

# SAN PATRICIOS LEGACY PAGE

This novel is a work of fiction, set in the very real world of Mexico and the American West in the Nineteenth Century. Sean Mulcahy and Michael Lonergan are not based on real people, though many of the characters they come across in Mexico and Monterey were real, including John Riley, the commanding officer of the San Patricios, and Robert Louis Stevenson, who had spent the last months of 1979 in Monterey on his way to San Francisco. Other characters, such as Father Lucien du Mantfort and Mrs. Alice Faulkner, are fictionalized versions of their real-life counterparts: Father Angel Casanova and Mrs. Charles Crocker.

The large number of Irish and German Catholics coming to the U.S. in the 1840s led anti-immigrant, anti-papist, native Americans to form a number of secret organizations, such as the Order of the Star Spangled Banner in 1849, which grew into the American political party, also known as the “Know-Nothings”, because they repeatedly refused to tell outsiders what they stood for. Bloody and violent riots that occurred in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Louisville, Kentucky did their talking for them.

As for the Chinese, the United States Congress passed the Page Act in 1875, which banned Chinese females from immigrating to the United States alone. This was followed up by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which banned the immigration of all Chinese laborers -- which remained in effect until it was partially repealed by the Magnuson Act in 1943 -- and was only fully repealed by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

Certainly, and most unfortunately, the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudice of the 1840s and 1850s and the anti-Chinese prejudice of the 1870s, 1880s, and into the Twentieth Century, were also very real.

The history and heroism of the San Patricios during the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848 has been very well documented in several books by several authors. What became of the very few survivors is mostly a matter of conjecture and speculation.

In the San Jacinto Plaza in the San Angel District of Mexico City, there hangs a commemorative plaque, placed there in 1969, which reads (in Spanish, of course), “In memory of the Irish soldiers of the St. Patrick’s Battalion, martyrs, who gave their lives to the Mexican cause in the United States unjust invasion of 1847.”



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