

TALES FROM THE REBEL ARCHIVE: History as Subversive Practice at California's Margins *By Genevieve Carpio*

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ABSTRACT: Academic histories have focused on urban centers, overshadowing neighboring towns and agricultural areas as if they didn't matter. The formal archives that house the records of (white) leaders obscure the experiences and perspectives of migrant workers, communities of color, and others in places such as Southern California's Inland Empire, which are important to arriving at a fuller historical understanding. The author identifies as "Rebel Archives" sources created by those overlooked by mainstream accounts, including family photo albums, school records, popular media, oral histories, and "counter-mapping." Analysis of such diverse sources can reveal patterns that cause us to ask questions and rethink history. The article concludes with several noteworthy projects of "subversive history" that are uncovering an enriched history of the Inland Empire.

Keywords: Inland Empire histories; Rebel Archives; subversive history; bottom-up history

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I grew up in the city of Pomona, what I like to think of as “The Borderlands” between Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire. My intellectual commitments to California are driven by my personal experiences raised at this crossroads. As a teenager, I thought it was boring . . . and hot . . . and that the only possibilities for my social life revolved around the mall. For me, success meant moving towards Los Angeles, but I rarely looked towards the east. In my personal cognitive mapping at the time, it seemed like the only thing that lay beyond the county line separating Los Angeles from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties was a desert. Okay, to be fair, there were also the Cabazon outlets and roadside dinosaurs. But as a teenager growing up at the county border, it would have been hard for me to imagine that my personal life and academic career would be so entwined with the east side of this line.

Much changed between my time growing up as a teenager in Pomona and my present as the author of a book about the Inland Empire and its relational histories of racial formation, *Collisions at the Crossroads: How Place and Mobility Make Race*.¹ Through collaboration with local organizations and extensive excavation work, I came to learn that the Inland Empire had a robust history, one of great significance to modern race relations, ongoing processes of settler colonialism, and global logistics. Even the desert, a colonial construct in and of itself, that I had imagined as empty, had a vibrant life of which I had been unaware. And I was not alone in my ignorance. Although there are some notable exceptions, by and large the academic historiography of this region has been lacking.² That dearth is dangerous. It can foster the idea that the Inland Empire and the people in it are insignificant. And nothing is further from the truth.

1. Genevieve Carpio, *Collisions at the Crossroads: How Place and Mobility Make Race* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019).
2. Among notable academic histories of the region, although neither an exhaustive list nor nearing the quantity of scholarship written about cities like Los Angeles, are José M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880–1960* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900–1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Thomas C. Patterson, *From Acorns to Warehouses: Historical Political Economy of Southern California's Inland Empire* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014); Clifford E. Trafzer, Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Lorene Sisquoc, eds., *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue: Voices and Images from Sherman Institute* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012); Ruth Tuck, *Not With the Fist: Mexican-Americans in a Southwest City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946); See also the forthcoming work of historian Mark Ocegueda, *Sol y Sombra: Mexicans, Race, and Culture in the Making of San Bernardino and the Inland Empire, 1880–1960*.

In this essay, I want to start from a simple, but bold foundation: That the Inland Empire and places like it, those sites of profound personal importance that live in the shadow of recognized urban centers (I'm looking at you Central Valley), are vitally important to the history of California. And, we need to do more to document, revive, and share those histories. When these places enter the picture, new stories, people, and *questions* come into focus. For instance, these spaces generate inquiry regarding the long-distance networks between urban centers and rural industries, and the diverse life histories of Indigenous migrants from Latin America who continue to supply labor for California's agriculture, and travel corridors well traversed but little known.³ These questions not only enable us to find new frameworks for understanding the past, but also illuminate new strategies for addressing the struggles of the present.

Those who embark on these endeavors will often be those who find themselves plagued and pushed by the absences. It is that gnawing feeling in the classroom when you do not see your stories reflected in readings and lectures, it is the pride felt at the single mention of your town in print, the intrigue you feel when your elders share a story about their youth, and the confusion that drives you towards answers when you try to make sense of a new place. It is not an easy path. But you are not alone in trying to make sense of the gaps.

The section that follows explains why these places continue to exist on the margins of historiography. Rather than the predetermined consequence of a willful erasure by historians, it suggests these gaps exist and persist into the present because of a particular set of challenges these places pose to our *modus operandi* as historians. The section after looks to what Kelly Lytle-Hernandez calls the "rebel archive" and the public humanities as avenues for addressing these gaps. This work often requires an exceptional amount of new research, reading against the grain, and stitching together disparate sources, sometimes across great distances. The final section is a case study of radical efforts to recover, interrogate, and share these histories as a form of subversive practice. It focuses on the grassroots efforts of Inland Mexican Heritage, an oral history and photography

3. See, for instance, Emily Bills, "Connecting Lines: L.A.'s Telephone History and the Binding of the Region," *Southern California Quarterly* 91 no. 1 (Spring 2009): 27–68.

project focused on the Mexican and Indigenous-descent populations of the California Inland Empire and High Desert.⁴

CHALLENGES TO THESE TYPES OF HISTORIES

In 2016, I published an article about collaboration between East Coast philanthropic organizations and Southwestern leaders of the Mexican American movement.⁵ I completed most of the research as part of a month-long summer fellowship onsite at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. The archive held the papers of the Robert Marshall Foundation, which included personal correspondence, financial ledgers, meeting minutes, and reports for one of the leading philanthropic organizations serving Latina/o/xs in the United States. I visited three other archives over the course of two years, spanning several states, to complete the article. Yet, this feat felt easy compared to the real challenges presented when researching the towns in which I grew up and the histories of the diverse communities who lived there over the twentieth century.

I share this story not to create a false equivalency between the divergent needs of two research projects, each with unique needs. Rather, I seek to highlight the differences between conducting research on two projects with two very different relationships to source material. The first type includes those where materials are readily available, largely in one place, with paid archivists, air-conditioned reading rooms, and processed finding aids. The second comprises those where materials are hard to find, spread out, managed by volunteers, sometimes in difficult settings, with little in the way of road mapping. Many of us will face at least one of these challenges when conducting research on California's history. Those working on places such as the Inland Empire may encounter all of them.

Despite the significance of the Inland Empire, its history has not been treated with the same importance as other trade and migration centers. There are no dedicated archives to Inland Empire history in the same way there are to Los Angeles or Chicago or New York. In

4. Antonio Gonzalez Vasquez, "California Coast and Desert Trail," 2019; Kurt Schauppner, "For Culture Bearer Antonio Vasquez, One Path Always Leads to Another," *Basin Wide Spirit*, magazine, Summer 2019.

5. Genevieve Carpio. "Philanthropic (Dis)Trust and the Mexican American Movement," *Western Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (Autumn 2016): 303–23.

my book, which examines racial formation as it unfolded through spatial mobility and place-making, I aimed to highlight this understudied region.⁶ Reconstructing this story was an interdisciplinary endeavor, both deep and wide in its scope. It meant searching through the multi-nodal records of this region, far and near in location. Locally, I searched the halls of local libraries, historical societies' filing cabinets, a museum's basement, and planning records in city halls. I also drew upon the careful and dedicated research of local community historians, including those of historical figures that I both found myself at odds with and inspired by.⁷ It has also meant scouring national records kept by government agencies, reviewing individual census entries, and poring through the Congressional Records. At times, it required searching for transnational evidence, including non-English sources, international agreements, and social-science research by foreign scholars.

Part of the challenge of studying the Inland Empire and places like it is that they are eclipsed by urban centers considered of more significance to California's development. Specifically, the Inland Empire lives in the shadow of Los Angeles. This urban bias has created a Catch-22. The dearth of work on the region fosters the idea that it is insignificant. To the contrary, it has been at the center of larger global currents for much of its history. Just consider the infill of warehouses stocked with goods from Asia, transported and packed by Latin American and African American workers, to be shipped to homes across the United States. In his important new work, *Inland Shift: Race, Space, and Capital in Southern California*, geographer Juan De Lara examines globalization and racial capitalism as they converge in the Inland Empire.⁸ These warehouses, or more accurately

6. I draw here on Natalia Molina's work on place-makers, as those who create social spaces that shape the shared physical spaces they inhabit. Natalia Molina, "The Importance of Place and Place-Makers in the Life of a Los Angeles Community: What Gentrification Erases from Echo Park," *Southern California Quarterly* 97 No. 1 (2015): 69–111; For a genealogy of place from a geographic perspective, see Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2014).

7. For detailed local histories of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, see John Brown and James Boyd, *History of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties with Selected Biography of Actors and Witnesses of the Period of Growth and Achievement* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1922); Tom Patterson, *A Colony for California: Riverside's First Hundred Years* (Riverside: Press-Enterprise Co., 1971); Joyce Vickery, *Defending Eden: New Mexican Pioneers in Southern California, 1830–1890* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1977).

8. Juan De Lara, *Inland Shift: Race, Space, and Capital in Southern California* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

multi-nodal meeting points of capitalism, can be seen proliferating in vast stretches along the Interstate 15, a pattern noticeable when traveling inland, to Vegas, or when in flight.

This erasure serves a purpose that is made visible by the insightful work of historical geographer Don Mitchell. Writing of the Central Valley, he explains that the transformation of our understanding of land from something that is continually produced into a static and picturesque “landscape” requires significant efforts on the part of elites. This transmogrification flattens historical contests over social relations and, in doing so, portrays inequitable relations to labor and land as natural. This erasure is not an accident but a central part of how hegemony operates.⁹ Looking historically reveals that powerful urban figures have been well aware of how the suburban and rural (and the spaces in-between) shape the operation of power across space. And insightful new scholarship points towards elites who have used this recognition to promote the operation of empire, such as Jessica Kim’s *Imperial Metropolis*, which ties Los Angeles to its eastern and southern hinterlands.¹⁰ This work, which highlights erasure and how power manifests across regions, begs a question: What might we gain if we were to uncover these histories for use not by the elites, but for those working in concert for agendas based on equity and justice?

A major explanation for the lack of a robust historiography concerning places exemplified by the Inland Empire has been the fluid spatial scope of the work. The Inland Empire is a vast region, without clear boundaries, one that encompasses multiple cities and place types, including sites as diverse as farms, factories, suburbs, and prisons. There is no clear answer to where it begins and ends. Rather, its boundaries are porous—culturally meaningful, but without clear governmental designations—making it a heavily contested “place,” with even the very name being up for debate—Inland Empire, Inland Valley, Inland Southern California, each with its own

9. Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 11–27.

10. Carpio, *Collisions at the Crossroads*; Jessica M. Kim, *Imperial Metropolis: Los Angeles, Mexico, and the Borderlands of American Empire, 1865–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019). I am also thinking of Clyde Wood’s foundational work on regions and inequity in his *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta* (London: Verso Press, 1998).

constituencies.¹¹ Although the lack of a clear geography makes the Inland Empire unique, and an exciting place for thinking about how regions are constructed, it also puts it in a category similar to other nebulous regions. Inland Empire, Central Valley, High Desert, San Gabriel Valley—what do these places really mean? And, how might we research sites with “unruly geographies”?¹²

Archives and manuscripts, the traditional building blocks for historical inquiry, are often organized geographically. For instance, administrative categories such as states, counties, and cities are commonly used to curate collections and tag individual materials. However, the Inland Empire was not recognized as a subject heading by the Library of Congress (LOC) until 2007. The Simple Knowledge Organization System (SKOS), another popular database regularly used by librarians, did not recognize the term until even later, in the fall of 2013.¹³ Subject headings are powerful in organizing knowledge and facilitating connections between bodies of work by allowing researchers to find scholarship in their area of interest and bestowing a type of cultural capital into those areas of research as authorized headings. Without such labels for much of its history, this scholarship was fragmented and distanced from one another, making regional debates based on printed texts difficult. In recent years, cataloguing terms have even sparked national level debates, as in the case of the highly contentious use of “illegal alien” as a library subject heading and the campaign to change it led by students and undocumented activists.¹⁴

Whereas libraries use recognized subject headings to organize secondary sources, museums and private institutions often choose their own labels.¹⁵ These often reflect national cataloguing terms, but

11. On critical approaches to regions, see Anssi Paasi, “Place and Region: Regional Worlds and Words,” *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 6 (2002): 802–11.

12. Alana de Hinojosa, “El Río Grande as Unruly Archive: Dis(re)membered Voices of the Chamizal Dispute,” dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, forthcoming.

13. Library of Congress, “Inland Empire (Calif.),” Linked Data Service, last accessed November 16, 2019, <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2007002640.html>; OCLC Research, “California—Inland Empire,” FAST Linked Data, last accessed November 16, 2019, <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2007002640.html>

14. *Change the Subject: A Documentary about Labels, Libraries and Activism*, directed by Sawyer Broadly and Jill Baron, 2019.

15. Conversation with Xaviera Flores, librarian and archivist of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Library, August 21, 2019.

also frequently the interests of its members. Such tendencies can amplify historical absences and reinforce hegemonic understandings of regional belonging. As I write in my book, pioneer and historical societies have often fostered selective visions of the past that decentered Native claims, restricted nonwhite membership, and centered the period of Anglo American migration to inland Southern California.¹⁶ More to the point, in the absence of established subject headings, the institutions themselves serve as the primary organizing metric for their collections. By and large, these institutions are based on their immediate geography. Where museums and historical societies often function at the municipal level, producing regional histories is quite a multi-nodal endeavor.

It required major tapestry work to weave a regional story of the Inland Empire together, not to mention to make it also a multiracial history encompassing the major resident and migrant groups that moved in and through here. For Haitian historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “silences” are created at four central moments: “the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance).”¹⁷ It is out of challenges such as these, as well as the hard work of figuring out how to find the data necessary to adequately address emerging analytic frameworks, that new methodologies and approaches to the historical record are born.¹⁸ And, there is yet still so much work to be done.

In my research, I have encountered stunning gaps, where rich community histories deemed insignificant have been denied or lost to scholars. Consider the historical records of the Los Angeles Police Department. Described by scholars of incarceration, police archives are notoriously difficult to gain access to, even though they are supposed to be made available upon filing a California Public Records Act request. In the case of the Los Angeles Police Department, it has habitually refused to open its files to the public, even to academics

16. Carpio, *Collisions at the Crossroads*, especially 33–35.

17. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26.

18. Natalia Molina, “Examining Chicana/o Histories through a Relational Lens,” *Pacific Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (November 2013): 520–41.

with elite credentials and affiliations with state universities. Opening LAPD's records has required an ongoing lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union.¹⁹ Even now, the boxes of unprocessed material require extensive work to make it accessible by any measure of the word, a project spearheaded by the Million Dollar Hoods Project and its research team.²⁰

Places such as the Inland Empire are particularly vulnerable to the perpetuation of silences. In my own work, I have learned of important biographical records disposed of by families after a loved one's passing, public records expunged by local agencies when retention records expire, and materials lost or inaccessible as a consequence of poor record keeping, disorganization, or the closure of important public institutions. This is not unique to the Inland Empire, but endemic to places like it across California.²¹ Part of the challenge is the lack of resources in these communities, where public history work is undercompensated, dependent upon volunteers with varying training and time, hard to access due to reduced schedules, or difficult to make sense of due to the prevalence of unprocessed, non-transcribed, or incomplete records. I have seen the long hours put in by the stewards of local history, often without pay. I have seen the only library in my home town at near risk of closing its doors because it could no longer afford to keep them open (Figure 1). And, I have followed whispers of sources across the region only to find they have been lost to the garbage. Moreover, I have talked to people who had been so denigrated, so ignored, so devalued, that they felt they did not have a story worth telling. And I know from experience that everyone has a story to tell, especially those who would be told otherwise.²²

19. Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

20. Kelly Lytle Hernandez and Marques Vestal, "Million Dollar Hoods: A Fully-Loaded Accounting of Mass Incarceration in Los Angeles," *The Abusable Past*, March 28, 2019, <https://www.radicalhistoryreview.org/abusablepast/?p=2907>; Kelly Lytle Hernández and the University of California, Los Angeles, Institute for Digital Research and Education, *Million Dollar Hoods*, <http://milliondollarhoods.org/>. Accessed August 8, 2019.

21. Natalie Santizo, "Critical Latina/o Foodways: Racial Formation and Placemaking in the San Gabriel Valley, 1910–1945," master's thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 2019.

22. Antonio Gonzalez Vasquez and Genevieve Carpio, *Mexican Americans in Redlands* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012).



FIGURE 1. Demonstration at the Pomona City Hall in support of the Pomona Public Library. Sign by Nezahualcoyotl Gonzalez reads “They Don’t Gotta Burn the Books, Just Remove Them,” attributed to Zack de la Rocha. October 16, 2015.
Photograph by author.

Drawing attention to government investment in military spending versus the essentials of daily life, Rage Against the Machine vocalist Zack de la Rocha sings in “Bulls on Parade,” “They don’t gotta burn the books, they just remove ’em.”²³ In places such as the Inland Empire, his warning rings loudly. And the truth is, the books do not even need to be removed. We need only to reproduce the status quo wherein accessing sources of public knowledge is so time-consuming, so difficult, and so devalued that it becomes untenable for working people, those with limited mobility, and those without institutional credentials to make use and meaning of them. Faced with these uneven power structures, we can look to alternative repositories and forms of knowledge. For those who hear this call, “All hell can’t stop us now.”²⁴

23. Rage Against the Machine, “Bulls on Parade,” *Evil Empire*, 1996.

24. Rage Against the Machine, “Guerilla Radio,” *The Battle of Los Angeles*, 1999.

The academic advantage of writing about the Inland Empire is that, although permeated by silences, it is not empty. When inland Southern California enters the picture, new stories come into focus, and in particular stories that foreground the complex workings of power that have enabled and prohibited different forms of physical and social mobility. So how might one maximize their use of traditional archival materials when addressing these questions whose answers are exceptionally dispersed? Where else might one look to build a story that seeks to include the nuance of unruly places? How might we draw on untraditional sources to create articles, books, and public humanities projects that satisfy the high standards of historical methods necessary to the profession? And, how might these approaches help reveal dynamic epistemologies that better account for diverse ways of making knowledge, particularly by aggrieved groups?²⁵

WORKING WITH THE REBEL ARCHIVE

Archival silences are often betrayed by what Lytle Hernández calls the “rebel archive,” where those who would be eliminated created their own records and defied their own erasure.²⁶ Over time, the rebel archive has taken many forms and there are diverse ways to learn its lessons, if one is inclined to listen. I am reminded here of Clyde Woods and what he calls blues epistemology. Drawing upon the living archive of blues music originating in the Mississippi Delta, he positions the blues as both a tradition and a theory, one based on a Black collective sensibility when faced with constant violence, one that positions Black Southern social relations at the center of African American culture.²⁷ I think also of Dolores Hayden and the attention she draws to urban landscapes as a means to nurture public memory through sites that might otherwise be considered mundane or without value.²⁸ I also evoke Natalia Molina and what she calls

25. On erasure and remapping Indigenous histories in part through recognizing new forms of knowledge, see Bonita Lawrence, “Rewriting Histories of the Land: Colonization and Indigenous Resistance in Eastern Canada,” in *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene Razack (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 21–46.

26. Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates*.

27. Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta* (London: Verso Press, 1998).

28. Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

relational methodology, an approach to history that builds on the scholarship of early Chicana/o historians who worked from the “bottom up” to push against dominant racial binaries. Her work models the value of research that draws beyond the “usual suspects” and instead thinks creatively about sources by reconsidering our units of analysis, collaborating across various fields of expertise, and reconsidering what we already know.²⁹ In our present moment, we might look to the digital realm as a site where the rebel archive is currently taking seed.³⁰ Both historically and today, the arrival of new technologies offers not only new data sources, but produces an urgent call for new ways of understanding how knowledge is and can be made, as enacted in the praxis laid out by María Cotera and Linda Garcia Merchant in their work with *Chicana por Mi Raza Digital Memory Archive*.³¹

The rebel archive of the Inland Empire includes novels, songs, photo albums, popular media, gated lots with modest traces of buildings constructed long ago, and maps. Let us momentarily consider the last example. In my book I examine maps as discursive texts that reveal racial and spatial relationships in the region. As discussed by critical cartographers, maps have been used to lay new meaning on Indigenous lands and to assert racial boundaries in space. Maps can also challenge the status quo and raise public consciousness in support of interventionist agendas. When brought together, inland Southern California’s rebel archive reveals counter-mappings of the region that challenge traditional cartographies. By counter-mapping, I mean those maps that oppose the hegemony of state and commercial maps and, instead, foreground the interests of aggrieved communities in process, content, and, intent.³²

29. Molina, “Examining Chicana/o Histories through a Relational Lens.”

30. Genevieve Carpio, “Racial Projections: Cyberspace, Public Space, and the Digital Divide,” *Information, Communication and Society* 21, no. 2 (2017): 174–90; See also the innovative work and digital methods of emerging scholars such as Cassandra Flores-Montaño and Michelle Vasquez who presented on a panel recently chaired by George J. Sánchez, “New Directions in Los Angeles Latinx History: Memory, Erasure and Representation,” Pacific Coast Branch-American Historical Association Meeting, August 2019.

31. María Eugenia Cotera, “Unpacking Our Mother’s Libraries: Practices of Chicana Memory Before and After the Digital Turn,” in *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*, eds. Dionne Espinoza, María Eugenia Cotera, and Maylei Blackwell, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018), 299–316.

32. Rob Kitchin, Martin Dodge, and Chris Perkins, “Introductory Essay: Power and Politics of Mapping,” in *Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation*, First

Working with the rebel archive can drive us to look at maps in new ways or push us to create our own. In the final stages of writing my book, I worked closely with a critical cartographer already active in interventionist mapping agendas, Omar Ureta of theworksLA.³³ Through creative and discursive exchange over the course of about two months, we created the opening maps in my book. Together, we aimed to foreground its intersectional histories. It helped that we are both from the Inland Empire and were committed to fostering a historical understanding of the region that revealed the violent racial histories of the region such as vigilante actions taken against Filipino farmworkers, and we worked to highlight important “place-makers” such as those who operate a popular Cal-Mex restaurant.³⁴ Scholarly-artistic works that have pushed mapping beyond its colonial foundations, exemplified by Laura Barraclough, Wendy Cheng, and Laura Pulido’s *People’s Guide* series and Rebecca Solnit, Joshua Jelly-Shapiro, and Rebecca Snedeker’s *Infinite Cities*, inspired us.³⁵ Through countermapping, works such as these help render the rebel archive visible by articulating it in space. In the process of working with the press and given the limitations of a print book, we made several changes to our maps, but I include one of the original renderings here (See Map, p. 70).³⁶

The rebel archive might also take us far from traditional archival repositories such as libraries. For instance, in a chapter about the

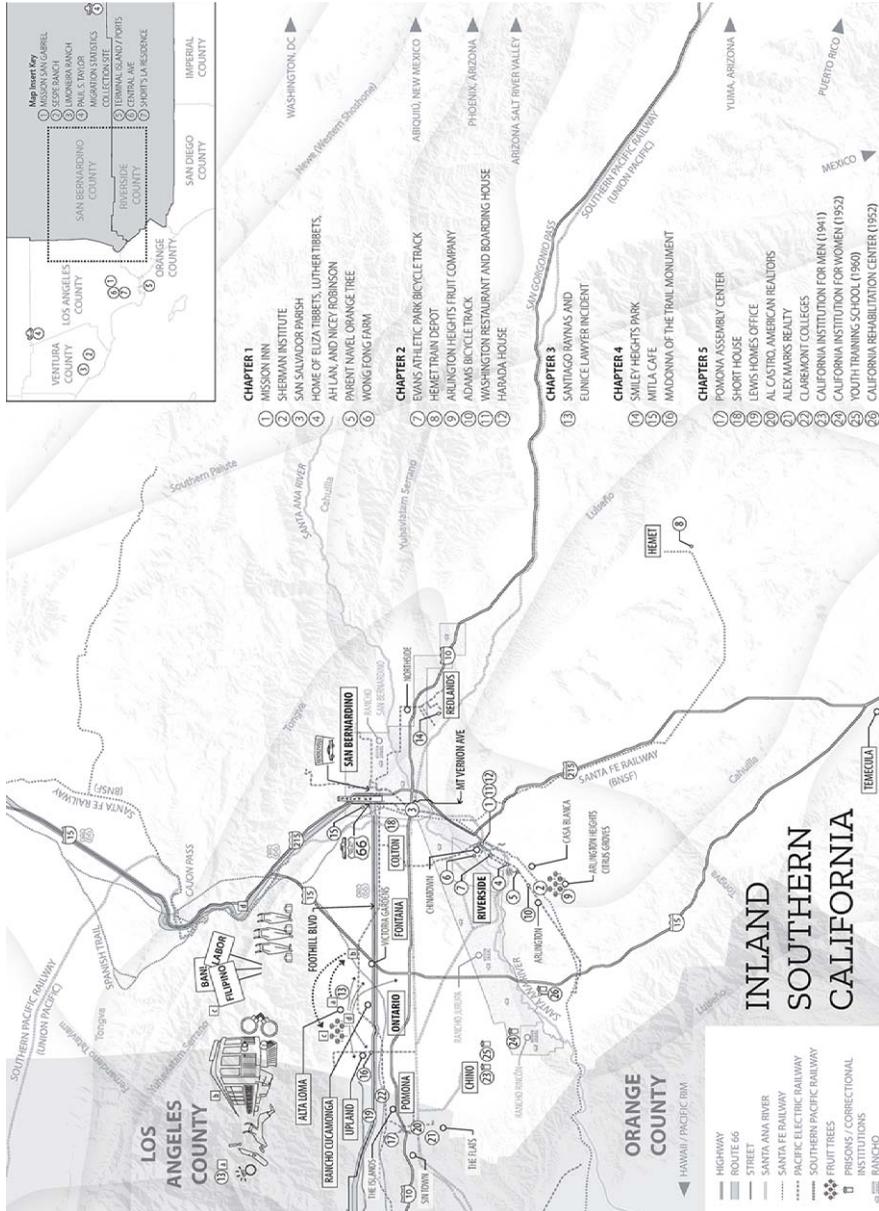
Edition, eds. Dodge, Kitchin and Perkins, (New York: Wiley and Sons, 2011); John B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” *Cartographica* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1989); on regions, mapping, and countermapping, see Joe Painter, “Cartographic Anxiety and the Search for Regionality,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 40 (2008); for a list of mapping resources and projects, see Genevieve Carpio and Andrzej Rutkowski, “Mapping LA-tinx Suburbs,” *Boom California* (July 2017).

33. Omar Ureta, *theworksLA*, website, <http://www.theworks.la>. Accessed August 23, 2019.

34. Molina, “The Importance of Place and Place-Makers in the Life of a Los Angeles Community.”

35. Laura Pulido, Laura Barraclough, and Wendy Cheng, *A People’s Guide to Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Rebecca Solnit, Joshua Jelly-Shapiro, and Rebecca Snedeker. *Infinite Cities: A Trilogy of Atlases—San Francisco, New Orleans, New York* (Oakland, University of California Press, 2019).

36. Map Data Sources: Militant Angeleno, “Pacific Electric Archaeology Map,” <http://militantangeleno.blogspot.com/2015/11/pacific-electric-week-militants-pacific.html>; “Native Land,” <https://native-land.ca/api-docs/>; CKAN, “Early California Cultural Atlas,” <http://eacadata.org/dataset/spanish-and-mexican-land-grants-in-california>; National Park Service, “Old Spanish Trail,” <https://www.nps.gov/olsp/planyourvisit/maps.htm>; “Streets, Cities, River,” © OpenStreetMap; California Department of Transportation, “Highways, Railways,” <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tsip/gis/datalibrary/>; Esri, USGS, NOAA, “ESRI World Terrain Base,” <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=c61ad8ab017d49e1a82f580ee1298931>



Map. *Inland Southern California, Black and White*. Map by Omar Ureta, 2018, with Genevieve Carpio.

changing forms of racial formation Latinas and Latinos faced in the 1930s when driving, I write about the criminalization of Latino boys and the uneven forms of incarceration they faced as a consequence of anti-joyriding policies. To build this story, I turned to the records of a private boy's home with a long presence in the Inland Empire, the Boy's Republic. Doing so meant reaching out to an institution without a formal mechanism for accommodating researchers, without an archivist, and without any official need or call to open their files to me. What they did have was a dedicated development director who was willing to hear about my work and who was committed to making the history of the institution public. The work of institutions like the Boys Republic and that of local history enthusiasts has created a foundation on which more traditionally academic histories can grow and push.

When writing about the history of American Indian runaways from the Sherman Institute, a Riverside boarding school for Native American children, I again turned to school records. Specifically, I looked to the files of the off-reservation boarding school and its annexed museum called the Sherman Indian Museum. Unlike the boy's home, the museum does have a formal staff person and public collections. But like many public humanities institutions operating in a climate of shrinking state support, it operates on reduced hours (3.5 hours per day), on a reduced schedule (three days a week).³⁷ Where sources are spread across the region, providing the rich context necessary to understanding these histories—such as those in school files, photo albums, yearbooks, and Bureau of Indian Affairs publications—has meant knitting together sources from multiple repositories. In this case, it entailed examining the pupil records available at the school's museum, non-digitized newspaper accounts of runaways on microfilm at a city library, site visits to locations mentioned in these news accounts, and confirmation against county court records. It is in bringing these diverse sources together that we can begin to recognize patterns and formulate bigger ideas about the deeper histories of places that are important to us. This is an intensive endeavor requiring great time and one steeped in power differentials, reflected in which histories are readily accessible versus those that require deep and diligent efforts to unearth.

37. Sherman Indian Museum, Riverside, California, last accessed November 16, 2019, <http://www.shermanindianmuseum.org>

In addition to drawing on the rebel archive, embarking on this work will require supportive efforts to build it up. For instance, *Collisions at the Crossroads* reflects extensive recovery efforts. It is the first academic use of the Inland Mexican Heritage (IMH) archives, an oral history and photography project concerned with the lives of Mexican-descent families in the Inland Empire with which I have collaborated in different capacities since about 2004. In public events held by IMH throughout the 1990s and 2000s, residents of former citrus communities in San Bernardino County were invited to contribute family photographs and oral histories as part of this recovery project. Among cherished images of weddings, returning veterans, and family gatherings, residents frequently submitted images of everyday life. Unlike government or professional photographs from this period, self-selected compositions help reveal the ways Mexican American people themselves experienced life in the region. Photographs produced by Mexican American residents of the Inland Empire were all the more powerful for the ways they disrupted normative expectations and bolstered self-representation in complex ways. For instance, dominant narratives about Mexican Americans produced in the 1930s suggested they were largely economic and social liabilities whose lives were anachronous with the larger society. Conversely, in photographs produced by Mexican Americans, themselves, they are represented as modern subjects engaged in all facets of public life, from youth leisure to participation in cultural institutions. We will return to Inland Mexican Heritage and other efforts to recover, interrogate, and share these histories as a form of subversive practice.

The call of the rebel archive is powerful. This is especially true in the age of internet archives and social media when, with the click of a finger, we can release new stories into the world with unprecedented ease. However, despite the urge to uncover buried histories, it is also important to recognize that not all stories are ours for telling. In her work on digital technologies and their use in and by Indigenous communities, Kimberly Christen draws our attention to the complexities of universal calls for open access. Her work on the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari community digital archive pushes us to think critically about the unintended consequences of circulating Indigenous materials without consideration of diverse notions of appropriate curation, such as cultural protocols around images of deceased people,

and the colonial legacies of collection, such as those fueling contemporary debates over museum repatriation today.³⁸ We might extend these arguments to the histories of undocumented populations, for whom methodologies including digital mapping that make population concentrations known can unknowingly create uneven risks, particularly in moments of heightened deportation and racial violence.

DIRECTIONS MOVING FORWARD

Places such as the Inland Empire have sat at the margins of California's historiography for much too long. Where institutional access, organization, and resources have posed distinct barriers to this work, the rebel archive offers avenues for addressing these challenges. This section looks to regional efforts to uncover the Inland Empire's history. It focuses on Inland Mexican Heritage, a grassroots effort to recover the marginalized stories of the California Inland Empire and High-Desert. This is one of several promising efforts to remap the histories of inland Southern California that points towards the resilience of grassroots projects concerned with building up the rebel archive.

Inland Mexican Heritage has its roots in the 1990s. In an effort to add depth to the A. K. Smiley Library's Heritage Room oral history collection, director Dr. Larry Burgess encouraged and secured funding for Robert Gonzales (A. G. Vasquez) to interview former citrus workers in Redlands and surrounding areas.³⁹ Vasquez was an essential intermediary: he was born in Redlands to Mexican and Mexican American parents, the son of a teacher and former bracero, and trained in history at the University of California, Riverside. In a three-year period between 1994 and 1997, Vasquez collected thirty interviews with Mexican-descent elders who lived across the East San Bernardino Valley. In 1997, they were made available at the Smiley Library under the title *Citrus, Labor, and Community*. The release of the project generated wide interest in developing

38. Kimberly Christen, "Does Information Really Want to Be Free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness," *International Journal of Communication* 6 (2012): 2870–2893; These challenges are not exclusive to the digital realm. See also Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

39. He later changed his name to Antonio Gonzales Vasquez to correct a historic change in his father's surname.



FIGURE 2: Screening of *Living on the Dime* at an Inland Mexican Heritage program held in the A. K. Smiley Public Library, Redlands, January 24, 2012.
Photograph by author.

a continuing oral history project. From this beginning was born The Redlands Oral History Project, an original collection of fifty audio and video interviews.⁴⁰

Citrus, Labor, and Community began with the initial idea of documenting the lives of citrus workers. Within itself, this was a radical departure from the prevailing regional impulse to document the lives of grove owners and regional elites. But it grew into much more than even that. Seeded in oral history, Inland Mexican Heritage (IMH) was founded by Vasquez in 2001 “to increase awareness of the stories and legacy of Mexican American, Mexican immigrant, and Indigenous people of inland southern California through historical research, preservation, and public presentation of cultural materials.”⁴¹ An offshoot of IMH was an extensive documentary effort called Panchebek Films, founded in 2006 to create independently produced films using IMH materials. The most widely viewed of the films is *Living on*

40. Gonzalez Vasquez and Carpio, *Mexican Americans in Redland*.

41. *Ibid.*, 127.

the Dime: The Freeway & the Barrio, which examines the events leading up to the construction of the Interstate 10 freeway through the historically majority Mexican neighborhoods of inland Southern California (Figure 2).

I was introduced to IMH in 2004 as a college student by historian Matthew Garcia, who had recently published his first book, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900–1970*, an important work on labor, leisure, and intercultural relations in the citrus communities of inland Southern California. At that point, I had already been involved with public history efforts in my position as a board member of the Historical Society of the Pomona Valley (HSPV).⁴² In this role, I worked with the HSPV on programming, governance, and the preservation of the built environment of Pomona, a community at the crossroads of Greater Los Angeles and the Inland Empire. Building on my commitments to Inland history, I was interested in further learning about and cultivating Mexican-descent histories of the region. Partnering with IMH offered me this opportunity, as well as vital training in the public humanities, oral history, and analytic lenses with which to view regional history.

Over the years, IMH grew into an extensive collection of inland history. It operated differently from dominant archival practice in a number of significant ways. Rather than existing in a brick-and-mortar institution, it was shared in traveling pop-up exhibits, public screenings of Panchebek films, and public events such as “History for Breakfast,” where community members were invited to have conversations over collected materials and where they were invited to contribute their own (Figure 3). By meeting people where they already were, such as community centers, American Legion halls, and churches, IMH moved past institutional walls and into spaces of everyday life.⁴³ Events were often designed to promote conversation around archival objects, rupturing the more prevalent model of solitary review that is commonplace at archival institutions. Instead,

42. Historical Society of Pomona Valley, Pomona, CA, last accessed November 16, 2019, <https://pomonahistorical.org/index.html>

43. For a comparative example, see the public nature of *Art Intersections*, a pop-up exhibit by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center and Smithsonian Latino Center in 2013. Genevieve Carpio, “Racial Projections: Cyberspace, Public Space, and the Digital Divide,” *Information, Communication and Society* 21, no. 2 (2017): 174–90.

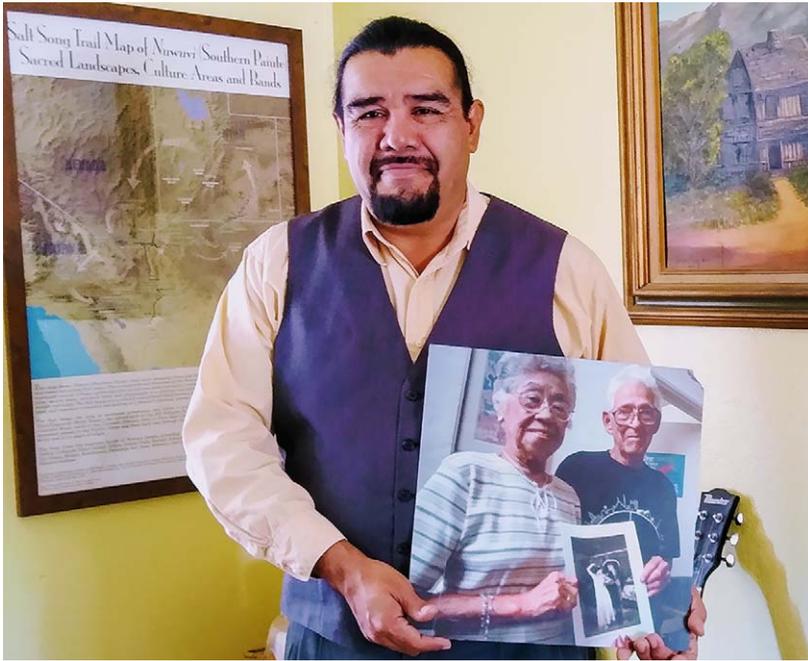


FIGURE 3. A. G. Vasquez, the founder of Inland Mexican Heritage, holds a photo of Steve Candelaria and Martha Park (Romero) posing together at an IMH “History for Breakfast” program as they hold a photograph of themselves taken in 1933, when they performed in *El Aguila*, a play presented at the House of Neighborly Service in Redlands. *Photograph by Kalli Xoxiketzailli (2019); original still by Will Chesser (2014). Courtesy of Inland Mexican Heritage.*

inquiry was based around dialogue and exchange.⁴⁴ Likewise rupturing more typical archival practice, in which the value of objects lies in the repositories’ sole ownership of original items, participants’ materials were scanned in real-time and returned the same day. Inland Mexican Heritage also diverged in a significant way from dominant archival organization as practiced often in local museums and private institutions. It reconsidered the primary organizing unit of knowledge from cities to a cultural community, thus creating a generative meeting point between places and people.

These types of events are powerful in shaping our understandings of the past, but also in identifying the historical and spatial processes that make us envision different types of futures in the places we inhabit. The potential of projects like IMH to increase regional

44. For similar methodologies that foreground personal narrative and public engagement as sources of knowledge, see Kaelyn D. Rodríguez, “Making Space and Marking Race: Emoji Mapping and Liberatory Cartographies in South Los Angeles,” *Diálogo* 21 no. 2 (Fall 2018): 83–90.

participation is confirmed in a multiyear study conducted by the California Council for the Humanities (now California Humanities), which partially funded these events. Over 80 percent of the respondents reported a greater commitment to civic dialogue after participating in its programs.⁴⁵ An annual report specifically highlights the work of IMH's *Living on the Dime* project because of its success in engaging in both discussion programs and multimedia projects, with a total of fifty public programs. According to Vasquez, "This project educated people about the area's little-known history, but also connected them to individuals, groups and entire communities working to improve the economic and social health of the area, balance growth with more [than] just environmental practices, and create greater awareness of the importance of land stewardship."⁴⁶ Focus groups affirm the impact of the project. Among its benefits, survey respondents included building relationships among diverse people, connecting to others, and participating in struggles over development in the local community.⁴⁷

To further circulate these stories and extend their lives beyond public forums, Vasquez and I worked together to publish a pictorial history of the region called *Mexican Americans in Redlands* (2012) by the popular local history series Arcadia Press. The book paired photographs submitted in public workshops with quotes from participants themselves about Inland history. The chapters highlighted immigration and migration, segregation and discrimination, labor and leisure, and the continuities between the past and the present. A uniting thread throughout the book was that of persistence and resistance in the face of structural and social barriers. Vasquez, himself, once described the personal drive and satisfaction he felt from sharing these stories,

Sometimes life is not worth living unless you take chances and do some of the things you believe... I've been doing this for some time now and people often ask me, 'Well, are you making money off of it, how do you live doing this?' But, you know, I really enjoy doing what I do. I like to sit

45. California Stories 2004–2005, *A New Approach to Strengthening Communities: A Report on the California Council for the Humanities' California Stories Initiative, 2004–2005*, California Council for the Humanities; California Stories 2006–2007; *Report on the California Council for the Humanities' California Stories Initiative, 2006–2007*, California Council for the Humanities.

46. Ibid, 18.

47. Ibid.

down and talk to people. I like looking at these things. I think it's important. It's important for your grandkids and your great-grandkids to know this stuff is here."⁴⁸

The same year that *Mexican Americans in Redlands* was published, another important pictorial history, *Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire* was also published by Arcadia. Drawing together stories from across the region and across national borders, the book grew out of collaborative efforts between athletes and academics via the Latino Baseball History Project at California State University, San Bernardino.⁴⁹ The Latino Baseball History Project has since produced a multi-regional series of books and has played an important role in the development of the National Museum of American History's upcoming exhibit, *¡Pleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues*, opening October 2020. Looked at together, these projects highlight the potential of collaboration, public partnerships, and alternative publishing formats (beyond the single-authored, textually focused, monograph) for supporting regional histories in places like the Inland Empire.

The IMH archive, including over 200 hours of video content, images, documents, and ephemera, is now housed in Joshua Tree, California, at Casa de Culturas. Programming focuses on the cultural traditions and natural history of Southern California through documentaries, social media, and efforts to establish the California Coast Desert Trail, a recreation of the historic path linking the desert and the California coast from the Blythe Giant Intaglios on the Colorado River to the Chumash Wishtoyo Village in Malibu.⁵⁰ There are currently efforts to recover data from IMH through the California Revealed online digital archive in collaboration with the University of California, Riverside Public History Program, directed by Professor Catherine Gudis.

Those with personal or academic obligations, often both, continue to collect, share, and interpret the histories of the Inland Empire. They do so despite formidable, but not insurmountable,

48. Gonzalez Vasquez and Carpio. *Mexican Americans in Redlands*, 83.

49. Richard A. Santillán, Mark A. Ocegueda, and Terry A. Cannon, Foreword by José M. Alamillo, *Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012).

50. Antonio Gonzalez Vasquez, "California Coast and Desert Trail," 2019; Kurt Schauppner, "For Culture Bearer Antonio Vasquez, One Path Always Leads to Another," *Basin Wide Spirit*, magazine, Summer 2019.

institutional and practical barriers that make their work difficult and challenging. Other current projects that demonstrate “subversive history” in the making include:

- the Save Our Chinatown Committee that works to preserve and interpret Riverside’s Chinatown archaeological site;
- graduate students who are working to uncover undertold stories such as those of the female educators who fought for Mexican school desegregation;
- others who are focused on the rise of resistant practices in group homes inhabited by young Chicanas;
- a three-person research team that runs the South Colton Oral History Project to collect Mexican American histories and their contributions to the region; and
- Instagram accounts such as IxEstreets that have become important forums for collecting and sharing “old school” images centered on the youth cultures engaged in by people of color in the 1980s–1990s.⁵¹

These are the archival rebels. Will you join them?

51. Save Our Chinatown Committee, Riverside, CA, last accessed November 17, 2019, <http://www.saveourchinatown.org>; Presentation by Audrey Maier, Whitsett Graduate Seminar in California History, California State University, Northridge, November 17, 2019; Joana Chavez, “Reincarnation through Homes: Testimonios from Chicana/Latina Rebels” master’s thesis, University of California Los Angeles, forthcoming; seminar paper for Racial Geographies, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, Spring 2019; Henry J. Vásquez, Frank Acosta, and Dr. Tom Rivera, “South Colton Oral History Project Digital Videos Available to Public,” press release, received from Dr. Tom Rivera August 24, 2019; IxEStreets, active since December 2013, last accessed November 17, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/h4_3t4pKDo/