

# BLOOD AND BORDERS: ANTI-MEXICAN VIOLENCE AND THE RISE OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How did anti-Mexican violence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sustain white supremacy in the U.S. borderlands, and how did Mexican and Mexican-American communities resist and build Solidarity in response

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout U.S. history, racial violence has aimed to preserve power and define who belongs. While anti-Black violence dominates white supremacy talks, another pattern emerged in the southwestern borderlands: anti-Mexican violence. After the U.S.–Mexican War, Mexicans faced lynching, land theft, and state terror. This poster argues that anti-Mexican violence in the 19th and 20th centuries upheld white supremacy.

## THESIS

Anti-Mexican violence was not random or isolated; it functioned as a deliberate system of racial control enforced by mobs, law enforcement, and government policy. While violence aimed to erase Mexican belonging, it instead fueled resistance rooted in memory, culture, and political organizing, shaping Mexican-American identity and activism that persists today.

## CONCLUSION

Anti-Mexican violence shaped the racial hierarchy of the United States, but it failed to erase Mexican identity. Instead, memory, culture, and resistance became tools of survival and transformation. Remembering victims and preserving their stories remains an act of justice that challenges white supremacist narratives and affirms Mexican dignity across generations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Carrigan, William D., and Clive Webb. "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848–1928." *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 2 (2003): 411–438.

Hernández, Kelly Lytle. *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands*. Ashland, OR: Blackstone, 2022.

Martínez, Mónica Muñoz. *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020.

Martínez, Mónica Muñoz. "Racial Violence in the West." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 20, no. 1 (2021): 114–121.

Loza, Mireya. *Defiant Braceros*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

"Harry Warren's Porvenir Notebook." Bullock Texas State History Museum.

"Josefa Segovia Lynched." *Working Class History*.

## MAIN FINDINGS / INSIGHTS

After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Mexicans were promised citizenship but faced racial terror. William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb document at least 547 lynchings of Mexicans between 1848 and 1928, likely undercounted due to incomplete records (Carrigan and Webb, 415). These lynchings served as "rituals of racial control," reinforcing white dominance and exclusion from citizenship.

### PRIMARY SOURCE HIGHLIGHT:

THE LYNCHING OF JOSEFA SEGOVIA IN DOWNIEVILLE, CALIFORNIA (1851) ILLUSTRATES HOW RACIAL AND GENDER HIERARCHIES INTERSECTED. ACCUSED AFTER DEFENDING HERSELF FROM A WHITE MAN'S ASSAULT, JOSEFA WAS EXECUTED BY A MOB THAT FRAMED HER MURDER AS PROTECTION OF WHITE HONOR. ("JOSEFA SEGOVIA LYNCHED").

### STATE-SANCTIONED TERROR: THE PORVENIR MASSACRE.

By the early 1900s, violence shifted to state-enforced actions. In 1918, Texas Rangers and U.S. cavalry executed fifteen Mexican men and boys in Porvenir, Texas, without trial and by labeling them criminals, as confirmed by journalist Harry Warren's notes. Historian Mónica Muñoz Martínez says this case shows how state-sanctioned racial violence was justified as border security, while official silence reinforced white supremacy.

### CULTURAL AND POLITICAL RESISTANCE

Despite repression, Mexican communities resisted erasure through memory, print, and organizing. Led by Ricardo Flores Magón, the Magonistas used newspapers like *Regeneración* to condemn violence and exploitation. Kelly Lytle Hernández notes this movement redefined Mexican identity as dignity (Hernández 57). Mutual-aid societies and newspapers promoted education and pride, paving the way for later Chicano movements.

### FROM LYNCHING TO POLICY: CONTINUOUS RACIAL CONTROL

Racial violence did not disappear—it evolved. Programs like the Bracero Program exploited Mexican labor while denying protection and rights (Loza 60–63). In the modern era, immigration detention and guest-worker proposals reproduce the same logic: Mexican labor is valued, but Mexican lives are expendable (Martínez 118–119).



Josefa Segovia, 1851.  
*Wikipedia*



Texas Rangers, c. 1890s.  
*The Best of the West Magazine*



Bracero Program, 1943.  
*Library of Congress*



Regeneración (periódico), 1900.  
*Wikipedia*

