"Rancho Dominguez"
February 2007

by
Bill DeLuca
For Teatro Dominguez

CAST:
Perry - Fr. Pat
John - Juan, Julio, Zeb
Grant – Vaquero, Manuel, Mervin
Luis – Serra, Jose, Cristobal, Don Manuel
Crystal – Victoria
Monica – Engracia, Dolores
Alexandra – Corona, Ana Josephina
Ingrid - Lupe, Bessie

Characters

Father Pat Narrator and Inspiration. A Claretian Father who served over 30 years as Curator of the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum beginning 1972; famous for his smile, charm, winning personality, and wit; an outgoing Irishman who developed a special respect for those who lived a dedicated life, like the officers of the Chicago Police Department, where he was chaplain in his early years; a true storyteller, with an electric enthusiasm for history and heroes;

Don Manuel The ranchero of the homestead and father of the Dominguez family; near 50 in the play, when he was at the height of his talents in securing the rancho; well educated by his father, Cristobal, and spoke and wrote both Spanish and English, which helped in his legal defense of the rancho; held public offices in both Mexican (mayor three times) and U.S. governments; built the adobe home in 1826, then protected and managed it; though described as a “tough old customer,” he was revered for his sincerity and generosity, and respected for his intelligence and dignity;

Doña Engracia Early 40s; Known to be the “embodiment of all the virtues and graces of a Castillian maiden,” and played a significant role in shaping the rancho as a center of public service; she added style to the rancho, and made it a welcome stop for visitors;

Ana Josephina The oldest of ten children, currently late teens; reserved, but in charge; stayed dedicated to her parents til she married in her 40s; quiet but proud; strong love for her sisters;

Guadalupe Late teens; firm with the domestic helpers; reserved and formal; had many suitors but never married; strong devout nature; willing to give up personal wishes for her family; returned to the homestead to die in 1913;

Manuel The oldest boy, about 15 during the events of the play; serious young man, very aware of his father’s record of service; dies at 21 from tuberculosis;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolores</td>
<td>Vivacious; impetuous; attractive; the first girl to marry (when she was 17 to Jack Watson); she would raise her four boys alone, after Watson dies young; currently 14 in the play;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>The young brother (12); known for his sense of humor and love for tricking his sisters; would die from a tragic riding accident at age 23;</td>
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<td>Maria Victoria</td>
<td>A sturdy 10 year old girl; very determined and energetic; a strong willed daughter, who loves living on the rancho; she would later have 15 kids of her own with George Cady Carson, who manages the Dominguez estate for many years;</td>
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<td>Susana</td>
<td>Only 8 in the play, but already showing signs of becoming a generous sister who quietly supported her parents for 40 years and gave much to charities; will eventually travel around the world with her husband Dr. Gregorio Del Amo (they are buried together under the Claretian Seminary at the Rancho);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reyes</td>
<td>Only 5 in the play, but loves to play with her sisters; would marry John F. Francis but never had children; oil was discovered on her estate, but died quietly in 1933.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan Jose Dominguez</td>
<td>The original family member who was granted Rancho San Pedro by the King of Spain in 1784 after years of service in Mexico and California as a rugged soldier, interpreter, and scout.</td>
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<td>Cristobal Dominguez</td>
<td>Like his uncle Juan Jose, Cristobal became a soldado de cuero, a leather jacket soldier, and stayed in the military his whole life. Inherited the rancho from Juan Jose, and secured certificates of ownership from the governor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father Junipero Serra</td>
<td>The Franciscan friar who came to California at 56 years old and established the mission system, designed to convert native peoples to Christianity and settle the area for Spain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romero the Vaquero</td>
<td>Imagined rancho cowboy from the Suangna tribe; short, sturdy, and quiet by nature.</td>
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<td>Corona</td>
<td>Though based on the actual Indio house servant who worked for the Dominguez family in the late 19th century, this comical, rough character is fictionalized after the Nurse in “Romeo and Juliet.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julio</td>
<td>A Suangna indian; he speaks Spanish and hides his Gabrieleno roots in order to escape possible punishments. He likes Lupe, but there’s no chance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zeb Jones</td>
<td>Former slave on board the “Lelia Bird” which arrived at San Pedro from Boston in 1805; his aggressive characterization is pure fiction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bessie</td>
<td>An angry cow (just her leg, actually);</td>
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AT RISE: Five music stands extend across the front of the assembly space. A drop with the image of Rancho Dominguez painted on them, as it looks today; Some early Californio ballads play on CD as a PRESHOW.

(FATHER PAT enters.)

NARRATOR (FATHER PAT)
Buenos días, pequeños¡ (Good morning little ones!) I am Father Patrick J. McPolin, but everyone calls me Father Pat. Soy su narrador (I am your Storyteller,) and this is a story I love to tell, because it’s about you and your community. So, I’m honored to welcome you to the 1840s where you will meet the Dominguez Family of Rancho San Pedro. By the way, the reason I’m telling the story is because, for 30 years, I took care of the Dominguez family’s home and turned it into the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum which you can visit. Es derecho por la calle Alameda, abajo del autopista 91 (It’s right on up Alameda below the 91 freeway.) I also fell in love with the history of the Rancho, and as a priest, I love helping people to stay connected with the spirit that lives all around them and inside them, sin importar su religión sean (regardless of whether your religion is) Christian, Moslem, Jewish, or Hindu, or whether you are black, brown, white or green. I believe that you have to have something to believe! Don’t you agree?

(VICTORIA enters, miming the “Doña Blanca” in a circle;)

FATHER PAT
Here’s a good example of historia haciendose vivo (history coming alive) for you. This is Victoria, who was born in 1842. The Dominguez girls and their brothers loved to play all kinds of games. Just like you, they played Tag, Hide and Seek, throwing games, and hoop rolling games they had learned from native Indians. Boys played kicking games like soccer, but they also played with lariats, known as reatas, made from cow hides, to practice their roping skills.

(VICTORIA hides behind FR.PAT.)

VICTORIA
Padre, salvame¡ (Father, save me!) Don’t let them lasso me!

FR. PAT
Está bien, Victoria (That’s okay, Victoria.) Say hello to the students. They’re your age.

VICTORIA
Wow! So many of them! Hey, Father Pat, there are doves in lemon orchards! ¿Quiere verlos? (Want to come see!)

FR. PAT
Not, now, you little tomboy. And you stay away from those skunks, Victoria!

VICTORIA
OK, Father. Adios¡

(VICTORIA runs off.)
FR. PAT
Now just because Victoria seems to be having a great time, don’t think life on a rancho
was all fun and games! After all, the work of running a rancho in these early years,
before they began to do farming, was to raise cattle. Y no tenían (And they didn’t have)
Play Station Three, or hair dryers, or even radio, or telephones. La vida era dura (Life
was tough!) Imagine being a vaquero, or cowboy, having to work the yearly roundup,
called a rodeo, where, all day long, you and other vaqueros ran your horses around the
herds to gather them into one area where you could count and brand them, to mark
them for the owner, the ranchero. But before we look at the 1840s, let’s find out how the
Rancho got started. So let’s meet “The Founders of Rancho San Pedro.”

(FR. SERRA , JUAN JOSE DOMINGUEZ, and CRISTOBAL
DOMINGUEZ are played by the same actor, who simply walks to a
new music stand to establish change of character.)

FR. PAT
Welcome, Father Serra! Please tell us about your work to build the missions in
California. How did it begin?

FR. SERRA
Well Fr. Pat, por sobre 200 años (for over two hundred years,) Spain left California to
the Indian peoples, like the Suangna, who lived here. But around 1760, traders from
Russia showed up, entonces el Rey de España reaciono (so the King of Spain woke up).
So he created La Santa Expedicion, a sacred experiment designed to bring families here
and build the missions.

FR. PAT
And what happened inside the missions?

FR. SERRA
Como en la primera misión en San Diego en 1769 (Like the first mission in San Diego in
1769,) we taught the indians not only about Christianity, but also how to raise
domesticated animals, like cows, sheep and goats, how to grow European fruits and
vegetables, hablar Español y ser fieles a España (speak Spanish, and become loyal to
Spain.) We also built presidios, forts to protect us, and roads between them, and the
King granted the lands around us to his soldiers for them to develop with their families.
Esto fue un gran plan y funciono¡ (It was a grand plan, and it worked!)

FR. PAT
But wasn’t it a rough life, back in the 1770s in California?

FR. SERRA
Sí, fue peligroso (Yes, It was dangerous) unless you were protected by Soldados de
Cuero!

FR. PAT
Soldiers of leather? What were they?
Well, many were actually people of mixed Indigenous, European and African descent. But why don’t you ask Juan Jose Dominguez, our scout on our Sacred Expedition, and the most famous soldado de cuero of all!

Bueno, Let me introduce you to Juan Jose Dominguez. (Actor crosses to new music stand). Por favor, Señor Dominguez, hablanos sobre los Soldados de Cuero. (Please, Signior Dominguez, tell us about the soldados de cuero.)

Pues, claro. (Why of course!) We were only a hundred rugged infantrymen, stout of heart, and equipped with a lance, a musket, a broadsword and a reata. Our job was to protect the new lands of Alta or Upper California.

But why were you called “Soldiers of leather”?

We wore specially tanned deerskin vests for protection against Indian arrows, an early bulletproof vest! Even our pants were leather to protect us when riding through thorns and brush.

And Juan Jose, please tell the fourth graders how you acquired 75,000 acres of what is today all the land from the Pacific Ocean to the Los Angeles River and from Compton to San Pedro?

Well, after my military career ended, I needed a place for my cattle, horses and mules. Tenia mucho de ellos! (I had a lot of them!). I had seen the area above the Bay of San Pedro, llamada así por el explorador Vizcaíno (named by the explorer Vizcaíno,) so I asked the King and he rewarded me this land in 1784 for my thirty years of service as a soldado de cuero. I named it Rancho San Pedro.

Rancho San Pedro later came to be known as Rancho Dominguez, after your family name. And here is your nephew, Cristobal Dominguez, who inherited the rancho after your death in 1809. (The actor crosses to another music stand). Welcome Cristobal.

Thank you, Fr. Pat. Gracias, tio! Hola estudiantes (Hello students!) It’s always nice to meet the future.

Please tell them why you too are a founder of Rancho Dominguez.

Well, I had to fight other families como Los Sepulveda (like the Sepulvedas) who had brought their cattle onto the Dominguez land, so in 1817, I filed a petition con el...
governador (with the Governor) to have the land declared the sole property of the Dominguez family, y lo logre (and I got it.)

FR. PAT

Congratulations!

CRISTOBAL

And before I died in 1825, I gave the rancho to my son, Manuel Dominguez, who secured the rancho and built a new L-shaped building of five rooms with thick adobe walls and a wood beam roof in 1826.

FR. PAT

Yes, Don Manuel Dominguez is the greatest founder of the Rancho. And we will meet him soon! Gracias por contarnos su maravillosa historia (thank you for telling us your wonderful story!)

(CRISTOBAL exits. CORONA enters.)

FR. PAT

And this is Corona, one of the Indian laborers. Hello, Corona.

CORONA

Fr. Pat, not everyone thought that Fr. Serra was a hero!

FR. PAT

What do you mean Corona?

CORONA

Well, what went on inside the missions was not just the teaching of Christianity, but the destruction of the Indian culture. And many Indians were punished severely for disobeying the soldiers and the priests.

FR. PAT

Yes, that is true Corona. And as a priest myself, I am sorry for how the Indians, known as the Gabrielenos, were treated.

CORONA

And Fr. Serra did not protect the Indians from the abuses by the soldiers on them.

FR. PAT

And that’s important, Corona. The students need to know the truth. Many Indians, like Corona, saw the missions as labor camps, and we must include their voices when we look at history.

CORONA

There was even a revolt against the Mission San Gabriel led by a powerful medicine woman named Toypurina. Though it was not successful, it showed that the native Americans did not accept Christianity so easily.
Thank you, Corona, for letting the students know that there are always two sides to everything you read in history books. By the way, Corona, what’s cooking in the kitchen? Yo no he desayunado todavía (I haven’t had breakfast yet.)

Ooh, perhaps some atole.

Before we meet Don Manuel, let’s visit the kitchen!

(The two oldest sisters, ANA JOSEPHINA and LUPE, enter.)

Buenos diaz, senoritas!

Padre Pat. Buenos diaz!

Good morning!

These two lovely ladies are the two oldest Dominguez girls, Ana Josephina and Lupe, inspecting the vegetables that the servants have just brought up to the cocina. (to the students) Say Buenos diaz!

(FR. PAT gets them to speak up.)

Buenos dias (Good morning!)

Bienvenidos, estudiantes (Welcome, students!)

Aquí hay muchos (Here are a lot of) the items that the servants used to prepare foods in the cocina. Ana Josephina, please tell them.

Here we used a French grinder for spices used in cooking. We also had many types of pots. Muchas de ellos tenian que ser reparadas (Many had to be mended.) Our water pump was used to draw water from a well, pero en los primeros días (but in the early days) all the water was carried in by the servants.

Ugh! Eso era una patada en el tracero (That was a pain in the ass!)
FR. PAT
Corona, watch your language en frente de los niños (in front of the children.)

LUPE
Fr. Pat, do the students know what a Metate (may tah’ tay) is? It was a heavy stone vessel that was used to make flour for our tortillas.

FR. PAT
Imagine this! To make tortillas, Corona can’t go to Von’s to buy a bag of flour. She has grind wheat to make the flour first! Cada cosa tomaba much tiempo hacerse; (Everything took much longer to do!)

CORONA
There are fresh ones out in the Horno (or’ no) Father. Shall I get you one?

FR. PAT
Absolutamente, Corona!

(CORONA exits.)

FR. PAT
Most of the cooking and baking was done outside in huge pots and large ovens. Not only the Dominguez family, but all the families of the workers had to be fed, so imagine how much goes into a noon meal for two hundred people! Eso es porque había tanto trabajadores allí (That’s how many workers were here too!)

(JULIO enters.)

JULIO
Miss Maria Guadalupe, here is the corn from my farm. It is very good, please accept it.

LUPE
Thank you, Julio. I will tell Papa that we should do more farming on the rancho.

ANA JOSEPHINA
Yes, it might be good for us to not rely only on the herds.

FR. PAT
Ah, Julio. How is the work on the railroad coming.

JULIO
Oh, Fr. Pat, I doubt this will ever happen. The workers living here to build the railroad from Los Angeles seem too lazy. They haven’t dug more than a mile next to my farm.

FR. PAT
But imagine Julio, when people will be able to take a train from the pueblo of Los Angeles to the Port of San Pedro, and stop over at our Rancho for lunch!

LUPE
Oh, Father, I don't look forward to that!
FR. PAT
Many handsome young men will be on that train!

(VICTORIA runs in.)

VICTORIA
Father Pat! Father Pat! Me tienen que ayudar (You have to help me.) I need you to talk to my father, and convince him to let me!

Let you do what, Victoria?

VICTORIA
Let me ride with the other vaqueros at the next roundup.

(ANA and LUPE laugh.)

FR. PAT
Victoria, I’ll talk to you about this later. Ahorita Corona me necesita afuera (Right now Corona needs me outside.)

(FR. PAT exits.)

LUPE
Victoria, you can’t think that father will let you ride. That’s a job for men only.

ANA JOSEPHINA
Pides demasiado, Victoria (You’re asking too much, Victoria.)

VICTORIA
Yo monto igual que cualquiera (I ride as well as) any vaquero on the rancho.

That’s true. I have seen her ride!

LUPE
Shuussh, Julio! Thank you for the corn.

JULIO
Buenos Dias, senoritas!

(JULIO exits.)

LUPE
(to Victoria) Ya te estas haciendo tonta (Now you’re being silly.) It’s not ladylike for a girl montar en el rodeo (to ride in the rodeo.)

VICTORIA
No importa. (I don’t care.) I’m going to ask father anyway.
ANA JOSEPHINA
Está bien, hazlo como quieres (Okay, have it your way.) Come on Lupe, let’s find Dolores. She said she would help us with las legumbres for dinner.

(ANA and LUPE exit. VICTORIA is alone.)

VICTORIA
I hope father will let me ride. I hope he’s in a good mood cuando llegue a casa (when he comes home.)

(VICTORIA exits. Fr. PAT eners.)

FR. PAT
Poor Victoria. Her father, Don Manuel, did not come home in a good mood.

(Enter DON MANUEL and ENGRACIA).

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Did Pio Pico sign it today?

DON MANUEL
Yes, our Governor has turned over all of Palos Verdes to the Sepulveda family. Our rancho has been cut in half, Engracia.

DOÑA ENGRACIA
But Manuel, Alta California is changing now, especially with the Americans arriving. You need to concentrate on our home area y no nos agobienmos (and not spread ourselves too thin.)

DON MANUEL
Sí, tienes razon, querida (Yes, you are right, my dear.) There will be more than enough land for our children.

FR. PAT
His wife, Doña Engracia, tries to comfort him in their Sala Principal where they would welcome any visitors traveling from the Pueblo of Los Angeles to the Port of San Pedro. The Rancho was a great stopover, porque eran muy buenos anfitriones (because they were such good hosts.) In fact, this portrait of Don Manuel was painted by a man who became deadly sick while traveling from the pueblo to the rancho. After Doña Engracia nursed him back to health, he was so grateful for their care that he painted the picture, as well as this one of Engracia and their youngest child, Reyes. They were very generous. Don Manuel even left a dish of coins for anyone without money, and would offer a fresh horse to anyone who needed one.

DON MANUEL
But I also heard more disturbing news today about the Americans. They have invaded California from the north, and no creo que Mexico podra defendernos (I don’t think Mexico will be able to defend us.) I suspect they will be moving down to Los Angeles soon.
DOÑA ENGRACIA
Manuel, will you have to be involved?

DON MANUEL
They have made me Capitan de Defensores of two local units.

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Ten cuidado, querido (Please be careful, my dear.)

DON MANUEL
I will be careful, Engracia.

FR. PAT
Don Manuel and Doña Engracia were the true heroes of the Rancho, and revered for their sincerity, intelligence, and generosity. But Don Manuel had a great weapon, passed on to him by his father, Cristobal Dominguez. Don Manuel was educated! El hablaba y escribía Ingles y Español (He spoke and wrote both Spanish and English,) and made it important to his children that they became literate, so that no one could take advantage of them. He also had a political career that made him a member of city council in Los Angeles, a judge, and he became the Mayor of Los Angeles three times!

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Yo no confio en los Tejanos (I don't trust the Texans;) they act like conquerors. And this war between Mexico and the United States of America frightens me, Manuel.

DON MANUEL
Sí, querida. (Yes, my dear.) Though it will not last long, I fear this war will always be fought between the new American settlers and the Spanish-speaking Californio people. I wonder when we will be able to stop fighting to protect our family and the rancho.

FR. PAT
December 18, 1858 para ser exacto (to be exact,) Don Manuel! That was the day that our 15th President, James Buchanan, signed the final Confirmation of Title that made the Dominguez family the official owners of Rancho San Pedro. But that was only after thousands of dollars, mucha frustracion y ansiedad (much frustration and anxiety,) and two decades of legal battles by Manuel earned him the title to the land. And there were hundreds of land owners who, like Manuel, had been granted land by Spain and Mexico but then lost it to American settlers.

DON MANUEL
Most of them did not speak English, Fr. Pat, which made it easy for the American lawyers to manipulate them in the courts.

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Manuel, deberiamos a invitar el Padre Pat (we should invite Fr. Pat) to have dinner with us tonight.
DON MANUEL
Of course, my dear. If he agrees to bring his 150 year old Spanish brandy!

FR. PAT
Con mucho gusto (Gladly), Don Manuel.

(VICTORIA runs in.)

VICTORIA
Papa, Papa, please, please, please.

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Mas respeto, Maria Victoria. Your father has had a difficult day. What do you want?

VICTORIA
Papa, can I ride in the roundup? Pronto is a good horse, and I will just stay on the outside to help guide the herd.

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Victoria, eres una niña (Victoria, you are just a child and a girl.) Why do you think you should join the vaqueros at the roundup?

VICTORIA
Madre, yo monto muy bien. (Mother, I ride very well.) And I want to help out.

DON MANUEL
No girl or woman has ever rode with vaqueros, and I can’t ask them to keep an eye on the Don’s daughter while trying to round up thousands of cattle. Deberías de practicar tu Fandango para la fiesta (You should practice your Fandango for the fiesta.)

VICTORIA
But father, I hate being just a girl. Yo quiero ayudar en el rodeo (I want to help with the roundup.)

DON MANUEL
Lo siento, mija. Fr. Pat, come sit with me in the dining room. Necesito su opinion sobre los Americanos (I need to ask your opinion about the Americans.)

(DON MANUEL exits with FR. PAT, who turns for one last aside to the audience.)

FR. PAT (aside)
Though Don Manuel was a great businessman, ranchero, and politician, it was Doña Engracia who made the rancho a home for their children. And she possessed all the virtues and graces of a proud and generous Spanish mujer, as you’ll see.

VICTORIA
Why won’t he let me ride, Mama.
DOÑA ENGRACIA
Now Victoria, Papa has a lot on his mind, and the roundup is still a few months away.

VICTORIA
Yo creo que mi papá ya no me quiere (I don’t think Papa likes me any more.) He’s nicer to the servants than me.

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Es una falta de respeto, Victoria. No seas niña (That’s disrespectful, Victoria. Now don’t be childish.) He values them for their work, mija, but your father loves you. And that’s the reason he doesn’t want you to do the roundup. Te puedes lastimar (You can get hurt there.) Some steers can be wild and their long horns are sharp. He is only trying to protect you, y es porque te quiere (and that’s because he loves you.)

VICTORIA
I know he loves me, but Mama, I want to join in. I can protect myself. I won’t do anything too risky. Puedo andar segura (I can be safe.)

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Bueno, si lo dices en serio (Well, if you are serious,) then make a plan rather than acting childish. Think of some reason why father should allow you to ride. Trata de convencerlo (Try to convince him,) mija, rather than demand it from him, just because he’s your father!

VICTORIA
Hmm. Sí, tienes razon, mama (Yes, you may have a point, Mama). How did you get to be so smart?

(VICTORIA kisses ENGRACIA, and exits.)

DOÑA ENGRACIA
It only takes patience. The one virtue that most don’t have.

(FR. PAT hears this, and goes to ENGRACIA.)

FR. PAT
How did you get to be so smart?

DOÑA ENGRACIA
Don’t you be foolish either, Fr. Pat. All I’ve done is listened!

(ENGRACIA exits.)

FR. PAT
History books do not always tell us about the women who helped the men in the history books to become heroes! And thanks to Dona Engracia, Don Manuel was able to make a lot of money from raising cattle in the 1850s. Let’s meet some of the workers who can tell us what working was like on Rancho San Pedro.

(ROMERO the VAQUERO enters.)
VAQUERO
Saludos. Yo soy Romero el vaquero (Greetings! I am Romero the Vaquero,) and I was employed by Don Manuel as a butcher. Fuimos conocidos como los (We were known as the) tasajeros.

FR. PAT
Tell us Romero, what did you have to do as a tasajero.

VAQUERO
On Saturday mornings, the other vaqueros would roundup the largest of the long-horned, half-wild Mexican steers and bring them to the calavera, the corral where they were slaughtered.

FR. PAT
Why did you kill them, Romero?

VAQUERO
Well, it was not to make burgers for Carl Jr.s or MacDonalds! En nuestros días (In our day,) we did not slaughter cattle for their beef, but for their hides, tallow and carne seca.

FR. PAT
I understand that the hides provided leather for clothing.

VAQUERO
Rawhide was used for almost everything, including hinges and shoelaces.

FR. PAT
But what is Tallow?

VAQUERO
Each steer produced about 200 pounds of fat, which was melted in large pots into tallow, a waxy substance that was sold to make soap and candles. And the meat from the carcass no se hacian en hamburguesas (was not made into burgers,) but cut into strips, salted, and dried in the sun into a hard, black form that we now call Jerky, or dried beef. Everyone enjoyed it!

(Angry grunting is heard from the behind the right wing. FR. PAT takes notice and they go up to the wing, where the leg of a steer is visible and pointing at them.)

FR. PAT
¿Quien está haciendo todo ese ruido? (Who is that making all that noise?) Oh Dios mio, it’s a cow. Can I help you?

BESSIE
Ruuuhhh, uuhhh, rruuuuh, ruuhhhh!

FR. PAT
You say that not everyone was happy on the rancho.
VAQUERO
Sí, si usted era una vaca, no sería tan maravilloso. (Yes, if you were a cow, it wouldn’t be great.)

BESSIE
Ruuuhhh, uh, uh, uh, ruuuhhh!

FR. PAT
You say that Don Manuel should plant vegetables instead of raising cattle.

BESSIE
Uuuhhh, ruuuh, uuuhhhh, ruh, ruh!

FR. PAT
Yes, I will tell him that.

BESSIE
Uhhh, ruuh, uh!

FR. PAT
No se me olvida. (No, I won’t forget.)

(FR. PAT blesses the steer, then crosses to the students with the VAQUERO.)

FR. PAT
It couldn’t have been too great for the cattle at Rancho San Pedro. Now Romero, these items taken from the cattle were then all sold. But to whom?

(ZEB JONES, a former slave, enters.)

ZEB
To the world! My name is Zeb Jones, and I serve the “Lelia Bird” which sails out of Boston.

FR. PAT
Are you a sailor?

ZEB
Oh no. I was a slave in Virginia, but I escaped to Philadelphia, then Boston, where I could take work as a cook on board. They only let me work there, if I stay below deck.

FR. PAT
I’m sorry, Zeb. All men deserve to see the rise and the fall of the sun. So what brings you to San Pedro harbor?

ZEB
My captain, William Shaler, trades for the hides, tallow and drief beef that the Californios provided.
And what did you provide in return?

FR. PAT

ZEB

The people here needed sugar, cloth, household goods, silks, and machinery. That’s what we would bring from Boston. And there were other ships that came from England, France, Spain, and even Russia.

VAQUERO

Yes, it was very exciting at the rancho to hear that there was a new ship in the harbor. El patrón paraba todo el trabajo (The patron would stop all work) and have us load hides, tallow and beef, onto our carretas, which were ox-carts with two wheels.

(CORONA enters.)

CORONA

Más trabajo para los sirvientes (More work for the servants!)

FR. PAT

Corona, were you overworked at the rancho?

CORONA

Todos los indios trabajabamos demás (All the indios were overworked, father.) We didn’t have any freedom.

FR. PAT

But isn’t it true that the Dominguez family provided the Indian laborers with a place to live in, food to eat, and some land to raise your own vegetables and chickens?

CORONA

Sí, eran muy buenos patrones (Yes, they were good patrons,) but the indios never had a chance, father.

But you did have your work.

FR. PAT

CORONA

O sí, si no era lavandera, cocinera, cuidando los animales, tejiendo o limpiando casa, (Oh yes, if it wasn’t laundry work, or roasting chicken, weeding gardens, herding, spinning, sewing, or cleaning chamber pots,) they would have you dancing in the mud pit to make more adobe bricks out of clay, straw, grass, and horse hair.

FR. PAT

Well, at least you didn’t have it as bad as the cattle did.

(Grumbles from BESSIE. They exit.)
FR. PAT
Thank you trabajadores, for letting us know about working on the rancho. Many Indian women of California, like Corona, were equals to their men, and many women served as shamans, the spiritual leaders of their tribe.

(DOLORES and VICTORIA enter.)

But let’s find out how our Dominguez dynamo is doing. I see she’s trying to get help from her sister, Dolores.

DOLORES
Vicky, you have no patience when it comes to making yourself look beautiful, como yo (like me.)

VICTORIA
Oh pooh, you worry too much about your beauty. Te ves bien, Dolores (You look fine, Dolores.) Why do you have to keep fussing about your looks.

DOLORES
Cuando tu crezcas (When you grow up,) you’ll see how important good looks can be.

VICTORIA
Oh, big deal! Dolores, I need an idea to work on father. ¿Me puedes ayudar? (Can you help me?)

DOLORES
I can help, if you put a word in for me to go to the Mercados’ fiesta next week.

VICTORIA
Listen, Dolores. I want to ride in the roundup with the vaqueros. And he won’t let me.

DOLORES
Por Dios, Victoria, ¿porque lo quieres hacer? (Oh my god, Victoria. Why ever would you want to?) You could lose all your hair barettes!

VICTORIA
I need to convince him somehow.

DOLORES
Pareces niño (You really are such a boy!) Why don’t you just ask Jose or Manuel?

VICTORIA
Sí, es buena idea (Yes, that is a good idea.) I will ask them. Thanks, Dolores.

(DOLORES and VICTORIA exit in opposite directions, while MANUEL and JOSE enter.)

FR. PAT
There’s not much mentioned in history about the Dominguez hermanos, and that’s because of the tragedies that claimed them both before they were 23 years old. Manuel
would die from tuberculosis in 1858, and Jose would die from a riding accident in 1863. Though they were so young to die, una terible perdida (a terrible loss,) they contributed a great deal to their sisters' life at the rancho, como veran (as you'll see.)

MANUEL
Mercedes said that they caught crawfish down at the slew yesterday.

JOSE
'Sta bien. Let's go this afternoon.

MANUEL
Yes, if we can sneak away from father.

(VICTORIA runs in.)

VICTORIA
Manuel, Jose, father won’t let me ride in the roundup.

MANUEL
Porque te había de dejar, Victoria? Es peligroso. (Why should he Victoria. It can be dangerous.) He's only worried that you might get trampled or gored to death.

VICTORIA
Are you going to treat me like a girl too?

JOSE
Pues, eres niña, tonta (Well you are a girl, silly!) Father is a good protector. Have you ever noticed the iron bars on our rancho windows? Since he is so often away on business, he put the bars in to protect us.

VICTORIA
Puedo andar segura (But I can be safe,) and I’m good enough to help with the roundup. Pronto is fast, but also very safe. He’s smart and doesn’t take chances.

MANUEL
We know you’re good enough, Victoria. But you’ll have to convince Papa somehow.

VICTORIA
Yes, that’s what Mama said too.

JOSE
Pues, usa tu cabeza, pequeña (Well, then use your head, little one.) Show father you can think too!

MANUEL
Yes, think of something you can do that will show him that you are safe and responsible.

JOSE
Our Papa is very sensible, Vicky. Convencelo (Convince him!)
VICTORIA
Ok, I will convince him. I’ll find some way to prove myself to father. And to you! You’ll see!

(VICTORIA storms out. The brothers laugh and exit.)

FR. PAT
Victoria would get a chance to prove herself to Don Manuel, when the Mexican War with the United States came to California and a battle was fought at Rancho San Pedro. On October 8, 1846, American forces led by Captain William Mervine, captured the rancho and approached the Dominguez family.

(MERVINE enters and DON MANUEL greets him. Off to the side, MANUEL enters, followed by VICTORIA, protected by CORONA.)

CAPTAIN MERVINE
I am Captain Mervine of the United States Marines. Signor Dominguez, you are surrounded by my forces, and your rancho is now under my control. I hope you can understand my English.

DON MANUEL
Captain, you speak English very well. Of course I understand you.

CAPTAIN MERVINE
Good! You and your family must leave.

DON MANUEL
Please understand that my family staying here can help supply your forces with beef, hides, and other necessities. Without us here, you would be on your own.

CAPTAIN MERVINE
We do not negotiate with the enemy, sir, though you have a good point. I still require you to leave.

DON MANUEL
Captain Mervine, I know that America will conquer California. But I don't know what kind of country America will be as a conqueror. Will you be like Spain, which enslaved the indios, or Mexico, which cared little for the people of the land? Does this Democracy that America is so proud of mean that you will care for its people? Your actions, Captain, will tell us a great deal about the future of this new country.

CAPTAIN MERVINE
America will prove to be a partner to the Spanish peoples of California, and to prove that, I will let your family stay if they can provide my men with food and supplies.

DON MANUEL
Agreed. I am thankful for your kindness, Captain.
CAPTAIN MERVINE
Excuse me for a moment, Signor Dominguez. My men need me.

DON MANUEL
Gladly.

(MERVINE exits. DON MANUEL whispers.)

DON MANUEL
Manuel, someone must ride to the pueblo de los angeles and tell them that the Americans are here at the rancho. Necesitamos agarar ayuda (We need to get help.)

MANUEL
Pero, padre, estamos rodeados (But father, we are surrounded.) The Americans would not let any of us ride through their lines.

CORONA
Our men would be shot dead, Don Manuel. Es muy riesgoso (It's too risky.)

DON MANUEL
Yes, perhaps too risky.

VICTORIA
Father?

(VICTORIA smiles at DON MANUEL, and whispers.)

I can do it!

(DON MANUEL looks at her strangely. CAPTAIN returns.)

CAPTAIN
Don Manuel, my horses need watering.

DON MANUEL
Yes, my son, Manuel, will take you and your men to our best stream. But Captain, I must ask you one more favor.

CAPTAIN
You may ask.

DON MANUEL
My sister, Maria Elena, lives in the pueblo of Los Angeles, but has become very sick. Today, my daughter was to ride there with our servant to bring some medicine and herbs to her. But I fear they would be in danger to make a journey through your lines.

CAPTAIN
That should not be a problem. I will have an officer bring them through the lines so that they can continue to Los Angeles safely.
VICTORIA
Thank you, Captain. My tia will appreciate your kindness.

MANUEL
This way Captain.

(CAPTAIN exits with MANUEL.)

DON MANUEL
Corona, gather some herbs and your medicines, and make the Americans believe you are going to nurse my sister.

CORONA
You're always giving me jobs.

DON MANUEL
Porque eres la mejor (Because you are the best!) Now Victoria, promise me that you'll be careful.

VICTORIA
I promise, Papa.

(They hug, and exit.)

FR. PAT
So, Victoria got her chance to prove herself to her father, and she and Corona delivered the message to the Mexican troops under Jose Antonio Cabrillo in Los Angeles. She also visited her Tia Elena, quien estuvo muy sorprendida de verla (who was very surprised to see her.) The next morning, Cabrillo and one hundred Mexican cavalry faced over three hundred American marines on the east slope of Dominguez Hill. And what happened there was more a matter of magic than muscle.

(VICTORIA runs in, excited.)

VICTORIA
Cabrillo decided to make the 300 Americans think they were outnumbered by Mexican troops. So they hitched a small cannon, called "Old Women's Gun," to a wagon, fired it from one side of the hill, then "rode through the mustard" (as it’s called because the stalks of our mustard fields are very high) and fired it from the other side of the hill. After doing this over and over, the U.S. troops thought that there must have been 1,000 Mexicans here at Rancho San Pedro so they retreated back to the San Pedro harbor.

FR. PAT
It was a great victory for the Californios. But eventually, California fell to the Americans, and when Mexico lost the war in 1848, they signed the Treaty of Guadalupe which made California the property of the United States. However, la vida no cambio mucho en el rancho (life didn't change much at the rancho.) Don Manuel served in the new American government, just as he had in the Mexican government. Dolores still fussied with her hair; Lupe was tough with the servants. And Victoria got her chance to
ride in the roundup, because her father was so proud of her courage.

DON MANUEL
Hija, I am very proud of you. You have the makings of a true hero, because you know how to follow your dreams.

VICTORIA
I’m sorry if I seemed pushy, father.

DON MANUEL
Está bien (That’s fine.) And it’s necessary sometimes to stay focused on your goal. It’s called commitment. Y yo no creo que (And I don’t think that) you could ever hurt someone, Victoria, so I’m not afraid of your pushyness. In fact, most fathers would like to know that their daughters can fight.

VICTORIA
To beat up brothers who play tricks on us?

DON MANUEL
No, to fight to make things right in your family and in your community. And Victoria, something I want all your girls to know, is that tu comunidad es tu familia tambien (your community is your family too.)

VICTORIA
My community is my family too? You mean all my uncles and aunts, and even the indios who live here on the rancho?

DON MANUEL
Yes, and our neighbors, and even strangers who are now coming to join our growing community. I want you to know how to serve your government and your neighborhood as well as you serve your family. That is the only way that you can truly protect yourself.

VICTORIA
Me gusta eso papá (I like that Papa.) I want to fight for peace by serving my community.

DON MANUEL
And I know that you and your sisters will.

FR. PAT
Well, the entire Dominguez Family did go on to serve their community well. In 1849, California wanted to become a state but they needed to draw up a list of laws, a constitution, in order to join the United States. And who do you think they asked to go to the State capital, to create the constitution?

VICTORIA
Mi papá (My father!) And do you know that they created two constitutions? One in English and one in Spanish. Mi papá se aseguro de eso (My father made sure of that.)
FR. PAT
And he also made sure that all the Dominguez girls were educated and able to conduct their own business wisely. They even married wisely! Victoria marries George Cady Carson in 1857, which is where our town’s name comes from.

VICTORIA
And all of my sisters and I, with our husbands, go on to contribute a lot to our South Bay communities.

FR.PAT
Well, today you’ve learned an important lesson! Una importante lección (An important lesson!) That if you serve your community, you are protecting your family. Es un deseo muy noble y admirable ayudar a los demás. (It is a very noble and admirable desire to want to help others.) That is why I became a Claretian father and also why I want you to take this story of Rancho Dominguez with you. The heritage of the Rancho still goes on, and you can make it grow by becoming a community hero, un heroe de la comunidad (a community hero) like the ones you met today.

CURTAIN.