

## Louis L'Amour's – The Californios



### Format for a Television Series or Mini Series

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## Concept

California. Tall mountains and sun swept beaches. A central valley ripe for farming. Dense forests of giant trees. There are growing cities and trade with the Far East, a culture of leisure and refinement, a haven for alternative spirituality. It's a place where fortunes can be won or lost. Style and prestige are everything, who you know is who you are and corruption lurks in the corridors of power.

There is tension on the border. Illegal aliens are challenging the economy, betraying the old values and altering the sense of community. Some are hard working and honorable, trying to make a future for themselves that would have been impossible in their native land. Others are drunken and bigoted troublemakers, criminals, ganging together and on the verge of rebellion.

These foreigners are from the United States ... and the Mexicans of Alta California want them out.

The year is 1845 and a storm is coming, a war that will tear California apart. The United States of America against the Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Religion against religion, race against race, generation against generation, lover against lover, friend against friend ... it's an entirely different kind of Civil War.

Louis L'Amour's The Californios follows the fortunes of the Mulkerins, an Irish-Mexican family who must survive the confusion created by the death of their mysterious patriarch, Colonel James Mulkerin, and the oncoming chaos that existed in California before, during and after the Mexican War of 1846-1848.

Presented as a Series or Mini Series, The Californios extends the time frame of Louis L'Amour's novel. Our adaptation would chronicle the end of a timeless and elegant way of life and the creation of a new state in a growing country. Steering a politically even handed course, we would explore a story where cultures dramatically collide but where people of diverse backgrounds and visions for the future must learn to live and work together.

Searching for hope, love, opportunity, revenge, and redemption, the characters of The Californios lead us on a journey both of idealistic hope and Shakespearian tragedy ... a journey through the juxtapositions that define the essential nature of the Golden State, the tragic search for an Eden on the Pacific and the need for change that is both it's constant resurrection ... and downfall.



### Series or Mini-series Structure

Season or Section One – On a quiet morning in 1945 Colonel James Mulkerin is thrown from the horse he is training and suffers a broken neck. He dies without ever regaining consciousness. In the weeks following his death the family gathers at the hacienda of Rancho del Malibu, the family's land grant north of Los Angeles. There are problems to be solved and relationships to be renewed and redefined now that the patriarch has passed away. Money is of grave concern as are the jealousies of their neighbors and the changing politics in the state, politics in which Mulkerin was deeply involved. His wife Elena must discover strength and independence within herself now that James is no longer there to support her. Their eldest son, Sean, returning from the sea, must rediscover his family and, ultimately, uncover the mysteries of his father's past. And with his father's death, Sean's younger brother, Michael, must deal with pressures and the traits in himself that caused him to flee to the Jesuit priesthood.

Neighbor Zeke Wooston seeks revenge and advantage for perceived slights and because he senses weakness. Others with an axe to grind circle the camp. The Colonel Mulkerin's one-time protégé, Win Standish, becomes a powerful supporter of the family and arranges for Sean to be brought into the world of state politics. Sean and Win try to make a stand for peace as tensions grow between the Mexican's and Anglo Saxons of California. Sean falls in love with Win's sister, Colleen Standish, and is drawn closer to the Yankees who would try to negotiate or force an annexation by the United States. Colleen and Sean become engaged. Learning more about his father's spiritual journey and the dark reasons behind it, Sean joins Los Hermanos Racionales de la Luz, a division of the Masonic Lodge, and eventually meets Indian shaman, Juan Ignacio, who will take him into mysteries beyond even what the Masons have to offer.

Then the war comes to California, pro-American militias rise up, the Marines land and every relationship changes over-night.

Season or Section Two – Sean and many others refuse to accept the surrender of the state to a token force of Americans. Behind closed doors and in the dark of night they organize a small but highly competent fighting force. Wooston seizes the opportunity presented by the invasion to grab as much power as possible and dominate those he imagines looked down on him. Win Standish suddenly finds himself the senior statesman for the Americans and tries to forge a working accommodation between the Mexicans, the US military and reactionaries like Zeke Wooston. But military supplies are being stolen or hoarded, each side spies and plots against the other and financial difficulties worsen. Elena and Michael try to keep the peace between Win and Sean but the two are on opposite sides of a wall that is being built higher and higher. As more American troops begin to arrive, Sean and the Californio Lancers take to the field either continuing the war or beginning a rebellion, depending on one's point of view.

Battles are won by the Californios but the tide of history is against them. There is yet another surrender and, this time, a treaty. However, peace and prosperity do not immediately reign. Despite the efforts of Win Standish, Zeke Wooston uses his influence with the American invaders to move against the Mulkerins and other enemies, taking their land and assets. Because of Wooston's actions, Sean's violent response, and the confused circumstances just as hostilities cease, Sean Mulkerin is branded an outlaw. Season Two or Section Two ends with Sean a desperate man, estranged from his wife, bent on vengeance, on the run for his life, and still fighting a war he never wanted. He is living his own version of his father's sins ... a story he is still in the process of discovering.

Season or Section Three – The US military administrates the government of California but they barely know what they are doing. Local leaders are appointed in an attempt to recreate the old "Alcalde" system where small areas each had a Mayor ... or Godfather. Some are good men but others are not. The area between Los Angeles and Ventura, James Mulkerin's territory when he was alive, is now awarded to Zeke Wooston. Elena is forced to live with friends. Win is trying to get the new territory organized and keep Sean from getting into even more trouble. Colleen is estranged from Sean because he is a wanted man and because of ongoing political passions have torn their family apart. Michael is the go between, the only one who can remain in touch with all parties. Southern California is a pit of lawlessness. Some of it is simple robberies and drunken violence but fury fired by events during the war lurks in every shadow and there is no telling if a murder was born of greed or revenge.

Sean Mulkerin has become like Joaquin Murrietta, Tiburcio Vasquez, and Three Fingered Jack. A mysterious figure who is part outlaw, part freedom fighter, part Mexican Robin Hood. Win is forced to hunt him down in the deserts and forests

of the vast California interior while Zeke attempts to create a situation that will end in both of their deaths.

Simply trying to survive, stories grow about Sean's actions to the point where he can no longer even recognize himself in the folklore. A ghost, a mystic, a man whom the old gods of the desert preserve when others perish, he is a symbol of rebellion and hidden Mexican pride. Mulkerin is hunted not only for who he is and what he's done ... but also what he means to a restive population. It is a role he would do nearly anything to give up, one that brings nothing but misery to his wife, family, and friends. But the alternative is death.

Ultimately, Sean Mulkerin, Colleen Standish Mulkerin, Win Standish, Elena Mulkerin and Zeke Wooston are driven together in a conflagration where few are left standing and the conflicted legacy of James Mulkerin plays out one final time.

Further Seasons – Reversing the roles that Win Standish and Sean Mulkerin play within the story, making Win the new protagonist and Sean as his loyal friend yet political opponent would allow us to move the action to northern California to cover the era of The Gold Rush, the Barbary Coast and Statehood in the period after the military occupation ends in 1850. Sean would now be Win's outlaw nemesis as Win steers the state toward it's future development and prosperity.



## Characters

Colonel James Mulkerin – 59

Mulkerin was born in Ireland. As a youth he joined his uncle who was one of the last of the “Wild Geese” an expatriate Irish officer serving the Spanish army in Mexico. An immigrant to Mexico just as many were to the United States, Mulkerin struggled to make a name for himself in his adopted country. He became both a military hero and well known public figure in the independence movement, also helping to bring an end to the reign of Mexican Emperor Agustin I.

In the turbulent 1820s Colonel Mulkerin played in all the vicious games of politics and romance that could be found in Mexico City. He betrayed his uncle to achieve his dream of building a Mexican democracy, he cheated on his new wife, he engaged in duels that were actually carefully planned assassinations and committed one out-and-out murder ... a final act that nearly broke him.

Regardless of his commitment to his causes or the passion of his romances, James Mulkerin's sins brought him to the edge of a nervous breakdown. He was saved by the teachings discovered within the rites of Los Hermanos Racionales de la Luz (The Rational Brotherhood of Light), a Masonic organization that had brought him political power but also contained mystical lessons regarding personal honor and self improvement.

With this new-found maturity Mulkerin recreated his life and emerged a stronger man, more moral and compassionate. He dedicated his life to rebuilding himself, recommitting to his wife and family, finding peace with his compromised and bloody past. Distrusted by his old accomplices, he chose to move as far away from his old life as he could get. So he accepted a pension from the power brokers who were equally interested in having him leave ... a Land Grant in Southern California.

Moving north beyond the pueblo of Los Angeles, Mulkerin settled in, serving on the local council and as Alcalde, a position combining the roles of judge, mayor and, occasionally, sheriff. He is liked by the local people but never truly trusted by the ever changing politicians in Monterrey both because of his connections in Mexico City and because none have any control over him. Given his past, he has made enemies nearly as often as friends.

His death left many projects undone, the family fortunes are in a state of debt and disarray. Even his recent past was barely understood and most of his deals were based on a handshake or some agreement made at a casual meeting. How complex was the web of financial obligations he had woven around himself? How believable were the stories of the gold that he sometimes used to pay his debts? And what were his connections to Juan, the strange and mystical old man who the local Indians believe is a powerful shaman? To his family, his friends and his enemies, however, the Colonel lives on, nearly as dynamic in death as he was in life.

Senora Elena Sandoval de Mulkerin – 51

Born in Mexico, she is the only daughter of an aristocratic family who's history went back to the time of the Conquest. Her family bloodline is enhanced, or tainted, depending on the point of view, by the legend that there was an Aztec princess amongst their ancestors. Regardless of it's truth, the Sandoval's are classically Mexican in all ways. Elena married James Mulkerin when he was just a lieutenant. Eventually, he did the inexcusable in the eyes of her family, he took

her away to a place where the government sent convicts ... Alta California. Also inexcusable to them was the fact that Mulkerin sided against the Spanish monarchists, wasn't of aristocratic birth, and happened to come from Ireland.

In many ways Elena reshaped herself from pampered city girl to a woman living (rather comfortably) on the frontier. She was terribly unhappy during Mulkerin's wilder days, a time when she was never sure if she feared or wished that he might die in a duel or plot ... when the moment came that he sought redemption, she never asked why, she simply accepted him more fully into her life and thanked god for the change.

The challenges after Mulkerin's death are even greater, however. Elena will have to learn how to manage her husband's estate both in times of peace and in the bloody tragedy of war. It is a transition that will force her to evolve into a resourceful woman in full control of her destiny but it will challenge her in more ways than she can ever imagine.

Elena is never without the memory, the thought, the fantasy, of her late husband. Though he was distant and authoritarian while they were married, he is still her guide in life. In dreams or memory or perhaps even as a ghost, he visits her with advice, with reminders, with the hard truths he never spoke while alive.

Sean Mulkerin y Sandoval – 32

Sean is old enough to remember his family's life before moving to California. In the days when his father was involved with the violent politics leading to the establishment of the Republic of Mexico and dealing with an equally chaotic personal life. Sean took on many responsibilities when James was away and was mature enough to have noticed the eventual change in his father's behavior and to have been grateful for it. But, no matter how welcome, that change did not bring the elder Mulkerin home on a more permanent basis. From ambitious philanderer to reformed seeker on a personal quest, Sean's father was a man who took his journeys alone.

As an ex-military man Mulkerin held his sons to exacting standards. Growing up, Sean was aware that his father expected a level of honor and honesty from his sons that the Colonel had not always lived up to in his own life. That hypocrisy along with love and the layers of his father's personal history, intelligence and pain, make for a complicated relationship once James Mulkerin has passed away. To his son, the Colonel continues to be a bit of a phantom, a man who always somehow eluded his grasp.

Besides Sean and his younger brother, Miguel, there was another young man who joined the Mulkerin household, Winston Standish. Win was fifteen, eight years older than Sean, when he came to the west coast with the crew of a whaling ship. James Mulkerin took Win under his wing and nearly made him a member of the family. The Colonel helped Win get started in business in

California, creating a partnership with the Standish family in Charleston. In time Win helped Sean in a similar manner, making the down payment on the schooner "Lady Luck" which Sean operates carrying mail and light cargoes up and down the West coast. There is also another connection between Win and Sean that slowly begins to command more and more of Sean's attention ... Win's beautiful and much younger sister, Colleen.

Luckily for the Mulkerin's, Win Standish is familiar with some aspects of the Colonel's business dealings. With his help, Sean must begin clearing up his father's business dealings, decide who is owed what and how to deal with out and out enemies and connivers like Zeke Wooston. With the political situation between factions in California and between the US and Mexico getting trickier by the minute, Standish also wants Sean to take his father's place within The Rational Brotherhood of Light ... the Masonic Lodge chapter in which Sean's father and many of the movers and shakers in Alta California have been members.

Win is a staunch proponent of American annexation even though he is deeply committed to his Mexican friends and the California way of life. Sean's father opposed those who would try to have California join the United States and, though he sees some of the advantages, Sean feels obligated to do the same. The two of them, Win and Sean, try to stand as a reasonable bulwark against the more radical voices on both sides, from the Mexicans who would try to deport the immigrants from the USA, to the more and more militant Yankees who congregate in places like Zeke Wooston's bar.

Amongst his father's papers Sean discovers what may be James Mulkerin's most valuable legacy ... the Colonel's private journals. But besides being the mother lode for blackmail and the uncovering of conspiracies, the journals chronicle something else ... the mysterious journey that James Mulkerin took to redemption in later life. It is this that truly fascinates Sean. Here is his father's life laid bare, a man he never knew struggling to be reborn, searching for answers to life's greatest questions.

It is within those pages that Sean also discovers Juan Ignacio, the ancient Indian who was his father's guide when the Colonel wanted to go beyond the more mystical aspects of what the Brotherhood of Light has to offer. With Juan, Sean retraces his father's footsteps to uncover the elder Mulkerin's heart of darkness. Yet even as he does so, the maelstrom of history, war and change that is about to overwhelm the Mulkerin family forces Sean down his own dark passage, leading him through an odyssey of self destruction and rebirth such as his father never imagined.

Risking everything, Sean must discover where his soul really lies, from ship's captain, to budding politician, young father, soldier in a last minute fight to save the way of life that he loves ... and from there to being a refugee and outlaw in

his own land. Only after following in the footsteps of his father's own odyssey of destruction and redemption can Sean discover what the outcome will be for himself and for all he loves.

#### Win Standish – 42

Born in Charleston. One time protégé, friend and business associate of Colonel Mulkerin. Win is a businessman with interests in the United States and Alta California. Win has a vision for California that is shared by few others. He sees the natural bounty that has supported the Spanish and then Mexican populations as a factory to be exploited to build an economic future far greater than anyone in the state has ever imagined. He sees twentieth century California as the future as clearly as we can see it as the past. He is fiercely driven and a true visionary.

Win is forthright and honest to a fault but he can also ruthlessly follow his own agenda. While hewing to his own, very strict, code of ethics he can plot deviously and play a very deep and long game when he has to. Win never lies, always keeps his word, and constantly struggles to better himself both financially and morally. This, combined with his business and political ambitions can create great stress in his life and it is a testament to the depth of his character that it is a struggle he is always willing to undertake, even if the outcome is not always what he would have hoped.

Standish is a powerful advocate of California joining the United States even though James Mulkerin opposed him. Both of them recognized California's potential ... but for different countries. Though there are those advocating the violent ouster of the Mexican government, Standish feels that must be absolutely the last option ... yet an option it remains. Many of the Colonel's compatriots, of course, are staunchly loyal to Mexico and resentful of the immigrants, like Standish, who are changing the culture of old California in many ways. The attitudes of these newcomers, whether racist like Zeke Wooston, or simply forceful, like Standish, along with religion and economics, create the clash of cultures in the state. Sean, until the outbreak of war, is torn between seeing a possible future for California, regardless of what country it is part of, helping his friend, or supporting his father's wishes ... these issues cause no end of trouble between them.

Win has a young son, though his wife is missing from the scene and is a subject he never discusses. She is a manic depressive and locked up in a sanitarium on the East Coast while Win is trying to move ahead in his life without her.

#### Colleen Standish – 26

Also born in Charleston. Win's only surviving sister. Widowed a few years before, Colleen has recently arrived at Win's headquarters in Los Angeles to help care for his boy. She shares many of Win's character traits, though she is less driven and more excited about searching out new experiences. She is well educated and looking for romance and adventure in a distant land. With Sean

Mulkerin in the picture, and a war with her native land on the way, she may well get about as much adventure as she can handle.

#### Miguel Mulkerin y Sandoval – 28

Miguel grew up the more protected yet more rebellious of the two brothers. A middle child, (there was a younger sibling who died) he resentfully competed for the attention he thought he deserved. Becoming an expert dancer and musician he courted many of the young women of Los Angeles. Deadly with pistol, sword or fists, he was known for his temper and wild ways. Yet, in his early twenties, Miguel suddenly renounced his old life and entered a Jesuit seminary, emerging a novice priest. Since then he has lived a very different life and it was only very much later that anyone ever knew just what it was that caused the change.

Once upon a time he impregnated a young girl who died in childbirth and shame. Horrified by his role in her fate, and without telling anyone, he sought the only outlet he thought his parents would approve of ... he entered the priesthood. Now, though he tries to atone for his sins, he still finds he is a man who's temper and physique make him known and feared. As he watches his family threatened by unsavory characters and by the horrors of war being a man of God is a trial for him in every way.

Miguel always thought of Catholicism as the only spiritual route acceptable to his parents yet as he and his brother discover more and more about their father they find that James Mulkerin explored spiritual areas beyond anything the church ever would have condoned ... and that there might have been other pathways open to young Miguel if only he had been open to them.

#### Zeke Wooston – 48

Born in New York City, Zeke has remade himself many times over the years. Always a criminal, it is only in California that he has attempted to maintain the pretence of legitimacy ... and has discovered that it pays off. Keeping his nefarious activities, robbery and smuggling, hidden from the population at large he has developed relationships with clout in the community, like Captain Nick Bell, the corrupt commander of the local gendarmerie. Wooston also runs a relatively successful saloon which provides him with a social cover for the money he makes importing items that are heavily taxed by the Mexican officials.

Wooston is at least as well off as many of the prominent land owners in the area (most of whom are paralyzed by the lack of cash in the economy), however, he has never received the respect he believes he is due. While Colonel Mulkerin was alive, Wooston tried to be neighborly and attempted to lobby for the position of Alcalde, a post Mulkerin held at one time. Wooston also wanted to be allowed into the Brotherhood of Light but was rebuffed in both attempts. With James Mulkerin dead, he senses both a power vacuum and an opportunity. Whether it is secrets that could lead to political blackmail or the source of the occasional

amounts of gold that James Mulkerin used to pay his debts, Zeke is set on controlling the source of the Colonel's power.

At first he buys up a few of Mulkerin's debts but the family responds by bringing forth some of the gold that the Colonel was known for producing from time to time. When Elena offers the court a contract of payments for the rest of the cash Wooston must wait to try another ploy. Getting the new Alcalde under his thumb, Wooston again tries to push his claim on their debts only to have war with the United States break out ... suddenly the legal claims of a Yankee have become a political joke. But ultimately, Wooston uses America's final victory and his influence with the new military government as an excuse to seize the ranch ... an act that will force Sean, a defeated soldier trying to recover his life in a conquered land, to become a outlaw and terrorist wanted by officials everywhere.

Juan Ignacio –

No one has any idea how old Juan is. A Native American of a forgotten tribe, a friend that James Mulkerin met under mysterious circumstances. Juan has been James Mulkerin's guide to other worldly experiences and destinations. It is not even certain that he is of this earth. Juan's people were a highly developed civilization living somewhere not too far from southern California. They had architecture, art, some simple technology, writing, a complex religion, and all the dynamic qualities both good and bad that are to be found in the Mexican and American cultures. Juan is a reminder that this land is not the territory of Mexico or the United States but of it's own people, that all Europeans and many of those who call themselves Native Americans are immigrants and late comers.

Through practices and knowledge he has taught Colonel Mulkerin and will attempt to teach Sean, Juan can experience other states of reality, worlds outside of time as we know it. A man who has seen his great city vanish, Atlantis-like in a single cataclysmic night, Juan will also teach both father and son the most important lesson he has learned about this place they live, this tumultuous place of earthquake and ocean storms, brush fires and revolution in the minds of men ... that California is a place of change, a place that renews itself and forces evolution in all who live there ... a timeless place where those who wish to inherit the future can only be those who are willing to give up the past.



### Historical Overview

Although the narrative of The Californios is primarily relationship driven, those relationships are shaped and stressed by the historical environment that surrounds them. Just as it is today, California of the 1840s was a state that was moving into the future far more rapidly than the societies that surrounded it. Spiritually separate from Mexico because of distance, the independence of its population, and the influence of other cultures, Californians were already a breed apart.

The state was notorious for overthrowing its appointed governors. By the 1840s its citizens recognized that the future might well lie with Washington D.C., or even London, rather than Mexico City. However, in 1845 the issue of the annexation of Texas and the concept of Manifest Destiny complicated all possible discussion.

Texas's independence had never been recognized by the government of Mexico. As statehood was considered by the Texans and United States tensions in Mexico rose and eventually war was declared. But it was a declaration in name only. Fighting did not break out and diplomacy continued. Over the next year the relationship worsened until finally it was announced that Texas would become America's 28<sup>th</sup> state. Even then, war still might have been avoided ... it was only after the Mexican President was replaced and American troops moved into positions on the Rio Grande, well beyond the line that would have satisfied the government of Mexico, that fighting finally broke out. Slow to break out as it may have been, the Mexican War ended up being a land grab of staggering proportions. Seen as cynical and manipulative by its detractors in the east and aggressive and imperialistic by the citizens of Mexico, it was not, however, obvious that the United States would succeed. Neither was it immediately apparent that Alta California would be the crown jewel of the newly acquired territory.

Life in California had been transformed by the Anglo Saxons who had arrived over the previous twenty years. They had challenged the relaxed and genteel attitudes that the Mexicans held toward certain types of organization, money and materialism, with hard nosed planning and occasionally vicious business acumen ... yet many Anglos had also been transformed by the California way of life and by Mexican culture. The Americans, for the most part, had fallen in love with the very thing they were forcing to change.

When the news of war finally arrived made its way north, the Mexican population was swept by a wave of nationalism, no matter what deal they might once have considered with the United States, bullying by a foreign power was intolerable. Expulsion and curtailing certain rights for Americans were discussed though not implemented quickly enough to stop the Anglos from acting. Yankee fifth columnists and an expedition lead by Charles Fremont were already on the move as was the US Navy and Marine Corps. With only a few hundred troops, key cities were seized, the stars and stripes were raised, and California became an occupied territory.

However, near the quiet pueblo of Los Angeles, a rebellion was brewing. Men were meeting at night, stockpiling arms and supplies, gathering horses and training them to the demands of battle. Americans in California, especially those not under military authority, moved to exploit their positions and the two sides, occupied and occupier, Latin and Anglo Saxon, Protestant and Catholic, older and newer arrivals, split into ever hardening camps. Meanwhile, down in Mexico Proper the war raged on.

Secretly, the rebellion gathered momentum. Men confused about exactly where they stood found their loyalties clarified. News of approaching American armies jolted the fledgling force of Californios into action and the California Lancers took to the field. For a brief period they were shockingly successful against the encroaching US soldiers. In two major battles they won the day but time and the odds were against them.

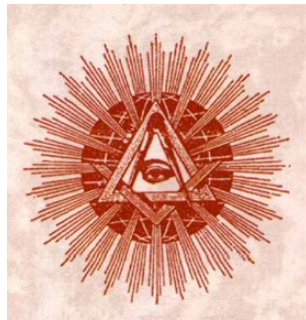
If the Americans succeed in capturing Mexico City then the forces in California would lose valuable bargaining power in formulating a separate peace treaty. Secret negotiations were held and arguments raged back and forth on both sides. Making the deal for the United States were men trusted by many Mexicans ... and the wisest men in the state were consulted by the Californio negotiators. But not everyone was willing to fight and watch their families starve just to further negotiations. The pressure was on and a deal was finally struck that was so favorable to the Mexicans that Charles Fremont, its chief architect, was court marshaled by the United States Army over its outcome.

That, however, did not mean that everyone was satisfied or that the treaty was universally seen as fair.

The shift in power created chaos, men both honorable as well as unprincipled, were recruited to administer the new territory. Corruption and abuse of power spread throughout the state. Resentment and outlawry become commonplace. Crime statistics in the pueblo of Los Angeles hit a record for murders per capita, a record that would stand until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As we have seen in our own recent history in Iraq, the end of the war was just the beginning of civil unrest in the captured territory and the rule of law needed to be reinstated among a suspicious and resentful population.

Alta California had never been particularly obedient to its masters in Mexico City and in the new United States territory of California, operating under a minimal administration of military officers, many were even less inclined to bow down to Washington.

It took the gold strike at Sutter's Mill to reset the California paradigm. The change was complete and profound. Men from all over the world flocked to the largely un-policed territory in order to attempt to get rich. Statehood was quickly enacted and California was launched into a completely new future once again.



### Los Hermanos Racionales de la Luz

The (fictional) Rational Brotherhood of Light is an appendant lodge of The Free and Accepted Order of Masons. Situated in the pueblo of Los Angeles and accepting Freemasons of both the York and Scottish Rite, it was begun by some of the earliest Spanish settlers in the area and is the gathering place for many of Southern California's most influential men.

The various divisions of the Masonic Lodge played as dynamic a role in the politics of Latin America as they did in the development of the United States. Both anti-colonial and royalist causes found a home with the Freemasons, as did many other political movements. Beyond national politics, many local issues were discussed and decided within the membership of Masonic organizations. Functioning almost of as a 'shadow government' for Alta California (Upper California, as opposed to Baja California), Los Hermanos contains most of the same players as the actual government as well as a number of others, men

without whom little in California would actually get done. Typically, no issue facing the state is taken up by the government in Monterrey until it has been thoroughly discussed by both southern California's brotherhood lodge and its northern Californian counterpart.

International and interracial in membership, Los Hermanos is a place where members from both the United States and Mexico regularly meet. Prior to the war it is the place where the possibility of American or British annexation of California was discussed. When war seemed inevitable, strategies to minimize hostilities between sides were attempted and after fighting broke out it became one forum for peace negotiations. Meeting secretly, side groups supporting both the American and Mexican causes used Los Hermanos for their own ends and nearly tore the fabric of the organization apart. After the war, throughout the period of military jurisdiction and well into statehood, California's original lodge remained the most influential, if least well known, institution in the area.

Like many aspects of Freemasonry, The Rational Brotherhood of Light has another purpose. If its political or social roles turn its members attention outward toward the world at large, then its spiritual or self-improvement role turns it toward the development of the inner man. Few members, however, have the dedication or the desire to take advantage of the degrees that can lead to greater enlightenment. For men like James and Sean Mulkerin, seekers of mystery, rebirth and redemption, the organization can offer a life changing alchemy of the soul. Built into Masonic myth are ancient and abiding lessons that have served its members for thousands of years ... and through one of its earliest members, the Old One, Juan Ignacio, Los Hermanos Rationales de la Luce is the repository of even greater secrets, those of ancient native America.



### Rancho del Malibu

The Rancho del Malibu was Land Grant awarded to Colonel James Mulkerin by Guadalupe Victoria, the first president of Mexico. It was not only a gift for years of service and loyalty to the fledgling country but also an incentive to remove

Mulkerin from the political scene where he knew far too many secrets about the events on the road to statehood.

Situated between Malibu Canyon and Point Mugu and reaching far inland, the Malibu ranch is vast and self sufficient in many ways. Built in the very early 1800s the estate contains a large adobe house, austere, even primitive in style. There are barns and several small cottages where the families who work on the land live ... in it's organization it is very much the European style estate, a small village that provides many of the requirements of civilization.

The headquarters compound is set in the hills with a view of the sea near Paradise Cove. There are a few small communities nearby, centered around stores or saloons, but the main pueblo of Los Angeles is a good day's ride away by horse and two days journey by cart.

The main business at the Malibu is raising cattle even though it is rare to find a buyer for anything more than hides, and tallow for candles and soap. James Mulkerin has experimented with farming and irrigation and even had a small wine making operation. In true Californio style he never tried to exploit these crops for anything other than his own table. Win Standish, however, has been inspired by their prospects and has developed great ambitions for farming in California.

Like nearly the entire state of California, the Malibu is cash poor ... anything they can not make themselves is almost unaffordably expensive. In one way or another, however, the Californios get by and a diverse economy of barter and favors fills in the gaps. Occasionally, when pressed to the limit, James Mulkerin has found gold on or near his land but the only other man to know it's location is the old Indian, Juan Ignacio.



### The Irish in Mexico

Like the United States, Mexico is also a nation of immigrants. Besides the Spanish, many were Roman Catholics from Germany, Ireland and France. The

term "The Wild Geese" historically refers to Irish soldiers who served in continental European armies. The last of these Wild Geese found their way into the service of the Spanish and thus wound up in Mexico at the time of Independence. The most famous of the Irish adventurers in Mexico may have been William Lamport, author of the first proclamation of independence in the New World, a document that promised land reform, equality of opportunity, racial equality and a democratically elected government. Passion for a country where Catholics were not victims of discrimination ran so high that a group of expatriate Irish-Americans, along with Germans, Italian, Poles, Scots and Swiss fought together as the St. Patrick's Battalion against the United States in the Mexican War. Many deserted or defected from the American army.