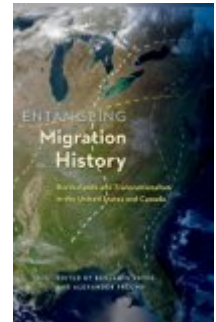


**Benjamin Bryce, Alexander Freund, eds..** *Entangling Migration History: Borderlands and Transnationalism in the United States and Canada*. Contested Boundaries Series. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015. 246 pp. \$79.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8130-6073-6.



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Migration history was transnational before transnational history was cool; it had to be, by definition. Borderlands history has also been dominated by transnational studies, the stories of people whose lives were bisected and redrawn by the arbitrary lines between nation-states. One of the many strengths of *Entangling Migration History: Borderlands and Transnationalism in the United States and Canada* is that it includes and entangles huge swaths of time and space as well as the intensely local and personal. Do not be fooled by the collection's modest size or misleading title: the eight chapters contained here cover centuries of history across Canada, the United States, and Mexico, as well as transatlantic and transpacific worlds. As editors Benjamin Bryce and Alexander Freund state in their introduction, thinking about "entanglement"—or *histoire croisée* to use the book's central phrase—as "a historical process ... binds together several literatures concerned with the study of migration. In light of a growing interest in global, imperial, transnational, transatlantic, transpacific, pan-

American, and borderlands history, the concept of entangled history can give cohesion to a fractured field. It embraces all scales, from the local or transborder to the national and the global. Entangled history decenters the nation, and it charts the relations, linkages, and transfers at several geographical scales and across national borders and cultural boundaries" (p. 2). A key goal is "to decenter national historiographies on both sides of the border" and the collection certainly achieves that goal (p. 3).

Three central methodologies (transnationalism, borderlands, and comparison) drive the anthology's *histoire croisée*, and the editors helpfully provide brief working definitions of all three. Bryce and Freund note that transnationalism "moves research questions beyond the confines of the nation-state. It helps scholars examine the international linkages and influences that comparison neglects" while emphasizing "experiences and processes below and above the national scale" (p. 3). Borderlands analyses "are quintessentially transnational, and scholars who

study borderlands necessarily engage with a space that transcends the borders of nation-states.” They quote Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett’s important 2011 article “On Borderlands” from the *Journal of American History*, to add that “if imperial and national histories are about larger-scale conquests, borderlands histories are about smaller-scale accommodations or pockets of resistance. If imperial and national histories fill the continent, borderlands history seeps into the cracks in between those studies” (p. 5).[1] And finally, methodologies like transnationalism and borderlands, which are inherently comparative, can challenge “the inward focus on the nation,” which is still all too common “in U.S. and Canadian historiographies.... The comparative approach challenges historiographic assumptions about uniqueness and enables scholars to test hypotheses and ask questions that they would likely not have otherwise asked” (p. 7).

This rich mix of methodologies, scales, and locations works well at creating unexpected patterns and connections between the eight chapters. For example, José C. Moya’s “Canada and the Atlantic World: Migration from a Hemispheric Perspective, 1500-1800” and David C. Atkinson’s “Out of One Borderland, Many: The 1907 Anti-Asian Riots and the Spatial Dimensions of Race and Migration in the Canadian-U.S. Pacific Borderlands” show what can be achieved by using really big lenses. Analyses of North American immigration often straddled huge distances because the ancestors of every North American who is not indigenous came here from other continents. Moya’s essay examines “the colonization of Canada in the context of the broader process of European overseas expansion and migration during the early modern period. In so doing, it entangles the histories of imperialism and colonization, of French and British Canada, and of Canada and the rest of the Atlantic World” (p. 14). He explains why early colonizers preferred more southern destinations (and it was not just because of the cold), different types of migration, and the different kinds of la-

bor systems that were shaping migration, and all with a very wide geographic lens. He carefully untangles the differences between the many kinds of free and unfree labor, the different religious and political motivations, and even military and convict migration.

And while at first glance Atkinson’s essay is about a very specific time (September 1907) in two adjacent cities (Bellingham, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia), what he goes on to do is argue that the riots can only be fully understood by seeing them as the intersection of no fewer than five kinds of borderlands: local, national, regional, imperial, and global. The two cities were “local urban borderlands in which white laborers sought to uphold imagined racial, economic, and political boundaries against the perceived incursions of Asian immigrants.” They were also “borderlands of the broader national polities to which they belonged,” both deeply dissatisfied with Ottawa and Washington’s “apparent indifference” to their concerns (p. 122). They were also part of a continental Pacific frontier borderland, “throughout which Canadian and American anti-Asian campaigners corresponded, traveled, agitated, and empathized with one another.” The fourth borderland lens Atkinson brings to his analysis is the imperial, because the riots forced “authorities in the United Kingdom, India, and Ottawa ... to mitigate the potentially destabilizing racial antipathies of Asian immigration’s white opponents in British Columbia.” And finally, these cities were global borderlands, the riots just one more “manifestation of these long-standing global processes and fostered diplomatic tensions between the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and the United States” (p. 123). While North American borderlands studies have been at their best when they focused on very local and specific spaces, this essay is a firm reminder that borderlands are never just local.

At the other end of the scale are the analyses in Grace Peña Delgado’s “Sexual Self: Morals Polic-

ing and the Expansion of the U.S. Immigration Bureau at America's Early Twentieth-Century Borders," Yukari Takai's "Bridging the Pacific: Diplomacy and the Control of Japanese Transmigration via Hawai'i, 1890-1910," and Janis Thiessen's "Religious Borderlands and Transnational Networks: The North American Mennonite Underground Press in the 1960s." These chapters focus on three specific groups of people (women of Mexican descent, Japanese diplomats, and Mennonite students) in three very different places (the U.S.-Mexico border, Hawai'i, and Mennonite colleges throughout Canada and the northern United States) to show how well an individual's experiences can illuminate much bigger themes.

Delgado's new research on the regulation of women's bodies, sexuality, and mobility as a central border-control strategy follows on the heels of her excellent 2012 monograph *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism, and Exclusion in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. Her chapter is the only one of the eight to focus on women, a ratio that remains depressingly common in North American borderlands studies. Part of what makes her work so important is that while her essay "focuses on women of Mexican descent and the sexual policing at the southern border of the United States,... enforcing anti-white slavery laws was a North American project that prompted the most significant bureaucratic expansion of the Bureau of Immigration since its establishment in 1891." In short, while North American borderlands historians have paid a great deal of attention to the ways that race was used to construct and enforce the borders of the three nation-states, efforts to control women's bodies, sexuality, and mobility were just as important to the new "regime of immigration control that gave wide force to the meaning of whiteness, middle-class respectability, and citizenship in North America" (p. 102).

Takai's chapter takes us off the continent completely to discuss Hawai'i's emergence "as a

crucial nodal point for Japanese transmigrants, a space that connected their island nation to the North American west and to the Pacific borderlands of the United States and Canada. The annexation of Hawai'i further transformed the islands into an ocean-bound borderland of the U.S. empire that was firmly connected to the Canadian and U.S. coasts." She pays particular attention to the "little-studied" Japanese diplomats of Honolulu, San Francisco, and Vancouver who were tasked with enforcing Japan's emigration laws and trying to limit Japanese transmigration from Hawai'i to the mainland (p. 142). Takai concludes that "the extent and frequency of the transnational mobility of these emigrants and the networks of knowledge and contact they wove attests to the extent to which migrants and middlemen were capable of entangling and complicating the otherwise neatly defined map of North America and the Pacific World that state officials strove to draw" (pp. 155-156).

And finally, Thiessen's chapter was particularly intriguing for readers like me who would not have put the words "Mennonites" and "underground press" together in the same sentence. Yet there were in fact thousands of underground newspapers produced by Mennonite students in Canada and the United States in the 1960s, and Thiessen uses some of the surviving papers here to explore how those students were constructing and negotiating their own transnational networks and religious borderlands. She argues that the newspapers and Mennonite colleges constitute religious borderlands where traditional Mennonite beliefs and New Left politics bumped up against each other. In this case, the migration has less to do with people (although certainly many of these students had crossed the international boundary to go to school, and young Mennonite men were among the thousands of young Americans who fled north to Canada to escape the Vietnam War) and more with the transnational circulation of and tensions between a specific pair of ideologies.

Holding down the solid center of our scale are the remaining three chapters, Randy William Widdis's "A Spatial Grammar of Migration in the Canadian-American borderlands at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," Bruno Ramirez's "Mexicans, Canadians, and the Reconfiguration of Continental Migrations, 1915-1965," and Benjamin Bryce's "Entangled Communities: German Lutherans in Ontario and North America, 1880-1930." There is also a fine epilogue from Erika Lee, "Entanglements and the Practice of Migration History." These chapters create several more interesting pairings which would work well for in-class discussions, such as Widdis with Ramirez to further explore Canadian migration southward, Ramirez with Delgado to explore Mexican migration northward, and Bryce with Thiessen to compare two different transnational religious institutions.

The collection is an excellent addition to the group of recent anthologies on North American transnational and borderlands history, including *Transnationalism: Canada-United States History into the 21st Century*, edited by Michael D. Behiels and Reginald C. Stuart (2010); *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories*, edited by Benjamin H. Johnson and Andrew R. Graybill (2010); and the 2011 anthology *Migrants and Migration in Modern North America: Cross-Border Lives, Labor Markets, and Politics*, edited by Dirk Hoerder (who provides a foreword for *Entangling Migration History*) and the late, brilliant Nora Faires. *Entangling Migration History*'s unique contribution to the field is its exciting mix of methodologies and scales across half the globe.

#### Note

[1]. Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September 2011): 338-361.

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