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**"Contemporary Deportation Raids and
Historical Memory
Mexican Expulsions in the
Nineteenth Century"**

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Abstract: *The contemporary situation in the United States with respect to Mexican migrants has reached a level of intensity that harkens back to the mass expulsions of the 1930s and the 1950s, when millions were forcefully removed south across the border. Recent deportation raids have targeted food processing plants and other large businesses hiring migrant workers from Mexico and Central America. By portraying the current raids as something new, the U.S. media decontextualizes them and strips them of historical memory. In fact, the current raids can be reconstructed and historicized to the moment when Euro-American settlers first encountered Mexicans in the early 1800s. Evidence taken primarily from Mexican archives reveals that expulsions first occurred in the mid-1830s and continued throughout the nineteenth century, especially in areas where local populations were demographically overwhelmed. This period has traditionally been overlooked by U.S., Chicana/o, and Mexican historiographers alike. The contemporary expulsions serve to discourage the contribution of migrants and separate individuals from their families, and they ultimately contradict the time-honored idea that the United States is a "nation of immigrants."*

The contemporary situation in the United States with respect to Mexican migrants has reached a level of intensity that harkens back to the mass expulsions of the 1930s and the 1950s, when millions of people were forcefully removed south across the border. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2008, 1) reports that it apprehended nearly 961,000 foreign nationals in 2007, 89 percent of whom were "natives of Mexico." Many of them were apprehended at their place of employment, and 2007 set a record for workplace raids by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Chertoff 2008). Deportation raids have taken place at food processing plants, leather manufacturers, and other large businesses in states as diverse as Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, and Hawaii (Cruz 2007; Flaccus 2007; Knight 2008; Kobayashi 2008; Malone 2007; Pilsner 2008; Powell 2008; Shulman 2007; Valdes 2008; Ziner 2008).

Mass deportation violates legal logic and the very spirit of this nation. Legal scholar Kevin Johnson (2005, 6) has noted that "international law condemns the forced deportation, or exile, of a nation's citizens. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

provides expressly that 'no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile'; the new law creating the international criminal court declares that it is a 'crime against humanity' to engage in the 'deportation or forcible transfer of population' from a country." Potential legal violations, however, are only part of a wider set of arguments against such deportations. The raids affect not only the migrants being deported but also their families and loved ones left behind and the communities where they lived and worked (Mendelson, Strom, and Wishnie 2009). These contemporary expulsions discourage the contributions of migrants to U.S. society and separate individuals from their families, and they ultimately contradict the time-honored idea that the United States is a "nation of immigrants."

By portraying the current raids targeting mostly Mexican migrants and their families as unprecedented, the U.S. media decontextualizes these actions and strips them of historical memory. These purportedly "new" raids can be reconstructed and historicized to the moment when Euro-American settlers first encountered Mexicans in the early 1800s. In fact, evidence taken primarily from Mexican archives reveals that expulsions first occurred in the mid-1830s and continued throughout the nineteenth century, especially in areas where local populations were demographically overwhelmed. This period has traditionally been overlooked by U.S., Chicana/o, and Mexican historiographers alike.

Historiography

The apprehension and subsequent deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans has a long history and an equally compelling historiography. A gaping narrative hole exists for the period encompassing the mid- to late nineteenth century, despite a rich set of materials from which to draw (Alanis Encino 2000; Balderrama 1982; Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006; Carreras de Velasco 1974; Garcia 1980; Guerin-Gonzales 1994; Hoffman 1974; Reynolds McKay 1982; Sánchez 1995). Indeed, much of the literature leapfrogs this period to focus instead on the mass deportations spurred by the Great Depression of the 1930s and Operation Wetback in 1954. Historian Robert McKay (2007) notes that the "most neglected era of Mexican repatriation from the United States

is before 1930." In a recent study of the 1930s deportation drives, historians Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez (2006, 120) estimate that a majority of those repatriated were in fact citizens of the United States: "approximately 60 percent of the persons of Mexican ancestry removed to Mexico in the 1930s were U.S. citizens, many of them children who were effectively deported to Mexico when immigrant parents were sent there." The mass deportations of the 1950s have been well documented. According to the statistics of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), these totaled around 1.3 million (García 1980). While such massive deportations certainly merit the attention they have received, the period from the 1830s to the turn of the twentieth century represents a significant unwritten chapter. This essay attempts to help fill this historiographical oversight, theorizing on the various social, political, and economic structures that provided the possibility for these early expulsions to occur.

Studies on the deportation of Mexicans have become more numerous over the past few years, spurred by the social and political controversy over increased migration since the 1990s (Abel 2003; Kuehnert 2002; Molina 2006; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2006). In states outside traditional immigrant-receiving locales like the U.S. Southwest, local governments have called for the forced removal of Mexican populations now considered "illegal" and therefore deportable. The correlation between the rising numbers of Mexican migrants and rising anti-immigrant sentiment recalls a period in U.S. history when even slight increases in immigrant populations met with a nativist response (Spickard 2007). Archival documents located in Mexico provide the key to linking the expulsions of the past with the deportations of the present, thus illustrating the possibility of employing Mexican archives to write Chicana/o history. To help outline this history as it proceeds to the close of the nineteenth century, I will first introduce and elaborate on my concept of expulsion.

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Theorizing Expulsion

Expulsion is a form of physical and symbolic violence that serves to cleanse the body politic of "undesirables" (Johnson 2005, 106–9). Indeed, Andrew Bell-Fialkoff (1993) suggests that ethnic cleansing is "virtually indistinguishable from forced emigration and population exchange while at the other end it merges with deportation and genocide." Furthermore, he gives the expelling of populations a particular interpretation that I would associate with my own use of the term expulsion. He argues that "ethnic cleansing can be understood as the expulsion of an undesirable population from a given territory due to religious or ethnic discrimination, political, strategic or ideological considerations, or a combination of these" (110–11). The process of expelling is "fundamentally linked to the political ideal of the homogeneous nation-state," and thus "the practice of ethnic cleansing becomes an instrument of nation-state creation" (Jackson Preece 1998). Expulsion, therefore, has the dialectical function of uprooting past histories of dominated populations, which presupposes a sense of rootedness for the expelled.

The expelled are relocated to another place, to a territory outside of the nation-state and therefore outside of the status and benefits of official belonging. Once relocated, the expelled are relegated to a dehistoricized category of criminality so that their efforts to remigrate to the nation that expelled them are surveilled, documented, and prosecuted by agents of the state. This further solidifies a sense

of the state's legal grasp on those areas from which Mexican migrants were forcibly removed. The border regions are disciplined by the state apparatus, and the notion of the borderlands extends beyond the internationally defined borders that set its geographic limits. The fact that contemporary deportation raids (since 2003) have occurred in states well removed from official border regions reflects the extension of what may be considered the borderlands to include segments of the entire geographic territory of the country. The concept of the borderlands, as such, extends beyond the officially sanctioned territorial border mappings of the state.

Although expulsions of Mexicans have taken place since the 1830s, the pretexts for these actions have varied. At different times and in different regions, "threats to the nation," "failure to assimilate," "disloyalty," and a host of related notions have been evoked as justification. To understand the real motives, however, one must look beyond these themes to the structural conditions prevailing at the time—labor competition, prior Native American removals, racism, collusion with African American slaves, wage aversion, demographic pressures, the coveting of land, and a perceived terror of Mexican "bandits." A brief look at selected archival sources from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries highlights some of these factors.

Early Mexican Expulsions

The first wave of Mexican expulsions occurred against the backdrop of an increasing migration of Euro-Americans to what had once been Mexican territory (Tijerina 1994, 137–44). The trigger was the so-called Texas Revolution of 1836. Memories of past massacres by the Mexican Army in Goliad and at the Alamo were still fresh in the minds of Texans, and I believe that these recollections provided the psychological setting for these first acts of expulsion in late 1836. Appadurai (2006, 42) asserts that "the expelled are often the carriers of the unwanted memories of the acts of violence . . . as new states were formed." Other acts of expulsion followed in 1842, when Mexico tried unsuccessfully to reconquer Texas, and in the 1850s, when a number of Tejanos were accused of colluding with African American freedmen and slaves.

On July 17, 1836, the Mexican consul in New Orleans reported to the secretary of foreign relations in Philadelphia that over 100 Mexican citizens had arrived near the port in New Orleans after being forced from their homes in Texas. According to the letter from the Mexican consul, Francisco Prianzo Martínez, one of the U.S. generals issued a warning to all citizens of the de León colony of Texas, Goliad, and Guadalupe Victoria to leave lest they be "put to the knife" by Texas colonists and volunteers, who by then outnumbered the local population.² The de León colony was founded by Martín de León, a Mexican empresario who was given a land grant to populate the area in the hopes of thwarting the increasing in-migration of Euro-American settlers (Castillo Crimm 2003, 152–84). But with the newly arrived Euro-Americans outnumbering the local inhabitants almost ten to one by the mid-1830s, the demographic superiority of these former colonists enabled them to expel those they considered "undesirable." Even though the founders of this particular town, the de León family, fought on the side of Texas and against Santa Anna, their presence and large landholdings generated fear in the burgeoning new state (Quiroz 2005, 6–7). Apparently Texans conveniently suspended their sense of "thinking historically" in the case of the de Leóns' fight for "Texas independence," which was quickly forgotten amid the fervor for land grabbing.

The de Leóns were not the only colonists being threatened. These early expulsions did not only target individuals; in some cases they were intended to clear the territory of what had become by then a "minority population," namely, the early Tejano settlers. Brigadier General Thomas J. Rusk, the military commander who ordered the expulsion of all Mexicans from this region, issued the following warning to the citizens of two towns:

The Citizens of Guadalupe Victoria and Goliad are required, by asking thus for their personal security, to march immediately towards the East. They will be able to go as they like, that is, by land or by sea; although the latter route is considered preferable for reasons that a trip through land would expose them to objections and labors, and that in actuality, there are sufficient embarkations in La Bahia that have been obtained for this purpose. They will all be given Passports and Letters of Protection, through which they will receive the best treatment. There

is no longer a neutral country; Texas will be free, or it will become a desert.³

Although Rusk confirmed that letters of protection, the best treatment, and passports would be granted to those individuals, he made clear that it was not possible to remain neutral in this war for Texas freedom: "Texas will be free, or it will become a desert." He suggested that Texas would be free only once Mexicans (even those who had demonstrated their loyalty to Texas) were expelled from their lands; this would remove a primary obstacle to further Euro-American colonization of the area. A claim filed in the state of Texas a decade later by Fernando de León asserts that Rusk "ordered the removal of the whole de León clan, including the Carbajal and Benavides families, from Victoria and the Aldretes and Mancholas from Goliad" (Castillo Crimm 1996, 121). These initial acts of expulsion, I would suggest, were a key component of the formation of the Texas Republic and a necessary ingredient for thinking unhistorically. The expelled, to follow Appadurai (2006, 42), "are often the carriers of the unwanted memories of the acts of violence that produced existing states, of forced conscription, or of violent extrusion as new states were formed."

According to the Mexican consul, Rusk issued another warning six days later: "The families that reside in the Ranchos and in the immediacies of La Punta, will be transferred aboard in brief time, since the circumstances require it as such; being the desire, not to detain the march of the ships, but instead to be most precise." Precision was necessary because Texas military volunteers were showing "symptoms of wanting to pass under the knife all Mexicans."⁴

The expelled arrived at the port in Louisiana in a miserable state, according to Mexican officials, and their government was unable to provide protection or assistance for their repatriation to Mexican territory. The Mexican representatives in Philadelphia responded to Prianzo Martínez,

The position, therefore, of those unfortunates is most pitiful. If at the very least they had been allowed to disembark at some point along the coast of Mexico, they would have even found aid and consolation; but due to a refinement of cruelty, that public opinion will quickly qualify,

they have been sent to a strange land, whose tongue they do not understand and whose customs they do not know, and because of this, not even their personal labor will be able to procure over time the means to prolong their miserable existence.⁵

Compounding the troubles of the repatriates was their inability to speak the language of the region and their unfamiliarity with local customs. Such would again be the case following the end of hostilities a decade later, during the U.S.-Mexican War (1846–48), particularly in those areas where Mexicans and Tejanos became the minority.

Much of this early violence in the mid-1830s can be traced to the aftermath of the Texas Revolution of 1836. The Euro-American population, having suffered severe casualties in that conflict, sought retaliation against Mexican communities, and they turned first to the settlements along the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers. According to sociologist David Monte-jano (1987, 26–27), "In 1837 the Mexican communities of Victoria, San Patricio, La Bahía (Goliad), and Refugio were the first to feel the vengeance for the massacres at Goliad and the Alamo." The town of La Bahía, for example, was razed along with the church and fort built by the Mexican government. One of the biographers of the founding de León family noted that although they were loyal to the Texan cause, "This family like other loyal Mexican families were driven from their homes, their treasures, their cattle and horses and their lands, by an army of reckless, war-crazy people, who overran the town of Victoria. These new people distrusted and hated the Mexicans, simply because they were Mexican, regardless of the fact that they were both on the same side of the fighting during the war" (Montejano 1987, 27). The earlier violence by the Mexican army was thus reciprocated in the form of these expulsions in Texas.

By 1839, over 100 Mexican families "were forced to abandon their homes and lands in the old settlement of Nacogdoches in what is now East Texas" (Montejano 1987, 27). The individuals who avoided being expelled eventually took refuge further south at the Carlos Ranch. This group lived in constant fear of raids and threats of violence from the burgeoning white population, who recalled the death trap at "the Alamo" and the massacre at Goliad only three years earlier (Stout 2008, 174–87). During that summer, "these bandits gave warning of their intention

to visit Carlos' Ranch (where residents from Victoria and Goliad had taken refuge in 1836) in order to burn it down and kill all the Mexicans belonging to it" (De León 1983, 78). These threats were not acted upon until the Mexican government made an effort to reconquer Texas and occupied San Antonio in 1842. At this time, according to historian Arnolfo De León (1983, 78), "Anglos angered over the invasion from Mexico destroyed the ranch and compelled the families to leave the Republic."

These expulsions, not surprisingly, were in many cases responses to real and perceived Mexican violence or for the purposes of material gain, either political or economic in nature (Anderson 2005; Carrigan 2004). The Goliad Massacre of 1836 was investigated by contemporaries of the period, and two scholars of that event concluded, "A man-by-man study of Fannin's command indicates that 342 were executed at Goliad on March 27. Only twenty-eight escaped the firing squads, and twenty more were spared as physicians, orderlies, interpreters, or mechanics" (Davenport and Roell 2007). At the battle of the Alamo, between 150 and 250 "Texians" and a number of Tejanos also lost their lives in the battle with the Mexican Army headed by Santa Anna, including those who gave themselves up in surrender. Hence, the mass execution of Euro-Americans at Goliad, the Alamo, and the rise of the Cordova Rebellion all contributed to an atmosphere of fear and violence in which these periodic expulsions of Mexicans took place (Lack 1996, 89–109).

Efforts by the Mexican state to reconquer Texas after it was signed over by Santa Anna in 1836 were also occasions to reconsider the loyalty of native Tejanos, and this in turn provided further pretexts for expulsions (Ramos 2008, 167–91). The 1842 effort by the Mexican government to reconquer the lost Texas Republic initiated yet another round of intense expulsions of those Mexicans unfortunate enough to be residing in that territory, even if they had fought for independence from Mexico (Milton Nance 1964). Historians of the Mexican experience in Texas have documented many of these early expulsions, and they argue that harassment by Anglos was a daily occurrence for Texas Mexicans, especially after the Mexican government's second attempt to recoup this lost territory. In the wake of this latter attempt, the

white populations of Texas considered banishing all Mexicans from the newly formed republic. According to a newspaper editorial quoted by De León (1982, 14–15), "There is no faith to be put in them; and until the war is ended, they should be compelled, every one of them, to retire either east or west from the frontier; or if they chose to remain, be subjected to the rigorous treatment due to enemies." No longer considered allies in the cause of Texas independence, these Texas Mexicans were now seen as "enemies" and therefore eligible for expulsion, even though it was the Tejanos who had initiated this rebellion against the Mexican state (Reséndez 2004, 146–70).

Now outnumbered and without the protection of the U.S. government, numerous families fled south toward Mexico and to areas where Mexicans had some numerical superiority. Hundreds of Tejano families, according to Andrés Tijerina (1994, 138), "scattered onto the ranches and eventually to Coahuila," while most Nacogdoches families left for Louisiana. According to one of the Texan volunteers, quoted by De León (1982, 14–15) in his extensive history of the Tejano experience in the nineteenth century, volunteer soldiers "acted very badly, having ventured to force the Mexican families from their homes, [causing them] to droop about in the woods and seek shelter wherever they could find it. Moreover, to gratify their beastly lusts [they have] compelled the women and girls to yield to their hellish desires, which their victims did under fear of punishment and death." Such episodes occurred frequently in the period leading up to the U.S.- Mexican War that erupted four years later. By then, increased violence and the political and economic instability that accompanies most wartime situations had forced still more families to migrate southward in search of protection. These difficult conditions were not enough, however, to deter hundreds of Mexican families from returning to lands they owned, and by the end of the war, hundreds had returned and appealed for reinstatement of their land titles and properties. Tijerina points out, for instance, that the 1850 census taken in Texas reveals that "although only about fifteen hundred of the original Tejanos remained in the old Béxar-Goliad region, more than six hundred Mexican-born heads of household had entered the region since the revolution." By the 1850s, the de León and Benavides clans would come to join the fifty Tejano

families already residing in "New La Bahia" (Tijerina 1994, 141).

Other expulsions followed in those areas of Texas where Euro-Americans became the majority and where Mexicans were seen as threats to social, political, and economic hegemony. Austin, Colorado, Matagorda, San Antonio, Seguin, and Uvalde were all sites of expulsion. In the case of Austin, Mexicans were driven out not once but twice. Montejano (1987, 28) reminds us that "Mexicans were driven from Austin in 1853 and again in 1855, from Seguin in 1854, from the counties of Matagorda and Colorado in 1856, and from Uvalde in 1857." Many of these expulsions grew out of fear of Mexican-African American alliances and economic considerations related to slavery, influenced by the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law (Kanstrom 2007, 77–83). In a newspaper of the era, for instance, this fear of a Mexican-black connection was imagined in both economic and sexual terms:

Matagorda—The people of Matagorda County have held a meeting and ordered every Mexican to leave the county. To strangers this may seem wrong, but we hold it to be perfectly right and highly necessary; but a word of explanation should be given. In the first place, then, there are none but the lower class or "Peon" Mexicans in the county; secondly, they have no domicile, but hang around plantations, taking the likeliest Negro girls for wives; and, thirdly, they often steal horses, and these girls, too, and endeavor to run them to Mexico. We should rather have anticipated an appeal to Lynch Law, than the mild course which has been adopted. Olmsted 1857, 502; quoted in Montejano 1987, 28)

Here the expulsion of all Mexicans is not seen as problematic; in fact, it is presented as a palatable alternative to lynching. The fact that "Negro girls" and "horses" are both seen as property should not surprise those familiar with the economics of a slave society. However, the accusation that Mexicans endeavored to run slaves and freedmen into Mexico is not without some basis in fact.⁶ In an analysis of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, for example, Daniel Kanstrom (2007, 83) suggests that the law "operated as a deportation system" that "caused many to flee the country for Canada and others for Mexico." This contradiction served to further the pretext that Mexicans were disloyal and ought to be expelled.

Paul Schuster Taylor, a noted economist and student of the Mexican American experience in Texas, cited purported Mexican-black collusion as one of the main sources of conflict between Anglos and Tejanos during the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1850s, a plot by African Americans was discovered in Colorado County, and Mexicans were immediately cited as the primary instigators of this rebellion to kill the "white masters." The committee of "whites" announced to their community that "without exception every Mexican in the county was implicated. . . . They were arrested and ordered to leave the country within five days and never to return. . . . We are satisfied that the lower class of the Mexican population are incendiaries in any country where slaves are held, and should be dealt with accordingly" (Taylor 1934, 37). Delegates from several counties west of the Colorado River met in October 1854 in order to enact stern measures directed against Mexican-black association in Texas. The convention "resolved that counties should organize vigilance committees to persecute persons tampering with slaves and that all citizens and slaveholders were to work diligently to prohibit Mexicans from contacting blacks" (De León 1983, 51). In similar fashion, the town of Seguin "drafted resolutions prohibiting Mexican peons from entering the country and forbidding Mexicans to associate with blacks" (De León 1982, 15).

Other locations in Texas followed suit. Residents of Austin, after accusing some Mexicans of horse theft, used this as the rationale to expel twenty Mexican families from their homes in the spring of 1853. In Laredo, some Americans "began a movement to clean out the Mexicans," even though the latter constituted the vast majority of the local population and had long held considerable political power. The local "white" population "would rant at public meetings and declare that this was an American country and the Mexicans ought to be run out" (Montejano 1987, 31). Even in the predominantly Mexican town of San Antonio a writer for the San Antonio Ledger suggested in 1855 that "Mexican strangers coming into the city register at the mayor's office and give an account of themselves and their business." Those who could not be vouched for by a "respectable resident of San Antonio" and who were "unable to produce a satisfactory certificate would be required to leave the city premises immediately" (De León

1983, 51). Even in towns founded and largely populated by Mexicans and Mexican Americans, the threat of expulsion was apparent.

In the case of California, the expulsion of Mexicans from that state began not in the 1830s but almost two decades later, once gold was discovered and settlers began pouring into the area. Indeed, it was the gold rush that ultimately overwhelmed the local population, who only a few years earlier had achieved social and political hegemony vis-à-vis the local indigenous populations. Mexicans in California were expelled not only for their "disloyalty" and violent behavior but because they represented a labor pool that would compete with incoming European immigrants and Euro-American settlers. This competition was addressed by the 1851 "Foreign Miner's Tax" that was supported by a mostly male population seeking to put at a disadvantage the experienced Mexican, Chilean, and Peruvian miners who migrated with a particular modality of cultural capital that was informed by centuries of mining under Spanish colonial rule. Jean Pfaelzer's (2007, 20–24) recent study of over 200 Chinese expulsions from California notes that "Latin Americans" also became victims in this climate of "vigilante violence and repressive law," especially after the passage of the Foreign Miner's Tax. Also, the mostly male migration that came from as far away as China, Hawaii, Australia, and South America was so intense and economically competitive that large vigilante committees were easily formed in response to shifting demographics, as occurred between 1851 and 1856 in places like San Francisco. According to one student of this phenomenon, the 1856 committee "ultimately enrolled between six thousand and eight thousand men and was the largest such extralegal movement in American history" (Senkewicz 1985, 8).

Given the relative success of Chilean, Sonoran, and Peruvian miners, threats directed at those groups were not uncommon. The comandancia general of Sinaloa, for instance, pointed out that multiple ships were arriving from Alta California with passengers who had been refused entry into the gold placers of California. He pointed out that in places like San Francisco, robberies and murders were frequent and hatred of Mexicans, Spanish, and Chileans was so intense that locals behaved aggressively toward the

new arrivals. In the words of this military official, "with the greatest of violence, they impede them to reside there, they steal from them, they insult them, and they cause them to embark by force in order to make them leave that territory."⁷ When this correspondence reached the Mexican legation in Philadelphia, Minister Luis de La Rosa wrote to the U.S. secretary of state, contending that this violence in fact constituted an expulsion that required rectification.⁸

For their part, Mexican officials, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had begun to adopt colonization policies that favored return migration as a way to settle and develop the northern frontiers of the fractured republic. Numerous pieces of legislation in the Mexican Congress called for repatriates to colonize the northern frontier and assist the state's efforts to "civilize" the numerous indios barbaros who continued to reside along the newly created boundary. In this context, the expulsion of Mexicans and other Spanish-speaking migrants from the United States was seen as an opportunity. One piece of correspondence from the central government expressed hope that the governors of Sonora and Sinaloa would do "whatever possible to bring this population" into the republic by extending "credit for uncultivated lands." Moreover, if these states were unable to "cede them for free," uncultivated lands would "nevertheless be provided" later "in the form that the general Congress opportunely authorizes."⁹ Here we can see the direct correlation between these expulsions and the practical aspects of repatriating and resettling those expelled. The governor of Sonora responded in kind to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, stating, "This government will freely give of so laudable a resolution inasmuch as the particular legation of Sinaloa will permit it to do so."¹⁰ The expulsions intensified because of the continued migration of more Sonorans to the mines of California almost immediately after gold was discovered. Thus, as the northern borderland was losing its population to this migration, more calls from border governors encouraged their repatriation and resettlement along a vulnerable "Indian frontier."

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By 1855, the depopulation of Sonora was in its sixth year and was so severe that Mexican military officials began to recommend repatriation not only as a way to thwart northern migrations but also as a means of creating a buffer zone against North American secessionist designs in that area. Writing from the Ministry of War and Marine, General Manuel Díez de Bonilla suggested to the Ministry of Foreign Relations in 1855 that repatriates from Alta California would be the best colonists because of their negative experiences in that area. Bonilla pointed out to the secretary that

the President General will not see with indifference a movement that, besides naturally awakening his feelings of brotherhood, could be of great utility for our country; thus, there can certainly be no better colonists for our borders than those instructed with hard experience, as with the falsehood of encouraging promises that the Americans are used to making to those . . . found in the most intimate contact with them.¹¹

Bonilla believed that Mexico could take advantage of the fact that Mexicans had endured harsh treatment at the hands of Americans, who had enticed them with the false promise of access to the American dream. Disillusioned by their negative experiences in the United States, returning migrants would be the best colonizers for the Mexican frontier. In addition, their capacity to thrive in a desert environment made fronterizos the ideal Indian fighters. Even someone like General Austin recognized rancheros as masters of guerilla warfare. According to Stephen L. Hardin (1996, 52), "Years of bitter conflict with horse-born Comanche and other hostile tribesmen had engendered within Mexican borderlanders cunning, stealth, agility, endurance, mobility, skill with weapons, and the ability to exploit their habitat to military advantage." The use of repatriates was a policy of resettlement overlaid with a moral patina of nationalism and brotherhood.

In sum, the period from 1836 through the late 1850s saw the first mass expulsions. They began in the violent aftermath of the so-called Texas Revolution of 1836 and in the wake of the demographic occupation of what had been Mexican territory. Mexican expulsions continued in the 1840s, when Mexico tried unsuccessfully to reconquer Texas, and in the 1850s, when Mexicans were accused of colluding with freedman and African American slaves. The next period of Mexican expulsions encompasses the latter half of the nineteenth century and extends into the twentieth century; these expulsions were justified on dubious grounds similar to those of the first period. What was different in this era, however, was that the question of expulsion forced the Mexican government to deal with this once-lost population by formulating a colonization policy that would simultaneously address the need to repatriate these citizens while fortifying the frontier against further U.S. and Indian encroachment.

Mexican Expulsions during the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century

The second major wave of Mexican expulsions, from the 1880s into the early twentieth century, occurred under various pretexts. Shifting demographics continued to be of central importance in this period: the cases that I located were from Texas and California, areas that were disproportionately populated by Euro-American settlers after 1849. It is interesting to note that these two states also absorbed the greatest numbers of Mexican migrants to the United States, especially after the 1880s (González and Fernández 2003). Indeed, migration to these areas, it can be deduced, also increased the chances for expulsion from those areas where Mexicans were seen as economic, social, or political threats. Here, the expelled were either asked to leave their places of residence or threatened with violence and hanging (Gonzales-Day 2006).

An additional motivation for expulsions in this period was the fear of Mexican rebellion and revenge. The period after the end of the U.S. Civil War saw the rise of fear among whites that Mexicans would retaliate for the sins of the past. De León (1983) suggests that "even more than before, they [whites] conjured up visions of Mexicans doing to them what they were

doing to Mexicans and imagined terrors that evolved into exagger-ated fantasies far more frightening than the actual threat." Any assaults, raids, or threats, real or imagined, from the Mexican populace were usually characterized "under the rubric of 'uprisings,' 'insurgencias,' and 'riots'" (87). Although Indian and Mexican raids were frequent along the border during this period, the local inhabitants often had little to do with them.¹²

The larger context was shaped by rising anti-immigrant sentiment nationwide and especially by fear of immigrant "radicalism." The Immigration Act of 1875 was the first major law in the United States to exclude Asians; it was followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. That same year, the Immigration Act of 1882 mandated the return and exclusion of all immigrants deemed to be convicts, idiots, lunatics, or persons unable to care for themselves. Two publicized episodes in 1886 further inflamed anti-immigrant sentiment nationwide, namely, the expulsion of Chinese residents from Tacoma, Washington, and the Haymarket Affair in Chicago (Kanstroom 2007, 94–112).

Several of the cases of Mexican expulsion that I located in the Archivo Histórico Genaro Estrada at the Secretariat of Foreign Relations in Mexico City are representative of the larger pattern in this period.¹³ The first comes from Texas. On August 28, 1886, a New Orleans newspaper, the *Daily States*, published an article headlined "Mexican Raiders: Frequent Raids into Texas by Armed Bands." The article's subtitle declared, "All Mexicans Not Naturalized Ordered to Leave McCulloch County, Texas Under Pain of Death."¹⁴ According to local officials quoted in the article, Mexican raiders had crossed the border and wreaked havoc on populations as far north as McCulloch. All Mexicans who could not prove their citizenship were to be held responsible for the crimes of a few. A special dispatch from Austin stated,

The citizens of McCulloch County recently adopted resolutions ordering all Mexicans not American citizens to leave the country within five days, under penalty of death. Every Mexican was served with a notice, and left within the time specified. Sheriff Gilder, of Kinney County, which borders on the Rio Grande, has called the attention of the Adjunct General to the frequent raids of late into Texas by armed Mexican bands of Mexicans, sometimes numbering over

forty men, who have driven away a number of cattle and horses. The state will order Rangers there immediately.¹⁵

The reason for this warning for Mexicans to leave, according to the U.S. official who was questioned, was that a "Mexican Greaser" had recently murdered an officer without cause or provocation. When pressured by the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations to defend this order, Wellington Shan, the county clerk of McCulloch County, responded to Shad W. Smith, the county clerk of Bexar County:

You doubtless refer to a local disturbance at this place, at which a Mexican Greaser, brutally and without cause shot down one of our officers. Our citizens held a meeting and requested the den of Mexicans, located at this place to leave, but no threats were made. There is no doubt but that some of them are participant criminals in the shooting. No animosity is held or has been exhibited to any Mexican or anyone else, in this county that obeys the law. As to the resolutions I have never seen them, and am unable to find a copy. . . . We have many Mexicans working in this county at this time, and they are as safe from violence as any other citizen of the county. We had located at this place a regular den of Greasers that were a constant nuisance. They were constantly gambling, drinking, and disturbing good citizens living in the vicinity. And they the very worst of the class made it a rendezvous, or headquarters when they were passing through the county. As far as I am able to ascertain our citizens have violated no law—merely requested these bad people to leave and made no threats whatsoever.¹⁶

Shan's contradictory statements did not satisfy those in the Mexican consulate who sought to investigate the case further, despite the lack of additional evidence. Shan maintains in his extensive and emotional response to the Bexar County officials that "No animosity is held or has been exhibited to any Mexican or anyone else, in this county that obeys the law. As to the resolutions I have never seen them, and am unable to find a copy." His anger over the killing of a police officer is obvious, yet he is still able to distinguish between those Mexicans who obey the law and the "Greaser" who "brutally and without cause shot down one of our officers." The Mexican consulate, for its part, investigated the case and sought to locate the victims of these expulsions but with very little success. In the end, the case was closed. This expulsion, one might then conclude, was simply propelled by fear of more violence.

At a national level, the 1891 Immigration Act and the 1892 Geary Law called for more immigration controls and for the continued deportation of "undesirables," Chinese workers, polygamists, and those likely to become a public charge (Kanstroom 2007, 115–16). Thus encouraged, some citizens decided to take matters into their own hands. In the middle of March 1891, the Mexican consulate recorded the expulsion of forty to fifty Mexicans from Cisco, Texas, this time at the hands of "White Caps" who threatened members of the Mexican community with lynching. The White Cap movement, which arose in central Texas during the 1890s, was so named because its members usually covered their lynching victims with white hoods before throwing a noose around the neck prior to hanging (Carrigan 2004). In several Texas counties, White Caps were known to have "mailed notices to planters warning them not to rent to Mexicans and blacks" or demanding that landowners "discharge their Mexican hired hands . . . or suffer the consequences" (De León 1983, 102). According to two newspaper accounts of the Cisco expulsion, between fifteen and twenty armed White Caps threatened to harm these individuals if they did not leave Eastland County and migrate south within twenty-four hours.¹⁷ The newspaper *El Domingo*, in an article titled "Expulsión de Mexicanos," published on March 22, 1891, noted that "With much frequency we are seeing that the Mexicans in Texas are victims of incalculable abuses, and nevertheless our consuls do very little or nothing in favor of our compatriots that are insulted in their interests and dignity." It appeared that neither U.S. nor Mexican authorities were capable of thwarting this particular expulsion or assisting the victims.¹⁸

These expulsions did not go unnoticed, and many concerned communities actively protested these outrages. "Latin American" communities of this area called for public hearings into the Cisco expulsion and sought the assistance of both the U.S. and Mexican governments. According to *El Eco Liberal* of San Diego, Texas, the announcements came accompanied with the words "alerta pueblo." The message printed in that newspaper is worth quoting at length:

This insult palpably demonstrates that the day draws near in which our cousins, feeling strong enough to make a

racial distinction and spurn the people of Latin America, propose to treat us as racial inferiors. We denounce such conduct as despicable [. . .] . We call on national U.S. citizens to stage public demonstrations to make known their indignation regarding such conduct toward our brothers in Cisco, asking at the same time the return of those families to the town of Cisco, Texas. For their protection we demand the immediate arrival of sufficient federal bayonets in order to ensure respect for the law, and that all American citizens be declared equal among equals. On the part of the subjects of Mexico, their government will know how to request polite satisfaction in turn. All the towns in the United States will do well to call for public meetings and through their agreements express their indignation regarding such outrages against our nationals.¹⁹

The authors of this document contested the idea that some considered them an "inferior race" that meekly endured this violence, and they appealed to both Mexican and U.S. citizens to respect the laws. The reasons behind the Cisco expulsions are never made clear in the documentation; neither the newspapers nor the archival records offer any explanation. In the end, despite the protests, forty to fifty Mexicans migrated southward.

Elsewhere workers were expelled prior to payday. In Redlands, California, for example, Mexican fruit pickers were told by the sheriff and local marshal that unless they left their homes within three days, they would be arrested under the Geary Law. According to the newspaper *El Monitor Mexicano*, this law, originally intended to expel Chinese, was now being applied to Mexicans. In this case, twenty-five men from a frutería had presented themselves to their employer and demanded two weeks of back pay. The patrón answered that he did not have any money to pay them, and if they did not continue working he would be unable to pay them. These men then took their grievance to the authorities, with the result that the local sheriff and marshal arrived at the encampment and ordered everyone to leave the country within three days or face arrest. Some of these individuals, the paper noted, were in poor health, and a number of their spouses were on dieta, which suggests that they were pregnant and could not possibly move. Moreover, these were family men who were enganchados—they had been "hooked" by agents and enticed to cross the border and work in California. The letter published by the newspaper

was signed by two of the expelled Mexicans, Ignacio Ronquillo and Albino Jiménez.²⁰ Clearly, the threat of expulsion here is tied to the employer's refusal to pay migrants their rightful wages, circumstances that would become more and more frequent in the last days of the century.

By the turn of the century, with the revolutionary atmosphere intensifying along the Mexican border because of several revolts, the expulsion of Mexicans became more closely linked to economic issues than to demographic issues or concerns about civil unrest. Although the revolution provoked by Catarino Garza in 1892 aroused the ire of the Euro-American populace, it was the Mexican Revolution that ultimately caused a shift in the manner in which expulsions were carried out (De León 1983, 101–2). For example, the deportation of hundreds of Mexican workers to the border town of Ciudad Juárez in 1907 was due primarily to an early economic depression in the United States; by this period, expulsion was being labeled as a deportation or as a ban against immigration.²¹ During the financial crisis of 1908–10, according to the noted Mexican historian Friedrich Katz (1998, 49), "The United States proclaimed a ban on Mexican immigration, and more than 2,000 Mexicans were given railway tickets by the companies to El Paso, where they crossed into Chihuahua, swelling the ranks of the unemployed." The movement southward, however, was only a trickle compared to the millions of immigrants who would soon cross into the United States, fleeing the violence and havoc of the Mexican Revolution, an exodus that would continue into the 1920s.

Conclusion

After the Mexican Revolution, deportations and other expulsions continued throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Currently, we are witnessing yet another period of deportation raids that have as their objective the forced removal of mostly Mexican migrants who do not have a history of criminality. Most striking is the continued political motivation behind these recent deportation raids and the new discourse of internal terrorism that is being attached to them. After agents raided the meatpacking plant of Swift and Co., Secretary Michael Chertoff of the Department of Homeland Security told the media

that the deportations would show Congress the need for "stronger border security, effective interior enforcement and a temporary worker program" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2006). A recent article by Tom Barry (2009), director of the Center for International Policy's TransBorder Project, maintains that "categorizing immigrants as national security threats gave the government's flailing immigration law enforcement and border control operations a new unifying logic that has propelled the immigrant crackdown forward." In other words, the traditional pretexts used to justify raids, concerned in part with economics and labor, are now supplemented by a new explanation focused on national security following the events of 9/11.

With respect to internal threats to the "nation," the major change I see over the past 170 years of Mexican expulsions has to do with what anthropologist Leo R. Chavez (2008) refers to as the "Latino threat narrative." Anti-immigrant rhetoric has long been a staple of U.S. literature and political life, but only in the past decade have we read books in which congressmen, presidential candidates, and university professors, among others, express their fear of continued Mexican migration and decry the potential reconquista of the U.S. Southwest (Buchanan 2002; Hanson 2003; Huntington 2004; Tancredo 2006). Demographic changes in the United States are contributing to a regeneration of anti-immigrant sentiment and providing the structural context in which a renewed wave of expulsions is occurring.

The background to this wave of deportations was the desire of President George W. Bush's administration to implement a guest worker program. According to David Bacon (2007), "The Southern Poverty Law Center's recent report, *Close to Slavery*, shows that current guest worker programs allow labor contractors to maintain blacklists of workers who work slowly or demand their rights. Public interest lawyers spend years in court, trying to get back wages for cheated immigrants. Meanwhile, the Department of Labor almost never decertifies contractors who abuse workers." This scenario harks back to previous years, when Mexican workers were expelled because employers refused to pay wages to those workers. In this regard, I partly agree with Bacon when he argues that the real driving force behind these current immi-

gration raids is political pressure from Washington. I would only add that economic, human, and political factors are not mutually exclusive and usually work in tandem. A recent newspaper report, in fact, suggested that ICE officials were pressured to produce arrests of noncriminal "aliens" in an effort to meet quotas established by federal officials. According to the piece, "federal agents who arrested 24 Latinos during a 2007 raid at a Southeast Baltimore 7-Eleven felt pressure from supervisors to round up possible illegal immigrants to 'produce statistics,' according to an internal U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement report" (Calvert 2009).

In May 2008, federal agents from ICE raided a kosher meat processing plant in Postville, Iowa, targeting more than 300 mostly Central American workers. The *New York Times* (Saulny 2008) called the action the "biggest workplace immigration raid this year." The *Associated Press* (2008) followed suit with a piece titled "Iowa Immigration Raid Largest Ever." Absent from those reports were comparative figures from the mass expulsions of the 1930s, the 1950s, and those of the current era; according to Mexican estimates, 1 million people were deported in 2007 alone (Román 2007). Recent statistics from ICE report 387,000 deportations in 2009, with a goal of 400,000 removals for 2010 (Hsu and Becker 2010). These recent news articles are devoid of historical memory; they portray the contemporary raids as anomalies and events never before seen or heard of in U.S. history. These public spectacles are imagined as aberrations that are not in tune with American ideals, yet the migrants in these raids were victimized not only by a failed U.S. immigration policy but also by irresponsible governments in Mexico and Central America. Moreover, they were victimized by the employers who paid them low wages under substandard work conditions. This marginalization, to return to Appadurai's (2006, 46) articulations, requires a level of "unearthing some histories and burying others." Here the present is conveniently burying the past in order to sanction thinking unhistorically about those uncomfortable episodes that call into question our national mythologies.

This essay seeks to historicize these contemporary deportation raids by discussing a number of cases of expulsion culled from Mexican archives during the

nineteenth century. It refutes contemporary narratives that attempt to bury the past in order to preserve an image of the United States as an "immigrant nation"—a fairy tale to which Behdad and others have alluded (Behdad 2005; Johnson 2004; Kanstroom 2007; Spickard 2007). Mexicans and Mexican Americans have been the victims of the largest mass expulsions in U.S. history, and they continue to be scapegoats in contemporary contexts. A recent study by the Migration Policy Institute noted that "almost three quarters (73 percent) of the individuals apprehended by FOTs [Fugitive Operations Teams] from 2003 through February 2008 had no criminal conviction" (Mendelson, Strom, and Wishnie 2009, 11). This fact should remind the United States of its failed national project; or, to cite Appadurai (2006) one final time, these expulsions are "marks of failure and coercion." Indeed, "They are embarrassments to any state-sponsored image of national purity and state fairness," especially when one considers who is being deported (42). As such, these contemporary deportations speak to a failed national project that reveals the national myth of the United States as a "nation of immigrants" to be little more than a convenient fantasy.

Notes

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1. This work builds on earlier historiographic work on nineteenth-century deportations by Arnoldo De León (1983), Richard Griswold del Castillo (1979), David Montejano (1987), Leonard Pitt (1971), and Ronnie C. Taylor (1934).
2. "Carta de Francisco Prianzo Martínez de Nueva Orleans a Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores en Filadelfia," July 17, 1836, Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (hereafter cited as AHSRE), L-E-1078 (13), 118–19. My translation.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "Carta de M. E. de Gorostiza y Señor Don Joaquín M. de Castillo y Lanzas," August 5, 1836, AHSRE, L-E-1078 (13), 122–24. My translation.
6. A number of Tejano elites also owned slaves, so this perceived collusion, to the extent that it existed, was certainly not universal. For some examples, see Raúl A. Ramos (2008, 92), Andrés Tijerina (1994, 109–11, 115–18), and Ronnie C. Tyler (1972).
7. "Oficio de la Comandancia General de Sinaloa a la Secretaría de Marina y Guerra, 27 Agosto 1849," Archivo Histórico Militar Mexicano, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, XI/481.3/2972.
8. "Carta de Legación de México en Filadelfia a Secretario de Estado de los Estados Unidos," October 19, 1849, AHSRE, LE-105.
9. "Se pone en conocimiento de Estados Unidos que los españoles, mexicanos y chilenos son ultrajados en la Alta California, viéndose obligados a emigrar," AHSRE, 6-17-41
10. "Carta de Gobierno de Sinaloa a Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores," September 22, 1849, AHSRE, LE-1095, ff. 186–87.
11. "Oficio de la Secretaría de Relaciones a la de Gobernación para que se facilite la inmigración de mexicanos residentes en California, EUA, con destino al departamento de Sonora, por no gozar de sus derechos, Año de 1855," Archivo Histórico Militar Mexicano, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, XI/481.3/5105.
12. On the problem of frontier raiding by both U.S. and Mexican bandits, see Comisión Pesquisadora (1873) and U.S. Congress (1876).
13. The following is not an exhaustive analysis. It provides merely a small sample of the cases I reviewed in a number of archives located in Mexico City, coupled with a number of secondary sources that also narrate this period. A more quantitative historical study that combed through local, municipal, and legal archives would probably reveal a larger pattern of these practices.
14. "Mexican Raiders: Frequent Raids into Texas by Armed Bands," Daily States, August 28, 1886, in "Orden de Expulsión de los Mexicanos Residentes en el Condado de McCulloch, Texas, 1886," AHSRE, 17-21-100.
15. Ibid.
16. "Letter from Wellington Shan to Shad W. Smith, September 13, 1886," in "Orden de Expulsión de los Mexi-

canos Residentes en el Condado de McCulloch, Texas, 1886," AHSRE, 17-21-100.

17. "Expulsión de Mexicanos de un punto llamado Cisco, en Texas, 1891," AHSRE, 18-27-15.

18. In a few cases, the Mexican state intervened actively and positively to gain recognition of the expulsions. At the very least, the intervention by a governmental apparatus appeared to have been enough to quell more serious violence against the Mexican populace, as in the Cisco case of 1891. See "Orden de Expulsión de los Mexicanos Residentes en el Condado de McCulloch, Texas, 1886," AHSRE, 17-21-100, and also "Expulsión de Mexicanos de Redlands, California por Autoridades Americanas, Según El Monitor Mexicano de Los Ángeles, 1893," AHSRE, 18-27-34.

19. "Expulsión de Mexicanos de un punto llamado Cisco, en Texas, 1891," AHSRE, 18-27-15. My translation.

20. "Expulsión de Mexicanos de Redlands, California por Autoridades Americanas, Según El Monitor Mexicano de Los Ángeles, 1893," AHSRE, 18-27-34.

21. "Familias Repatriadas de Los Ángeles a El Paso, Texas, 1907," Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo Gobernación, 1a 907-8-(1)-(1). On the repatriation of Mexican workers in 1910, see "Emigración de Jornaleros Mexicanos, 1910," AHSRE, 18-25-72.

Archives

AGN: Archivo General de la Nación, México (General National Archives, Mexico)

AHMM: Archivo Histórico Militar Mexicano, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (Historical Archive of the Mexican Military, Secretariat of National Defense)

AHSRE: Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, México (Historical Archive of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, Mexico)

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