This study is a reinterpretation of nineteenth-century Mexican American history that examines Mexico’s struggle to secure its northern border with repatriates from the United States in the aftermath of a war resulting in the loss of half its territory. Responding to past interpretations, José Angel Hernández suggests that these resettlement schemes centered on the developments of the frontier region, the modernization of the country with loyal Mexican American settlers, and blocking the tide of migrations to the United States to prevent the depopulation of Mexico’s fractured northern border. Through an examination of Mexico’s immigration and colonization policies as they developed throughout the nineteenth century, the book focuses primarily on the population of Mexican citizens who were “lost” after the end of the Mexican American War of 1846–1848 until the end of the century.

José Angel Hernández is assistant professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is currently a faculty Fellow at the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies. He has received fellowships from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Research Fellowship, and the Center for Mexican American Studies Fellowship at the University of Houston. Professor Hernández has had articles published in Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies; Landscapes of Violence: An Interdisciplinary Journal Devoted to the Study of Violence, Conflict, and Trauma; and Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos.
Mexican American Colonization During the Nineteenth Century
A History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

José Angel Hernández
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107666245

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First published 2012

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data
Hernández, José Angel, 1969–
Mexican American colonization during the nineteenth century : a history of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands / José Angel Hernández.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
F786.H446 2012
972’.1–dc23 2012002707

ISBN 978-1-107-01239-4 Hardcover

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Dedicado a mis padres,

Martha C. Hernández

&

José G. Hernández
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Like most historical monographs, this inquiry shares a narrative that has many entrances, interpretations, exits, contradictions, and shortcomings. These acknowledgments are likely to share a similar fate. Given that the book came about as an academic journey of sorts, involving many institutions, individuals, and ideas, I will focus on that particular perspective. To start, a special thanks to my editor, Eric Crahan, and the staff at Cambridge University Press, especially Abigail Zorbaugh and Bhavani Ganesh. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to the two outside readers for their advice and recommendations. I’ve made an effort to include all of their great suggestions and critiques, but in the end all oversights and errors are my own.

The ideas and interests that started this particular journey began somewhat at San Antonio College (SAC) and at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), where I met a stellar group of professors that first introduced me to the field. A number of them also asked interesting questions about the intraethnic phenomena of diasporic communities, which in part informs some of my ongoing academic concerns. Among those professors who shaped my interest are Juan “El Profe” Rodríguez, Félix D. Almaráz, Norma Cruz-González, Roberto Calderon, María García, Yolanda Leyva, Ben Olguín, José Macías, John Igo, Stephen Casanova, Rodolfo Rosales, Frank Pino, Ellen Riojas Clark, Jacinto Quirarte, Andrés Tijerina, and especially Juan Mora-Torres. Indeed, it was my friendship with Juan at UTSA that not only stoked my interest in Mexican history, but also influenced my decision to pursue graduate studies. Nothing I write in these few words can relay the significant role he played in teaching, supporting, and mentoring this kid from the south side of San Antonio.
Other friends and acquaintances at UTSA were equally important in providing friendship, encouragement, and support. Marisol Pérez, Carlos Hernández, Jennifer Mata, Oscar Valdés, Anita Revilla, Mariano “Mono” Aguilar, Marcos Valdés, Kevin López, Raquel Favela, John David Naranjo, Saul Levario, Frank Abel Cantú, Lisa D. Anaya, José A. Macías Jr., Chico Mendez, Cecilia Perfecto, Nelly Casas, Raul Eduardo Ruíz, Jerry Portillo, Semilla Mestiza Rivera, Camerino Salazar, David Armendariz, Michelle Alvarado, Michael De León, Brenda Mauricio Peña, Lisa Suárez, Roxanne Guerra, Barbara Peña, Raquel Aguilar, Belinda Ramirez, Regina Cantú, and Selena Tamez are all part of an amazing group of friends whom I met during this time, and I adore their friendship and comradery. Special abrazos for Mari, Carlos, Mono, Anita, Brenda, and Jennifer.

When I returned to Texas during the 2003–4 academic year in order to continue my dissertation research, Josephine Méndez-Negrete was kind enough to support me as a research affiliate with the Mexican American Studies Program for the semester. There, I also met Marie "Keta" Miranda and Elizabeth De La Portilla, who were very kind, warm, and welcoming. Rubén Martinez provided office space and other privileges during my tenure as a visiting research scholar with The Culture & Policy Institute during that spring, and I would like to acknowledge his support and that of the institute. Dennis Bixler Márquez was kind enough to host me at the University of Texas at El Paso as a visiting research scholar with the Chicano Studies Program for the 2004–5 academic year.

At the University of Houston, I was fortunate to have received a graduate fellowship with The Center for Mexican American Studies for two years, starting in 1998. This fellowship provided me with the time, space, and liberty to work solely on my graduate studies in Latin American history, but it also forced me to constantly consider the transnational perspective of the borderlands when thinking of my thesis. My thesis adviser, John Mason Hart, suggested the topic of Mexican colonies during the Porfiriato and I was immediately drawn to the multiple possibilities of the topic and to the transnational approach that such a study would entail. Aside from being supportive, John was an excellent teacher and encouraging adviser. Classes with Bob Buzzanco, Susan Kellogg, Thomas O'Brien, and Emilio Zamora rounded out an intense (historiographically speaking) and productive graduate experience, and I also made many friends along the way. Scott
Murray, Irving Levinson, Brian Behnken, Courtney Forsloff Shah, Chris Danielson, Christos Frentzos, David Urbano, Julia Sloan, Roy Vu, Theresa Rae Jach, Ron Milam, Russell Contreras, Scott Parkin, James Carter, and Ellen Fout were cheerful and intelligent friends in many seminars and class discussions. Thank you to Guadalupe San Miguel, Néstor P. Rodríguez, Tatcho Mindiola, Angela Valenzuela, and Lorenzo Cano for their support and help with the thesis. While living in Houston, I also became fast friends with Abhilash Sivaraman, Carlos Romero Malpica, Madanmohan Catti Nandagopal, Trinidad Gonzalez, and Siddharth Poonja. Abhi and Madan: I’m looking forward to a serious game of dominoes or billiards as soon as humanly possible!

At the University of Chicago (UC) I met a cadre of scholars and academics who forever altered the way I thought about the production of history. Friedrich Katz (1927–2010) read through my master’s thesis and encouraged me to pursue the topic further, and his inquisitive nature during classes, workshops, and while I served as his research assistant still informs the way in which I ask historical questions. The guidance and mentorship that I received from Claudio Lomnitz is immeasurable. Claudio forced me to think critically about questions of nationalism and Mexican history more broadly. Emilio Kouri arrived a few years later and was an amazing adviser and mentor during my time in Hyde Park, and his support, advice, and guidance are greatly appreciated. Aside from being a provocative thinker, Dipesh Chakrabarty is an excellent teacher. He patiently taught me to think critically through his classes and office hours, and as a member of my dissertation committee. By this time, Juan Mora-Torres was back in Chicago at DePaul University, where he helped get my first real teaching job and then continued to mentor me, only now as part of my dissertation committee.

Friends and colegas at UC were central to my survival, and I would like to thank them here: Jaime Pensado and Jennifer Morales Pensado, Mihwa Choi, Marcy Jane Barrientes, Rocío Magaña, Romina Robles Ruvalcalba, Quincy T. Mills, Nilda Barraza, Luis Barrón, Allyson Hobbs, Dwaipayan Sen, Michael Mantak, Jessica Graham, John H. Flores, Sarah Osten, Kittiya M. Lee, Robin Bates, Dora Sánchez Hidalgo, Carlos Bravo Regidor, Muhammed Salhi and Ruma Niyogi Salhi, David Jacobson, Matt Clark, Julia Grace Darling Young, Ana Serna, Paul Liffman, Omar Acha, Beth Cooper, Todd Paul Prudencio Romero,
Benjamin Johnson, Nicole Mottier, Brendan Swagerty, Amanda Hartzmark, Daniel Cohn, Eduardo Moralez, Elise LaRose, Laurencio Sanguino, Jovita R. Baber, Ann Schneider, Antonio Sotomayor, Ariana Hernandez Reguant, John Eason, Mike Czaplicki, Illya Davis, José Luis Razo, Josh Beck, Colby Ristow, Susan Gzesh, Shane Green, Toussaint Lossier, Ev Meade, William Leslie Balan-Gaubert, Paul Ross, Maru Balandran, Patrick Iber, Mikael Wolfe, Steven Platzter, Pushpam Jain, Gregory Malandrucuo, and especially Pablo Ben – who was my roommate in Ciudad Juárez, Chicago, and Mexico City. I would especially like to acknowledge the various writing and workshop groups with Julia Young and John H. Flores, and especially those with my dearest friends, Pablo Ben and Jaime Pensado. Jaime and I lived parallel lives of sorts, and I will always cherish the intellectual exchange and friendship that developed during those years in Hyde Park and beyond.

Funding from various agencies and institutions throughout the past decade were also key in the completion of this latest outline, and I would like to acknowledge the support of the Fulbright Hayes Dissertation Fellowship; the Center for Mexican American Studies Fellowship at the University of Houston; various grants from the Department of History at the University of Chicago; Tinker and Mellon Foundation grants from the Center for Latin American Studies at UC; research and travel money from the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at UC; the University of Chicago Human Rights Program; and the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. Since my arrival at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, I have also received support for my research from the Department of History; as a Center for Public Policy and Administration workshop Fellow; a Lilly Teaching Fellowship; as Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latina/o Studies Faculty Fellow; and with the support of a Research Intensive Semester grant at UMass.

A number of librarians and archivists were instrumental in obtaining and sharing information that is well documented in this inquiry, and here I would especially like to mention Fernando Blando Baeza and all of the staff of the Archivo Histórico de Terrenos Nacionales in Mexico City; Felipe Talavera García of the Biblioteca Arturo Tolentino, which also houses the Archivo Municipal of Ciudad Juárez; Juan Sandoval, Samuel Sisneros, Claudia Rivers, and all of the staff of Special Collections at the University of Texas at El Paso; Margo
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gutiérrez and the helpful staff at the Nettie Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin; the wonderful and pleasant staff at the Archivo Histórico Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores in Mexico City; all of the librarians, friends, and staff of the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago; the staff at the Archivo Colección Porfirio Díaz at the Universidad Iberoamericana; the helpful folks at the Archivo Histórico Militar Mexicano, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional in Mexico City; and to all the staff at one of my favorite hangouts in Mexico City, Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada. And a special thank you to the librarians and staff of the W.E.B. DuBois Library at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, especially my good friend Peter Stern.

Friends and colleagues in Mexico City and throughout the state of Chihuahua helped me with research, with housing, with direction, and, most important, with friendship. Early on I was lucky to have met Beatriz Carrillo González, formerly of the Archivo Histórico de Relaciones Exteriores, who was kind enough to orient me to the many archival holdings of the city. Martha Loyo of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México wrote me a letter of support during my year as a Fulbright Fellow. In La Ascensión, Chihuahua, the help, assistance, and comradeship of Ramón Ramírez Tafoya were invaluable, and I am very appreciative of our collaboration since we met in 2004. Lilia Esthela Bayardo Rodríguez helped me with transcribing hundreds, if not thousands, of documents during the course of my research. Although limited information was located for my research at the time, I think it is important to thank the directors and their staff at the following local archives in the state of Chihuahua: Municipio de La Ascensión, Municipio de Guadalupe, Municipio de Janos, Municipio de Práxedis Guerrero, and the Archivo Municipal de Ciudad Chihuahua. I would also like to say thank you to Professors Victor Orozco and Jorge Chávez Chávez of the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez for their help and assistance during my residence in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

Friends and colleagues at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, have also provided feedback, support, encouragement, suggestions, discussions, and criticism, and I would especially like to acknowledge Joel Wolfe, Joye Bowman, John Higginson, Brian W. Ogilvie, Audrey L. Altstadt, Jennifer N. Heuer, Anna Taylor, Jon Olsen, Heather Cox Richardson, Daniel Gordon, Heidi V. Scott, Richard T. Chu, Laura
L. Lovett, Anne Broadbridge, Richard Minear, Larry Owens, David Glassberg, Stephen Platt, Barry Levy, Charles Rearick, Bruce Laurie, Andrew Donson, Brian Bunk, Joyce Avrech Berkman, Christian Appy, Jane M. Rausch, Carlin Barton, Bob Potash, Jennifer Frone, Rachel Martin, Barbara Krauthamer, Marla Miller, Alice Nash, Sigrid Schmalzer, Mary Christina Wilson, Suzanne Bell, Mary Lashway, and Jean Ball. Friends and colleagues in the greater New England area whom I would like to thank include Mari Castañeda, Davíd Carrasco, Joya Misra, María Soledad Barbón, Mathew L. Oullette, Melissa Madera, Douglas S. Massey, Kym Morrison, Wilson Valentín-Escobar, Nina Siulc, Renato Rosaldo, Flavia Montenegro-Menezes, Brian Baldi, Joselyn Almeida-Beveridge, Amilcar Shabbaz, Diana Coryat, Rick Lopez, Micaela Jamaica Díaz-Sánchez, Isaac Peter Campos Costero, Whitney Battle-Baptiste, Mark Overmyer-Velasquez, Toby Barnes, Angelica Bernal, Patricia Gubitosi, José N. Ornelas, Sonia E. Alvarez, Mario Ontiveros, Gloria Bernabe-Ramos, Mike Funk, Rani Varghese, Ata Moharreri, Jonathan Rosa, Laura Briggs, Luis Marentes, Cruz Caridad Bueno, Harry Frañqui Rivera, Patricia Medina Ferrer, Agustín Lao Montes, Joseph Krupczynski, Alberto Ameal Pérez, and especially my dear friend Diana Yoon. A special thank you to my friend Ramón Solórzano for all his help with editing and doing some of the translations in the manuscript.

Last, but surely not least, I would like to acknowledge the incredible support, encouragement, love, kindness, and warmth my family has provided through this and many other life journeys. I’m not sure how much I can say about each of my brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, cousins or aunts, but they have all shaped and influenced me in many ways. First of all, I would like to say muchísimas gracias to my daughter, Jessi Ylaní Hernández, for enduring this long trip with me … I love you mija. My sisters, María Guadalupe Hernández Tovar and Lucía Gabriela Hernández, have always shared their homes, advice, love, ideas, and great cooking. Hermanas, I love you very much. When in San Antonio, Texas, I love spending time with my nieces and nephews, Zolt Hernández, Luciano Tovar Hernández, Caesar Alexander Mendez Hernández, Susanna Tovar Hernández, and Zsofia Hernández. I would also like to acknowledge the help, kindness, and support of my cuñados, Lucio Tovar and Bobby Mendez, and also my cuñada, Zsuzsanna Sterl Hernández. My brother, César Daniel Hernández, has been my closest and dearest friend since childhood and a real “partner in crime.” Carnal, know that I love you very
much and that I appreciate all that you have done for me, Papi. There are no words, and not enough pages in the world, to express the love and gratitude that I have for my parents Martha C. Hernández and José Gabriel Hernández. They were my first teachers, and I dedicate this inquiry to them.
To criticize Caesar is not to criticize Rome.
To criticize a government is not to criticize a country.

Carlos Fuentes, to Excelsior
reporter Guillermo Ochoa, March 4, 1969