



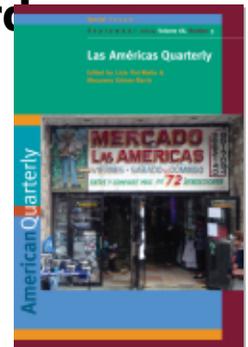
PROJECT MUSE®

Recuperating Histories of Violence in the Americas: Vernacular History-Making on the US-Mexico Border

Monica Muñoz Martinez

American Quarterly, Volume 66, Number 3, September 2014, pp. 661-689
(Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: [10.1353/aq.2014.0040](https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2014.0040)



➔ For additional information about this article
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/aq/summary/v066/66.3.martinez.html>

Recuperating Histories of Violence in the Americas: Vernacular History-Making on the US–Mexico Border

Monica Muñoz Martinez

On September 27, 1915, Jesus Bazán and his son-in-law Antonio Longoria—both members of the Tejano elite and the latter a Hidalgo County commissioner—traveled to a local Texas Ranger camp to report a robbery. Just days before, raiders stole horses from their ranch north of the Rio Grande River in Hidalgo County, Texas. Although Bazán and Longoria should have had the law on their side, anti-Mexican violence in the region—state-sponsored and otherwise—made the decision to report the robbery difficult. On the one hand, they knew that if they reported the robbery to local or state police, their kin could face the raiders' wrath for aiding local authorities. On the other hand, if Bazán and Longoria did not inform local authorities and the assailants were later arrested in possession of the stolen horses, the families could then be accused of supporting bandit activities and risk brutal reprisals. Had they cooperated with authorities to report the crime, they might still be accused of sympathizing with bandits and suffer the consequential wrath of border agents. In other words, either decision could trigger violent repercussions. Weighing the risks, Bazán and Longoria decided to report the robbery to Rangers camping on the Sam Lane Ranch. After a seemingly uneventful conversation with Ranger captain Henry Ransom, the two men left on horseback. When they were about three hundred yards from the Ranger campsite, laborers on Sam Lane's ranch witnessed Captain Ransom and two civilians, William Sterling and Paul West, climb into a Model T Ford and follow the men. One passenger reached outside a window and shot both men in the back. Bazán and Longoria fell from their horses and died on the side of the road. Unfazed by the shooting, Ransom returned to the Ranger campsite to take a nap.¹ Before getting too comfortable, Ransom warned witnesses not to bury or move the bodies. Taking this additional step of intimidation denied the bodies a proper burial and forced neighbors and friends of the dead to endure an extreme act of disrespect.²

Bazán and Longoria's predicament, in a frontier space and zone of regional power dynamics, reveals the precarious lives of racialized and gendered subjects alongside and operating within the US–Mexico border region. As this essay shows, these acts took place within a culture of impunity in which state agents abused their authority and denied protection to ethnic Mexicans within their jurisdiction. In the name of policing the border, these agents regularly collaborated with vigilantes to summarily execute residents and created a reign of social terror that denied residents their civil and social rights. Between 1910 and 1920, historians estimate that state agents and vigilantes murdered thousands of ethnic Mexicans.³

This period of anti-Mexican violence is not exceptional in terms of US history in general or border subjects in particular. As many authors have contended, state violence constituted the forms of state consolidation through the participation of state agents and local residents in the region. By claiming a monopoly on violence, nation-states interpolate racialized subjects and declare brutal border pacification efforts as symbols of progress and modernity.⁴ From Spanish, to Mexican, to Texan, and finally to US systems of governance, regional state-building projects targeted racialized and sexualized bodies in this region by imposing colonial and imperial forms of surveillance that installed new racial hierarchies and brutally policed categories of belonging. Borders have provided unique terrains for examining moments of racial formation. Overlapping colonial systems of racialized and gendered violence developed a social process of differentiation on the US–Mexico border that regularly denied the privileges of citizenship to ethnic and racial minorities.⁵ Anti-Mexican violence on the US–Mexico border cannot be disentangled from the violence practiced in prior and concurrent state-building initiatives. For example, in the US South, the lynching of African Americans increased at a feverish pace in the early twentieth century. In Texas, the mob violence that targeted African Americans continued in northeastern counties alongside practices of anti-Mexican violence in southwestern counties.⁶ The lynchings of ethnic Mexicans gained the attention of Mexican consulates, which protested mob violence against Mexican citizens in the United States. These diplomatic protests, however, occurred alongside the Mexican state's own practices of racialized and sexualized violence against indigenous groups, like the Apaches, in northern Mexico and the Arizona–Sonora border region. The genocide of Yaqui Indians in this region continued until 1907.⁷

Unfortunately, histories of state violence in the Americas tend to be segregated by disciplinary traditions and geographies, bounded both by nation-states and by regionalism. Links between these regimes of state violence are

frequently overlooked. Moreover, the popular forgetting of violence against racialized groups stands in stark contrast to the popular celebration of the agents of state violence like the Texas Rangers, who maintain a global iconic status and are celebrated in song, literature, television, film, and professional sports. Histories that trace the movement of people and policies that traverse state boundaries help expose interconnected histories of the Americas and recast agents of violence in new light. In particular, transborder communities on the US–Mexico border help expose the limits of the nation-state, its imagined communities, and the particular systems of racial formation during state-building efforts.⁸ Memorialization projects that attend to the history of slavery, genocide, displacement, and mob violence in the Americas rarely highlight the interconnected systems of violence that permeate international borders. Doing so offers new opportunities to challenge the erasure of histories of violence from popular memory, to expose the long legacies of violence, and to make continued efforts for reckoning with these histories.⁹

The local murders of Bazán and Longoria provide a window into the wider hemispheric regimes of state violence in the Americas. This event is located at the nexus of histories of vigilantism in the United States against domestic racial groups, practices of genocidal colonialism against indigenous nations in the Americas, and histories of US Empire. These forms of state violence have deep histories in the nineteenth century, as I argue, and produce a discourse about policing that mirrors many of the more contemporary forms of anti-Mexican violence.¹⁰ Many scholars have shown that to narrate these histories requires reading institutional archives against the grain.¹¹ This essay contributes by showing that when scholars attend to generational memories, new opportunities emerge to help recuperate marginalized histories of state violence. By using census records, state records, and Texas Ranger reports, this study demonstrates the long legacy of state-sanctioned violence against ethnic Mexican subjects who appear in institutional archives as anonymous criminals. In contrast, oral histories, memoirs, documentaries, memorials, and private archives produce alternative historical narratives, circulated from one generation to the next, which seek to prevent the victims of state violence from being criminalized or erased.¹²

Memories of state terror are not easily forgotten. To the contrary, both culture and memory are ripe terrains where meaning and history are under constant negotiation. Memories of state violence—and the cultural representations inspired by them—provide opportunities to expose the lasting traces of state violence in the construction of nation-states and the policing of political and social borders.¹³ In particular, vernacular histories challenge historical nar-

ratives that disavow generational loss and obscure the roots of state violence throughout settler colonialism in the Americas. Because of absences in public memory and in institutionalized historical narratives, local residents in Texas have borne the burden of sustaining alternative histories and demanding a public reckoning with the legacies of racialized and sexualized forms of terror for their communities. By using local memories that describe both state-sanctioned violence and local responses to state regimes of terror, researchers throughout the Americas can continue to recuperate disavowed histories and illuminate how local regimes are connected to long and ongoing histories of violence.

The first part of this article analyzes the brutal methods of state agents and outlines the culture of impunity they enjoyed when acting to cement imperial and colonial racial hierarchies and make newly subjugated populations available for manual labor. It broadens examinations beyond racial binaries and patriarchal narratives to uncover struggles for power between residents and the state previously understudied.¹⁴ It also considers how the witnesses of state-sanctioned terror survived in its aftermath. By following the legacies of this particular double murder, the present article demonstrates the enduring impact of this period of terror on the familial, social, and political lives of residents near the US–Mexico border. Moreover, studying the aftermath of violent conflict in a local context highlights residents' varied efforts to rebuild their communities and reclaim social and political rights in the wake of state-sanctioned violence. Residents used various methods to resist this period of terror including engaging in public protest, exerting property rights, and filing claims through international courts to hold states and their agents accountable for their crimes.¹⁵ Recounting these acts helps disrupt nationalist narratives of violence and reconciliation that popularly justify state terror, criminalize the dead, and claim that violent conflicts are resolved over time.¹⁶

The article's second part uses generational memories to help trace the long legacy of the specific form of state violence carried out through vigilantes and state agents. It highlights residents who challenge mainstream narratives that work to assert both cultural and social control over populations.¹⁷ These residents recuperate and mourn the lives of victims of state violence criminalized by mainstream histories in public school curriculums and displayed at public museums.¹⁸ Texas residents Norma Longoria Rodriguez and Kirby Warnock have labored for nearly forty years to demythologize US history by memorializing the double murder of Bazán and Longoria. Both Rodriguez and Warnock learned of the event from family members; each independently dedicated years to researching and documenting the murders after learning of the state failure to investigate and prosecute the assailants.¹⁹ Rodriguez and Warnock refuse to

allow the victims of state violence to remain anonymous. Through a practice of vernacular history-making, they bring into the public sphere alternative histories that were previously shared only in private settings among trusted friends and family, providing residents real and virtual forums to reckon with the long legacy of this violence. Examining their memorialization efforts shows that Mexican nationals, Mexican Americans, and Anglos alike suffered from the violent practices of law enforcement agents.

Historical Context

Critical events in the nineteenth century contributed to the creation of the US–Mexico boundary. In 1821 Mexico gained its independence from Spain, but the Texas Revolution (1836), the US–Mexico War (1846–48), and the Gadsden Purchase (1854) resulted in the United States acquiring half of Mexico’s territory within forty years of the latter’s independence. These constructed boundaries required constant enforcement throughout the century.²⁰ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, shifting racial hierarchies, the massive transfer of property from Mexican to Anglo hands, and the industrialization of agriculture—which assigned Mexicans in the American southwest to manual agricultural wage labor—led to a particularly violent period in the US–Mexico border region.²¹ This displacement occurred alongside Anglo migration from southern and northern US states that brought with it alternative ideologies for land use as well as strict ideas of white supremacist racial hierarchies. Efforts by state agents to enforce new racial hierarchies resulted in the brutal repression of insurrections on both sides of the Texas–Mexico border.²²

Since their establishment in the early nineteenth century, Texas Rangers blurred the lines between enforcing state laws and practicing vigilantism. Initially, the agents worked to ensure that Anglo settlers flourished in the new Texas Republic of 1836. This came at the grave expense of groups identified as enemies of new settlement. Rangers historian Walter Prescott Webb described the agents as a “fighting force” created by Anglo settlers to wage a battle in the ongoing war for racial supremacy between Mexican settlers and Indigenous tribes, including the Tonkawas, Lipan Apache, Waco, Karankawa, Kiowa, and Comanche nations. The Texas Rangers targeted the “Indian warrior” and the Mexican vaquero as enemies of white supremacy in the battle to control the region.²³ In their efforts to secure Anglo settlement and a new racial hierarchy, the Rangers also policed black bodies. They tracked and punished enslaved men and women trying to cross the Rio Grande River into Mexico to escape slavery in the US South, including Texas. Rangers quickly gained a reputation

for torturing prisoners and for abusing their authority with impunity. Many historians view the Texas Rangers as the first prominent Western vigilantes to be endowed with legal authority. These agents became models for other state forces in the United States, including the Arizona Rangers and the US Border Patrol.²⁴

Many leading agents refined their policing techniques during the expansion of US Empire into the Caribbean and in the western Pacific, particularly in the 1898 Spanish–American War and the Philippine–American War from 1899 to 1902.²⁵ During two tours of duty in the Philippines, Texas Ranger captain Henry Ransom practiced brutal aggression toward “enemy combatants.” His fellow Rangers later recalled that Ransom learned to devalue racialized bodies when he developed a pleasure for killing during his time in the Philippines. During a scouting trip in south Texas, William Sterling and Ransom bonded with a Cavalry troop from Ft. Ringold by sharing the gruesome details of their military experience. Sterling wrote in his memoir, “The tales they told about executing Filipinos made the Bandit Wars look like a minor purge.”²⁶ Captain Ransom imported his military tactics, used earlier to colonize the Philippines, into his strategies for policing the US–Mexico border. The double murder of Bazán and Longoria, in short, is intimately linked to previous theaters of war and must be understood as part of the policing of “bandits” and “insurgents” in the US colonial empire in the Americas and beyond.²⁷

Rising numbers of ethnic Mexicans in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century increased racial tensions near the US–Mexico border. Mexican nationals crossed into the United States to escape an economic depression in 1880 and a recession in 1906, and eventually to escape the violence of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. Between 1914 and 1916, when racial hostilities peaked, thousands of Mexicans migrated into the United States by way of Texas to escape the revolution. Historians estimate that during the revolution as many as one million Mexicans sought refuge in the United States. While many soon returned to Mexico, the number of ethnic Mexicans in the United States tripled between 1910 and 1920.²⁸ By 1913 local anxieties in Texas rose as conflicts of the Mexican Revolution reached the northern border towns of Matamoros and Ojinaga. Texas governor Oscar Colquitt dispatched over one thousand state militiamen and the Texas National Guard to patrol the international border to appease residents of Brownsville and El Paso. By 1916 the Wilson administration had deployed approximately one hundred thousand National Guard troops between Yuma, Arizona, and Brownsville, Texas.²⁹ Unfamiliar with the border region, these troops struggled to police the Rio Grande. San Benito resident William G. B. Morrison noted that even the twenty thousand

US soldiers stationed there could not adequately patrol Hidalgo County's approximately sixty-mile stretch along the US–Mexico border. In his words, "bandits still slipped through."³⁰ Whereas Mexican and American residents had previously moved fluidly across the border and back again, wartime conditions allowed the US state to militarize the Rio Grande River and make it an increasingly permanent political and social boundary. Throughout the twentieth century, local and state agents called for the continued policing of this borderland and its residents.

For Anglo ranchers, the Texas Rangers remained the preferred force to secure the region from alleged threats of "Mexican bandits." Under the administration of Governor James Edward Ferguson, the number of Texas Rangers increased at an alarming rate. In September 1913, a mere thirteen Rangers patrolled the entire state and the 1,214 miles of the Texas border with Mexico. By April 1915 the force doubled to twenty-six Rangers. The Texas legislature raised the state budget for Ranger salaries, and Governor Ferguson accordingly increased the number of Texas companies and appointed captains to select paid regular Rangers and unpaid special Rangers to fill their ranks. The force grew to approximately 1,350 agents by the end of World War I.³¹ The dramatic increase in the force led to rampant hiring with little administrative oversight. Given special commissions, these new agents were a class of men wholly unqualified to act as law enforcement officers. Even Webb, a historian sympathetic to the Rangers, described some of these enlisted men as "incompetent."³²

Without a formal process for screening these new agents, the special Rangers selectively enforced self-interested laws to please local alliances. In 1915, when word of an organized insurrection in south Texas spread, Ferguson authorized the systematic execution of anyone affiliated with revolutionary activities. The Plan de San Diego, a plan accredited to Mexican insurrectionists, called for the overthrow of US rule in south Texas and the murder of all Anglo men sixteen years and older. This plan gave the governor and south Texas residents discursive ammunition to justify state-sanctioned violence on an intensified scale and put ethnic Mexicans at further risk for being targeted as enemies of the state. A period of rampant violence in south Texas described as an "orgy of bloodshed" and a "reign of terror" ensued when Rangers initiated a revenge-by-proxy technique, killing ethnic Mexicans, regardless of citizenship, social status, or evidence of guilt, merely for being in the approximate location of a nearby crime. These efforts regularly resulted in considering any local resident profiled as "Mexican" a "bandit" or "bandit sympathizer." Benjamin Johnson accurately describes the Rangers' methods of repression of this revolution as systematic ethnic cleansing: an attempt to remove Mexicans, whether citizens

of Mexico or of the United States, from Texas.³³

Despite legislative regulations, Governor Ferguson instructed state officers to use their authority without hesitation. He instructed his Ranger captains to “pacify” the border region, and even assured the men he would protect them from future prosecutions.³⁴ One Anglo rancher from Monte Cristo, near the Bazán and Longoria ranches, pleaded with Governor Ferguson to shield Captain Ransom from prosecution because he was “doing good work.” The governor assured the rancher that he gave Ransom clear instructions to “go down there and clean it up if he had to kill every damned man connected with it.” Ferguson elaborated, “If [Ransom] didn’t clean that nest up down there I would put a man down there that would. . . . I have the pardoning power and we will stand by those men.”³⁵ With the governor’s pardoning power behind him, Captain Ransom continued his notoriously ruthless approach to securing south Texas, systematically ignoring Mexican residents’ civil and social rights and thereby evacuating multiple categories of citizenship.

The year 1915 emerged as a stark period of anti-Mexican violence resulting from state administrations encouraging Rangers and local agents to abuse legal authority. As a result, when Texas Rangers and local enforcement officers collaborated to take the law into their own hands, there were countless violations of residents’ civil and social rights. The violation of judicial rights, in particular those meant to guarantee a trial by jury and presumed innocence, formed the most common techniques of state violence. The failure of local and state judicial systems to prosecute vigilantism, coupled with the encouragement of such violent conduct by Texas governors, amounted to a system of state-sanctioned racial terror. This institutionalized a culture of impunity that was further compounded by anti-Mexican sentiment. Such practices led to a staggering number of ethnic Mexican casualties; some residents who lived through this turbulent period estimated that between August 4, 1915, and June 17, 1916, Texas Rangers and deputy sheriffs executed approximately 300 Mexican residents without conducting proper investigations.³⁶ Texas judge James Wells estimated that in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties alone Texas officers and vigilantes executed 250–300 ethnic Mexican men in less than a year.³⁷ These murders, of course, had a tremendous impact on the communities left in the wake of this period of terror.

In 1919 the high number of deaths attributed to Texas Rangers led State Representative José T. Canales to initiate a committee to investigate their conduct. At the hearing, he cited eighteen abuses of power in which Texas Rangers inflicted harm or incited terror on ethnic Mexican communities.³⁸ The investigation proved valuable for documenting state agents’ crimes and

regular abuse of power, and also revealed a high tolerance of some local residents for state-sanctioned violence. These insights are particularly important for challenging narratives that portray this period of anti-Mexican violence as the irrational or unusual behavior by a few Rangers. To the contrary, they show the social approval that enabled these acts.³⁹ On February 8, 1919, Representative Canales interviewed Judge James B. Wells, a resident of Brownsville and a known boss of machine politics in south Texas. Representative Canales asked, “Judge, did you ever happen to see extraordinary scenes, I mean by that some dead bodies.” Judge Wells responded that near the end of the “bandit trouble” he saw eleven dead bodies lying near the side of the road on his drive back from Edinburg. The judge noticed a bad smell and buzzards circling in the air. The signs of death led the judge to eleven ethnic Mexican men lying in the brush. Buzzards had picked over the corpses, consuming the men’s eyes, faces, and scalps. This expedited the decomposition and made the men’s identities undeterminable. “It was a very gruesome sight,” Wells explained. “They were too far decomposed.”⁴⁰

Even the harsh south Texas elements, however, could not conceal the cause of death. Judge Wells continued, “You could see bullet holes right above the eyes, great big holes you could stick your finger in, the only thing to indicate the wounds or how they had been killed.”⁴¹ Judge Wells’s testimony exemplifies south Texas residents’ common encounters with violence. Whether witnessing the violent act of extralegal execution, participating in the act, or merely stumbling on a decomposing corpse, residents of the Texas–Mexico border region could not escape the social reality of this violent era. Although anti-Mexican executions and lynchings during this period did not frequently occur in public, the act of leaving corpses to rot on the roadside or hanging from mesquite trees became a regular practice and helped heighten a climate of fear in the region. These corpses served as an act of intimidation and as a painful reminder of the social vulnerability of ethnic Mexicans in the US–Mexico borderlands. In particular, the double murder of Bazán and Longoria sent a message that class, citizenship, and social status would not protect residents from being deprived of their life, being denied the equal protection of the laws of the state, or being denied rights guaranteed to US citizens by the Constitution and those guaranteed to foreign nationals.⁴² Indeed, these acts conveyed to ethnic Mexican residents that agents would police them as enemies of the state. The criminalization of ethnic Mexicans simultaneously enabled a period of ethnic cleansing and marked the international borderlands and their residents as dangerous and in need of brutal policing. Through the militarization of this region, achieved using new systems of surveillance, residents came to feel the

grip of US nation-building practices through the enactment of state violence.

Representatives of the judicial system ensured that the agents of racial terror, official and vigilante alike, enjoyed a culture of impunity. James Wells's unique social position as a judge also meant he was familiar with and had power over the panoply of racial conflict and racialized punishment in the region. He considered himself a "Ranger man" since his childhood, but as a man of the court he cautioned, "I don't think anyone should be given power of life and death."⁴³ Despite this opinion, Judge Wells paradoxically acknowledged that he, as a justice of the court, would defend agents without hesitation. He explained, "I am a Ranger man. . . . You asked me about defending them. I don't know of a man since I have lived in Brownsville, forty-one years . . . that I have not defended them voluntarily. . . . I thought it was my duty and I never took a cent of compensation. Defended several for murder. . . . I think all our reputable bar would stand by them."⁴⁴ Embedded in this transcript, Judge Wells reveals himself as simultaneously moved by his encounter with victims of state-sanctioned violence and resolute in his position to defend state agents. Moreover, he saw this as his duty. In other words, although Wells recognized the dangers of unqualified Texas Rangers "taking the power of life" into their own hands, in his official capacity as a judge and attorney he refused to prosecute Rangers and instead defended their actions without hesitation. This sentiment exemplifies the systemic sanctioning of violence in which law enforcement officers murdered ethnic Mexicans without risk of being prosecuted. To the contrary, officers seasoned by local violence enjoyed a culture of impunity among the state judiciary and the public alike.

Residents of southwest Texas remember the brutal tactics Texas Rangers used to murder ethnic Mexicans. Several oral histories describe in graphic detail the systematic killing of criminalized Mexicans. For example, Jesse Sterling Campbell, born on June 2, 1888, and sister to William Sterling (present during the murders of Bazán and Longoria and eventually the adjutant general of the Texas Rangers), grew up and lived on her family ranch near McAllen, Texas.⁴⁵ At this ranch, both the Texas Rangers and US Cavalry maintained a station to organize patrols of the border region.⁴⁶ Campbell lauded the Rangers: "We had all this protection you see. Two Rangers was all you needed. . . . Two rangers are worth two dozen other soldiers."⁴⁷ Although the Ranger and military presence provided security for the ranching family, it also brought the violence closer to home. Campbell witnessed the execution of an unidentified Mexican man brought to the ranch. As she recalls, Rangers brought him back to the ranch, bound him, and held him stationary during an interroga-

tion. When the officers finished, they released the prisoner in a manner that Campbell described as common practice. “The way [the Rangers] do them is they turn them loose and [the prisoners] run. Then the Rangers shoot them. . . . I wish I didn’t see that but of course he deserved what he got.”⁴⁸ Mrs. Jesse Campbell’s memories showcase how Rangers denied prisoners’ judicial rights by executing suspects without proper investigation.

As a witness to these crimes, Campbell was simultaneously mesmerized and revolted by the state’s violent practices against the ethnic Mexican population. As an Anglo woman, she provided a gendered account of the events and performed regret for seeing the murder. However, she quickly justified the violent act by repeating the phrase, “he got what he deserved” twice during her account. What evidence, if any, the Rangers found for detaining, binding, and then shooting the prisoner in the back is not preserved in institutional archives. Instead, Campbell insinuates that the man committed a crime that warranted the inhumane conduct, the disregard for his rights, and his summary execution. Testimonies like Campbell’s criminalized Mexican residents and defined Ranger brutality as necessary in securing Anglo settlement.

Although most of the killings took place on ranches and in isolated areas, others occurred more publicly near rural towns. For Reynolds Rossington, who grew up in the nearby town of Hebbbronville, watching the agents clear the landscape of Mexican bodies became a grotesque pastime. Every morning, as a young boy, Rossington walked over to the Rangers campsite to watch the officers who brought in the corpses of those he described as “desperados.” As he remembered in a 1973 oral history, “Dead ones and the ones part dead, [the Rangers] had a clearing and they would burn them up behind this lumber company. Best thing I remember I was there one day, I was sitting there on a bench, and the Texas Rangers were talking about shooting one of these Mexicans and that he bleated like a goat, and I started to laugh.”⁴⁹ The young spectator laughed so hard that he swallowed an iron washer he held in his mouth and almost choked. Rossington’s sadist recounting of this event as a humorous episode underlines the popular insensitivity to the systematic killing of ethnic Mexicans, the enjoyment of some at witnessing these acts, and the regular boasting by Rangers who dehumanized their victims. Campbell and Rossington offer just two accounts, among many others, of the callous social milieu that some residents fondly remember and celebrated. These narratives helped cement the process of differentiating which residents had rights and which ones could be murdered without consequence.

Warnock’s account of working on ranches in south Texas helps complicate

popular racial binaries that assumed that all Anglo residents commonly justified the preoccupation with Mexican death at the hands of state agents. In his account, race or nationality did not exempt someone from being threatened, robbed, or killed. He vividly remembered the social environment that made residents fear for their safety. Sam Lane, for example, armed every employee with a high-powered Krag rifle, four hundred rounds of ammunition, and a six-shooter pistol. He ordered Warnock and other laborers to always carry a loaded firearm. Anticipating assaults by both Anglo and Mexican raiders seemed the greatest priority to Lane and surrounding ranchers.⁵⁰ According to Warnock, raiders, Mexican and Anglo, crossed both national and private borders, eluding Texas Rangers and the US Cavalry alike. He explained, "There were a lot of white men that certainly didn't sprout any wings. . . . It was both races that played that border country."⁵¹ In other words, while fear of Mexican banditry fueled the murder of ethnic Mexicans in south Texas, local residents like Warnock noted that social banditry did not have a racial line of demarcation.

The denigration of human life and the murder of his neighbors remained with Warnock throughout his life. Warnock recalled that law enforcement agents killed without hesitation. "It was some mighty dirty work going on then."⁵² The site of victims executed and tossed into the south Texas brush remained vivid in his memory. "There were so many innocent people killed in that mess that it just made you sick to your heart to see it happening," he lamented. "If those ranchers caught a Mexican with a bunch of cattle, they didn't ask him where he got them, they killed him. I knew of one time when they hung eighteen men in a grove of trees. A man's life just wasn't worth much at all."⁵³ Mass executions became a regular phenomenon for Warnock, but the victims he encountered were not always strangers. Warnock sympathized with Bazán's and Longoria's precarious position, stating, "You felt sorry for them. One of these men I knew real well, sixty-seven-year-old Jesus Bazán." He continued, "These Mexicans were afraid that if they told the Rangers anything, the bandits would kill them, but if they hadn't helped the bandits, then the bandits would have killed them. They were right in the middle of it and didn't know what to do."⁵⁴ Warnock remained bewildered, searching for a reason for their murder. No certain course of action could protect his neighbors from meeting violence.

Considering the climate of anti-Mexican violence, it is difficult to ascertain a sole reason that a Texas Ranger and two civilians would collaborate in the murder of Bazán and Longoria. The Bazán and Longoria families held local respect. Jesus Bazán and his wife, Epigmenia, were both American citizens and longtime property owners. Antonio Longoria and his wife, Antonia, were

equally well respected. The Longorias maintained an eighteenth-century land grant from the Spanish Crown. Despite the turbulence of the Texas Revolution, the US–Mexico War, and the Mexican Revolution, the Longorias still held property in Hidalgo County. As a young adult, Antonio gained local distinction as a public servant, an educator, and a political official in Texas.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, their citizenship, political positions, and social prominence did not offer them protection from local authorities.

Instead of being a source of protection, their social status, in this period, made these men vulnerable to state violence. On the one hand, both were stable ranchers in an era when Mexican landowners were part of a dwindling minority. Additionally, skyrocketing property prices made ranchers especially susceptible to land companies that looked to divide ranches into parcels sold for farming. The two also may have been targets for offering to testify on behalf of an ethnic Mexican neighbor fighting to maintain his property in local courts against an Anglo land company. Their murder resulted in the land case being dismissed.⁵⁶ Certainly, challenging an Anglo land company's expansion would raise Bazán's and Longoria's profiles as obstacles to the agricultural colonization of the southwest. In addition to these reasons, Longoria had a prominent reputation for actively participating in political machines. Bilingual, educated, and socially influential, he was a target for Anglo settlers who believed that Mexicans had no place in politics or in business. On multiple levels, then, Bazán and Longoria represented ethnic Mexicans not quick to fall in line with the region's shifting racial hierarchies.

During a period in which ethnic Mexicans were overwhelmingly relegated to manual labor in Texas, the success of Bazán and Longoria reminded both Mexican residents and newly arrived Anglo settlers that, in Texas, Mexicans had recently been the colonizing group of political, economic, and social influence. To eliminate them, and other residents like them, from the social network helped secure Anglo supremacy in the region and institutionalize the industrialization of agriculture. For the judges and lawyers in the Hidalgo County courthouse, the double murder of Bazán and Longoria may only have created a delay in the court proceedings. However, for the relatives, friends, and neighbors of the men, their loss proved to have infinite repercussions.

State-sanctioned racial violence transformed the daily realities of entire communities in 1915. In the aftermath of the double murder, Epigmenia Treviño Bazán, sixty-five, and Antonia Bazán Longoria, thirty-eight, decided to remain on their land. They maintained local respect and even managed to keep their family property. With the exception of a portion of land that Epigmenia Bazán donated for the construction of a church and a local cemetery, the Bazán and

Longoria widows passed down their property to their children.⁵⁷ As a source of income, Epigmenia Bazán leased out portions of her property to relatives, and the two widows baked goods to sell for extra money.⁵⁸ In 1920 Bazán's adult children Pedro, Jesus Jr., Gregorio, Petra, and Enemencio helped their mother remain on the property until she passed away on November 18, 1938, at eighty-four years old.⁵⁹ After the double murder, the Longorias' oldest children lived in nearby towns; Adela worked as a bookkeeper at the Edinburg courthouse and for the Hidalgo County clerk, and Pedro eventually owned two dry goods stores in the towns of Mission and San Benito. In 1920 Antonia Longoria lived with her children in Edinburg.⁶⁰ Antonia Longoria remained devoted to her extended family. She temporarily housed several of her siblings' children, she practiced *remedios*, or folk medicine, and frequently delivered babies for local residents. Antonia Longoria resided in Mission, Texas, upon her death in 1966.⁶¹

The children of Antonia and Antonio Longoria lived active lives in the Rio Grande Valley region as business owners, policemen, and members of local churches and civic organizations. The civil services provided by Antonio before his death, and the contributions of Antonia and her children, led to the family's later public recognition in Mission. On June 30, 2006, the Mission Historical Museum posthumously awarded Antonia Bazán Longoria the President's Pioneer Award to recognize her family's long-standing contributions to the early Rio Grande Valley region.⁶² The award celebrated pioneering families who colonized the region. These celebrations made no mention of the violence inherent in settler colonialism during Spanish colonization or the violence that Tejano families suffered from Anglo settler colonialism in the early twentieth century. Perhaps in another context the family's success might contribute to a narrative celebrating the American dream of prosperity through hard work, determination, and diplomas. For the Longoria and Bazán families, however, their continued social prominence was a story of resilience in the face of intimidation and state terror against racialized groups.

Vernacular Histories of Anti-Mexican Violence

The cultural products and archival collections created by Norma Rodriguez and Kirby Warnock offer evidence of a noticeable transition in the circulation of generational memory in the border region. In the 1970s oral historians took to interviewing Texas residents to preserve these alternative memories. This period also saw the rise of Mexican American heritage organizations and genealogical groups that celebrated Tejano heroes and tied the members to

the initial colonizing families that held Spanish land grants in the sixteenth century.⁶³ Social history trends influenced Rodriguez's and Warnock's searches into their family histories, but their quests were interrupted by the discovery of a case of racial terror in 1915. Rather than aim to situate their family history within existing regional and national narratives, the two represent residents who labor to document their histories, expose state terror, and memorialize both the casualties and the survivors of violence.

By circulating alternative histories of this period, residents also transmitted the social traumas of racial conflict from one generation to the next. In so doing, local residents continued to produce and circulate accounts of their dispossession in oral narratives and archival collections that challenged popular histories of this period. When asked why she dedicated so much energy over decades to document the murders, Rodriguez replied, "I wanted it in writing. I wanted my children to know the story, and I wanted them to pass it on."⁶⁴ Grappling with how her children processed the history, she reflected, "It's always there. It's a part of their life I think. It's an injustice. It never leaves you. It's inherited loss." Despite never directly knowing her murdered relatives, the injustice of their deaths remains with her and her children four generations later. "Once I knew it, it affects you very deeply. Then when you know it was multiplied many times, this is just two of them. There are so many others."⁶⁵ Historians have yet to develop methods for analyzing histories of violence that continue to influence social relations generations after initial conflict. Rodriguez offers "inherited loss" as a concept to articulate her family's intimate connection to this period of anti-Mexican violence. Her own assessment of her pain invites researchers to locate generational memories that attend to silenced and forgotten histories. Until then, local residents are finding their own way to reckon with these histories.

Warnock conducted an oral history with his grandfather, Roland Warnock, who witnessed the double murder in September 1915. After being shocked to learn a "dark history" of the Texas Rangers, Kirby Warnock became motivated to raise social awareness of this fraught history by making the documentary *Border Bandits*, which was screened in Texas communities in 2004 on a tour titled "Texas Justice Tour."⁶⁶ Rodriguez learned about the murder of her grandfather and great-grandfather from her father when the two visited the graves of the deceased. After searching for historical records of the deaths in state and university libraries and coming up empty-handed, she interviewed her surviving aunt and uncle Ernestina Longoria Martinez and Armando Longoria in 1992, who witnessed the initial robbery and the actions of their mother and grandmother after the double murder. She also wrote and published poetry,

memorials, and essays on the Internet and in newspapers to document their deaths. Generational memory, in these two cases, worked to preserve alternative narrative accounts of the double murder, fill gaps in institutional archives, and challenge social scripts provided by mainstream narratives. To preserve memories of the murdered, lynched, and dispossessed, residents have operated with a sense of urgency to keep these histories from being forgotten.⁶⁷ These vernacular history-making practices give faces and names to victims and their communities and cast an alternative light on state violence in the name of securing the Texas–Mexico border for Anglo settlement.

In 1973 Kirby Warnock interviewed his grandfather. The eighteen-hour interview became the primary source for the published oral memoir of Roland Warnock titled *Texas Cowboy* (1992) and *Border Bandits*. Nearly a century after the violence occurred, Warnock shows us generational memory in action; he documented narratives preserved in family oral tradition and made them publicly available by posting his research on his website called Border Bandits. In addition, the circulation of his documentary constitutes a public act to demystify the law enforcement agents and to reimagine the Texas frontier as a fraught social milieu, in which state officials and civilians devalued the life of racialized bodies. In this same light, the public screenings of the documentary created opportunities for local residents to share their own personal histories and to publicly mourn Texas's violent past.

The documentary opens with the Ramirez Family Band's Spanish version of the Eagles' popular hit "Desperado." While the band's sorrowful performance audibly situates the viewer in south Texas, the opening testimony of Roland Warnock orients the viewer to the perspective of the narrative. As a ranch hand in south Texas, Warnock introduces the murder of Jesus Bazán and Antonio Rodriguez through his eyewitness account. The documentary plays the audio recording of Warnock telling his grandson that he buried the two Mexicans. He declares that the men were unarmed when the Texas Rangers shot them in the back and that no formal investigation took place. Warnock's narrative is then joined by the perspective of his grandson Kirby, generations removed from the event.

The intertwining of these two perspectives introduces the reader to a narrative structure that pans back and forth between past and current accounts of the murder of Bazán and Rodriguez in September 1915. Although the two voices remain distinct, the transitions between the two perspectives are fluid. For example, during the opening scene of the documentary Kirby's account is synchronized with his grandfather's, so that as Roland tells the story his voice fades and eventually his grandson, presumably reading from the transcript of

the oral history, completes the thought. This stylistic editing helps blur the two distinct temporalities from which the narrative voices speak. It also makes it difficult for the viewer to distinguish whether they are hearing testimony from Roland's memory, from the memories of the story Kirby has internalized, or from the historical research that Kirby conducted.

Memory production in the context of documentary filmmaking plays with temporality and history as nuanced forms of storytelling. This is most clearly exemplified in the documentary when Roland recalls burying Bazán and Longoria in September 1915, and the film shows photographs of the graves. This film disrupts linear time in a closing scene when the description of Roland burying the bodies overlays the image of his grandson visiting the gravesites of Bazán and Longoria. As such, the viewer hears and watches as both men simultaneously lament the deaths. The film produces a narrative of a lived memory that continues to evolve, thus disrupting historical periodizations that attempt to relegate this violence to the past. The documentary reminds viewers that past events continue to be felt in present-day southwest Texas.⁶⁸

After its release, screenings of *Border Bandits* took place in San Antonio, Austin, Waco, Brownsville, Harlingen, and Edinburg, and it continues to be screened today. During an interview with the *San Antonio Express News* in 2004, Warnock described sharing the controversial history with local residents. He explained, "This is a Western, but it's not a romantic [film] like most Westerns. It's dark. It doesn't have a happy Hollywood ending." In particular, unlike Westerns that romanticize and celebrate vigilantism and state agents, Warnock attempts to expose the brutalities of Captain Ransom and others. These screenings, often to sold-out crowds, attracted academics, local historians, and the wider public. Perhaps most interestingly, the screenings drew people who shared a common history with the Bazán and Longoria families. For some in the audience, the film screenings became a public space to vocalize how the past continued to influence their lives. The question-and-answer sessions after the film screenings, in particular, frequently turned into a space for testimonials in which audience members explained their own relationships to tragic histories of death at the hands of Texas Rangers or famous ranch owners.⁶⁹

Some viewers found solace in the company of residents with similar troubled histories, but others who identified with the work of the Texas Rangers or with early Anglo ranchers had reactions of their own. In 2004 Tom Vinger, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety, explained that the events of 1915 had no relationship to modern-day Texas Rangers, insinuating that past events have no current social relevance. Without refuting any of the events covered in *Border Bandits* he stated, "There's zero correlation."⁷⁰ For

Vinger, the crimes remained relegated to the past. Two years later a *San Antonio Express News* journalist interviewed Jim McAllen, relative of the McAllen family portrayed in the film and a supporter of the Hidalgo County Historical Museum. McAllen clarified that there are two sides to every story and replied, “I won’t go there. [Warnock’s] got a vendetta against the Rangers.”⁷¹ Although Ranger supporters vehemently defend their legacy in Texas, the film *Border Bandits* became so popular that in San Antonio the Alamo Draft House movie theater held encore viewings to meet audience demand.⁷²

The documentary points out that the stories in *Border Bandits* exist because a grandfather told his grandson what he saw during his young adult life, and then asks the viewer to consider the following, “Imagine a grandfather telling a grandson that his father was shot . . . imagine that multiplied by 100 if not 1000s. . . . There is an official denial of this in history textbooks. The unifying symbol for Anglos has been the divisive image for Texans as a whole.”⁷³ The film prompts the viewer to consider the magnitude of the practice of generational storytelling. If the murder of Bazán and Longoria affected the surviving relatives and witnesses for more than a century, and thousands of murders occurred during this period, then potentially thousands of other families are living with similar traumas. For these residents, Texas icons are painful reminders of past violence. The long-standing effects of these stories are then exacerbated by the disavowal of this period of state terror in public history exhibits, popular culture, and public school textbooks.⁷⁴

Border Bandits also questions public memorials that celebrate Texas Rangers. The film ends by describing the careers and graves of Henry Ransom and William Sterling, allowing the reader to visualize the disparity between the lives of Bazán, Longoria, Ransom, and Sterling even in death. Sterling, who died in 1960, rests in Corpus Christi, Texas. His grave is decorated with a historical marker celebrating his service as a Texas Ranger. In contrast, the film shows the gravesites of Jesus Bazán and Antonio Longoria. Both gravesites have tombstones, but neither life is dignified with a historical marker. In the absence of the public recognition of past social injustices, Warnock mourns the legacy of racial violence in Texas and dedicates *Border Bandits* to Roland Warnock, the Bazán and Longoria families, and to the thousands of Mexicans victimized by state violence.

Norma Rodriguez and her family members drove to different cities in Texas screening the documentary and expressed gratitude to Kirby Warnock for his work. For Rodriguez, the screenings helped spur conversations about this violent period. Her appreciation, however, did not prevent her from troubling some of the documentary’s messages. In particular, she took issue with the

film's representation of the Bazán and Longoria families as disappearing and abandoning their property. She corrected, "Warnock says the family left and disappeared, but no, we are everywhere. . . . In our case it didn't happen that way. My grandmother never sold anything."⁷⁵ Rodriguez dedicated years of her life to preserving her family's accounts for future generations. Her archive and literary productions offer more insights into the lives of the deceased and those of Epigmenia Bazán and Antonia Longoria after 1915, frequently forgotten or erased in historical narratives.

In the mid-1970s Rodriguez traveled with her father, Heriberto Longoria, to the gravesites of Bazán and Longoria. Her father pointed to a discrepancy in the dates on the tombstones for Antonio Longoria and Jesus Bazán that suggested the two men died on different days. He said, "Well I don't know why it's different they were both murdered on the same day. . . . Killed by the Texas Rangers."⁷⁶ As a child, Rodriguez's mother attempted to shield her from the tragedy by explaining the death of her relatives as an accident of mistaken identity. Her father's account challenged her perceptions of Texas history more broadly. In her own words, "I went home and I went straight to the library."⁷⁷ Prompted by this interaction with her father, nearly sixty years after the event, Rodriguez searched archives for more information about the double murder.

In the 1970s Rodriguez began traveling to Austin to conduct archival research at the University of Texas and at the Lorenzo de Zavala Texas State Archives. After years of searching, she found no institutional records in public libraries, court archives, or newspaper accounts that mentioned the double murder or referenced the names of Antonio Longoria and Jesus Bazán. She became especially frustrated that no death certificates exist to mark their murders. To correct institutional silences, she turned to generational memory and pieced together a private archive of family interviews, documents, and photographs. From this alternative archive she constructed her own narrative of the double murder in 1915 and how the event affected her family since the early twentieth century.

While working full-time as a public school teacher in San Antonio, Texas, Rodriguez focused her research efforts on three tasks: first, she labored to document the strength of her relatives by conducting oral histories that highlighted her family's survival; second, she worked to retell her family history by narrating the story to her children and family members; and finally, she documented their deaths by publishing essays and poetry that honored the victims. Her archival efforts and publications refute historical narratives that depict anonymous victims of state-sanctioned violence as "Mexican bandits" or "bandit sympathizers." Her efforts to memorialize the lives of Jesus Bazán,

Antonio Longoria, Epigmenia Bazán, and Antonia Longoria succeeded in creating an alternative space for preserving this history and shifted attention from the double murder to a life disrupted by state-sanctioned violence.

Rodriguez interviewed her aunt and uncle, Ernestina Longoria Martinez and Armando Longoria, specifically looking for information about how her grandmother, great-grandmother, and relatives survived in the aftermath of the double murder. After the murder, she found, many visitors and family members came to offer the family their condolences, pay their respects, and ask Antonia Longoria if she planned on pursuing the assailants in court. Antonia worried especially for the vulnerability of her brothers, who might be the next targets of violence. Ernestina remembered overhearing her mother responding to inquiries by saying, “What would be the point? Why make other orphans?”⁷⁸

Indeed, the vulnerability for ethnic Mexicans who challenged state violence in this period remained real. By 1915 ethnic Mexican landowners were rare and remained vulnerable to efforts to remove them from their property. When legal channels failed to remove residents from their property, violence became an expedient method. Anglo migrants popularly circulated the phrase, “You don’t buy from the husband, you buy from the widow,” gesturing to a widespread practice of executing landowning men to force the sale of land by their widows through threats of physical violence. During the 1919 investigation into the Texas Rangers, Representative Canales interviewed residents and state agents on what he referred to as an “exodus” of ethnic Mexicans in Texas who fled to Mexico to escape the state terror they faced in Texas. Lon C. Hill, appointed to the force as a special Ranger in August 1915, testified that farmers expressed concern because their Mexican laborers fled to Mexico. Farmer anxieties rose when the workforce seemingly “evaporated.” Hill noted that even landowners fled to Mexico, some leaving thousands of head of cattle behind.⁷⁹ That entire communities would abandon their homes, jobs, land, and livestock to flee to a country in the throes of a civil war for safety reveals the dangers for ethnic Mexicans in Texas.

This period of intimidation silenced some residents. Rodriguez uncovered evidence of why her grandmother and great-grandmother kept their protests private. She explained, “The penalty of death. That’s what would happen if they found that a man was lynched. The rest of the family was also in danger especially the men. That’s when they fell silent.”⁸⁰ Rodriguez processed the social climate in the early twentieth century and concluded that future threats of violence kept her relatives from publicly challenging the murders of Bazán and Longoria. Women, too, risked being victims themselves. “It wasn’t just

men killed,” she continued. “I’ve been reading cases of whole families, small children, killed or hung. Lynched. . . . There was a lot of unrest and the [Mexican] Revolution made it easy to disguise killings . . . just say “bandido” or “sympathizer.”⁸¹ In Antonia Longoria’s words, fear of “making more orphans” gives insights into how living in a period of racial intimidation influenced the daily life and choices available to Bazán and Longoria. Her words also serve as a reminder that there were no gendered parameters for violence.

Histories of this period must go beyond critiquing celebratory narratives of state violence. Scholars must also conduct research that will disrupt patterns of anonymity and erasure from historical narratives and to expand studies to include the stories of people who lived in the aftermath of state violence. The long-standing narrative trope of surviving relatives leaving their homes in fear, never to be heard from again, erases the multiple strategies that borderlands residents used to challenge state violence including remaining on their property. This figurative way of ending accounts of racial violence is commonly repeated in histories passed down through the oral tradition, in memoirs, and in scholarly publications referring to law enforcement and vigilante killings of ethnic Mexicans. Rodríguez’s research helps reinscribe Antonia Longoria and Epigmenia Bazán as active residents able to maintain their property and livelihood after being widowed.

Toward the end of memorializing the Bazán and Longoria families of the early twentieth century, Rodríguez wrote a biography of her grandmother Antonia Bazán Longoria and an essay titled “A Silence of the Heart,” and published them on her cousin Hernán Contreras’s website called *Los Tejanos* and again on the website *Somos Primos*.⁸² Rodríguez’s writings narrate the murder of Jesus Bazán and Antonio Longoria, but also underscore how this event affected her family for generations.⁸³ Transcriptions of the interviews she conducted with her aunt Ernestina Longoria Martínez and uncle Armando Longoria are available at the *Los Tejanos* website in both Spanish and English. In addition to publishing on the Internet, Rodríguez honors the memories of Jesus Bazán and Antonio Longoria by publishing poetry in the *San Antonio Express* newspaper, on the anniversary of the double murder.⁸⁴ In her publications, Rodríguez demands, “These stories can no longer be ignored, minimized or covered up by explanations that conveniently protected the guilty parties and justified their actions.”⁸⁵ Rodríguez’s publications call for a public reckoning with this violent past and calls attention to silences in popular memory and in mainstream histories.⁸⁶

For Rodríguez, a true reckoning requires a recentering of the bodies and

identities of subjects of state violence. During an oral interview Rodriguez reflected on having forty years of her life interrupted by this inherited tragedy. She did not express anger. Instead, she reflected on her deep sense of remorse for missing an opportunity to meet Roland Warnock before he passed away. Her relatives held important information, but Warnock witnessed the shootings. If Rodriguez and Kirby Warnock had met earlier in their archival searches, she could have asked his grandfather the most intimate and lingering questions about the murder of Jesus Bazán and Antonio Longoria. “That has been my biggest regret,” she lamented. “They could have asked [Roland Warnock]. We could have asked him, ‘Did they die immediately?’ We hope they did. We assume they did.”⁸⁷ Among the many unanswered questions, those about the last moments of Bazán and Longoria are the most plaguing for Rodriguez. The last breaths of Bazán and Longoria remain central to her retellings of the double murder. These questions offer a brief glimpse into the sentiments that she describes as inherited loss. Rodriguez’s questions are reminders of the brutality of acts of racial violence and the intimate loss experienced by relatives that are generations removed from the event itself. Her questions are saturated with worry for a grandfather and great-grandfather that she never met. She wonders and she hopes that they did not suffer and die in pain.

At the time of the double murder, the Longorias’ close family friends Martiriano and Timotea Cantú worked for Sam Lane. They faced the torment of being ordered not to bury the decomposing remains. They pleaded with their boss and ultimately received his support to bury the bodies of their friends. Although killed in a manner that denied them human dignity, the Cantú family and Roland Warnock proved crucial in helping restore some respect for Jesus Bazán and Antonio Rodriguez by delivering them to a final resting place. The accounts of Ernestina Martinez, Armando Longoria, and Roland Warnock all mention the process of burying the remains. In a climate in which law enforcement agents, vigilantes, and spectators alike disregarded the humanity of ethnic Mexicans, this civil act speaks to the continued effort by some to restore respect to victims and their families. They resisted the efforts of state terror to refuse residents the right to mourn the dead. The single act of burying Bazán’s and Longoria’s bodies offered a fleeting condolence to the mourning residents. Today the graves continue to provide a space to mourn the loss of Jesus Bazán and Antonio Longoria and serve as a reminder of the pain passed from generation to generation.

Conclusion

The state-sanctioned strategies for disciplining gendered and racialized subjects on the US–Mexico border are emblematic of the wider use of violence in subject formation and state-building projects in the Americas. By looking beyond mainstream archives, this article exposes the “modernizing” state projects that used mass execution, torture, and other forms of violence to eradicate ethnic Mexicans from economic and social influence in the border region. It shows that Texas administrators, the Texas judicial systems, and the industrialization of agriculture in the southwest have deep roots in anti-Mexican violence. This period produced a discourse about policing the border region that informs contemporary forms of anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant violence on the US–Mexico border. Linkages between these systems of violence and exclusion must continue to be explored.

In the face of great odds stacked against examining the lives of the victims, the aftermath, and those left in the wake of the departed, generational memories offer an opportunity to recuperate marginalized histories of state violence in the Americas. They emerge as archives that contain histories of the long legacies of genocide, slavery, vigilantism, and ethnic cleansing practiced in the region of the Americas that would become Texas. These histories disrupt patterns of anonymity, challenge the ongoing criminalization of the dead, confront historical narratives that justify the violence inherent in nation-building practices, and make transparent the longer legacies of histories of border policing. These memories show that living in a period of mass executions is not a historical memory that is easily erased.

In an article published in the *New York Times* in 2004, a journalist suggested that the documentary *Border Bandits* and the publication of the historian Benjamin Johnson’s book *Revolution in Texas* worked to “reopen old wounds.”⁸⁸ The testimonies of Roland Warnock, Ernestina Longoria Martinez, Armando Longoria, Kirby Warnock, and Norma Longoria Rodriguez show us that these wounds had never healed. Until researchers attend to histories of violence in the Americas, local residents will continue to assume the burden of challenging state narratives that celebrate violence inherent in state-building projects.

Future studies should take note of the vernacular history-making practices near the US–Mexico border that encourage histories to trace and reckon with long histories of violence. As the centennial of the double murder of Bazán and Longoria and this violent period of history approaches, it remains unknown if the nation-states that enabled these histories will participate in reckoning with inherited loss. As this article is being completed, a committee of historians, state legislators, and residents are collaborating to commemorate the hundred-year

anniversary of this period of violence in the US–Mexico border region. This memorialization effort, titled “Refusing to Forget,” will include a multiyear series of historical marker unveilings, public lectures, a traveling exhibit, and curriculums for public school teachers. Revising school curriculums, museum exhibits, and public memory is only the first important step toward reckoning with these stories. This process must be collaborative, it must expose interconnected histories of violence, and it must engage the ongoing violent policing of border residents and migrants in the guise of national security.

Notes

Research for this essay was supported by the Woodrow Wilson National Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, and the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. I wish to thank Joanne Meyerowitz, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Ralph Rodríguez, Matthew Frye Jacobson, Matthew J. Garcia, Simeon Man, Larissa Brewer Garcia, Kathleen Belew, A. Naomi Paik, Ana Minian, Jessie Kindig, Camilla Fojas, Geraldo Cadava, Benjamin Heber Johnson, Ramón Gutierrez, the associate editors and anonymous readers of the *American Quarterly*, and especially the guest editors Macarena Gómez-Barris and Licia Fiol-Matta for their precise insights and considerate feedback. Earlier versions of this essay were presented and improved by conversations at the Ethnicity Race and Migration Working Group at Yale, the CMAS Writing Group at UT Austin, and the Newberry Library Borderlands and Latino Studies Conference.

1. Kirby Warnock, “Trouble on the Border,” www.borderbanditsmovie.com/story.htm (accessed February 2, 2010).
2. In his study, Benjamin Johnson notes that to bury the bodies of loved ones in this period was to court death (*Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003], 118).
3. For more, see Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 478; David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*; and Arnold De León, ed., *War along the Border: The Mexican Revolution and Tejano Communities* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012).
4. Chandan Reddy reminds us that claiming a monopoly on violence is a key element of the nation-state. Moreover, Wilsonian foreign policy in the early twentieth century asserted the state’s role as guarantor of individual freedoms and integrated US colonialism, racial wars, and global violence with the state’s persistent discourse of US exceptionalism. However, the state left vigilantism that helped secure the motivations unregulated into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The US government sanction of the ongoing Minutemen movement along the US–Mexico border is one example of the long reliance of the nation on vigilantism to secure its goals. See Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 7–12; and Alicia Schmidt Camacho, “Migrant Melancholia: Emergent Discourse of Mexican Migrant Traffic,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 105.4 (2006): 831–61. Ned Blackhawk provides an exemplary methodology for using violence as a lens to examine US imperial history. See Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
5. For more on gendered, racial, and sexual violence in national formation, see Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

6. William Carrigan and Clive Webb, *Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence against Mexicans in the United States, 1848–1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
7. For more, see Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin, 2008); William D. Carrigan, *The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilantism in Central Texas, 1836–1916* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Evelyn Hu-Dehart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival: The Struggle for Land and Autonomy, 1821–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*; Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*.
8. Alicia Schmidt Camacho builds on the work of Benedict Anderson and shows that transborder communities of Mexican nationals, migrants, and Mexican Americans have continuously exposed the limits of state formation for both nations and expose parameters of the imagined communities of the nation-state. See Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; rpt. London: Verso, 1991); Samuel Truett and Elliot Young, eds., *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.–Mexico Borderlands History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
9. Michael Rothberg convincingly shows that multidirectional memory, remembering that embraces an intercultural dynamic, has potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice. For more on this and on relational methods for writing history, see Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Natalia Molina, “Examining Chicana/o History through a Relational Lens,” part of the special forum “Chicana/o History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 82.4 (2013): 520–41.
10. For more, see Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*.
11. Leading examples include Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*; Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*; Antonia Castaneda, “‘Que Se Pudieran Defender’ (So You Could Defend Yourselves): Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses,” *Frontiers* 22.3 (2001): 116–42; Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
12. Ramón Saldivar noted that Américo Paredes preserved vernacular cultures of Texas–Mexicans with urgency because “even the dead are not safe from cultural eradication” (*The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006], 8, 12–13). See also John Moran Gonzalez, *Border Renaissance: The Texas Centennial and the Emergence of Mexican America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009); José Limón, *Américo Paredes: Culture and Critique* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).
13. Macarena Gómez-Barris describes the afterlife of violence as it becomes visible in cultural representations by witnesses and people generations removed from state terror. See Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells*; and Herman Gray and Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Toward a Sociology of Trace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
14. Within the fields of borderlands and Chicano/a history, investigations of this period focus on armed conflict between ethnic Mexican and Anglo men. New examination into this period shows that the social category of being a widow became an important social position from which to hold states accountable for crimes against its citizens. For more, see author’s manuscript in progress: “Inherited Loss: Reckoning with State-Sanctioned Anti-Mexican Violence, 1910–Present.” For other histories that revise standard narratives by attending to gender, see Vicki Ruiz, *From out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in the Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Miroslava Chávez-García, *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Mia Bay, *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010); Crystal N. Feinster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
15. For more on these cases, see Monica Muñoz Martínez, “Indemnities for State Murder: The U.S.–Mexico General Claims Commission of 1923,” *Periscope: Going into Debt*, special section, *Social Text* (September 2011), www.socialtextjournal.org/periscope/going-into-debt/.

16. These methodological questions are inspired partly by ongoing struggles of mothers in the Americas who publicly mourn the murder and disappearance of their children. Public memorials and performances challenge state violence and judicial neglect while also serving as reminders of the pain carried by those living in the wake of state violence. For more, see Susana Rotker, *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Rosa-Linda Fregoso, *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
17. These residents participate in what David Blight calls the politics of memory (*Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002], 191). Local communities across the Americas have been engaging in the politics of memory as a way to push back against mainstream narratives that serve the nation-state and sustain the state's elite efforts to maintain and expand hegemony. Historical representations are under constant negotiation. See Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Edward Linenthal, "Violence and the American Landscape: The Challenge of Public History," *OAH Magazine of History* 16.2 (2002): 10–13; Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, trans. Helen R. Lane (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991); Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
18. Lisa Yoneyama reminds us that by formulating questions of historical knowledge through memory, it is possible to determine the conditions of power that shape representations of the past to show how such representations interpolate and produce subjects. See Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Trace: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
19. For more on these competing memories and their lasting influence on racial formation in Texas, see Rosa-Linda Fregoso, "Reproduction and Miscegenation on the Borderlands: Mapping the Maternal Body of Tejanas," *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gabriela F. Arredondo, Aida Hurtado, Norma Klahn, Olga Najera-Ramírez, and Patricia Zavella (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Richard Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002). For more on the practice of critical remembering, see T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001). The editors describe critical memory as an effort to deconstruct normalized historical narratives.
20. For more, see José Angel Hernández, *Mexican American Colonization during the Nineteenth Century: A History of the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Ernesto Chávez, *The U.S. War with Mexico: A Brief History with Documents* (New York City: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007).
21. For more, see David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*; Young, *Catarino Garza's Revolution*.
22. Timothy J. Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.–Mexico Border, 1978–1992* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 6–8; Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 106–17.
23. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995) 3, 11. Despite popular assumptions, Indigenous groups and Tejanos also served as Rangers in this period. Prior to Chicano/a academics' reevaluation of the Texas Rangers, historians such as Walter Prescott Webb celebrated Rangers for quelling the dangers of the frontiers for Anglo settlers in Texas. Webb's book deemed the officers as making civilization in Texas possible. The later writings of the Chicano scholar Américo Paredes portrayed the Rangers as outlaws who intimidated Mexican communities. His first book, *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), studied the Mexican musical form of the *corrido* that commemorated Tejano heroes who underwent an epic attempt to escape the wrath of the Rangers. See María Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Catriona Rueda Esquibel, *With Her Machete in Her Hand: Reading Chicana Lesbians* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).
24. Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 262, 266; Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

25. For more, see Young, *Catarino Garza's Revolution*.
26. William Sterling, *Trails and Trials of a Texas Ranger* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979).
27. For more on the entanglements of the domestic and foreign lives through empire, see Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Allan Punzalan Isaac, *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). The constant struggle to assert racial supremacy throughout histories of settler colonialism continued well into the early twentieth century in both the United States and Mexico. Jody Byrd reminds us that that empire born out of settler colonialism is predicated on discourses of indigenous displacements that remain within the present everydayness of settler colonialism. For more, see Byrd, *The Transition of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).
28. For more, see Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880–1920* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981); Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*, 59.
29. Dunn, *Militarization*, 9; Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 215–18, Arnoldo De León, *War along the Border: The Mexican Revolution and Tejano Communities* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012).
30. William G. B. Morrison, testimony, “Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force,” January 31, 1919, p. 24, Adjutant General Records, Texas State Archives, Austin.
31. Charles Harris and Louis Saddler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910–1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 105, 190, 427; Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, “Brief History” Exhibits Virtual and Real, www.texasranger.org/history/Timechaos.htm (accessed May 2013).
32. Webb, *Texas Rangers*, 513.
33. For more on the practice of ethnic cleansing, see Johnson’s chapter “Repression” in *Revolution in Texas*; Young, *Catarino Garza's Revolution*, 311; Webb, *Texas Rangers*, 478.
34. Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, “Brief History.”
35. Scarborough, testimony, “Proceedings,” 260.
36. Frank Cushman Pierce, *A Brief History of the Lower Rio Grande* (Menasha, WI: George Banta, 1917), 103.
37. James B. Wells, testimony, “Proceedings,” 676.
38. J. T. Canales organized the proceedings as a fact-finding hearing that investigated Texas Ranger practices from 1915 to 1919, but the committee of senators strictly limited the content of the testimonies. Even the state representative was on the receiving end of threats and violent intimidation tactics by Texas Rangers for his efforts.
39. Jacqueline Goldsby provides an important framework and argues that lynchings should not be conceptualized as “extralegal” violence. Instead she shows that it is closely tied to state power over the lives of citizens, the denial of life to black citizens, and a practice of state-building efforts. For more, see Goldsby, *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5, 218, 283.
40. Wells, testimony, “Proceedings,” 670.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Photographs of these scenes were developed into postcards for popular consumption. The author’s manuscript in progress contextualizes these images within a history of war photography and the photography of lynched bodies in the south. See Dora Apel and Shawn Michelle Smith, *Lynching Photographs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
43. Wells, *Proceedings*, 678.
44. *Ibid.* Wells acted as the defense attorney in 1903 for A. Y. Baker, a Texas Ranger charged with the murder of Mexican rancher Ramón de la Cerda. Baker later became a political boss of Hidalgo County and the sheriff who decided not to conduct an investigation into the deaths of Bazán and Longoria. For more on political machines, see Anders, *Boss Rule*.
45. William Sterling, *Trails and Trials of a Texas Ranger* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979).
46. Jesse Sterling Campbell, South Texas Oral History and Folklore Collection, James C. Jernigan Library, Texas A&I University, Kingsville.
47. *Ibid.*

48. Ibid.
49. Reynolds Rossington, South Texas Oral History and Folklore Collection, James C. Jernigan Library, Texas A&I University, Kingsville.
50. Kirby Warnock, *Texas Cowboy: The Oral Memoir of Roland A. Warnock and His Life on the Texas Frontier* (Dallas: Trans Pecos Productions, 1992), 43–50.
51. Warnock, “Trouble on the Border.”
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Federal Census records show the Longorias living with their six children. All four sons are listed as working on the family ranch (*Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, Justice Precinct 7, Hidalgo, Texas, 7B, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, DC). Federal Census records from 1910 list Antonio Longoria living with his wife, Antonia, since their marriage in 1897 (*Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Justice Precinct 6, Hidalgo, Texas, 4B, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, DC). Norma L. Rodriguez, “Antonia Bazán Longoria (1877–1966),” *Los Tejanos*, <http://los-tejanos.com/essays.htm> (accessed August 28, 2010); Antonio L. Longoria, Hidalgo County Teaching Certificate, June 25, 1908, Norma Longoria Rodriguez Private Collection; Hidalgo County Treasurer John Clossner to Antonio Longoria, “Estimado Amigo . . .,” June 6, 1914, Norma Longoria Rodriguez Private Collection.
56. Wells, *Proceedings*.
57. The Longoria grandchildren all inherited portions of the family ranch and maintain the property today.
58. Norma Longoria Rodriguez, interview by author, September 22, 2010, San Antonio, TX, digital recording; Rodriguez, “Antonia Bazán Longoria.”
59. Census records list all the Bazán children were born in Texas and all could read and write in Spanish (*Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, Justice Precinct 6, Hidalgo, Texas, 4A, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, DC).
60. Rodriguez, interview with author (*Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, Justice Precinct 7, Edinburg, Hidalgo, Texas, 2B, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, DC).
61. Rodriguez, “Antonia Bazán Longoria.”
62. Ibid.
63. For more on Mexican American heritage movements, see Andrés Tijerina, “Constructing Tejano Memory,” in *Lone Star Past: Memory and History in Texas*, ed. Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner (College Station: Texas A&M Press University Press, 2007), 192.
64. Rodriguez, interview with author.
65. Ibid.
66. Warnock, “Trouble.”
67. Ibid.
68. Marita Sturken encourages researchers to ask what memories reveal about how the past affects the present. Oren Baruch Stier explains that examining cultural representations of the past offers opportunities to engage the persistence of the past and how past events maintain a presence in current day. See Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Baruch Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Meditations of the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).
69. Jessica Belasco, “Film Puts the Spotlight on Ranger Slayings,” *San Antonio Express News*, November 16, 2004. In Texas, nearly one hundred years after these state crimes, no official investigation into this period occurred after 1919. These public screenings provided a public space for commemoration. In contrast, civil wars in Central and South America necessitated the truth commissions organized as official, nonjudicial fact-finding bodies to investigate violations of human rights that occurred in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay from 1974 until 2007. For more on connecting these public acts to the epistemological counterhegemonic genre of *testimonies*, see author’s manuscript in progress. For more on *testimonios*, see Daniel James, *Dona Maria’s Story: Life, History, Memory, and Political Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press,

- 2000); John Beverly and Marc Zimmerman, *Literature and Politics in the Central American Revolutions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Abril Trigo, “The 1990s: Practices and Polemics within Latin American Cultural Studies,” in *The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Ana Del Sarto, Alicia Rios, and Abril Trigo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
70. Belasco, “Spotlight.”
 71. Jesse Bogan, “The Story of S. Texas,” *San Antonio Express News*, May 7, 2006.
 72. *Ibid.*
 73. *Border Bandits*, directed by Kirby Warnock (Dallas, TX: Trans-Pecos Productions, 2004), DVD.
 74. The Texas Ranger History Museum and Hall of Fame in Waco, Texas, is the leading institution for celebrating Texas Ranger history.
 75. Rodriguez, interview with author.
 76. *Ibid.*
 77. *Ibid.*
 78. Ernestina Longoria Martinez and Armando R. Longoria, interview with Norma L. Rodriguez, July 26, 1992.
 79. Lon C. Hill, *Proceedings*, 1145–46.
 80. Rodriguez, interview with author.
 81. *Ibid.*
 82. Hernán Contreras dedicated a page on his website to challenge common misconceptions about the Texas Rangers. He writes: “This reign of terror resulted in a ‘code of silence’ by survivors who felt threatened and uncomfortable in even speaking about Texas Ranger atrocities. Many of the killings were never reported. Here we are collecting documented cases that were never reported.” This site includes a digital archive with family photographs, documents, and narrative accounts of relatives’ impact on society in south Texas (Contreras, “Texas Rangers: Reign of Terror,” *Los Tejanos*, <http://los-tejanos.com/rangers.htm> [accessed August 28, 2010]).
 83. Rodriguez, interview with author.
 84. Norma L. Rodriguez, “The Old Windmills/Los Papalotes,” *San Antonio Express News*, November 2, 2008.
 85. *Ibid.*
 86. Here the “the politics of mourning” as described by David L. Eng and David Kazanjian as the creative process mediating a hopeful or hopeless relation to the past and between loss and history is particularly salient. See Eng and Kazanjian, “Introduction: Mourning Remains,” in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 2.
 87. Rodriguez, interview with author.
 88. Ralph Blumenthal, “New Charges Tarnish Texas Rangers’ Image and Reopen Old Wounds,” *New York Times*, October 31, 2004.

Copyright of *American Quarterly* is the property of Johns Hopkins University Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.