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Introduction by Samuel Truett

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Introduction by Samuel Truett, University of New Mexico

A little over a decade ago, the historian of U.S. foreign relations Nathan J. Citino contemplated the significance of frontier and borderlands approaches to his field. Such histories, he wrote, “do not simply offer scholars of U.S. foreign relations another category of analysis.”¹ Instead, they carried historians to the brink of a larger transnational sensibility—a new way of historically relating the United States to other parts of the world by focusing not only on diplomatic or other state-to-state networks, but also more broadly on cultural, economic, social, and environmental entanglements. “Only those historians who leave the familiar landscapes of American historiography and venture into the terra incognita of other literatures,” Citino argued, might fully comprehend these broader horizons, and thereby “recognize how unexceptional the American experience truly is.”²

Eleven years later, these words seem remarkably prescient. The field of borderlands history has moved into the mainstream, building precisely on the promise that Citino identified in his now-landmark essay. More and more historians are taking the plunge, drifting beyond the borders of their ‘native’ imperial or national histories, engaging strange literatures, learning new languages, and leaving familiar centrist bearings behind. In its attention to global networks, entanglements, and comparisons, borderlands history has become less bound to any given place. It has become, for a new generation of scholars, a way of seeing the world.

Rachel St. John’s new book, *Line in the Sand*, embodies the best of this new sensibility. As scholars of U.S. foreign relations take stock of the field—and how much it has changed in the past decade—they could hardly pick a better starting point than this engaging historical sweep of what St. John calls the western U.S.-Mexico border (reaching from the Pacific to the Rio Bravo). *Line in the Sand* draws on the archives and historiographies of both the U.S. and Mexico to situate the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in a transnational context. It focuses on strategies that nation-states, market actors, and ordinary people used to navigate an increasingly regulated space, while also offering a deeply humanized narrative of a region that found its center in what would later become one of the more notorious dividing lines in American history.

The reviewers here call *Line in the Sand* well-written, and an exemplar of the historian’s craft. Flannery Burke judges it a “clear-headed guide” to a place that has eluded understanding for centuries, Kelly Lytle Hernandez describes it as a “smartly written” book, whose breadth alone will win it “a wide readership,” and Pekka Hämäläinen calls it “the work of a historian’s historian: deeply researched, intellectually rigorous, methodologically innovative, and engagingly written.” All of the reviewers appreciate St.

¹ Nathan J. Citino, “The Global Frontier: Comparative History and the Frontier-Borderlands Approach in American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 25:4 (Fall 2001), 678.

² Citino, 688.

John's broad regional scope, and the ways she moves us beyond the field's tendency to privilege local tales. But they disagree on the architectural implications of this decision. "Such a sweepingly inclusive approach could have resulted in a disjointed work of dangling threads," notes Hämäläinen, yet the book "finds its center from the outset and never loses it." Lytle Hernandez, by contrast, calls the book a "series of essays," and writes that it would be impossible to cover so much space and time any other way.

These larger concerns—how to *contain* the borderlands spatially and temporally—are increasingly familiar to the field's practitioners. Unlike national or imperial histories, which are typically easy to plot on a map (and often come with clear starting points, if not also rise-and-fall plots), borderlands histories have the tendency to morph, slip, trespass, and evade. They frequently antedate or outlast standard imperial or national histories. There is a lot that one simply cannot take for granted in the *framing* of borderlands histories, and much depends on the author. Perhaps the most visible *spatial* decision that St. John makes is that of anchoring her story primarily to the border, and it is a choice that the reviewers generally appreciate. "Borderlands has become an elastic concept," writes John Paul Nuño, and *Line in the Sand* counters this trend in useful ways: it "serves to remind scholars not to quickly dismiss territorial borders." U.S.-Mexico borderlands historians "have paid surprisingly little attention to the space of the border itself," concurs Geraldo Cadava. By offering us a corrective to this trend, he argues, St. John takes us in important new directions.

And yet, does she do enough? Cadava and Lytle Hernandez both advocate in their reviews for even more attention to the material culture and built environment of the border. For Cadava, *Line in the Sand* opens a door through which others might pass, whereas Lytle Hernandez wonders if St. John's failure to develop "an analysis of the boundary as a physical form" may in fact undermine the book's "promised history of the border." If we may have to await a deeper history of the *materiality* of the borderline, readers are almost unanimous in embracing another aspect of St. John's spatial analysis: her careful and consistent attention to issues of *scale*. Moving nimbly across scales, from the global to the local, St. John gives us a "comprehensive frame," Burke says, "that explains why and how a border can change everything from who has sovereign territory to what's available in the grocery store."

If the border anchors the spatial coordinates of *Line in the Sand*, it also has an important role to play in framing the book's borderland *narrative*. The tale begins with disoriented boundary surveyors in search of a border, and it ends with a new era of state controls and fences. Nuño observes that readers may feel that St. John is reiterating a "linear story" of how two nations turned—to borrow a phrase from historians Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron—"borderlands into borders."³ To put it another way, what begins as a relatively fluid web of entanglements yields, by the end of the story, to a clear, state-managed dividing line with a visible "material reality" (to use Lytle-Hernandez's term). A

³ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104:3 (June 1999), 814-41.

firm border, in this framework, sets clear temporal as well as spatial parameters: the story *ends* with the state and its technologies of separation and exclusion.

And yet, as Hämäläinen proposes, St. John's story is also more complicated than this. What makes her story so important is its attention to multiple strands—some of which end with states and their borders, and others which lead in different directions altogether. Instead of a linear tale of fluidity yielding to rigidity, Hämäläinen sees a story with “multiple voices, multiple storylines, and multiple contingencies.” The larger lesson of *Line in the Sand*, Hämäläinen proposes, is that “the border does not have a linear past, and it will not have a linear future.”

Participants:

Rachel St. John is Associate Professor of History at New York University. Her research focuses on nineteenth- and twentieth-century North American history with a particular emphasis on state-formation and nation-building. Her first book, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border*, was published by Princeton University Press in 2011. She is currently working on a new book project, “The Imagined States of America: Nation-building in Nineteenth-century North America,” which will explore the diverse range of people and communities who attempted to create nation-states in North America over the course of the nineteenth century.

Samuel Truett is Associate Professor of History at the University of New Mexico. He is the author of *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (2006) and co-editor (with Elliott Young) of *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* (2004). His new project, *Empire's Castaway: The Travels and Tangled Tales of an English Globetrotter who Became a Mexican Villager*, focuses on the borderlands and entanglements of the global nineteenth century through the voyages of a sailor-turned-peasant and his border-crossing cohort. He is also writing a history of the obsession with ruins and lost worlds on imperial borderlands on the North American continent, from the sixteenth century forward.

Flannery Burke is an Associate Professor of History at St. Louis University and the author of *From Greenwich Village to Taos: Primitivism and Place at Mabel Dodge Luhan's*. She is currently working on a cultural history of the twentieth-century Southwest tentatively titled, *Out of Place, Out of Time? The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century*.

Geraldo L. Cadava teaches Latino and U.S.-Mexico borderlands history at Northwestern University. His first book is a history of the Arizona-Sonora border region since World War II, entitled *The Heat of Exchange: Latinos and Migration in the Making of a Sunbelt Borderland*, forthcoming from Harvard University Press.

Pekka Hämäläinen is Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and, starting in 2012, the Rhodes Professor of American history at Oxford University and a Fellow at St. Catherine's College. He is the author of *The Comanche Empire* (2008) and the co-editor (with Benjamin H. Johnson) of *Major Problems in the History of North American*

Borderlands (2011). He is currently writing a book on cross-cultural relations, power struggles, borderlands, and empires in North America from 1600 to 1900.

Kelly Lytle Hernandez is Associate Professor in the UCLA Department of History and director of the UCLA Department of History's Public History Initiative. Her research interests are in twentieth-century U.S. history with a concentration upon race, migration, and police and prison systems in the American West and U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Her new book, *MIGRA! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (University of California Press, 2010) is the first book to tell the story of how and why the U.S. Border Patrol concentrates its resources upon policing unsanctioned Mexican immigration despite the many possible targets and strategies of U.S. migration control. Her current research focuses upon exploring the social world of incarceration in Los Angeles between 1876 and 1965.

John Paul Nuño is an Assistant Professor of history at California State University, Northridge. In 2010 he received his Ph.D. in Borderlands History from the University of Texas at El Paso. He is currently examining Seminole-Spanish diplomacy at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is part of a larger project that traces racial discourse in the Florida Borderlands among indigenous and European groups.

Review by Flannery Burke, St. Louis University

When I was twelve years old my grandfather moved from Santa Fe to Mesilla, New Mexico, to become the superintendent of schools for the Gadsden School District. My grandfather was a product of the borderlands. Born in Watrous, New Mexico, he learned Spanish from the cradle and learned English from teachers who forbade his first language at school. Such a background should have prepared him well for the move to Mesilla, less than thirty miles from Mexico, but the border was different from the borderlands. When I visited, I heard a lot about Pancho Villa. The agriculture was more corporate than in northern New Mexico. Family outings were now exotic adventures to an entirely different country. We would return with paper flowers, embroidered dresses, and whole quarts of vanilla extract. But such visits were also fraught with anxiety. My grandmother did not speak Spanish. Her lack of understanding and the greater poverty in Juarez made her nervous. My dad always worried over the fact that I had been born at Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines. He would instruct me to answer “United States” when asked my place of birth on our return. My uncle, a teenager at the time, had heard (likely exaggerated) stories of his older brother’s rowdy exploits across the Rio Grande, and he very much wanted to head to Juarez with friends, unattended by adults. Meanwhile, my grandfather struggled to support Spanish-speaking students in Gadsden, where language could be a marker of illegal immigrant status. When my grandfather retired and returned to Santa Fe, I felt relieved. I had enjoyed visiting, but the region had confused me. I often wondered if the area was more like Arizona and if an upbringing there would have prepared my grandfather and our family better for life in southern New Mexico.

In retrospect, I needed a basis of comparison less, and a clear-headed guide more. In Rachel St. John’s *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border*, I have finally found one – a “narrative geography” (10) of a place that I did not understand. If I think back to our family visits, I can see every layer of meaning that a man-made national border added to the landscape. St. John begins with the drawing of the boundary line itself in the early 1850s and then turns to the ways Native Americans and filibusters used the border to their advantage, precipitating international negotiations over military jurisdiction into the 1880s. Subsequent chapters address the foundation of American corporate enterprises that stretched across the border, civic boosting of border towns, the Mexican Revolution, and efforts to control cross-border traffic and limit border-town vice. St. John ends with the foundations of contemporary debates about immigration laid in the 1930s. The place now makes more sense --from my grandfather’s battles over the immigrant status of students to my uncles’ desire to party in Juarez to the very names of the places that were my grandfather’s new home and workplace: Mesilla and Gadsden, the Mexican and American names for the treaty that settled the boundary between Mexico and the United States.

Until I read this book, I would not have thought to turn to diplomatic history to understand velvet paintings of Pancho Villa and cotton growing in the desert. And the book is decidedly diplomatic history. St. John’s capacity to see the region as a place created by international negotiation is a great strength. The book is a history of the border, the actual line

separating one nation from another. And, like a declaration of war or an international trade treaty, the border was a tool for both nations, a tool that national leaders as well as border residents used and re-fashioned to their particular needs with varying degrees of success. As such, the border requires an analysis of what two nations meant to each other and how they negotiated the space between themselves. Yet those negotiations took place at a variety of levels. As St. John explains: “A critical part of the development of state power was the ability of nation-states to operate on a variety of scales—making wide-reaching policy on a national level, but utilizing the discretion of individual agents to give nuance to those policies on the local level” (7). A social history might well capture my family’s various experiences, but it would be less likely to provide a comprehensive frame that explains why and how a border can change everything from who has sovereign territory to what’s available in the grocery store.

If St. John’s book shows the direction that diplomatic history is heading, then I very much look forward to reading it. For historians of policy and diplomacy, there is just as much attention as one expects to the thorny points of international negotiation, but the work also provides an invitation to place transnational corporate ownership and tourist trips to Mexican vice districts into the wider frame of state power. Moreover, St. John shows an extraordinary sensitivity to contingency and the many different shapes and forms that Mexico, the United States, Apacheria, and numerous other territories might have taken, given a shift in power in the past. These seemingly incidental moments are often the purview of social history, but St. John shows just how much the decisions of everyday people and mid-level officials shifted the functioning of the border. Her conclusions are especially relevant for contemporary debates about the border and immigration, not because she suggests policy solutions, but because she shows just how transitory those debates are. St. John ends her discussion in the 1930s to show the contingent nature of the border’s meaning. As she concludes: “The border has not always been a barrier and there is no reason to think that it will not become something else in the future” (208).

None of which is to say that social history is absent in *Line in the Sand*. St. John owes a debt, which she readily acknowledges, to the social historians and historians of Native America who helped to break the national boundary at the U.S.-Mexico border and moved the field toward transnationalism. Samuel Truett’s *Fugitive Landscapes* is especially present in the footnotes when St. John outlines the increasing power of U.S. corporate entities along both sides of the border.¹ Brian DeLay’s *War of a Thousand Deserts* forms a strong foundation for St. John’s chapter on “land pirates” and Apaches, who spent the middle years of the nineteenth century trying to carve their own sovereign spaces and who rushed north and south of the border as they fled and taunted Mexican and American troops.² By re-framing the stories she tells as a part of international negotiations, however, St. John brings

¹ Sam Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006).

² Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

together what were previously told as disparate stories, while still providing a clear narrative line for readers to follow.

This clarity will enable the book to work especially well in the undergraduate classroom. Students accustomed to seeing the workings of government policy as distant events will be more likely to understand the impact of government decisions on their everyday lives. Students struggling to show how everyday people shape national and international events can find evidence for their claims in St. John's work. And students inclined to see an inevitability to national borders will be hard pressed to hold to such a position. Undergraduate students might benefit from creating "maps of contingency" by drawing alternate lines that might have been the U.S. Mexico-border or the borders of other nations that never took full form or that existed briefly or for only a few individuals or for only brief periods of time.

Borderlands historians might conclude by this point that St. John has written a work of borderlands history and, of course, she has. Nonetheless, I see value in parsing the book's contributions into the fields of diplomatic history and social history. First, I doubt that diplomatic historians would look regularly to borderlands history as a source of contributions to their field without a book such as this one. Second, querying the relationship between the border and the borderlands should be a central question of borderlands history. As St. John notes, "As borderlands historians have emphasized historical processes that transcend national boundaries and have expanded their focus to include zones of interaction outside of the U.S. Southwest and Mexican north, they have often treated the border itself as an irrelevant or incidental part of the borderlands. By contrast, I emphasize the centrality of the boundary line in the processes of market expansion, conquest, state building, and identity formation with which many borderlands historians are concerned" (6). Studying the border and the borderlands together highlights the border region within the larger space of the Southwest borderlands. Proximity to the border is one factor that varies over the region and shifts valences of power and lines of economic exchange. Exploring the border and the borderlands in tandem is more likely to reveal a full portrait of the region.

As borderlands historians turn their attention to the relationship between the border and the borderlands, I hope that the power of individual state governments receives more attention. I am thinking particularly of the relationship in the twentieth century between the states of Arizona and New Mexico, not just because of my research interests in my home state, but also because of Geraldo Cadava's recent *Journal of American History* essay in which he describes how the repercussions of the border "refract". Cadava argues that the border causes effects that rebound from the border region toward Mexico and the United States, but the border also contributes to shifts and realignments within and between border communities. Cadava focuses on the Tohono O'odham of Sonora and Arizona and concludes: "The border refracted these [concepts of modernity and abandonment] and other ideologies every which way, undermining conceptions of an ontological divide between the United States and Mexico and demonstrating the deep sense

of affinity and alienation experienced by borderlands residents.”³ While there has been some scholarly attention to the ties and barriers between New Mexico and Texas and Arizona and California, I would like to see more attention given to the affinity and alienation between Arizonans and New Mexicans.

I think St. John’s book may give us a way to do so. Northern New Mexico has long held the attention of historians -- perhaps too long. There is not nearly as much scholarly work on Arizona, and as scholarship by Katherine Benton-Cohen and others has shown, studies of Arizona have much to show us about the relationship between class and race, Mexico and the United States, and employers and laborers.⁴ I fear, though, that as work on Arizona grows, historians will be tempted to compare Arizona and New Mexico in the same facile ways they are compared in popular contemporary conversations about the region. From such juxtapositions it is far too easy to conclude that the states are entirely different. In such comparisons, Arizona has and always will be a politically conservative state driven by mining and other economic interests and intent on perpetuating a racially stratified society with whites on top and all non-whites, including Mexican Americans, below. In contrast, New Mexico appears to be politically liberal, beholden to no industry but tourism, and steeped in a heritage that acknowledges and celebrates its tri-ethnic origins. Neither, of course, is a full portrait, but more importantly, the juxtaposition compares *southern* Arizona with *northern* New Mexico. More work needs to be done on *northern* Arizona and *southern* New Mexico as sites of political negotiation, economic development, and racial identity.

Rachel St. John’s book opens such a view for scholars of the region. Moreover, she invites cross-state comparisons north and south of the border. What would a history of the region bounded by Ensenada and Cananea look like? Or one of the area between White Sands and Tucson? Or that between Taos and the Grand Canyon? Perhaps, just as I speculated as an adolescent, an upbringing in southern Arizona might have better prepared me for my grandfather’s experiences in southern New Mexico, because these regions share a relationship to the U.S.-Mexico border, even as they are divided by differing state government policies. Studies of Chihuahua and Sonora might reveal similar ties and divisions. Studies of such zones would help to explain and complicate how the border shapes the region and how the power of the border differs depending on a borderland community’s proximity to the border itself. I look forward to reading books that, by examining the relationship between the border and the borderlands, pull together the histories of multiple centuries and multiple regions and deepen our understanding of the American Southwest. In the meantime, we have, in *Line in the Sand*, an important first step in this direction.

³ Geraldo Cadava, “Lines within Ambos Nogales and the Tohono O’odham Nation,” *Journal of American History* 98:2 (September 2011): 383.

⁴ Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Rachel St. John's *Line in the Sand* is the best book yet on the early development of the U.S.-Mexico border. It also has great relevance for contemporary debates about the border and Mexican immigration to the United States, and should be read widely by policy makers who continue to claim that border debates in the United States have arisen only during the very recent past. St. John argues, instead, that they are the product of histories that stretch back to the mid-nineteenth century. The brevity and clear prose of her book also make it perfect for students of borderlands history at all levels, including the undergraduates who more often than not enter college with fixed ideas, or ideas misinformed by the images they see on television. Finally, St. John's book brings together the concerns and approaches of several subfields of U.S. and Mexican history, including histories of the U.S.-Mexico border, the American West, Mexico's *frontera norte*, or northern frontier, and—most important for the readers of H-Diplo—U.S. international relations.

St. John describes historical change along the U.S.-Mexico border between the mid-nineteenth century, when boundary surveyors for the United States and Mexico drew the border as a literal line in the sand, until the early twentieth century, by which point, she tells us, the 'modern' border had taken shape. In general, she describes the border's transition over an eighty-year period from an invisible line to a heavily policed and regulated boundary. In doing so, she follows the cues of other borderlands historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Samuel Truett, Katherine Benton-Cohen, and Benjamin Johnson, all of whom argue that the border, in one way or another, hardened by the mid-twentieth century.¹ Like them, she argues that histories of the border necessarily move back and forth among local, national, and international scales, and that local conditions often trumped national imperatives, allowing local immigration officials, for example, to selectively enforce national laws, and local actors, like raiding Apaches, to shape border policy. And she joins them in arguing that the border became a way for the United States, whose national and international power increased during the period, to try to "control space," negotiate "state sovereignty," and define the "significance of national identities." All of this reflected the machinations of a government that sought to "improve" its "ability to manipulate spatial controls to reflect state priorities" (5-6).

St. John adds to their work several useful metaphors to describe the dominant characteristics of the border during particular periods, and of the period she studies as a whole. Her chapter titles say it all: "Landscape of Profits" (about the capitalist revolution along the border during the late nineteenth century), "The Space Between" (about U.S. and Mexican jurisdictional and policing concerns during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), "Breaking Ties, Building Fences" (about conflict during the Mexican Revolution era), and "Insiders/Outsiders"

¹ Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Border* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); and Benjamin H. Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

(about the rise of immigration policies that targeted Mexicans). She also describes the border as a “conditional barrier” that excluded “undesirable” immigrants but “let in citizens, local crossers, and much-needed immigrant laborers,” and also smoothed the way for cross-border commerce on a grand scale (175). Indeed, the term captures a key characteristic of the U.S.-Mexico border across time and space.

By design, many of the points St. John makes will surprise readers who have little historical knowledge of the border. While fences, drugs, and undocumented immigration shape ideas about the need for a rigid border today, St. John convincingly shows that the border was not always this way. Only over the course of decades did the border become a clearly demarcated international boundary. Even as the border became a clear boundary, its sole purpose was never to exclude Mexican immigrants and the illicit goods some carried with them into the United States. Moreover, even when the sole function of the border was exclusion, it never fully succeeded in achieving this goal. *Line in the Sand* therefore corrects contemporary, and widespread, misconceptions about the border. But refuting dangerous stereotypes—that all Mexicans are criminals, that Mexicans are the only borderlands criminals, that Native Americans were violent marauders, or that Mexico is a backwards country—is the work of all borderlands historians.

What makes *Line in the Sand* stand out compared with other studies of the U.S.-Mexico border are three contributions in particular. First, St. John reorients regional histories of the U.S. Southwest and Mexican north, from 1850 to 1930, around the development of the borderline itself. Second, she offers a history of the relationship between social, cultural, and political change, and the development of particular border spaces. Third, she reveals how the borderline itself produced differences on each side of the border as much as it reflected them. These contributions will influence how scholars think and write about the border for years.

St. John tells stories that are familiar to historians of northern Mexico and the American West, but she places them in the context of the evolution of the U.S.-Mexico border. Mexican American historians have recognized the effects of the U.S.-Mexico War on Mexican American communities throughout the U.S. Southwest, and how population displacements in Mexico during the Mexican Revolution led to the first wave of mass Mexican migration to the United States. Historians of the American West have detailed the effects of railroad construction throughout the region, especially how it facilitated the transport of people and commodities into and out of the area. Mexicanists have described the impact of conquest and annexation on Mexico’s sense of loss, the shifting power dynamics between Mexico and the United States, and the international histories of the Mexican Revolution that led Mexico and the United States to the brink of war, eventually causing the United States to enter World War I.

Moreover, like St. John, Katherine Benton-Cohen has written about Apache Raids in Arizona and Sonora; Samuel Truett about transnational copper industries; and a number of other scholars about the cross-border effects of the Mexican Revolution and the rise of anti-Mexican sentiment during the Great Depression, which for the first time led U.S. officials to turn

restrictive immigration policies against Mexicans.² But St. John brings these histories together as part of the broader story of how the U.S.-Mexico border, and the many debates it inspired, evolved between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As cross-border raids and filibustering, new border policing regimes, the prevention of revolutionary violence from spilling across the border, vice regulation, and concerns about Mexican immigration shaped border debates during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the “once-unmarked boundary line” became a “space of gates, fences, and patrols” (2).

By gathering together histories that sit at the nexus of several regional subfields and reading them through the lens of the border itself, St. John bucks trends in the work of many borderlands scholars. Scholars of early American borderlands before the U.S.-Mexico War have focused on themes including violence, power, captivity, intercultural and inter-imperial negotiations in so-called contact zones, or middle grounds of human interaction and mutual misunderstanding. Scholars who have worked on the same period as St. John have, like her, focused on cross-border raiding practices, the development of international capitalism, revolutionary violence, and the passage of new immigration laws during the early twentieth century. Finally, social scientists who focus on the border in the very recent past have focused almost exclusively on themes of militarization, border enforcement, and undocumented immigration. St. John picks up on these themes—or, in some cases, picks them apart—by focusing on the space of the border itself. While it makes sense that early American borderlands scholars would not focus on the border, since there was no U.S.-Mexico border in early America, historians of the period since the mid-nineteenth century have paid surprisingly little attention to the space of the border itself. As St. John describes it, in many studies, the border is an “irrelevant or incidental part of the borderlands” (5).

Nevertheless, *Line in the Sand* is less a history of the built environment of the border than a history of how the social, economic, and political histories of a given moment shaped how the border changed over time. In other words, she describes the physical character of the border—how it was at first a series of lines drawn on maps, then became a line of refuge, beyond which U.S. and Mexican authorities had difficulty pursuing outlaws, and then a space linked by railroad tracks and customs houses that later became divided by fences—but these elements of her story are secondary to the broader historical debates reflected by the changing shape of the border itself. For example, cross-border raids by Apaches, and filibuster expeditions into Sonora and elsewhere in Mexico, led to the first concerted efforts to police the border. International railroad connections led to the growth of transborder commerce, which in turn led to the emergence of twin border cities as an important part of border landscapes. Fears about the spread of violence and imperialist aggression led U.S. and Mexican citizens to argue for the construction of fences along the border, which, although prompted by battles during the Mexican Revolution, from that moment forward became a permanent feature of the

² See, for example, Mario Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), Chapter 9; George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Part One and Chapter 10; Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974); and Francisco Balderrama, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, Revised Edition, 2006).

borderlands. The growth of moral reform movements during the 1920s then caused U.S. and Mexican governments to use the border as a way of policing morality, and during the 1930s and beyond, the border became a space to police the movement of immigrants, dominated by government officials of one sort or another.

The broader histories that led to changes along the border—again, Indian raids and filibusters, capitalist revolutions, revolutionary violence, morality, and immigration—offer a highly effective way of narrating the early history of the U.S.-Mexico border. But as I read *Line in the Sand*, I also imagined another book that would focus closely on the built environment of the border, thereby inverting the order of the one St. John wrote. She includes so many wonderful details that gesture towards a comparative history of border cities, a subject that has not received full historical attention. St. John writes, the “twin towns of the desert border were a product of the boundary line itself” (83). They emerged during the late nineteenth century with the sole purpose of negotiating the rise in international commerce. Mining companies, customs houses, immigration offices, rail yards, stores, and communities created an “industrial landscape” along the border (85). They became sites of binationalism, with names that served as perfect reflections of their deep connectedness, like Calexico and Mexicali, hotels named *El Internacional*, and shops called the International Drug Store. As communities and vice districts formed all along the border, in Ciudad Juárez, Mexicali, and Nogales, races and sexes intermixed. Historians have yet to write this book, but it would be a good one, offering an inside-out, bottom to top, or ground-up account—choose your own metaphor—of the broader historical forces St. John uses as her points of departure.

Line in the Sand demonstrates that the border not only reflected broader historical changes, but also produced differential development on both sides of the international line. The establishment of the border produced space on either side of it that became a kind of safe haven for cross-border raiders fleeing justice. To filibusters, one such group of raiders, the border reinforced U.S. sovereignty in the area and emboldened them to push into Mexico. In this sense, as St. John notes, the borderline changed regional power relations, as Apaches, filibusters, and others used the boundary strategically. Then during the Mexican Revolution, Mexican rebels cut railroad ties that affected commerce on both sides of border. During the 1920s and 1930s, a period during which they were discriminated against in Mexico and excluded from the United States, Chinese immigrants living in Mexico also used the border strategically, opting for arrest and deportation in the United States rather than persecution in Mexico. U.S. officials took responsibility for their deportation, and in this way, Mexican officials, while they could “do little to prevent the United States from repatriating Mexicans,” could “use the boundary line to force the U.S. government to help fund the deportation of Mexico’s Chinese population” (195). Such dynamics, St. John tells us, reveal how the border, even though it had become a “tool of the states,” could also be used to their disadvantage, since the United States had to assume the expense of their deportation. The border thus became a “relational space” where developments on one side of the border affected histories of the other side as well (195-196).

The most poignant example of how the borderline both reflected and produced changes on each side of the border comes in Chapter 6, about anti-vice movements, the growth of vice industries, and the policing of morality. To my mind, this is the best and most original piece of

St. John's work. In this chapter, St. John brilliantly analyzes how moral reform movements in the United States led to the establishment of vice industries south of the border, including casinos, bars, and brothels. In response, the U.S. government closed the border to traffic at night, when, presumably, Americans would be most likely to head south to engage in behavior prohibited to them at home. So far, this story follows St. John's impulse to demonstrate how national politics influenced change along the border. But the aftermath of this border policy demonstrated how social, political, and economic change also moved from the border to the interiors of both nations. The policy angered Mexican businessmen, who claimed it harmed their financial interests, and led Mexicans to establish anti-vice movements of their own, causing Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas to convert casinos into trade schools, which temporarily, and only officially, closed down border vice industries. Before Cárdenas cracked down, the Mexican government had used vice industry profits to build dams, schools, and other infrastructural projects. This example fully demonstrates the deep intertwining, transnational connections, mutual influences, and general messiness of borderlands history. That Mexico ended up benefitting financially from the policing of morality in the United States also shows how nations and their peoples could, unwittingly or not, and in ways however small, take revenge upon the imperialist aggressions of the United States that had led to the establishment of borders in the first place. This is a story not unrelated to how Native American communities have profited from the establishment of various gaming ventures. These are histories that should, and surely will, shape future borderlands histories and broader narratives of relationships between the United States and other sovereign nations.

While *Line in the Sand* advances borderlands history in the ways I have discussed above, future borderlands scholars can expand on several threads in St. John's narrative that she touches on only briefly, but which deserve greater, more focused attention. A comparative history of twin border cities, and a fully fleshed out story of how nations affected by U.S. expansion have exacted some measure of revenge, are two possible paths new scholarship could follow. Others include a more explicit comparison of different kinds of borderlands spaces, including urban and rural, or the western border, which is St. John's focus, and the eastern, Rio Grande portion of the border. I also think scholars could conceptually and empirically expand the U.S.-Mexico border even farther eastward by looking at the Gulf of Mexico as a water border dividing and linking the two countries.

Also, St. John, building on work by the political scientist Peter Andreas, gives us the useful concept of the border as a "conditional barrier" open to some kinds of goods, services, and products, but closed to others.³ This kind of control over the border has been a fantasy of policy makers and businessmen along the border for more than a hundred years, making its way most recently into Mitt Romney's remarks during the Republican primary debate in Mesa, Arizona, as his ideal vision for the border. Of course St. John is right: the border has always been simultaneously open and closed. It also simultaneously links and divides, and is, at the same time, the beginning and ending point of two nations. But as we now take these dynamics for granted, have we pushed to its limits our understanding of how the border functions?

³ Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, Second Edition, 2009).

Maybe we have, but I think we should nevertheless continue to think about new ways of conceiving of the border, as a line that moves not only from east to west, but also north and south, for example, dividing border cities and ranch lands, or indigenous populations and Mexican or Mexican-American populations. What else might we be able to say about the border if we see it this way?

Finally, I want to make a couple observations about borderlands chronology, as presented by St. John and other borderlands historians writing about the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I think we should push St. John's analysis into the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This is what I try to do in my own work, so I recognize that this point will sound self-serving. St. John argues that the border, however unevenly, became increasingly firm by the 1930s as a result of deportations and the application for the first time of restrictive immigration policies to Mexicans. Then in her conclusion, beginning with the Secure Fence Act of 2006, she argues that very recent immigration and border debates flowed from the earlier histories she writes about. By the 1930s, immigration control had become the focus of border debates, and, presumably, it remained so. The "modern" border, with its system of immigration controls, policing mechanisms, and fences, was in place before World War II. Both the United States and Mexico, St. John tells us, "continued to build on that foundation for the remainder of the twentieth century," and "we are living today with the legacy of those ideas about the border and state control" (202, 204). I would not deny that the 1920s and 1930s were important turning points; laws, fences, and attitudes toward Mexicans changed. But the post-World War II histories of immigration and border debates were less predictable, and more formative for the present, than *Line in the Sand* and other borderlands histories suggest. In some ways, the post-World War II period, between 1940 and 2010, repeats St. John's story about the border's opening then closing, or invisibility then increasing solidity. The post-World War II period included decades when the international line seemed meaningless, and open to the free flow of goods and people, despite sporadic and transnational conflicts over immigration and other issues. Border debates then became increasingly polarized from the 1970s forward, as a result of shifting Cold War politics, a rise in undocumented immigration, and drug trafficking—not as a result of social, economic, and political histories set in place by the 1930s—even though the dream of open borders did not fade, as evidenced by new borderlands economies in the age of neoliberalism and globalization, and defined by episodes like the construction of *maquiladoras* and the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In this respect, *Line in the Sand* has helped us take a big leap forward towards understanding how the border has functioned in American life, but we should continue to strive to understand how, when, and why the border changed, as well as the roots of present day debates.

Rachel St. John's *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* offers much to admire. It fills a yawning historiographical gap, being, quite remarkably, the first analytical history of the creation and evolution of the U.S.-Mexico desert border in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While much has been written about the modern border and the disputes around it, *Line in the Sand* is the first work that takes a comprehensive look at the past.

Line in the Sand, moreover, is the work of a historian's historian: deeply researched, intellectually rigorous, methodologically innovative, and engagingly written. The book covers a vast range of topics from local border crossings to the enforcement of territorial boundaries, from community building to nation building, from the rise of transnational capitalism to the struggles for national sovereignty, from the bureaucratization of transborder relations to the racialization of others, from identity formation to historical memory. Such a sweepingly inclusive approach could have resulted in a disjointed work of dangling threads, but *Line in the Sand* finds its center from outset and never loses it.

The book's main theme—and the core of its originality—is St. John's effort to defamiliarize the U.S.-Mexico border, to make us see the border and its making anew, without the obscuring layers of presentism. Over the past decades, the U.S.-Mexico border has turned into a focal point of xenophobia, caustic immigration debate, and international controversy; *Line in the Sand*, better than any other study, shows that the prevailing condition of intense border control and militarization cannot be projected backward in time. Things were once different and perhaps they can be different once more. This underlying notion, together with St. John's calm and smooth prose, makes *Line in the Sand* a work whose influence can reach far beyond the scholarly community.

The historicization of the U.S.-Mexico border is an overarching theme that makes *Line in the Sand* so compelling, but St. John understands that this is a theme that needs to be shown, not told. Thus the book develops variations of the central theme through a number of narrative arcs: the emergence and persistence of permeable transborder communities; the primacy of local negotiations in arranging transnational spaces on and around the border; the gradual emergence of racial stereotypes that conflated Mexican immigrants and unskilled labor; the broadening of the category of unwanted border crossers from Native Americans to Chinese to certain Europeans to Mexicans; the binational efforts to make the borderlands safe for transnational capitalism; the rise of border vice industries; the gradual and often ad hoc implementation of immigration laws and bureaucratic border controls. These developments do not only unfold along parallel lines, St. John shows how they built and piled on one another, producing layered histories that transcend places and periods—drug traffickers employing the already established channels for smuggling Chinese immigrants, illegal immigrants capitalizing on the cross-border mobility of local inhabitants and transnational corporations, cohering national governments denouncing the fluid transborder relations they had once sponsored to solidify state power in the center. From such blending of story lines and analytical modes emerges nothing short of a

total history of a contested place in time: *Line in the Sand* is at once a political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, legal, local, regional, national, and transnational history of the desert border between the United States and Mexico.

St. John interweaves her many threads together so effortlessly that it may be easy to miss how much conceptual and methodological work the book does. *Line in the Sand* is the first study to make the western U.S.-Mexico border—rather than the borderlands around it—its subject. The new borderlands and transnational histories of the past two decades have illuminated previously neglected developments that transcended imperial and national borders, but only a few among the recent studies have had much to say about the border itself. St. John puts the border front and center and by doing so tugs borderlands and transnational histories forward. She is the first historian to systematically show how the border came to signify drastically different things for different peoples and institutions: Native Americans, local Mexican and American citizens, legal and illegal immigrants, migrant laborers, border officials, metropolitan investors, filibusters, and national governments. By analyzing how different meanings collided, overlapped, shifted, and persisted on the border, St. John not only sheds light on the crucial importance of the boundary line in shaping local and national identities, intergovernmental relations, and capitalist development. She also reveals how radically the strategies of state building have changed since the mid nineteenth century. She uncovers an era—roughly from the 1850s to the 1910s—when both Mexico and the United States were comfortable with transnational spaces and when state building was not based on an exclusionary territorial logic. Here St. John makes an important contribution to the burgeoning literature that places U.S. history and foreign policy in larger comparative context. She shows how the United States and Mexico forged their respective national spaces in tandem—sometimes competing, often cooperating, and always defining themselves in interaction with the other—thereby inviting scholars to look at the border as the crucible where key aspects of U.S. and Mexican national projects took shape.

Line in the Sand also breaks new methodological ground. Much of the recent borderlands and transnational history has operated on relatively limited analytical registers. There are many studies that focus on local spaces and processes and there are numerous studies that trace larger transnational networks and developments, but there are only a few works that operate on multiple analytical scales, moving from the local all the way up and back again. Historians have called for scale-transcending analyses for quite some time now; *Line in the Sand* shows how it can be done in practice. The book moves flexibly across intimate, local, regional, national, transnational, and global registers, providing a multivariied analysis of the border and the people, institutions, and ideas that shaped it. Moreover, St. John executes the shifts so nimbly that the reader hardly notices them, thereby making a quiet—and therefore all the more effective—methodological intervention. Her narrative underscores the importance not only of including but also *blending* multiple analytical modes when writing about borders, borderlands, and transnational phenomena. For over three generations, the western U.S.-Mexico border was less a line than a shifting relational space where local, regional, national, and global processes interpenetrated one another—and not necessarily from the bigger institutions down.

Line in the Sand opens with a description of the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission between 1849 and 1852—confused, frequently lost, desperately trying to draw a line according to agreed coordinates—and it closes with a 1931 story of a group of Mexican Chinese slipping under a border fence in Nogales, Arizona, only to be captured by U.S. immigration officials. These opening and closing scenes capture the changes that had taken place on the border during the eighty intervening years: the growth of federally - enforced regulatory apparatus, the erosion of local agency, the bisection of binational communities, the decline of transborder movement. But, crucially, the closing scene is not the sum of the stories that had unfolded before it; there is no direct narrative line from the disoriented Boundary Commission to the definite state-enforced border fence. Instead, St. John uncovers numerous stories pulling in different directions and towards ends that were often more local and regional than national. One of those border stories was the Mexican Revolution, which galvanized the U.S. government, changing its attitude toward the border. State control grew neither linearly nor organically on the desert border. It came there abruptly in the aftermath of a sprawling and seemingly uncontrollable revolution.

For some, this ending may seem too sharp, even artificial. Why not flesh out the developments from the 1920s to the present with more detail than what St. John provides in her brief and speedy conclusion? And why not discuss the parallels between the 1910s and 1920s and our era—the threat of what may seem like foreign wars spilling into U.S. borders, the onset of economic crises that harden attitudes toward immigrants and their labor, the recasting of the U.S.-Mexico border as a conflict zone and a security problem? I, for one, welcome St. John's abrupt ending, for it underscores her commitment to writing histories that step outside of easy linearities to uncover developments that did not necessarily last and blossom—not at least from our limited present-day vantage point. The 160-year existence of the U.S.-Mexican border, St. John suggests, consists of two halves that have surprisingly little in common. The border does not have a linear past and it will not have a linear future.

A Line on the Page

Line in the Sand begins with a provocative observation. When first established in 1848 by U.S. and Mexican diplomats during their negotiations in U.S.-occupied Mexico City at the close of the U.S.-Mexico War, the new U.S.-Mexico border ran down the belly of the Rio Grande and then across mountains, rivers, and deserts to the Pacific Ocean south of San Diego, California. Today, the western U.S.-Mexico border may be defined by a “patchwork of steel mesh, picket fencing, vehicle barriers, and barbed wire stretching from the desert floor marking the boundary line’s course from the Pacific Ocean to the Rio Grande,” (1) but as Rachel St. John reminds us, when U.S. and Mexican officials first marked it on a map “the desert border running from west of El Paso to the Pacific Ocean did not correspond to any previously existing geographic feature” (2). The Texas-Mexico border, embodied by the Rio Grande, had long served as a gathering site for humans, flora, and fauna in the region but the western hemisphere of the U.S.-Mexico border, explains St. John, was a political fabrication -- nothing but a “series of imaginary lines” (2) – in a region the border’s first surveyors described as a “sterile waste, utterly worthless” place. (3) In *Line in the Sand*, a book of essays, Rachel St. John proposes to chronicle how a meaningful boundary -- a “landscape of fences and patrols,” -- was etched into the wasteland of the western U.S.-Mexico borderlands between the 1850s and the 1930s(7).

At the outset of the book’s introduction, St. John reminds us of what many have forgotten in the rise of borderlands history. “The border,” she writes “has a history” and she proposes to explore the “history of how and why the border changed”(1). To do this, she offers two lines of intertwined research and analysis. With the first, she “traces the transformation of the once unmarked boundary line into a space of gates, fences, and patrols that allowed the easy passage of some people, animals and goods, while restricting the movement of others [telling] the story of how the border shifted from a line on the map to a clearly marked and policed boundary where state agents attempted to regulate who and what entered the nation”(2). The objective of this line of analysis is to examine how the western U.S.-Mexico boundary developed from a wasteland into a “landscape of fences and patrols”(7). In telling this story, St. John promises to make a contribution to borderlands history by “emphasiz[ing] the centrality of the boundary line in the processes of market expansion, conquest, state building, and identity formation with which many borderlands historians are concerned”(6).

With the second line of analysis, St. John proposes to examine how the first, the creation and evolution of the “border’s physical form,” forged “an entirely new space in the west”(2). The distant governments of the U.S. and Mexico claimed to control this space but since, as St. John writes, “state power is never absolute,” this only opened up new possibilities for contestation as people leveraged, manipulated, challenged, reinforced, defended, brokered, and were even smothered by the new boundary(7). With these lines of analyses and research, St. John promises a more textured and historical view of the U.S.-Mexico border’s contemporary form.

In seven smartly written essays, St. John marshals a broad range of historiographies and archives to chronicle what she identifies as key moments and stories in the making of the western U.S.-Mexico border. The remarkable breadth of stories that St. John tells is certainly one of the most distinctive and important contributions of *Line in the Sand* and will win it a wide readership. The book begins with an essay on the long struggle of U.S. and Mexican surveyors to measure, mark, and gather general topographical information about the new U.S.-Mexico border. The second essay charts the subordination of filibusters and the military conquest of the Apaches in the 1880s. Chapter three examines how “the border became the centerpiece of the landscape of binational interaction and exchange” (10). In particular, St. John charts the rise of capitalism across, at, and against the border. Chapter four turns to the State to examine how government actors attempted to “regulate, tax, and restrict transborder movement and enforce jurisdictional boundaries” (10). This is the story, in particular, of customs officers struggling to enforce the line in the sand. Chapter five examines how the Mexican Revolution and World War I transformed the western U.S.-Mexico boundary from a “site of interaction and cooperation to one of conflict and division” (10). This was the era, St. John argues, when border enforcement and control first took shape. Chapter six demonstrates how prohibitions in the U.S. prompted vice districts and smuggling along the border and explores how state actions experimented with border control as a method to control illicit activities across the boundary. Chapter seven charts the rise of the immigration control regime now familiar along the border. The book closes with a reflection on the border fencing projects at the turn of the twenty-first century.

With these selected topics, *Line in the Sand* offers an expansive treatment of social, political, and military history along the western U.S.-Mexico border that has otherwise only been discretely chronicled. By bringing these topics together in one text, St. John demonstrates the shifting meaning of the border and provides much-needed broad-stroke views of the U.S.-Mexico border’s formation between the 1850s and 1930s. Undergraduate readers in particular will revel in the border’s broad and shifting meaning and the unexpected turning points in its development long before the consolidation of the U.S. immigration regime during the 1920s. I am certain that when I assign it to my graduate students, those who are steeped in the literature of the borderlands will be grateful for the book’s expertly-crafted balance of breadth and concision in a story that “move[s] across time and space” (9). Still, after reading the text several times, I am left wanting. Let me explain.

As a historian of policing the border, I found St. John’s promise to “emphasize the centrality of the [western] boundary” to be downright titillating. The western U.S.-Mexico boundary – that is, the line in the sand that runs from El Paso to the Pacific Ocean -- is fairly obscure or, at best, only clarified in chunks and compartments as it is embedded in the local histories in the border region and histories of the borderlands. Since the 1968 publication of Robert Hine’s *Bartlett’s West: Drawing the Mexican Boundary*, we have learned about the troubled effort to survey the border but we still know very little about the marking, fencing, and the overall effort to make the U.S.-Mexico boundary a material reality as it stretches across

mountains and deserts and through growing border towns.¹ St. John's promise to chronicle the U.S.-Mexico border's "landscape of fences and patrols" was enticing and she employs a rich definition of the boundary as not only the line in the sand that can be surveyed, cleared, marked, and even fenced but also as the political boundary that more often than not is embodied by an "array of physical structures and government agents" (6). As such, boundary markers, border monuments, customs houses, ports of entry immigration and customs officers, U.S. and Mexican troops are all, rightly, part of her analysis as embodiments of the western U.S.-Mexico boundary. I enthusiastically read *Line in the Sand* for a history of the boundary in its physical and embodied form followed by the meanings that this new and evolving border spawned. In particular, I read to discover how *Line in the Sand* was going to bring the border back into borderlands history, a very exciting prospect.

The book's construction as a series of essays was a wise choice. It would be impossible to provide a comprehensive analysis of the western border's development over eighty years. The two-prong analytical framework -- chronicling the boundary to examine its many meanings -- is also strong. What *Line in the Sand* does do very well is bring multiple literatures into conversation about the shifting and conditional meaning of the western U.S.-Mexico border between the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848) and the mass repatriation of Mexicanos during the 1930s. My critique of *Line in the Sand* is that the boundary itself is not a consistent or rigorous subject of analysis. Too often St. John's examination of the boundary hovers in the realm of its political fabrication while the boundary's construction as a material form is presented as a passive creation and the boundary's multiple everyday representations by institutions and state actors are vague. Whereas the book successfully chronicles the shifting meanings of the border, it lacks depth and precision in the analysis of the boundary as a physical form, whether embodied, performed, or material.

The opening chapter of *Line in the Sand* chronicles the struggle to map and mark the western U.S.-Mexico boundary between 1850 and 1855. The U.S. and Mexican survey teams first met in the scorching desert outside of Tucson, Arizona in late-summer 1851 and disagreed from nearly the first moment of the survey. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the U.S.-Mexico War and determined that the western U.S.-Mexico boundary line was to head directly west from the Rio Grande River in El Paso, Texas, across the desert, over mountains, and into the Pacific Ocean but the surveyors could not agree where to begin the survey along the river. The U.S. surveyor said it began farther south. The lead Mexican surveyor said it began farther north. Such unsurprising disputes continued throughout the survey, which was not completed until 1855, yet as the surveyors continued their work the most enduring challenges they confronted were the landscape and local inhabitants. The unfamiliar landscape they sought to mark and render "legible" as a meaningful political boundary in the sand bested them many times. Across the difficult and often remote terrain, as St. John beautifully writes, it often seemed that "rather than

¹ Robert Hine, *Bartlett's West: Drawing the Mexican Boundary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). For a more recent treatment of the survey see, Joseph Richard Werne, *The Imaginary Line: A History of the United States and Mexico Boundary Survey, 1848-1857* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2007).

establishing the border, they [the surveyors] seemed to be searching for it”(13). They ran out of food, got lost, trudged through desert heat, exhausted their supplies, feared Apache attacks, ran up debts, broke their tools, had chapped lips, and fell to illness. “From its very beginnings,” writes St John, “the border eluded state control”(15).

Plagued by troubles, the surveyors resolved to only establish seven markers across the western boundary. Although few in number, these markers are critical because they were the first, and for a long time, only, physical reality of the new U.S.-Mexico boundary across the nearly seven hundred miles between El Paso, Texas and the Pacific Ocean. It is with the story of these markers that St. John’s promised history of the border begins to falter. St. John suggests the locations for two of the original markings of the border -- a point just south of San Diego Bay and the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers – but where and whether the other five boundary markers were actually established and what form they took and how they were made is unclear (27). Rather than chronicle the making of the border’s actual physical form, what St. John emphasizes is the boundary’s development as a set of twists and turns by longitude and latitude according to the maps created by surveyors and adjusted by politicians. Representing St. John’s emphasis on the border as a political imagination, figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 picture the western U.S.-Mexico border as a continuous line on the page without any evidence as to the location of the original boundary markers. In fact, no map in the book represents the border’s material reality between El Paso and the Pacific Ocean. Although there are four maps of the border’s evolving location as a formal site of political division between the United States and Mexico, the border’s physical and embodied forms -- the boundary markers in the early years and the border monuments, military forts, immigration stations, customs houses, and fences, in later years -- are not mapped. By only mapping the continuous line of the border’s political formation, St. John ironically reifies the formal state definition of the border, a “series of imaginary lines,” (2) and elides the promised history of the border’s history as a physical form.

In the following chapters, there are flashes of focus on how the border changed as physical form -- pages 91 to 95 and pages 144-45, for example – but there is no sustained examination of the making of the boundary as a material reality. Precisely how the western U.S.-Mexico border became marked and represented in everyday life remains obscure. How, for example, were the monuments, fences, immigration stations, and customs houses built? One of the greatest stories of the fencing of the U.S.-Mexico border during the 1990s was that the companies contracted to build the fence hired undocumented Mexican labor to get the job done, revealing the greater tensions, inequities, demands, and interests in border enforcement. Such stories of the actual construction of the boundary as a built environment are untold in St. John’s narrative and analysis. For example, in figures 4.1 to 4.3, St. John provides wonderfully illustrative images of the border’s embodiment in monuments and cleared strips but she does not detail the formation of these physical forms of the border. The sixty-foot cleared strip between Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, for example, is chronicled as the result of little more than a presidential proclamation. The forced removal of homes, businesses, barns, fences and a railroad depot is told in just a few sentences and represented in the passive voice. The border, as a physical form, appears without labor and only a little protest but also without entanglement in the regional

economies or social inequities of the borderlands that St. John expertly discusses throughout the book.

Similarly, the patrols of immigration officers, customs officials, and military troops who so often embody the boundary in St. John's story are not given sufficient treatment. For example, St. John writes of the military patrols during the era of the Mexican Revolution that the "soldiers became a human wall along the boundary line" because "in the absence of a permanent physical barrier marking the line, armed soldiers performed the border"(141) but she provides no insight into actual patrol techniques and practices and does not provide a deep social profile of the men 'performing' the border. This is crucial because when chronicling the history of the border and forwarding men and their patrols as constituting the "human wall" that stood in the void of any actual physical boundary the author should provide a more textured analysis of who they were and how they "performed the border." Here the performance and performers receive no analysis or deep empirical digging. No militia or National Guard records are cited in the discussion of the National Guard (militia) on the border during the Mexican Revolution. Without a look into muster rolls and correspondence records, St. John's social profile of the "human wall," is derived from the reminiscences of external sources, a cowboy (John Henry Eicks) and ranching woman (Mary Rak Kidder). Their characterization of the militia and their patrols is unchallenged and not triangulated with original research into the servicemen who flooded into the region during the Mexican Revolution. Further St. John does not reveal how the militia actually went about 'performing the border.' How were their patrols organized and implemented? Similarly the profiles and actions of other state actors, immigration and customs officials, in particular, are left vague. For example, on page 98, the book begins to home in on the boundary itself by focusing on the establishment of customs houses along the line but we learn nothing of how the ports of entry were selected or how the customs houses were designed and constructed. We also learn nothing of the men assigned to enforce the boundary at and through these sites. The boundary as a built environment and embodied form, therefore, is not examined, stripping depth from St. John's promised history of the "landscape of fences and patrols."(7)

Without a precise and rigorous treatment of either the physical boundary, where it existed, or of the men and their practices, when they represented the boundary, *Line in the Sand* does not firmly fix or detail the western U.S.-Mexico boundary as a substantive *there* there beyond the politicians' line in the sand. The monuments, promised to be built every 5 miles along the border; the fences, as erected through border towns such as Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora; and the formation of the immigration stations and customs houses are framed almost as immaculate conceptions of the political imagination and disputes of the western U.S.-Mexico boundary. Unfortunately, *Line in the Sand* does not provide its promised history of the border. It does not offer a penetrating empirical and analytical breakaway of, as St. John promised, "how the border shifted from a line on a map to a clearly marked and policed boundary where state agents attempted to regulate who and what entered the country"(2). I am left to wonder how a more penetrating analysis of the border as a physical form may have impacted St. John's analysis of the border's many meanings. Despite all of these "nots" and wonderings, *Line in the Sand* is an important book as it persuasively pushes back against ahistorical notions of the border's permanence and it

offers a well-crafted and much-needed consolidation of multiple literatures addressing the border's many meanings and uses across space and time. As such, I expect it to be a widely-assigned text in borderlands classes.

Scholars have embraced the use of borderlands and transnational frameworks in order to escape the analytical limitations inherent within a nation-state perspective. For instance, Glorinda Andalzúa and Mario García highlighted the development of a border culture that transcends the political demarcation between Mexico and the United States.¹ Consequently, borderlands has become an elastic concept encompassing both physical and metaphorical borders that simultaneously serve to separate yet create points of interaction concerning issues such as citizenship, identity, gender, race, and sexuality. A borderlands study can take place anywhere; geographical proximity to the border in question is not a prerequisite. For instance, the city of Chicago, over 1,300 miles away from the U.S.-Mexico border, experienced significant Mexican immigration beginning in the late 1910s. Certainly sociocultural borderlands existed among ethnic communities as they navigated various urban spaces. In light of these transnational processes the physical border can seem, if not insignificant, then at least malleable. However, this expansive definition of borderlands has, at times, led us to overlook ever-increasing militarization of the border and nation-states' efforts to define citizenship and identity. Rachel St. John's text, *Line in the Sand: A History of Western U.S.-Mexico Border*, serves to remind scholars not to quickly dismiss territorial borders and their impact on a region's political economy, peoples, and cultures.

Along the U.S.-Mexico border (particularly in urban areas) fences, barbed wire, check points, surveillance drones, custom agents, and border patrol agents dutifully prevent unauthorized movement while safeguarding permissible transnational economic exchanges. These symbols of state power represent the culmination of nearly a century of federal policy directives implemented and negotiated by local officials and communities. St. John traces the development of the border from "a line on a map to a clearly marked and policed boundary where state agents attempted to regulate who and what entered the nation" (2). She argues that state forces, local actors, and historical processes led to shifts in the nature of the border. By the 1930s, the border became a site of capitalist development, transnational trade, enforcement of territorial sovereignty, and a marker of national identity.

Although Mexico and the United States eventually solidified control over their border, during much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, local forces largely drove the region's historical events. St. John's first chapter highlights the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the creation of the U.S.-Mexico border. Consequently a bi-national border commission undertook harrowing journeys to survey the new border. Their difficulty demonstrated the inability of both nations to project their power upon the new boundary. The second chapter further reinforces this point by highlighting filibustering efforts and military operations against indigenous peoples. State-sponsored military operations struggled to restrain groups such as the Apache from utilizing the international border to

¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987); Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

their advantage. Chapter three recounts the economic development of the Southwestern Borderlands and its incorporation into the market economy. The arrival of the railroads led to the development of border communities centered on agriculture, ranching, and mining. In the following section, the author traces early efforts to control trans-border economic exchanges. Border officials weighed local realities when making pragmatic decisions concerning access. The fifth chapter examines how the Mexican Revolution led to increased immigration into the United States. Consequently, further steps were taken to control immigration, in particular the building of fences, which drastically altered border spaces. In the book's sixth chapter the author traces the utilization of the discourse of vice and morality in relation to border controls. A number of border checkpoints, in the name of protecting Americans, had imposed nightly curfews that interfered with the daily flow of the border. According to the text's final chapter, by the 1930s, immigration rather than trade or morality became the main focus of an emerging "immigration control apparatus" (176). Immigrants and laborers seeking to cross the border were subject to literacy tests, head taxes, and health inspections. Both nation-states put into place the type of controls, such as the creation of the Mexican Border Defense force or the U.S. Border Patrol, that have come to epitomize the contemporary Southwestern Border.

While examining the evolution of the U.S.-Mexico border, St. John's work makes a number of effective arguments. The author seeks to present a complex and nuanced view of the border. As a result, she uses Mexican archival sources to demonstrate that the United States was not alone in efforts to extend national jurisdiction and control over its territorial borders. Mexico also sought to impose order on the border and often cooperated with its northern neighbors in pursuit of this goal. This was evident in bi-national agreements that allowed U.S. forces to follow "hostile" groups across the international boundary (57). Additionally, Mexico also developed its own laws and organizations to regulate immigration into the country (178). The Mexican government was not simply a victim of its powerful neighbor to the north but embarked on its own nation-building project. St. John joins a number of scholars, such as Ana María Alonso, who have examined Mexican policies around the turn of the twentieth century aimed at "civilizing" frontier peoples.² Rather than highlighting national animosity or rivalry, St. John demonstrates that Mexico and the United States were engaged in similar processes.

Historians have recently broadened their scope beyond a Mexican and Euro-American dichotomy to fully understand the effects of strict border controls. St. John seeks to be part of this larger historiographic movement by discussing the border in relation to indigenous peoples and Chinese immigrants. Scholars such as Brian DeLay and Eric Meeks have illustrated how native peoples were, if not dominant, then important actors in Southwestern Borderlands.³ St. John writes that in the latter half of the nineteenth century

² See Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1995).

³ Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008); Eric V. Meeks, *Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos in Arizona* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2007).

the Apache manipulated the international boundary to evade state jurisdiction. In response, the United States sought to restrict native peoples' space to reservations. The author's work also devotes significant space to Chinese immigrants crossing the border.⁴ The Chinese were targeted in anti-immigrant campaigns in both Mexico and the United States. A number of immigrants even crossed into the United States to utilize deportation proceedings in order to return to China and escape Mexican persecution (194). St. John's inclusion of indigenous peoples and Chinese immigrants provides an invaluable perspective. She demonstrates how Mexico and the United States sought to regulate groups that they perceived as national threats.

While examining federal policies on the border, St. John remains cognizant of the tensions between national and local forces. She attempts to maintain a delicate balance between both and seeks to avoid a narrative that solely privileges state power. The text contains a number of interesting personal accounts and case studies that highlight how local actors either challenged the nation-state or negotiated its power. In an engaging narrative style, St. John recounts how people living in border communities both demanded tighter controls on "foreigners" and yet lamented the restrictions on their own movement. Local residents could nonetheless circumvent restrictions and maintain their daily trans-border routines by establishing relationships with customs agents. In 1918 a U.S. immigration inspector notified his superiors that he was not derelict in his duties when he allowed locals to pass without questioning since he recognized them. The U.S. government responded to these local needs by issuing more readily attainable border-crossing cards to satisfy residents (180).

St. John makes a concerted effort to present a complex view of the U.S.-Mexico border's evolution. Nevertheless, readers may still feel *Line in the Sand* is the linear story of how two nation-states turned "Borderlands into Borders," to borrow a phrase used by Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron in their discussion of colonial borderlands.⁵ The text could have addressed this with more discussion on the ways that the border remained porous despite the tighter controls initiated in the 1920s and 1930s. In particular, it would have been interesting to examine how the border affected the Tohono O'odham. Their communities spanned across the U.S.-Mexico border and Eric Meeks writes that despite isolation between some settlements, travel across the border and seasonal migration for agricultural labor did occur.⁶ Did increased border controls also affect these communities or did Tohono O'odham travel with little disruption? However, indigenous peoples' roles in the

⁴ For more work on the Chinese in the borderlands see: Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Immigrants to a Developing Society: The Chinese in Northern Mexico, 1875-1932," *Journal of Arizona History* 21 (Autumn 1980): 275-312; Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho, *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁵ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron. "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History." *American Historical Review* 104 (June 1999): 816.

⁶ Eric V. Meeks, *Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos in Arizona* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 142.

book are limited to the second chapter and discussions of military efforts to stop Apache raiding.

Overall, St. John has expertly written a synthesis of the formation of the U.S.-Mexico border from its inception to the 1930s. Scholars have previously written about the expansion of state power in the borderlands, efforts to control immigration while encouraging trade, and the construction of national identity at the border. However St. John contributes to these studies with a well-researched examination of these broader processes as they unfolded on the physical border.

Historians are gratified when their work is relevant to contemporary events and political issues. Undoubtedly *Line in the Sand* directly speaks to the continuing militarization of the border. In fact the book's most insightful section examines the construction of the border fence in the city of Nogales, Arizona. The subsequent spatial reorganization of the community is especially pertinent in light of current events. In 2006 the U.S. Congress passed the Secure Fence Act, which allotted more than a billion dollars to extend the border fence beyond urban areas. In some cases Americans have found that the fence was actually built behind a buffer zone. Consequently, a number of U.S. citizens have found that their homes and properties are cut off from their neighbors. This has led to a similar disruption of community space that the residents of Nogales faced in 1920s. We are all reminded once more that the line in the sand matters.

Author's Response by Rachel St. John, New York University

It strikes me that a book, not unlike the boundary line about which I wrote, is created with a certain sets of concerns, assumptions, and goals in mind, but that once it is finished it goes out into the world where people, in this case readers with distinct disciplinary approaches and scholarly concerns, bring different perspectives to bear that shape the way they read it. I have been both humbled and flattered by what this great group of scholars has both brought to and taken away from *Line in the Sand*. While I cannot fully respond to all of the points made in these reviews—and at any rate must leave it to other readers to read the book and come to their own conclusions—I would like to try to respond to some of the issues raised and to provide some further context about how I approached the topic, how my thinking about the border was transformed throughout the process of researching and writing this book, and where I think scholarship on the border might go in the future.

In her review, Flannery Burke frames *Line in the Sand* in two distinct ways: first, in light of the local context of the southern New Mexico that she visited as a child and, second, in relation to the broader field of diplomatic history. While I hope that readers, like Burke, will find *Line in the Sand* to be a helpful contribution to the literature on U.S. and Mexican diplomatic history and the related field of 'the United States and the World,' it is worth noting that I did not initially intend to write diplomatic history. Rather, I set out to better understand the history of the U.S.-Mexico border as a space—a space that I first knew, much like Burke, on a local level through my own adolescent encounters with the San Diego-Tijuana border. Growing up in Southern California, I had visited and on occasion crossed the border without much thought. As a graduate student focusing on western and environmental history, I became interested in this space where the artificial and, as I would learn, quite arbitrary, boundary line that U.S. and Mexican officials had imposed in the mid-nineteenth century had come to mark a stark divide and to exercise enormous influence over the lives of the people who lived along and crossed it. I wanted to know how this had happened.

As I began my research into the border's history, two things initially struck me. The first was the power of the boundary line to create such stark distinctions. The second, as a number of the reviewers have also noted, was the way that the border operated and was significant on multiple scales. The border has simultaneously been a local space in which people have worked, traveled, and made their homes and a site of national and international definition, negotiation, and policing. While it was my own experience of the local context of the border which first drew me to want to explore its history, I soon became fascinated by the way the United States and Mexican governments had claimed and used the border to serve national and international agendas as well. I quickly realized that the border's history could not be told at the local level alone and set out to explore local, state, and national archives across the United States and Mexico in order to write a narrative that could engage all of the scales on which the border existed.

I also sought out secondary literature that would help me to better understand and contextualize the border. I was first drawn to the burgeoning interdisciplinary scholarship on the U.S.-Mexico border and other boundaries around the world. In the early stages of my research, I found Peter Sahlins' *Boundaries: The Making of Spain and France in the Pyrenees* and its exploration of how national identities took form at the margins of nations to be particularly helpful.¹ Equally influential was the work of scholars in other disciplines, including sociology, geography, anthropology, and international relations, which illuminated the complexity and contestation surrounding the late-twentieth-century U.S.-Mexico border and particularly the issues related to immigration, trade (both legal and illicit), and urbanization.² However, as I read these works on the modern border, I was struck by the fact that they at times lacked historical depth. In order to understand the late-twentieth-century border, they often began their studies with a discussion of the delimitation of the boundary line in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and then jumped ahead to the second half of the twentieth century. I wanted to know what had happened in the period in between—a period stretching from 1848 to the early years of the Great Depression which, I soon concluded, had witnessed profound transformations in both the meaning and spatiality of the border that provided a window into how state power and priorities had shifted during this critical period of nation-building in North America.

What I concluded in the course of my research is that the U.S.-Mexico border, despite widespread contemporary assumptions about its significance as a barrier to immigration and illegal activity, has meant many different things and served many distinct purposes throughout its history. As I wrote in the introduction to *Line in the Sand*, the border was at different times “a marker of military sovereignty, a site of transborder trade, a home to binational communities, a customs and immigration checkpoint, a divide between political and legal regimes, and even, at times, a battlefield.” (3) These meanings not only changed over time, but, as Pekka Hämäläinen notes in his review, “the border signified drastically different things for different people and institutions.” In *Line in the Sand* I explored these different meanings by tracing the narrative of the border from its creation in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo through the early 1930s. While each chapter has a thematic focus that highlights the aspects of the border that were most significant during a given period in its history, I also drew attention to the ways in which the multiple meanings of the boundary line became intertwined and layered over one another, often with unintended

¹ Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

² See, for instance, Lawrence A. Herzog, *Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Lawrence A. Herzog, ed., *Shared Space: Rethinking the U.S.-Mexico Border Environment* (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 2000); Daniel D. Arreola and James R. Curtis, *The Mexican Border Cities: Landscape Anatomy and Place Personality* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1993); Pablo Vila, *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders: Social Categories, Metaphors, and Narrative Identities on the U.S.-Mexico Frontier* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the “Illegal Alien” and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

consequences. As Flannery Burke notes in reflecting on the Gadsden, New Mexico, of her childhood where she sees “every layer of meaning that a man-made national border added to the landscape,” none of the previous and alternate meanings of the border ever entirely disappeared. For instance, the United States and Mexico did not cease to desire military authority over their shared border once they defeated the Apaches. To the contrary, the urgency of military sovereignty reemerged during the Mexican Revolution and First World War and continues to echo in the rhetoric of homeland security, national defense, and both nations' wars on drugs to this day. The same is certainly true of bi-national economic cooperation. Despite the growth of border crossing regulations and traffic jams at border ports of entry, neither international trade nor bi-national communities ceased to exist. However, while the border has continued to be a site of military sovereignty and economic, social, and cultural exchange, these meanings are, particularly from the perspective of the states, often subsumed today beneath the preoccupation with controlling trans-border migration and smuggling. Among my goals in *Line in the Sand* was to show how the multiple meanings of the border were layered on top of each other, but also how different priorities gained precedence at different times.

As the meaning of the border changed, so did border spaces. By space I mean not just the physical structures or built environment of the boundary line, but the broader spatial context that shaped movement, property ownership, and personal interactions along the border. As Geraldo Cadava notes in his review, *Line in the Sand* is not primarily a history of the built environment of the border. A reader who, like Kelly Lytle Hernandez, is looking for detailed descriptions of the border's built environment and the making of boundary markers and barriers will find more thorough treatments of those subjects in the work of historians who have focused on the mapping, surveying, and marking of the boundary line and geographers who have analyzed the development of border cities and environments.³

³ See, *Drawing the Borderline: Artist-Explorers of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Survey* (Albuquerque: The Albuquerque Museum, 1996); Robert V. Hine, *Bartlett's West: Drawing the Mexican Boundary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Paula Rebert, *La Gran Línea: Mapping the United States-Mexico Boundary, 1849-1857* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); Joseph Richard Werne, *The Imaginary Line: A History of the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey, 1848-1857* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2007); Robert M. Utley, *Changing Course: The International Boundary, United States and Mexico, 1848-1963* (Tucson: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1996); Fred Rochlin and Harriet Rochlin, “The Heart of Ambos Nogales: Boundary Monument 122,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 17:3 (Summer 1976): 161-80; Herzog, *Where North Meets South*; Herzog, ed., *Shared Space: Rethinking the U.S.-Mexico Border Environment*; Arreola and Curtis, *The Mexican Border Cities*; Nathan F. Sayre, *Ranching, Endangered Species, and Urbanization in the Southwest: Species of Capital* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2002).

Recent works by historians Katherine Morrissey and Mary E. Mendoza which discuss the photography of the boundary surveys and border fences, dipping vats, and bath houses respectively represent important new additions to the rich literature focusing on the materiality of the boundary line. Mary E. Mendoza, “If We Build It They Won’t Come: The Physical Manifestation of the U.S.-Mexico Border,” paper presented at the Western History Association 52nd Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado, October 4, 2012; Katherine Morrissey, “Borderline Photography: The Visual Legacy of the 1890s U.S./Mexico International Boundary Survey,” paper presented at the Western History Association 52nd Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado, October 4, 2012.

Although *Line in the Sand* covers some similar terrain and topics, it diverges from this body of scholarship by focusing on the broader spatial dynamics that defined the U.S.-Mexico border. Seen through the lens of spatial history, the built environment was just one facet of an evolving array of legal, economic, political, social, and cultural constructs that influenced how people related to each other and operated in space. In this context, laws and assumptions about race and citizenship were as significant in influencing how an individual experienced the border as the construction of boundary markers or barbed wire fences.

In thinking about border spaces, I was influenced by the work of theorists, geographers, and historians who had explored the ways in which individuals, nation-states, societies, and economies have both actively produced spaces that reflect human goals and values and been constrained by the spatial realities that they created.⁴ Perhaps no one was more influential in my thinking about spatial history than my mentor, Richard White, whose own spatial turn coincided with the years I was working closely with him at Stanford.⁵ The western U.S.-Mexico border seemed particularly apt for spatial analysis. The delimitation of the border in 1848 began a process that was at its most basic level about the production and division of space. While there were a number of studies that focused on the mapping and surveying of the boundary line and the development of urban spaces along the border, no one had analyzed how the growth of state power, settlement, and capitalist economies and the evolution of ideas about national territory, membership, and economics had transformed both the meaning of the border and how it channeled and constrained movement.⁶ It was this that I set out to do in *Line in the Sand*.

As my work on the border progressed, I also came to identify with and to be in dialogue with another body of literature—borderlands history. Diverging from the older Boltonian school of borderlands history which had focused on the Spanish colonial experience in the present-day U.S. Southwest, borderlands history experienced a resurgence in the 1990s and 2000s as young scholars extended the geographic scope and chronology of the field and brought fresh perspectives to the study of the borderlands at the edges of empires and surrounding international boundaries across North America and the world. As I wrote in

⁴ See for instance, Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1991); Derek Gregory and John Urry, eds., *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd, 1985); Kate Brown, "Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana Are Nearly the Same Place," *American Historical Review* 106:1 (February 2001): 17–48.

⁵ For work that White has since published in spatial history see, Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011); Richard White, "What Is Spatial History?," working paper, February 1, 2010, The Spatial History Project Website, available at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29>, accessed online September 28, 2012.

⁶ *Drawing the Borderline: Artist-Explorers of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Survey*; Hine, *Bartlett's West*; Martínez, *Troublesome Border*; Metz, *Border*; Rebert, *La Gran Línea*; Werne, *The Imaginary Line*; Utley, *Changing Course*; Rochlin and Rochlin, "The Heart of Ambos Nogales"; Herzog, *Where North Meets South*; Herzog, ed., *Shared Space: Rethinking the U.S.-Mexico Border Environment*; Arreola and Curtis, *The Mexican Border Cities*.

the introduction to *Line in the Sand*, these scholars blended “Spanish colonial borderlands history with the analytical approaches of Native American, Chicano/a, and western history,” drew attention to “broad processes of conquest, colonization, and cultural interaction and exchange,” and became “models for transnational history.” (5)⁷ In addition to the obvious regional connection between my work on the border and many of these books which focused on the U.S. Southwest and Mexican North, my interest in the expansion of state power, the demarcation and division of territory, and the ways in which people responded to these incursions into their everyday lives drew me into the orbit of the new borderlands history.

As both Geraldo Cadava and Flannery Burke note in their reviews, *Line in the Sand* both is in conversation with and owes a debt to earlier works of borderlands history. However, I think it is also worth reiterating what is different about *Line in the Sand*. First, as a number of the reviewers underscore, is my emphasis on the border itself. At a time when, as John Paul Nuño notes in his review, “borderlands has become an elastic concept encompassing both physical and metaphorical borders,” my work draws attention to the specificity of the boundary line within the broader context of the borderlands. Second, although I, like other borderlands scholars, have written a transnational history, I would suggest that my intentions in doing so may have been slightly different than those of the authors of some other works that take a transnational approach. At a time when many scholars had embraced a transnational framework in order to decenter or transcend the nation-state as a category of analysis, I approached the border to better understand how nation-states took form, evolved, and asserted their power. In this sense, I think *Line in the Sand* is in line

⁷ For overviews of the field of borderlands history see, Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 98:2 (September 2011): 338-61; Benjamin H. Johnson and Andrew R. Graybill, “Introduction: Borders and Their Historians in North America,” in Benjamin H. Johnson and Andrew R. Graybill, eds., *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, “Making Transnational History: Nations, Regions, and Borderlands,” in Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, eds., *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). A small sampling of the borderlands histories that influenced me include, Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995); James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); María E. Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Benjamin Heber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Andrew Graybill, *Policing the Great Plains: Rangers, Mounties, and the North American Frontier, 1875-1910* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Truett and Young, eds., *Continental Crossroads*. For the classic work of Boltonian borderlands history see, Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921).

with the field of diplomatic history which, although operating on an international and at times global scale, continues to emphasize the role of nation-states and state actors.

Finally, in contrast to some borderlands historians, most notably Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron who, in their 1999 *American Historical Review* article, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” have argued that the central problematic of borderlands history is to explain and chart the shift from imprecise, contested “borderlands” to fixed, national “borders,” I see the border’s history as less linear and more multifaceted and contested.⁸ By highlighting the multiple and shifting meanings of the border and the extent to which state power was never absolute and always negotiated, *Line in the Sand* challenges the binaries—of open vs. closed, soft vs. hard, lawless vs. controlled, and porous vs. impermeable—that have so often dominated the rhetoric about both the contemporary and historic U.S.-Mexico border. Reading some of the reviewers’ responses has reminded me again of how hard it is to get past these binaries. Geraldo Cadava notes in his review that I show how “the border, in one way or another, hardened by the mid-twentieth century.” Similarly, John Paul Nuño remarks that, “readers may still feel *Line in the Sand* is the linear story of how two nation-states turned ‘Borderlands into Borders,’ to borrow a phrase used by Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron in their discussion of colonial borderlands.” He goes on to suggest that I might have further emphasized the continued porosity of the border throughout the twentieth century. While I agree with Nuño’s suggestion that further discussion of the Tohono O’odham would have made a valuable additional chapter (although one that I think would most fruitfully be pursued beyond the time frame of *Line in the Sand*), I would draw attention to the examples of continued contestation and permeability that I did include. As I noted in the conclusion to my discussion of 1930s immigration enforcement in Chapter Seven, “The persistence of undocumented immigrants, along with other people who went under, over, through, and around the states’ fences, testified to the constant challenges to the states’ authority to define the meaning of the border and control who and what crossed it.” (196) To this day, the border remains contested, imperfectly controlled, and both intentionally and unintentionally porous in many ways. I would argue that the rhetoric that Cadava evokes of “soft” and “hard” borders, much like the language of “open” and “closed” borders, mischaracterizes the more complicated shifts in the form and meaning of the border that occurred over time along the boundary line. As I asserted in *Line in the Sand*, “while both the U.S. and Mexican governments gradually expanded their presence and power on the border over the course of its history, this is not a history of how either nation-state managed to close the once-open border, but rather of how the border evolved, often into forms and meanings that neither nation-state could predict or fully control.” (4-5) The border came to have a greater presence in individuals’ lives by the 1930s not because it had become harder or more closed, but rather because more people had come to live along and cross it and both governments used it as a tool to restrict and regulate a much wider range of activities and movement.

⁸ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *American Historical Review*, 104:3 (June 1999): 814-41.

I unfortunately do not have enough space to address all of the thoughtful issues the reviewers have raised, but before I close I want to briefly acknowledge a few points that I think are particularly useful in suggesting directions for future scholarship on the border. Although my story closes in the 1930s, Cadava makes a compelling argument for why other historians, as both he and Lytle Hernandez have done in their recent work, should continue the study of the border's evolution up through the mid-twentieth century. Highlighting the significance of state (as well as national) boundaries, Burke convincingly suggests that future historians will be able to develop a more nuanced understanding of border dynamics by more fully addressing the differences between state jurisdictions on both sides of the border. With her own work on the members of the Border Patrol serving as an implicit model, Lytle Hernandez emphasizes the need for further exploration of the experiences of U.S. servicemen who were stationed on the border. By raising these and other important questions about the border's history, each of these reviewers has illuminated new connections for me in thinking about my own work and, more importantly, suggested exciting new directions for future scholarship on the U.S.-Mexico border. I am gratified that *Line in the Sand* is provoking such stimulating conversations. It will certainly not be the last word on the subject.

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