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Between Rhetoric and Barbed Wire: Regimes of Violence to Secure the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

In the decade between 1910 and 1920, Texas became a site of racial violence and an estimated 5,000 Mexican men died at the hands of military and vigilante violence. This part of our presentation examines regimes employed in Texas in the early twentieth century in the name of civilizing the landscape and its inhabitants through an industrialized cattle industry. Apparatuses for security private property and national borders in this period (ranging from the U.S. Calvary and Texas Rangers to barbed wire and cedar fences) transformed the social and physical geography in the name of modernity. This quest reconstructed the landscape and employed racialized violence to manage human mobility across and within constructed borders. This project focuses on the U.S.-Mexico border, but compares the cattle industry in this region to those in Argentina, Brazil, and South Africa.