. However, two hundred twenty-seven years later, in 1769, King Carlos III dispatched Franciscan priest Junipero Serra to construct the first twenty-one missions plotted over five hundred miles of coastal land. Contrary to benevolence tales, thousands of indigenous natives were conscripted in near slavery and used to construct walled fortresses to protect the land from foreign invaders.

At the same time, guiltless Aboriginal natives indentured to Christianity as a spiritual blessing, become indoctrinated in European culture to better their lives. Tragically, oppressive conditions and lack of immunity to European disease killed an estimated 300,00 and reduced to 20,000 over the following six decades. King Carlos III authorized land grants to loyal military servants, including sixty-five across Southern California.

Of the above, Rancho San Pedro was the first awarded in 1784 to Juan Jose Dominguez, a loyal soldier of Spanish blood. Thirty-seven years later, Mexico claims the rich golden land that will soon become the fifth-largest economy in the world.

The fabled Days of The Dons were romantically colorful; however, they regrettably darkened as fledgling California suffered incursions by outlaws and rogue natives who sought vengeance against white men who pillaged tribal sanctuaries and genocide of their heritage.

Rancho San Pedro, a 75,000-acre coastal land mass, prospers. Yet, suffers an illegitimate loss of 33,000-acre Palos Verdes. Over generations, cattle and agriculture gave way to new cities and were replaced by a massive oil discovery. Portions of historic Rancho San Pedro remain two hundred seventy-five years later in the same family who continues a proud legacy that began with a humble soldier, Juan Jose Dominguez.

Story:

1784 - 1921

Eternally grateful for the heroic rescue of his young wife and unborn child, Governor **Pedro Fages** rewards retired soldier **Juan Jose Dominguez** with a tract of seventy-five thousand acres of rich Southern California coastal land, an immense portion of *South Bay Los Angeles*, “*Rancho San Pedro*” flourished for forty years with thousands of prize livestock and golden agriculture tended by loyal Mexican and Indigenous Native workers.

In 1809, Dominguez suspiciously dies with the fabled land in the evil hands of corrupt Los Angeles Spaniard **Jorge Gutierrez**, who pays his meager debts and claims the ranch as his own. Suspected of murdering his uncle, Juan Jose's sole heir, and nephew **Cristobal Dominguez** embarks on a dangerous mission to expose Gutierrez and recapture the land.

Following eight years of ill-fated attempts, Cristobal fails and loses his life in a bloody skirmish, leaving the fearsome quest to a twenty-one-year-old educated son, **Manuel**. Soon upon arrival in Pueblo Los Angeles, Manuel meets **Guillermo Cota**, an influential commissioner, marries beautiful daughter **Maria**, and launches an all-out personal war against powerful Gutierrez.

Aided by his father-in-law, Manuel earns political office and investigates the two suspected murders. Gutierrez denies the claim and fortifies the ranch with a band of armed guards. Unaware Manuel has craftily obtained confessions from accomplices, Gutierrez sluffs off a court hearing until he observes Cota has replaced a corrupt judge and jury. Found guilty of two murders and theft of Rancho San Pedro, Gutierrez lives the rest of his life in hard labor on a ranch he once claimed his own.

1857

Sons-in-law **George Carson** and **Jack Watson** share management with Manual of the expanding empire. Five years later, torrential rains devastated crops and livestock, leaving Dominguez in heavy debt. After two decades of back-breaking work, during which time, Manual rises to further political fame as the ranch returns to its prior glory days.

1882

Fortunes, however, reverses again when Los Angeles suffers a disastrous drought that scorches the land and rich crops, resulting in the death of thousands of valuable livestock. Manual and Jack, now deceased, George forced to borrow heavily again. Eighteen years pass as George, aided by son John, nephew **Jimmy Watson**, and hundreds of loyal Mexican and Native workers, rebuild the fabled ranch.

1901

Following four decades of joyous times amid political success while faced with family tragedies, George passes, leaving the Carson estate to his wife **Victoria** and nine children. Brotherly cousins John and Jimmy manage their respective ranch shares and continue the century-long legacy.

1921

Rancho San Pedro, a once vast seventy-five-thousand-acre cattle empire, is one-third of its original size with thirty-three-thousand-acre Palos Verdes illicitly sold by Gutierrez to **Juan Delores Sepulveda**. A deadly combination of depressed crop prices and rising taxes again placed the ranch in economic peril. John and Jimmy sell portions of the ranch to raise funds; however, void of options leads to potential foreclosure and loss of family legacy.

Christmas Surprise

A bolt of luck finds the Carson and Watson clan on Christmas Eve when a wildcatter enters and announces a major oil discovery that will cement the family's fortune for future generations. Relieved, the family offers prayers, and Rancho San Pedro is again blessed to breathe a new life.

Amid a celebration, Jorge Gutierrez's grand-nephew, **Victor**, arrives with a bogus claim to Rancho San Pedro and its newfound oil. Shocked by the illicit demand, John and Jimmy team up with former New York rogue detective **Max Hammer** to investigate the matter.

A complex trail of clues reveals Victor tied to an East Coast underworld crime family with a scheme to control Southern California's new oil. Faced with death threats, Jimmy's kidnap, and harrowing rescue, the cousins and Max execute a clever "*sting*." The devious scheme places Victor behind bars and runs the "*baddies*" out like scared rabbits away from LA.

Relieved the crisis is behind them, the Carson and Watson families celebrate a grand fiesta at the ranch with a backdrop of hundreds of wells of black gold that allow Rancho Dominguez to live another day. The two families continue two-hundred and thirty-nine years after Juan Jose Dominguez's humble request to Pedro Fages for "*small grazing land*" that became a seminal part of Southern California's legendary history.

El Legado "*The Legacy*" – A seminal part of rich California history never told in film.