

Introduction

NATIONS, BORDERS, AND HISTORY

By 1993, Cheng Chui Ping could claim she helped hundreds of Chinese immigrants achieve the American Dream. Cheng, most commonly known as “Sister Ping,” proved to be a reliable conduit to jobs and housing in New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco for would-be immigrants. Sister Ping’s generosity was without comparison and her resourcefulness was unsurpassed. When destitute immigrants were unable to afford the transportation cost from China to the United States, Ping financed the journey and arranged work for those who could not immediately repay the loan. For her deeds, the Fujianese native earned a reputation as a modern-day Robin Hood and was once described as “a living Buddha.”¹ Ping’s benevolence seemed befitting of one called “Sister.” She promised hope and prosperity to those who believed that hard work and dependability would secure jobs and relieve debts.

Ping, though, was not a “sister” of goodwill. Rather, she was a kingpin, often dubbed the “Mother of All Snakeheads,” who organized and financed the most notorious human-smuggling network in the history of the United States. Her scheme, which included packing hundreds of Chinese into the sweltering holds of cargo ships, netted millions of dollars for the immigrant financier and members of the Fuk Ching, a New York City-based gang with whom Ping worked closely for more than fifteen years.² “Customers” paid as much as \$40,000 for a circuitous, often treacherous trip from Hong Kong through Thailand and across the Pacific Ocean to Guatemala and Belize. From Central America, immigrants either continued by sea to the port of New York City or trekked overland and across the Mexican border to the United States. Once they landed in the United States, they were either harbored or housed, depending on the travel debt owed to Sister Ping. After years of immigrant smuggling, Ping’s enterprise finally met its end when the off-loading of would-be border crossers went

awry a mile from the Mexican coast and fourteen immigrants drowned trying to swim ashore.³

When one thinks of the history of unauthorized immigration through the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the story of Sister Ping is hardly the first to come to mind.⁴ Instead, our common image of border crossers is of weary Mexicans who slog through blistering deserts and scale walls partitioning one nation from another. A mental picture emerges of migrants so desperate to reach the United States that they enlist the services of “coyotes,” that is, human smugglers of varying scruples who promise safe passage—but for a steep price.

Despite the familiarity of these images, our common views of immigration through the U.S.-Mexico borderlands are curious mostly for what they reveal about the writing and silencing of history. That we summon pictures of stark national division and treacherous border crossings when we think of immigrants originating from Mexico indicates that history has effaced many stories from the record. This book seeks to tell these stories. Until 1924, when the National Origins Act placed stringent new restrictions and means of exclusion on would-be immigrants, Mexicans were subject to some scrutiny from American immigration officials but, for the most part, entered the United States almost unfettered. Chinese border crossers, however, faced a different reality. After the passage in 1882 of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese laborers from entering the United States, virtually all Chinese were subject to intense inspection and surveillance by an immigration bureaucracy designed to exclude and deport. But immigration officials at the Mexico border discovered early on that exclusion laws were often too general for effective enforcement at the southern U.S. boundary. U.S. lawmakers had not anticipated the manner in which the myriad legal and social complexities presented by Chinese immigrants continuously prompted the reconfiguration of enforcement strategies at the Mexico border. Networks of migration comprising Chinese family and business relationships that reached deeply into the trans-Pacific world mutated in constant adaptation to immigration restrictions, serving to offer ever-changing means of undocumented entry into the United States. These means of migration persist to the present day.

Sister Ping’s story, an example of the illegal immigration that occurs at the southern U.S. boundary, reminds us that the images that constitute the common borderlands narrative rarely if ever capture the entire history of any given group. Over the last thirty years, scholars have worked attentively to retrieve the histories of native peoples, women, and working-class *fronterizos* (borderlanders) from the oblivion of official narratives. We now take as a given the larger webs of race, gender, class, and nation that have ultimately defined who becomes American and Mexican and who

does not.⁵ But as much as this body of scholarship has helped us better understand the intricacies of border life and the discreet adjustments made by *fronterizos* in times of momentous social change, the history of Chinese borderlanders has yet to be adequately told.

There were noteworthy entries in the early scholarship of Chinese in Mexico.⁶ Evelyn Hu-Dehart's pioneering research, for example, invited scholars to look through a revisionist lens focused on Chinese living in Mexico's northern states. Advancing the work of Leo Michel Jacques Dambourges and Charles Cumberland, Hu-Dehart made visible the rhetoric of Sinophobia (the unfounded fear and intense dislike of Chinese persons) and economic competition as justifications for the official expulsion of Sonoran Chinese in 1931.⁷ At the same time, Hu-DeHart posited that Mexico's revolutionary period was a crucial historiographical watershed, a time of national and racial consolidation that worked alongside anti-Chinese crusades. Since then, new studies about Chinese Mexicans have emerged, generating rich social and cultural histories.⁸ But as Chinese borderlanders became more visible in scholarly literature, they did so almost exclusively within the context of nation-centered histories, Asian American studies, and Latin American studies. Their full significance for U.S.-Mexico borderlands history is still inadequately understood.⁹

I initiated writing this book because the omission of Chinese *fronterizos* from borderlands history did not square with my knowledge of the region, which resided in the everyday, in anecdotes, and in places where individuals and communities created identity. For a time, I relied on my own neighborhood experiences, the transmission of family stories, and the pursuit of hunches, which proved to be as effective in reconstructing this story as did a small collection of historians' essays. A patchwork of memories distilled from my childhood through my early adulthood guided my initial investigation. Growing up in southern California some two hundred miles from the U.S.-Mexico divide I experienced the border initially through a series of short visits from my grandmother, a native of Magdalena, Sonora, Mexico, a border town just south of Nogales, Arizona. I was perplexed that each visit culminated in a formal meal of Chinese food and not my favorite rice and beans. The meal, shared only among the adults, who would dress up for the occasion, seemed to transport my grandmother to places in her past as only a particular cuisine and ambience could. When rice and beans gave way to Chinese food, I invariably turned to a more reliable source to satisfy my palate—the corner grocery store. Here a family of Chinese, all of whom spoke Spanish, supplied me with far too many sodas and candies. While I dedicated myself to getting my fill of junk food, they proved equally dedicated to pestering me to improve my awkward Spanish. The irony was not lost on me.

Years later, as a college freshman, I ran into this story again. On a whim, I ventured into Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico, expecting to find a smaller and calmer version of Tijuana, but instead I chanced upon three square blocks of Chinese-owned restaurants, groceries, *carnicerías* (meat markets), and dry-goods stores. The dusty red facades of *la chinesca* (the Chinese neighborhood) lingered in my memory. Some years after that, teaching sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade immigrant students from Mexico, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia taught me that no matter how much emphasis was placed on the distinct histories, cultures, and languages of South-east Asia and China, some Mexican students still believed that all Asians were Chinese, and that all Chinese deserved ridicule and humiliation.

When I stopped teaching middle school, I began to search for this story as a graduate student and then as an American historian, but I encountered nothing more than fragments lodged between Mexican and U.S. national histories. As I mined archives on both sides of the border, a deeper, interlocking, and fascinating history appeared, one that seemed to account for some of my earlier experiences and observations. Telling this story has raised new questions, and to answer them has required looking beyond and between the Mexican and U.S. national narratives that had obscured it.

What follows is a history of Chinese *fronterizos* that offers a way to understand how the current images of the border came to be, and why our constructs of the U.S.-Mexico border do not include the Chinese. The answer is both complicated and simple. Clearly one can point to the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act, or one may conclude that the violence of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917) permanently drove out the Chinese. Restrictionist laws and civil war, however, were social realities that occurred almost everywhere Chinese settled; they alone cannot adequately explain the absence of Chinese from our border imagery. Some scholars have diminished the presence of Chinese *fronterizos* in their histories because of the modest size of the Chinese communities along the U.S.-Mexico border. When compared to the larger populations in San Francisco, Cuba, and Peru, the Chinese story of transborder communities seems like a marginal tale and one that historians can justify as numerically inconsequential.

I propose instead a more complicated explanation, one that has to do with writing history and recalling the past, which Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Prasenjit Duara suggest is mutually constitutive. In *Silencing the Past*, Trouillot argues that the production of historical knowledge involves power and that this power often determines what history includes and what history neglects. The basis of underrepresented, unconventional, or unpopular stories, contends Trouillot, is a lack of equal access to history telling, from the assembling and retrieval of facts to the selection of certain themes over others.¹⁰ Trouillot's insights about the "silences and

mentions” of the Haitian Revolution can be similarly observed about the Chinese in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands: Mexican and American histories of westward expansion (imperialism), nationalism, and immigration have all but neglected Chinese *fronterizos* and say little about how these borderlanders openly challenged laws and practices that cast them as foreign and dangerous.

The silencing of people of Chinese descent is especially apparent in the prevailing historiography on race in Mexico, which for the most part has upheld the view that national identities were forged from the racial mixture of European *criollos* (creoles) and indigenous peoples. The discourse of *mestizaje* (racial mixture) by José Vasconcelos, its most eloquent progenitor, offered postrevolutionary Mexican elites a foundation for national unity and race homogeneity based on the triumph of the Europeanized *mestizo*.¹¹ By overcoming African, Asian, and Indian cultures to favor the Europeanized *mestizo*, the discourse of Vasconcelos placed a special emphasis on *mestizaje* as the ideal synthesis of racial diversity on which Mexico’s national identity hinged. *Mestizaje* guided the efforts of postrevolutionary architects to assimilate native populations into mainstream Mexican society, to exclude blacks from the national image, and to expel most Chinese from the country. But as Ben Vinson II shows, scholars in postrevolutionary Mexico—notably Alfonso Toro, Germán LaTorre, and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán—celebrated blacks as colonial missionaries, early abolitionists, and rightful citizens of Mexico. These accounts, Vinson contends, were partially successful in restoring Afro-Mexicans into the national-racial imaginary.¹² Scholars, however, rarely extolled the contributions of Chinese Mexicans, instead casting them mostly as either interlopers or tragic victims of virulent xenophobia (the unfounded fear and intense dislike of persons perceived to be foreign or alien).¹³ Chinese Mexicans are nearly absent from the Mexican national narrative.

Omissions of history, however, are only one part of the equation. The predilection for nation-centered history is the other. Prasenjit Duara makes this point explicit in his critique of the writing of history as a project of modernity. “Linear history,” contends Duara, “allows the nation-state to see itself as a unique form of community which finds its place in the oppositions between tradition and modernity, hierarchy and equality, and empire and nation.”¹⁴ In challenging the constructs of history, Duara urges scholars to “rescue history from the nation” by reevaluating how pre-national identities shaped national ones. “Nationalism is rarely the nationalism of *the nation* [his italics],” argues Duara, “but rather marks the site where different representations of the nation contest and negotiate with each other.”¹⁵ The concept of nationalism as a modern form of consciousness gained wide currency in the work of Karl Deutsch, Ernest Gellner, and

Benedict Anderson, but Duara is quick to challenge perspectives that privilege the nation as a cohesive, collective subject.¹⁶ Duara's rethinking of the past reminds us to account for the contingent nature of national identity and the fluid communities that emerge in the process of nation-building.

This book builds on Duara's insights. It shows not only how the strategies, adjustments, and practices of Chinese *fronterizos* reveal nationalism at work along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but also how Chinese, British, and Spanish imperial influences, regionalism, and localism mediated the nation-making process and shaped Chinese Mexican identities. Significantly, the late nineteenth-century borderlands world in which the Chinese settled was crafted in the *absence* of exclusionary nationalisms. After 1854, when the Arizona Territory was cleaved from northern Sonora, many features of late Spanish colonial society and early Mexican national society persisted. Without the ideological stronghold of American or Mexican nationalism in place, relationships based on kinship lines and friendship ties organized social and cultural interaction among borderlanders. Over time, Chinese *fronterizos* came to rely on relationships with Mexicans that not only counteracted the misgivings that had often accompanied their arrival in greater Mexico and the United States, but also transfigured a system of mutual trust that underscored the ways in which they responded to the challenges of living in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands.

What continued steadily into the early twentieth century at the Arizona-Sonora borderlands was a reliance on relationships that derived from Chinese, British, and Spanish imperial societies and were malleable and durable in national landscapes. Some of these relationships originated on the other side of the world. Western imperialism in South China bore the unmistakable imprint of the colonizers' power, as Qing officials and Chinese emigrants knew all too well. Britain and later the United States left their mark by embedding structures of migration in South China that linked Chinese to various colonies and nations in the Americas and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The world of Chinese *fronterizos* was shaped by the convergence of trans-Pacific networks and local borderlands arrangements, showing that, in often indirect ways, a wide range of collective practices deepened cultural interactions among *fronterizos*, solidified networks of regional and hemispheric migration for border crossers, and preserved a sense of social fluidity in the region.

The configuration of relationships had profound consequences for Chinese on both sides of the border. In the absence of American citizenship by naturalization for Chinese migrants, networks—and the types of relationships they fostered—gave value to a type of civic participation that had less to do with voting and holding elected office than with creating neighborhood bonds. On the other hand, Mexican citizenship among Sonoran

Chinese helped to fend off anti-Sinitic (that is, anti-Chinese) attacks. These relationships worked for the Chinese until the mid-1920s, but thereafter, ties among *fronterizos* began to erode and were replaced by exclusionary nationalisms that resulted in a hardening of racial identities and in a more clearly defined border. On the U.S. side, adjustments to nation-building projects brought a measure of social mobility to southern Arizona Chinese, but on the Sonora side, the Chinese became perpetual foreigners. *Making the Chinese Mexican* reveals these processes by telling stories of the exceptional, the obscure, and the in-between, as well as the mundane, the predictable, and the unfortunate. These stories reveal that our common contemporary image of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands represents not what actually was but what nation-centered histories have made it.

Making the Chinese Mexican argues for a rigorous rethinking of the history of U.S. and Mexican borderlands traditions by broadening the temporal and spatial boundaries of the region. In moving this story into several social and cultural worlds, the concept of *borderlands* is expanded chronologically and geographically so that the continuous life of Chinese *fronterizos* through imperial and national states in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is captured. In this book, *borderlands* designates a physical place between the shared national boundary of the United States and Mexico, a place that was also influenced by pressures originating from European empires and the Qing Dynasty. By using this term in this manner, I illustrate that Old World patterns from Britain, Spain, and dynastic China were not easily toppled by new political and cultural configurations in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.¹⁷ Within these cultural landscapes, *fronterizos*, sometimes separately and sometimes together, mediated centralized authority to hold on to their place in the borderlands or to move freely within them. Importantly, these activities, at some distance from colonial and national metropolises, occurred where power wielded by the British, Qing, and Spanish, and later the Mexican and American central states, were often relational, exercised from numerous sites and subject to local permutations and arrangements. Thus, whereas the periodization of this work—the 1870s to the mid-1930s—corresponds with the rise of nationalism in Mexico and the United States, interaction among *fronterizos* shows that the origins of the modern border were wrought from the overlapping worlds of empires and alternative visions of national belonging.

Approaches and arguments in this book shift the intellectual underpinnings of U.S.-Mexico borderlands history from nation-centered narratives to transnational and global history. Viewed broadly, Chinese transnational communities reveal much about borderlands, and they magnify the cultural and political ambiguities of burgeoning nation-states. Putting forth this perspective is crucial. To move away from nation-centered

narratives requires nothing short of writing Mexican and U.S. history from the perspective of multilayered empire-state and nation-state processes.¹⁸ Calls to internationalize American and Mexican history have long been in play, and although many studies have adopted transnational approaches, few have pushed the boundaries of the nation into other realms. Thomas Bender's *A Nation Among Nations*, an influential rewriting and reimagining of the American past, stands as a substantial revision of U.S. history. Bender's work reinterprets national processes as transnational ones.¹⁹ The "default narrative" that Bender and countless other historians wish to unseat and replace with a more cosmopolitan, less "exceptionalist" view of American history is but a partial solution to writing beyond nation-centered history. Instead transnationalism must also acknowledge and explore its imperial origins by recognizing globalization as a determining influence both spatially and temporally, and as a consistent subject of history.

One consequence of bridging empires and nations may be that the American West and the Mexican North become less hermetic fields. The exploration of connections to imperial Spain and Britain and dynastic China links colonial worlds to national ones at the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Within such a frame, Asian American history and Latina/o history unite discrete areas of study and explore an array of previously unknown relationships among various peoples in the Americas.²⁰ This perspective may help explain how relationships among indigenous people, blacks, South Asians, Caribbean creoles, and Latin Americans have co-created discourses to counter racism and immigration hierarchies, thus revealing a more thorough telling of people's lives within global and local landscapes. Such an approach not only opens up nation-centered history to divergent cultural bonds, ties to a homeland, and temporal and spatial realms, but also captures the complexities of everyday tensions, revealing nations as historically constructed and variously contested entities.

Movements and Migrations

Several overlapping processes converge in this book to tell a new story about the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, not least of all how webs of support created everyday meaning for Chinese borderlanders and how that meaning was part of a deep multilayering of local and global systems of migration. Thus, global, local, and transborder movements of people tie together this study. They bridge disparate epochs and geographies, and they reveal distinctions between imperial and national projects.²¹ Chapter One traces the reliance on diasporic networks and local structures that linked Chinese migrants from imperial worlds to national worlds. Existing networks tied Chinese migrants to each other through kinship, friendship,

and membership in social or lineage associations. Once in place, these networks reproduced or were transformed in order to facilitate channels of interconnectivity so that people, commodities, and ideas circulated almost seamlessly and continuously from homeland to adopted country.²²

The movements of migrants organize this book in an additional manner. They help us to understand how local relationships and transnational arrangements profoundly influenced the reception and treatment of Chinese migrants in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. Chapter Two examines personal and economic ties between Chinese and Mexican *fronterizos* that afforded Chinese newcomers a home abroad. Everyday bonds among *fronterizos* and the relationships those bonds engendered deepened, changed, and gave new meaning to community and family life. In the midst of the enforcement of Chinese exclusion laws and the monitoring of southern Arizona Chinese communities by immigration officials, kith and kinship networks reinforced claims of social belonging and highlighted personal and practical relationships between people of Chinese and Mexican origin en route to becoming ethnic Americans.²³

Relationships also served to keep the border open. For Sonoran Chinese, claims of Mexican citizenship prompted border officials to extend, rather than deny, the right of entry into the United States and reentry into Mexico, whereas southern Arizona Chinese caught at the border relied on Mexican and Chinese kith and kin for support. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the fluidity and flexibility of the region began to give way, albeit unevenly, to a growing regime of immigration restrictionism. Chapter Three discusses myriad inconsistencies of border enforcement at the southern U.S. border and the manner in which Chinese smugglers blazed illegal pathways across the Arizona and California lines. The backdoor route was so successful that it spurred American politicians to seek a diplomatic solution to end illegal entry of Chinese at the country's northern and southern borders, although Canada was more inclined than Mexico to accommodate American requests. By the turn of the twentieth century, enforcing Chinese exclusion laws remapped the U.S.-Mexico borderlands on the basis of a new sense of territoriality.

After 1917, local and regional attachments began to give way to restrictionist immigration policies in Mexico as well, as cross-border movements provoked political persecution and dislocation more than social freedom and autonomy. The new Mexican nationalism cast Chinese as both race contaminants and stalwarts of Porfirian liberalism (which dominated a period between 1876 and 1911 characterized by liberal immigration laws, foreign investment, and capitalist economic development). State-makers sought to remedy Chinese influence by ousting the Chinese from Mexico in general and from Sonora in particular. Chapter Four explores the rise

of José María Arana's anti-Chinese movement and the dynamics it created between Mexican women, Chinese men, and revolutionary state-makers. In reinforcing women's primary role in the revolutionary project, state-makers simultaneously cast women at two extremes of the moral-political tandem: as traitors of the Mexican state by way of marriage to Chinese men, and as gatekeepers of the revolutionary state by way of marriage to Mexican men. To choose one over the other circumscribed women's relationship to Mexico's revolution. The ability of women to retain Mexican citizenship was dependent on *mestizo* marriages, whereas those who married outside the socially ascribed racial structure (in this case the Chinese) suffered the loss of citizenship. Revolutionary fervor also constrained the lives of Sonoran Chinese men, many of whom began to flee Mexico as victims of Sinophobic violence. The influx of Sonoran Chinese into the United States induced heightened policing of the Arizona border, and by 1917, excluding Chinese from U.S. shores as well as imposing new measures for legal entry on Mexicans placed greater emphasis on immigration officials as America's gatekeepers.

Chinese in southern Arizona dealt with the reinscription of nativism similarly, but from a different position. Chapter Five examines these distinctions. Whereas *mestizaje* and Sinophobia shaped the Mexican nationalist imagery in opposition to Sonoran Chinese, numerical immigration quotas, specifically the National Origins Act of 1924, created and privileged "whiteness" as a race category and as a criterion for legal entry into the United States. With the near exclusion of all Asians from U.S. shores and the virtual closure of the U.S. southern border to unrestricted crossing, relations between Chinese and Mexican *fronterizos* grew strained. Differences in legal status, political power, and resources began to distinguish Chinese from Mexicans even as each group had become, in the words of historian Mac Ngai, "impossible subjects," a people whose presence in the United States was a political reality and economic necessity but whose legal membership in the nation was unattainable.²⁴ In the absence of citizenship through naturalization and in the face of harsher immigration laws, southern Arizona Chinese recast the boundaries of community and family life toward Chinese-based social networks.

If American immigration law widened the divide between Mexicans and Chinese in southern Arizona, Sonorans effectively purged themselves of the so-called "yellow peril" by attacking what had made the Chinese Mexican: citizenship by naturalization, the formation of nuclear families, and business ownership. Chapter Six examines the dimensions of postrevolutionary Mexican nationalism and the expulsion of Sonora Chinese. In legal and extralegal maneuverings at the local and federal levels, anti-Chinese agitators successfully endeavored to counter most claims of social and political

belonging. State-makers and policymakers utilized a brand of nationalism that constructed and drew on highly racialized and gendered identities. Beset by the enforcement of Chinese-Mexican marriage annulments, severe labor laws, and barriozation (the forced relocation of Sonoran Chinese to designated sections of the state), the Chinese fled Sonora under a state order of expulsion in 1931, with many taking flight into southern Arizona. Objections to the expulsion decree prompted a flurry of correspondence between Chinese ministers and Mexican and American officials, but in the end the only concession granted to Sonoran Chinese was temporary admission to the United States.²⁵ By August and September of 1931, the peak months of expulsion activity, a steady stream of Sonoran Chinese were temporarily housed in southern Arizona jails, in Nogales, Naco, Bisbee, Tucson, and Douglas (see Figure I.1).²⁶

For Mexican women married to Chinese men, the prospect of leaving the western border region of Mexico for China seemed less terrifying than remaining in Sonora. Although legally able to stay in their native land, the vast majority of Mexican women departed for China with their husbands and children.²⁷ Once in China, however, many Mexican women and their children found themselves stateless, unprotected by Chinese or Mexican law; others returned to their homeland with the help of Mexican consuls during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940).²⁸ By 1943, only 155 Chinese remained in Sonora, once a dynamic borderlands community, whereas on the other side, southern Arizona Chinese become ethnic Amer-



FIGURE I.1 Chinese Fleeing Sonora, Circa 1931. Courtesy of the Arizona Historical Society/Tucson. Photo no. 42945, Fallis Photograph Collection, PC 042, folder 7, box 1. <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org>

icans.²⁹ As southern Arizona Chinese differentiated themselves from Mexicans and as Sonoran Chinese steadied themselves from the 1931 expulsion decree, the modern conceptualization of the border began to crystallize. Nation-centered policies—and histories—were on the ascent.

The idea that some people belong to nations more easily than others is powerful, yet it is subject to the political construction and cultural imaginings of the nation-state. National borders arbitrate state control as much as they mediate identities. This book's Epilogue ponders the use of state power in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands after 1931, and the manner in and degree to which cross-border interaction persisted even as the American state limited immigration and Mexican officials sought to contain emigration. The expulsion of approximately 3,500 Sonoran Chinese to China and the repatriation of approximately 500,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans to Mexico marked the beginning of a regime of border control predicated on territorial sovereignty during the early years of the Great Depression. Despite some semblance of bilateralism, evidenced in the pan-Americanism of the Good Neighbor Policy (1933) and the Bracero Program (a series of initiatives between 1942 and 1964 to facilitate the importation of Mexican workers to the United States for agricultural labor), Mexico and the United States emerged as sole arbiters of the composition, communication, and enforcement of their shared border. The Epilogue meditates on the tension between late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century globalization forces by placing this present-day configuration in the *longue durée* of U.S.-Mexico borderlands history.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands was a world of overlapping cultures and epochs of Chinese, native peoples, and Mexicans who saw one another pragmatically: at various times as neighbors, as rivals, and as outsiders, but most often as intensely "in between." Chinese *fronterizos* reconciled the turbulence of a changing trans-Pacific-borderlands landscape while creating lives that corresponded at once with disparate spaces and times. Between transimperial and transnational movements, Chinese *fronterizos* countered exploitation and race hatred in multiple and contingent ways. Many adjusted on their own terms, coexisted, and built new communities that integrated all that was around them. What follows is a history that draws attention to movements, relationships, and tensions. In doing so, it places the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and Chinese *fronterizos* at the crossroads of imperial and national worlds.