

Review Essays | Ensayos de Reseña

Borderlands Narratives: Contours of Life in the Southwest Borderlands

Book Review Essay by Evan C. Rothera

- *Arredondo: Last Spanish Ruler of Texas and Northeastern New Spain*, by Bradley Folsom. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017.
- *Borderlands of Slavery: The Struggle over Captivity and Peonage in the American Southwest*, by William S. Kiser. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.
- *Wars for Empire: Apaches, the United States, and the Southwest Borderlands*, by Janne Lahti. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017.
- *Soldiers in the Southwest Borderlands, 1848-1886*, edited by Janne Lahti. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017.
- *The Other California: Land, Identity, and Politics on the Mexican Borderlands*, by Verónica Castillo-Muñoz. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Borderlands, the contested spaces between nations and empires, are often violent places.¹ The five volumes discussed in this review understand this important point and the authors emphasise the harshness of life in borderlands. Soldiers played an important role, but non-military settlers, civilians, and indigenous people often proved faster and more willing to reach for violent solutions to problems than the agents of the state did. Some borderlanders became inured to violence. Others broke under the strain of excessive violence, directed either at them or by them. In sum, borderlands life featured challenges posed by unforgiving environments, cultural contacts, international borders, and the frictions that inevitably occurred when nations, empires, tribes, and other groups of people collided with each other.

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All five volumes demonstrate subtlety about analysing violence. For one, violence was never monolithic, one-directional, or uncontested. In the colonial period, the Spanish frequently paid for peace with indigenous people by offering them tribute. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the United States adopted policies of containment and appeasement against the Apaches. In both cases, empires and nations understood that indigenous actors held advantages in borderland conflicts and that it was better to pay for peace. On the other hand, in the extermination era, when many people wanted to wipe indigenous people off the face of the earth, some powerful voices argued against annihilation and in favour of reservations. In addition, a few short decades after the U.S. War with Mexico, soldiers from both nations found incentives to work together to stop raiding and pacify the borderlands.

Still, to reduce the story of borderlands life to violent episodes misses other important themes. As these books indicate, life in the borderlands was also a story of economic development and modernisation. In Baja California, entrepreneurs carved green spaces out of the unforgiving landscape. However, in so doing, they produced discontent among people who felt their lives were changing in unfathomable ways. In addition, distance and communication became major problems and led to tenuous control of regions by national states and people feeling abandoned. Borderlands played a critical role in narratives of empire, both in terms of collapse and development. They also spoke to burgeoning state power and contestation. In sum, life in the borderlands was messy, complex, and defied simple categorisation. The volumes discussed in this review do much toward explaining why.

The example of Arredondo²

Miguel Hidalgo, Vicente Guerrero, and Agustín de Iturbide overshadow Joaquín de Arredondo in the scholarly literature about Mexican independence, as well as in popular opinion.³ Nevertheless, Arredondo was one of the most consequential royalist officers in the twilight years of New Spain's existence. As the commandant general of the Eastern Internal Provinces, the area composing today's Texas, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas, he spent nearly ten years protecting a large portion of New Spain's borderlands from revolutionaries, both home-grown and foreign. To do this, he usually resorted to violence. However, as Bradley Folsom comments, "although his harsh methods often made Arredondo unpopular among the people he ruled, they successfully prevented the eastern provinces from falling to revolutionaries in the Americas" (p. 5). This was the central paradox of Arredondo's life: the violence he employed proved vital in staving off revolutions from within and without. However, his methods left borderland communities vulnerable to Indian raids that weakened Spain and, later, Mexico. Arredondo's life and career illustrate the unravelling of Spain's New World Empire and highlight persistent issues

such as Indian raiding that confronted both Mexico and the United States as nations emerged and international boundaries solidified.

Arredondo's service to the Spanish Crown began shortly after the commencement of the French Revolution. In 1802, he received orders to travel to New Spain and defend Veracruz. When Napoleon placed his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne, insurgency exploded throughout the Americas. Therefore, rather than defending Veracruz against foreign invasion, Arredondo had to prevent revolution from ripping New Spain apart. Viceroy Francisco Javier Venegas initially ordered Arredondo to gather five hundred men to subdue an uprising in Texas. However, when royalists regained control of Texas, Arredondo decided to recapture Nuevo Santander. He seized the town of Aguayo, punished revolutionists, and scored a series of victories throughout Nuevo Santander against insurgents. "By implementing political reform, taking punitive measures against rebel sympathisers, and maintaining the loyalty of his soldiers," Folsom asserts, Arredondo "effectively prevented a resurgence of revolution in Nuevo Santander" (p. 61).

By 1813, two major centres of rebel activity remained: western New Spain and Texas. Texas had always been a problem because it was "too big, too hot, too poor, and too far from Mexico City for Spain to control it effectively" (p. 69). A polyglot army of European exiles, U.S. citizens, and residents of New Spain threatened Texas. Arredondo routed his opponents at the Battle of Medina, "by far, the bloodiest battle in Texas history, with fatalities outnumbering those of the much more famous Alamo and San Jacinto battles combined" (p. 95). He considered most Texans traitors and unleashed savage repression. Although he successfully rid Texas of revolutionary activity, he also stripped the region of labourers. Disarming the population, furthermore, made isolated frontier communities even more vulnerable. Lipan Apaches took advantage of this state of affairs and raided with impunity. Indian raiding proved a persistent problem and, as Janne Lahti's *War for Empire* demonstrates, the United States confronted the same issue later in the century. In sum, "although Arredondo would never again set foot on Texas soil after 1814, his actions in the region in 1813 and 1814 and his policies as commandant general would continue to influence Texas well into the future" (p. 108).

After leaving Texas, Arredondo made Monterrey the new capital of the Eastern Internal Provinces. Problematically, in response to events in Europe, the Spanish government stopped paying tribute to the Comanches and shifted soldiers elsewhere. This, in combination with Arredondo's punitive methods, increased Indian raiding.⁴ As Mexico and the United States later discovered, much to their dismay, fighting mounted Indians often proved frustrating and futile. Furthermore, Arredondo took defensive precautions in response to filibustering in the United States.⁵ This did not stop Francisco Xavier Mina from invading New Spain, although Arredondo defeated insurgents at Fort Soto la Marina. The final years of his rule proved rocky. Spanish authorities in Mexico City reduced his authority. Furthermore, once insurgents gained the upper

hand, Arredondo's bid to change sides failed. He fled New Spain and spent the rest of his life in exile in Cuba. In sum, Arredondo's "methodological use of violence, intimidation, and political jockeying prevented Americans and revolutionaries from taking the eastern provinces until 1821" (p. 233). However, his use of violence and intimidation, not to mention his adherence to the royalist cause, meant that people, if they remembered him at all, saw him as a villain. Still, Folsom cautions, if northeastern New Spain was a frontier of terror, Arredondo did not hold the monopoly on brutality. Readers will appreciate his nuanced treatment of Arredondo. He is not interested in analysing whether Arredondo was a good or a bad person and does not avoid Arredondo's brutal treatment of the vanquished. Rather, he explains "what Arredondo did and why he did it" and leaves "moral judgement to the readers" (p. 9).

Debt peonage and captive slavery: New Mexico in the U.S. imagination

People in the United States understood Arredondo's violent behaviour in northeastern New Spain as attributable to his Spanish ancestry. Many people in the nineteenth century considered Spain backwards and brutal. For centuries, Protestants had developed the Black Legend of Spanish Catholic cruelty. In a similar manner, many people saw Spanish systems of unfree labour as similarly alien. William Kiser's *Borderlands of Slavery* analyses two of these systems – captive slavery and debt peonage – in the area that became New Mexico. While human captivity predated the Spanish, "multi-ethnic slavery institutions took on new importance in the Southwest" (p. 2) after the Spanish conquest. The captive trade involved raiding by Spanish colonists and Indian tribes and developed over several centuries. Peonage, on the other hand, "bolstered the labour force in a province experiencing gradual economic and demographic expansion" (p. 13). In sum, these systems of involuntary labour were deeply entrenched in local society. He contends that the Thirteenth Amendment did not end slavery in the United States because "debt peonage and even captive slavery outlived the Civil War, often to the shock and consternation of the nation's champions of freedom" (p. 15).

New Mexico's systems of unfree labour played an important role in national discussions after the U.S. War with Mexico about the territory the U.S. took during the conflict. In other words, "regional forms of slavery underwent a rapid politicisation at the federal level" (p. 25). Despite a deep-seated moral aversion to chattel slavery's expansion to New Mexico, abolitionists rarely advocated banning peonage and captive slavery. Indeed, most people "did not view them with the same abhorrence as they did black slavery" (p. 41). People's prejudices dictated their analysis. They saw Arredondo's violence as emblematic of a flawed Iberian character and did not acknowledge that U.S. settlers and soldiers often used the same types of violence. They believed debt peonage and captive slavery particular to New Mexicans and distinct from chattel slavery as practiced in the U.S. New Mexicans themselves held ambiva-

lent attitudes about chattel slavery, but “vehemently defended their right to retain captives and peons” (p. 52).

Kiser offers fine-grained discussions of captive slavery and debt peonage. He argues that people understated the extent of captivity in New Mexico. Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, New Mexicans and Indians raided frequently with the intent to seize captives. Masters “placed a monetary value on their Indian servants, whom they sold and traded with greater frequency than the indebted peons being similarly held in bondage” (p. 60). After the arrival of U.S. soldiers in 1846, and territorial officials several years later, captive slavery began to wane. Soldiers strove to quell raiding and officials, both civilian and military, ransomed people in captivity. Ransoming captives, however, sent the wrong message and encouraged raiding to seize captives for ransom. Both Indians and New Mexicans resisted attempts to reclaim captives and the captives themselves often refused to return. Decades of bad faith between Indians and New Mexicans, which began long before Arredondo’s time, usually doomed peace agreements. As for debt peonage, U.S. conquest saw “the implementation of American jurisprudence and the imposition of ideological principles regarding servitude and free labour that counteracted previous Mexican laws” (p. 89). Nevertheless, the New Mexico territorial legislature passed a seemingly benign peon law in 1851 that actually upheld lifetime bondage.

Problematically, in the late 1850s, the territorial legislature passed anti-black codes “that placed New Mexico within the rhetorical and political orbit of Southern interests” (p. 111). Some black slaves, the property of military officers, resided in New Mexico. Thus, while attempting to end captive slavery, the army proved complicit in introducing chattel slavery to the territory. New Mexico’s slave code became a political liability because it “placed the infant territory at the forefront of public controversy” (p. 126). The territorial legislature repealed the slave code in 1861, but, critically, failed to mention debt peonage and captivity. In other words, the legislature denounced chattel slavery but not peonage or captivity. Still, even if the repeal of the slave code proved a halfway measure, it indicated alternative slaveries could not endure permanently. Nevertheless, New Mexicans fiercely resisted changes to peonage and captivity, thus demonstrating the deeply entrenched nature of these forms of unfree labour. Although Congress passed the Peon Law in 1867 outlawing debt bondage, peonage and captive slavery endured until the 1870s. Kiser offers compelling analysis of how unfree labour in New Mexico influenced the United States, although he might have spent more time exploring captivity and debt peonage in the period before the U.S. arrival.

The U.S. Forty Years’ War

In *Borderlands of Slavery*, Kiser emphasises rhetorical wars about captive slavery and debt peonage and focuses on national and territorial politicians, judges, and military officers. Janne Lahti’s *Wars for Empire*, on the other hand,

discusses of one of the borderland wars waged during this period: the U.S.-Apache Wars. His analysis of the forty-year conflict complements Folsom's coverage of Arredondo's attempts to subdue Indian raiding. Lahti's book demonstrates that the difficulty of curtailing raiding intensified in the intervening decades. Indeed, men with better weapons and technology than Arredondo possessed faced similar challenges about fighting a highly mobile enemy force. He skilfully dissects "the strands and shapes of violence comprising this splintered and intricate encounter between the United States and the Apaches" (6). Furthermore, he pays careful attention to the complexities of people's attitudes about Apaches and other Indians. Some people's perceptions of racial superiority and desire for land led them to advocate extermination. Others, acting from many different motivations, believed Indians could be "civilised." Thus, Anglos were as much at war over their own ideas about Apaches as they were with the Apaches themselves.

Lahti begins by analysing different elements of U.S. and Apache cultures. Each group had a very different conception of war. For many Anglos, war referred to "conflicts against and between European powers and their offspring states" (p. 22). However, "direct control over subject peoples, possession of new lands, and annihilation of enemy forces were largely irrelevant to the Apaches" (29). The Apaches did not form a monolithic political entity, so raiding and warfare varied tremendously over time. The physical differences between U.S. soldiers and Apache raiders proved important.⁶ Enlisted men in the U.S. Army performed a great deal of labour, but "this labour did not necessarily improve the soldiers' conditioning" (p. 39). Indeed, "the military's failure to build a systematic exercise regimen for its troops would prove a serious handicap when pitted against Apache fighters who had been exposed to a demanding, versatile, and systematic workout system from childhood" (p. 40). Considering the physical regimen of Apaches, soldiers operated at a disadvantage. When faced with failure after failure, soldiers faced hard questions about their capabilities. Rather than blame themselves, many blamed the environment and likened Apaches to cowards who refused to fight fair.

In outlining the course of the U.S.-Apache Wars, Lahti explores four themes: containment, extermination, internment, and insurgency. Violence between Indians and settlers was certainly not new. Arredondo, had he been alive, could have said as much to Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, when Kearny's men arrived in New Mexico in 1846. Anglos initially derided Mexicans for their failure to suppress Indian raids, but before long began to question their own abilities. The U.S. waged a war of containment against the Apaches in the 1850s. However, "unreliable diplomacy" and a "propensity for bursts of violence" by the new conquerors left Apaches "anguished and desperate" (p. 105). Thus, the government experimented with diplomatic and military means, but their policies often proved inconsistent. Apaches probably understood agreements with Anglos as payments for peace. During this period, the balance of power favoured the Apaches, who could have "paralysed the over-

land travel and driven off the small mining enterprises" (p. 125). Appeasement and containment thus seemed the best policies.

Things changed dramatically in the 1860s when many people embraced extermination and eradication. This likely occurred because of the U.S. Civil War and the proliferation of men in arms.⁷ General James H. Carleton called for "numerous fast-moving columns whose members would push to the limits of their endurance" (p. 127). Although never enacted, Carleton's plan testified to the ferocity of this particular borderland war. That said, subtleties existed. Carleton refused to condone tactics practiced by many civilians such as "intentional slaughter of non-combatants, poisoning of Apache food, chicanery, and massacres during diplomatic meets" (128). In sum, Carleton "favoured merciless straightforward subjugation of the enemy, pure destruction without chicanery" (p. 146). Civilians like King Woolsey, on the other hand, used strychnine to kill Apaches. Carleton disliked Woolsey's tactics, but, nevertheless, Woolsey "was commended by Anglo society in Arizona" (p. 158).

Many Anglos believed the borderland wars would end in annihilation. However, because diplomacy became prominent again, the result proved to be internment rather than extermination. Diplomacy and negotiations involved placing Indians on reservations, like General Carleton's ill-fated Bosque Redondo. In addition, General George Crook "shied away from much of the rhetoric and methods of the 1860s" (p. 177) and the Army increasingly relied on Apache recruits. As he discusses internment, Lahti also analyses insurgency. The presence of the international border created problems because Indians could move across the line with relative ease. U.S. and Mexican soldiers, on the other hand, knew that crossing the line risked a diplomatic incident. Sometimes soldiers cooperated with each other and the two governments eventually hammered out an agreement that allowed troops in hot pursuit to cross the border. Anglo fears of an all-out Apache uprising were a chimera. In reality, Apache raids were "the acts of a militarily proficient people driven to desperate measures by the one-sided and confusing policies of an imperial power" (p. 199). Nevertheless, as the U.S. government exerted control over the rest of the country, "the continual fighting in the Southwest began to look more important and more embarrassing" (p. 203). Geronimo, in particular, provoked widespread fear among Anglos. Crook's successor, General Nelson Miles, understood that "the only way to guarantee an end to the U.S.-Apache struggle was the removal of all Chiricahuas as far away from Arizona as possible" (p. 236). This is exactly what happened, although some people would have preferred executing rather than exiling Geronimo. Lahti's detailed and nuanced study provides an excellent overview of the U.S.-Apache Wars and their place in the development of the U.S. as an imperial power.

Many borderland wars

Where Lahti's *Wars for Empire* analyses the U.S.-Apache Wars specifically, his edited volume *Soldiers in the Southwest Borderlands* offers biographies of ten soldiers to discuss borderlands warfare more generally. Taken as a whole, the essays explore common soldier experiences in the Southwest borderlands from the end of the U.S. War with Mexico, through the U.S. Civil War, and the Indian Wars. Borderland soldiers generally focused "less on long-term political outcomes and more on issues that had direct bearing on their daily life" (p. 6). In addition, they "confronted various peoples of different ethnicities whose cultures, attitudes, and ways of life they sometimes found difficult to comprehend" (p. 7). The contributors to this volume prefer common soldiers to leaders, because scholars often overlook the former. Some of these men were illiterate and few left extensive paper collections. Thus, the contributors had to use an array of sources to piece together narratives of their lives. Folsom's *Arredondo* also faced the same challenge of writing biography when the subject did not leave many sources. In sum, these borderlands studies demonstrate how careful scholars can offer illuminating insights about people who left few archival traces.

Borderland soldiers had staggeringly diverse experiences. For instance, before Santiago Brito became "a miner, freighter, and pioneer of the southwest," he was "a soldier of the borderlands" (p. 13). Brito, a soldier in the Mexican Presidio of Janos in the 1840s and 1850s, understood first-hand the cycles of revenge and retaliation between Mexicans and Indians.⁸ He fought Apaches on several occasions, an important reminder that both Mexico and the U.S. engaged in conflicts with indigenous people. Brito moved to the U.S. after the disbandment of his company, although "borderlands war was still never far away" (p. 30). Louis Geck, of Poland, also "experienced the rigors of borderlands military life" (p. 35). Geck served in the 1840s and early 1850s and participated in numerous expeditions against the Apaches. That said, he "did not have much to show in the way of battles, victories, or personal glory, as Apaches still enjoyed a high level of independence and remained a powerful force throughout southern New Mexico" (p. 47).⁹ After leaving the army, Geck became a merchant and later got in trouble for supporting Confederate occupiers in New Mexico in 1861-1862.

If Brito and Geck received a taste of military life in the 1840s and 1850s, other men joined the army during the U.S. Civil War. Homobono Carabajal, a Nuevomexicano, enlisted in the New Mexico Volunteers to repel the rebel invasion of New Mexico.¹⁰ Many Anglos disliked the New Mexico Volunteers and blamed them for the Union defeat at Valverde. Carabajal seems to have suffered from acute homicidal mania and killed one of his fellow soldiers. "Whether the borderlands violence he had participated in triggered Carabajal to insanity and murder or not," Jerry Thompson comments, "it would seem plausible to suggest that his ordeals as a borderlands soldier at least contributed to

the decline of his mental state" (p. 72). For Anglo Alonzo Ickis, on the other hand, "the Southwest borderlands were foreign places to be conquered in the name of the Union, and thus defended from Confederate invasion" (p. 77).¹¹ Ickis treated the New Mexico Volunteers with barely disguised contempt. Where borderlands violence likely broke Carabajal's mind, Ickis saw battlefield violence as a way to prove himself. Anglo Alonzo Davis, on the other hand, enlisted in the California Volunteers.¹² Davis's wartime experiences differed somewhat from those of Carabajal and Ickis because "most of the California men were practical miners, and their interests naturally turned to the region's mineral resources" (p. 106). None apparently spent more time and energy prospecting than Davis did. He became a booster of the region and wrote newspaper articles extolling the resources of the Southwest borderlands.

Five soldiers joined the army after the U.S. Civil War. Harry McConnell, like many other soldiers, did not have many chances to fight Indians. Indeed, McConnell participated in one violent engagement, which demonstrates that even during the extermination period, many soldiers saw little combat. McConnell's story suggests "that even among the violence of the wars against the Indians, Reconstruction, and a turbulent borderlands, many – probably most – Americans devoted the majority of their lives to the quest for order and the promise of a settled, comfortable life" (p. 131). George Goldsby, on the other hand, did not find a settled, comfortable life. In fact, he lived a "borderless life that defied nineteenth-century understandings of race and identity" (p. 138). Goldsby, an African American, served in a white regiment during the U.S. Civil War and in a black regiment in Indian Territory after the war. After several cowboys assaulted him in a local tavern near Fort Concho, Texas, he rallied some of his fellow soldiers, marched them to the bar, and engaged the cowboys in a shootout. Goldsby subsequently deserted and became a frontier myth. Frederic Remington wrote about him and some people believed Goldsby fled to Mexico and became Pancho Villa. In sum, "in an existence filled with border crossings of one kind or another, violence remained his only true constant" (p. 155). German-born Emil Bode sympathised with Indians. He seemed mesmerised by the appearance of the Comanches and acted more like ethnologist than a soldier. Even though he saw little military action, Bode nevertheless "got a dose of frontier soldiering" (p. 172). Again, the stories of these men testify to the diversity of borderland experiences.

The volume also includes essays about Mickey Free and John Rope. Mickey Free went through many different transitions during his life. Born Feliz Télez Martínez, Western Apaches captured him when he was a young boy. Years later, he enlisted as a scout in the U.S. Army under the name Mickey Free, which referred to an Irish character in a popular novel.¹³ In his role as a scout, Free's livelihood, identity, and future depended on "assisting the U.S. Army against those Apaches who resisted reservation realities. He could not allow room for his loyalties to be misunderstood" (p. 186). John Rope, a Western Apache, was one of the captured Mickey Free's siblings. Rope, like other

Apaches, mastered rigorous fighter training, but by the time he was old enough to raid, “the traditional avenues had all been blocked by the Americans and their reservation system” (p. 199). Rope, like Mickey Free, joined the army and served as a scout. His life “attests to the complexities of borderlands violence and U.S. settler colonialism” (p. 213) because Rope did not see the world in terms of simple racial dichotomies. *Soldiers in the Southwest Borderlands* successfully utilises the biographies of ten common soldiers to illuminate four decades of borderland warfare.

Modernisation and development: Baja California as case study

The essays in *Soldiers in the Southwest Borderlands* illustrate how soldiers pursued different forms of conquest. Some fought the Apaches, but others envisioned an economic conquest based on modernisation and development. Verónica Castillo-Muñoz’s *The Other California* studies Baja California and analyses another type of borderlands development, one less reliant on overt violence and more reliant on flows of people and capital. To be sure, overt violence appears in this book. She cites examples of strong state and federal governments repressing labour organisations and groups of people. That said, her study begins in the aftermath of the U.S. War with Mexico and extends until the 1950s. This wider period allows her to think about economic development after the death of peonage and captive slavery and the cessation of the U.S.-Apache Wars.

Before the U.S. War with Mexico, Baja California was a backwater. However, this borderland quickly became an arena of conquest, migration, and settlement. U.S. investors transformed Baja California into “one of the most prosperous cotton-producing centres along the U.S.-Mexico border” (p. 11). The cost of that transformation proved steep for indigenous people caught in the middle of economic and political change. As with other borderlands residents, indigenous people developed strategies to resist and adapt. For example, although “no records exist of indigenous people challenging land sales to investors near the Mexican border, they did challenge their evictions” (p. 19). U.S. farmers and investors avidly purchased land near the Colorado River and manifested the same enthusiasm as Alonzo Davis about developing the region. In sum, her analysis reinforces the point that the buzz of activity in the borderlands, namely surveying, prospecting, mining, and agriculture, occurred on both sides of the border.

While capital changed the appearance of the borderlands, migration and intermarriage also altered local communities. Some of the other books in this review mention intermarriage, but most do not dwell on the subject at great length. Castillo-Muñoz, however, offers an extended discussion. She notes that single men, heretofore transient, began to settle more permanently and accounts for this pattern by noting, “migration and mixed-race unions contributed to the increase of permanent settlements” (p. 32). As the Mexican Revolution

increased migration to Baja California, marriage and consensual unions became vital survival strategies for indigenous and mestiza women. In addition, “marriages between Mexican women and Chinese men transformed segregated neighbourhoods assigned to Chinese bachelors into diverse Chinese Mexican communities (p. 48). Migration proved critical to the success of mining and agribusiness while intermarriage reshaped borderland communities. Borderlands migration often becomes a story of Anglos taking indigenous land and she offers a nice counterpoint to this narrative.

Problematically, as intermarriage increased, so did xenophobia and anti-Chinese sentiment.¹⁴ Unemployment, a housing shortage, and a new wave of migrant workers led to the formation of labor unions where “indigenous peoples, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans demanded access to farmland and called for restrictions on Chinese labour” (p. 53). Chinese workers formed associations to fight repression and forced deportation. Lázaro Cárdenas’s land reform and nationalism also reinforced the anti-Chinese movement. Castillo-Muñoz analyses the development of ejidos and land reform. Ejido distribution “shaped gender relations and the concept of campesino identity in the Mexicali Valley” (p. 85) and forged new ideas about masculinity and women’s roles. She also argues for a “link between the decline of agrarian subsidies and the increase in migration of Mexican farmworkers to northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest” (p. 90). As ejido production decreased elsewhere, ejidos boomed in the Mexicali Valley. Furthermore, ejido farmers enjoyed a middle-class standard of living, unlike farmers in other regions of Mexico. By 1950, Mexicali and Tijuana stood on the brink of becoming major urban centres. One could easily conclude, she comments, “that foreign investment was a catalyst for Baja California’s dramatic success. But this is only part of the story” (p. 108). In fact, intermarriage, land reform, and migration proved vital to the development of the borderlands. *The Other California* skilfully examines migration, activism, and prejudice in the development of the Baja California borderlands.

Conclusion

Borderlands are well-worth scholarly attention. This might seem self-evident, especially considering how recent political events have highlighted the continued salience of contact zones and liminal spaces between countries. Borderlands contain the roots of some persistent problems in modern life. For instance, during the twilight years of New Spain, when General Arredondo governed the Eastern Internal Provinces, people from the U.S. crossed an international border and raided into New Spain. These filibusterers were a polyglot group. Some came from Europe, others from the U.S., and still others from New Spain. Some saw the Western Hemisphere as the next theatre of revolutionary wars. Some sought material riches. Others simply looked for adventure. Once Mexico broke away from Spain, border crossing took another form and many U.S. citizens poured into Texas. This migration did not, by itself, cause

the Texas Revolution, but it played an important role. In the nineteenth century, Spain and Mexico complained about illegal immigration from the U.S.; today it is just the opposition.

After the U.S. War with Mexico, the border created by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo became a contested site. Indigenous people raided from one nation into the other, understanding that troops could not pursue them across the line without causing diplomatic problems. Bandits, both Anglo and Mexican, operated throughout this region. President Porfirio Díaz of Mexico complained that Mexican revolutionaries raised armies in the U.S. to topple his regime.¹⁵ If the U.S. presence had an impact on certain elements of borderlands life – captive slavery and debt peonage, for instance – U.S. officials, both civilian and military, quickly learned they faced many of the same problems that plagued Spanish and Mexican authorities. The books covered in this review could be subtler about their use of the word “American” – too often, they use the word to refer solely to people from the United States. Nevertheless, they do an excellent job discussing the contours of life in the borderlands and examining violence, state power, indigenous communities, migration, and economic development.

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Notes

1. For several recent studies of borderlands see James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Andrew J. Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Slavery and the Transformation of the Texas Borderland, 1800-1850* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); and George T. Díaz, *Border Contraband: A History of Smuggling across the Rio Grande* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).
2. When asked what to do with any prisoners taken at the Alamo, Antonio López de Santa Anna allegedly replied, “the example of Arredondo,” Folsom, *Arredondo* 228.
3. Case in point, a recent study of Mexican independence does not mention Arredondo. See Jamie E. Rodríguez O., “*We Are Now the True Spaniards*”: Sovereignty, Revolution, Independence, and the Emergence of the Federal Republic of Mexico, 1808–1824 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

4. See Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) and Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
5. See Edward A. Bradley, *We Never Retreat: Filibustering Expeditions into Spanish Texas, 1812-1822* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2015).
6. For excellent recent discussions of the U.S. Army during this period see Kevin Adams, *Class and Race in the Frontier Army Military Life in the West, 1870-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009) and Janne Lahti, *Cultural Constructions of Empire: The U.S. Army in Arizona and New Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).
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