

Don Guillermo Castro

Don Guillermo Castro was a **Californio ranchero, military officer, and surveyor** who once owned vast land holdings in Alameda County, including what is now **Castro Valley, Hayward, and San Lorenzo**.

His Land Ownership

- In **1838**, while serving as a **government land surveyor**, Castro was granted **Rancho San Lorenzo**, a **28,000-acre** land grant by the Mexican government. This grant covered much of the East Bay, including **Cull, Crow, and Palomares canyons**.
- He built an **Adobe home** where Hayward's Old City Hall now stands. The foundations of this home were unearthed during excavations for the building of city hall.
- As a rancher, he owned **4,000 sheep and 500 horses**, which grazed on the valley's rich grasses.

His Downfall

Despite his vast land holdings, Castro had a **weakness for gambling**. Over time, he **sold off portions of his land** to pay debts and eventually **mortgaged his property**. In **1864**, his remaining land was **auctioned off** in a sheriff's sale, with **Faxon Dean Atherton**, a wealthy New Englander, purchasing the remaining acres for **\$400,000**.

Later Years

After losing his land, Castro moved to **Chile**, where he spent the remainder of his life. His name lives on in **Castro Valley**, a lasting reminder of his once vast land holdings.



**GUILLERMO CASTRO (RIGHT) AND HIS SON LUIS (LEFT) IN 1852
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