

## Introduction

In the summer of 1993, Danny Flores parked his lowrider, a 1952 Chevrolet Fleetline adorned with painted roses and a chrome steering wheel, alongside four friends and their cars at Plaza Park. That afternoon the San Bernardino Convention and Visitor's Bureau was sponsoring the *Rendezvous*, a yearly celebration of Route 66 cruising heritage held in the city's downtown. The iconic highway, famously recalled in Nat King Cole's rendition of "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66," acts as a gateway to numerous U.S. transportation corridors and serves as a central destination in Southern California. Embracing San Bernardino's place on the Mother Road, the *Rendezvous* festival draws close to 100,000 participants from across the Southwest each year. In a single weekend, the downtown district transforms from a restrained landscape of modernist county buildings and commercial storefronts into a dynamic display of automotive culture as families convene to celebrate the iconic symbol of western mobility. Local rock bands play nostalgic tunes from the 1950s, the expansive street show features custom cars, and participants share in a slow cruise through downtown. But Flores and other Mexican American lowriders had gathered away from the site of the *Rendezvous*, which lowriders had participated in since the festival's founding in 1990, to protest the festival's newly enacted lowrider ban.<sup>1</sup> Festival officials described the exclusion of lowriders as protecting the event's authenticity. Flores, however, attributed it to discrimination. To draw attention to the festival's fabricated placement in downtown San Bernardino, a mile away from the iconic highway, he chose the city's historically Mexican Westside for the lowriders' gathering, on what Flores has called "the real Route 66."<sup>2</sup> It was here that Route 66 carried travelers through California and that Mexican cruising culture had thrived for decades. Mexicans are among the many diverse

groups discussed in this book that experienced their racialization through permissions and prohibitions on their mobility, but never without contest.

As Southern California experienced significant economic and demographic changes during the second half of the twentieth century, competing claims to Route 66 became powerful contests over the region's past, present, and future—and San Bernardino held a central place in these efforts. While the National Civic League had once selected San Bernardino for the prestigious All-America City award, by the 1990s the town faced stark challenges to its economic and social identity. The closing of both the Kaiser steel plant (1984) in nearby Fontana and the Norton Air Force Base (1994), as well as their supportive industries, led to sudden and devastating economic losses. Poverty, crime, and shrinking social services followed. Dovetailing with its deindustrialization, the city had recently become majority-minority. The white, non-Hispanic population continued to hold the single demographic majority, but barely so. Indeed, San Bernardino has become a national symbol for some of the most pressing challenges in (sub)urban America, where the seeming divisions of suburban and urban life bleed into one another.<sup>3</sup>

Like the city of San Bernardino, the tri-county region of inland Southern California faced major demographic shifts in the second half of the twentieth century. For instance, between 1970 and 1990 each county in the area experienced a rise in its Hispanic population, from 17 to 26 percent in Riverside County, 16 to 27 percent in San Bernardino County, and 18 to 38 percent in Los Angeles County. In Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, marginal growth occurred in the African American and Asian/Pacific Islander populations as well.<sup>4</sup> Further, at the metropolitan level, increasing racial tensions marked Greater Los Angeles following the Los Angeles Uprising (1992), which sharpened local racial divides and fears as the entire nation consumed violent images first of white police officers beating African American motorist Rodney King, and later of the urban riots that followed the officers' acquittal. In the following years, Californians would combine a fixation on crime and immigration enforcement at the ballot box in a resurgence of nativist hysteria. For example, a series of controversial racial propositions amplified tensions surrounding the state's growing Latina/o population,<sup>5</sup> from Proposition 187 (1994), which aimed to deny public education, health services, and benefits to undocumented immigrants, to Proposition 227 (1998), which nearly ended bilingual education in public schools.<sup>6</sup> In a large sense, social tensions in California responded to global economic restructuring as the financial gap between the rich and the poor widened,

free trade agreements restructured large economic sectors, and neoliberal multiculturalism cast acts of international force as humanitarianism.<sup>7</sup>

As towns throughout inland Southern California attempted to respond to their new socioeconomic realities and increasing racial diversity, Route 66 heritage became a racially charged backdrop deployed by boosters to place lowrider cars and their Mexican American drivers on the opposite side of regional development. The Rendezvous festival in particular held a central role in urban revitalization efforts played out in Southern California. The festival tapped into a popular Route 66 nostalgia that recast San Bernardino from a place of danger and blight to an idealized post–World War II America where visions of hot rods and cruising on the Mother Road signified small-town America, upward mobility, and racial homogeneity. San Bernardino is also geographically close to Hollywood—land of James Dean’s iconic Mercury in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), the daring racing feats of Steve McQueen in *The Great Escape* (1963) and *Le Mans* (1971), and the southern escapades of Bo and Luke Duke in a customized Dodge Charger adorned with a Confederate flag (1979–1985)—which lent powerful symbolism to Southern California cruising events. The potency of these alluring narratives is further revealed by their popularity among the populations written out of the scripts, such as people of color and women. Ultimately, the festival and the lowrider ban harkened back to a nostalgic past of postwar prosperity that both sanitized history and denied the complexity of a multiracial present. Like the perfectly restored classic hot rods and vintage cars around which the Rendezvous was organized, the festival suggested that San Bernardino too could return to its former glory as a white, middle class city. This vision negated the long historical presence of Mexicans on Route 66, an erasure made all the more possible with the formal removal of Mexican American lowriders from the festival. Furthermore, this image distanced the city from its working class, multiracial present.<sup>8</sup>

The conflicting claims to Route 66 made by Danny Flores and San Bernardino’s Convention and Visitor’s Bureau illustrate a larger set of twentieth-century tensions related to race, place, and mobility that form the subject of this book. Sitting uneasily alongside the nostalgic Americana of the 1990s redevelopment campaigns was the rise of regional policies regulating the flows and stoppages of Latina/o residents, or their “mobility”—a geographic concept referring to the ways we experience, manage, and give meaning to movement.<sup>9</sup> Throughout this book, the concept of mobility particularly applies to the everyday channels of movement in a community, especially for

Indigenous people and people of color.<sup>10</sup> By “everyday,” I refer to the ordinary and extraordinary experiences embedded in the lived mobilities of a society.<sup>11</sup> For instance, in the years following the lowrider ban, police traffic checkpoints increased sharply in Latina/o majority communities throughout inland Southern California, a region encompassing parts of San Bernardino, Riverside, and Los Angeles Counties. With increasing frequency, blue and red lights trapped long lines of residents as they waited for police officers to confirm their sobriety, proof of insurance, and identity. While a 1990 Supreme Court decision had upheld the constitutionality of traffic checkpoints for the purpose of identifying drunk drivers, the line between sobriety checkpoints and immigrant checkpoints became porous when this practice was combined with a 1993 law (since nulled) prohibiting undocumented immigrants from receiving a California driver’s license. That is, regional sobriety stops functioned as unofficial, wide-reaching immigration checkpoints. Regionally, citizenship status was used to impose heavy fees on undocumented drivers, to impound vehicles at towing companies’ profit, and to foster a state of fear among all drivers when navigating their everyday movements between home, work, and school in Latina/o majority communities.<sup>12</sup> That is, Latinas/os experienced racialization through their everyday mobility and its management by state forces. Indeed, as this book demonstrates, throughout the twentieth century mobility functioned as a modality through which race was lived through forces as diverse as historical societies, Indian boarding schools, bicycle ordinances, immigration policy, incarceration, traffic checkpoints, and Route 66 heritage.<sup>13</sup>

Traffic checkpoints became a pressing site of contestation as they spread throughout inland Southern California. Operating under the guise of public safety, they were most commonly positioned in communities with large immigrant populations where municipal police departments disproportionately identified, criminalized, and penalized Latina/o drivers, documented and undocumented alike. That is, where Latinas/os of varying citizenship statuses shared space, they also were caught in a shared net, one that focused traffic enforcement efforts on majority Latina/o pathways through the region. Community groups formed in protest against the discriminating impounds, not to mention the heavy fees levied on residents by municipal governments and private towing agencies. These groups held demonstrations, testified at city halls, and filed legal action against municipal leaders.<sup>14</sup>

Local authorities met activists’ efforts with staunch resistance. In one particularly volatile episode, an off-duty police officer belligerently disrupted

a community forum addressing the checkpoints' municipal impact. Interrupting the meeting, he accused organizers of spreading false information and called one Mexican American audience member "a killer." In doing so, the officer hurled the common trope of immigrant drivers as imminent dangers. That the man accused was in fact a U.S. citizen highlights how policies targeting one group (i.e., undocumented immigrants) can be used to narrate and manage the movement of a broader cross-section of racialized people (i.e., Latinas/os).<sup>15</sup>

Both the Rendezvous festival's ban of lowriders and traffic checkpoints were local responses to the changing face of California and attempts to reinforce prevailing racial hierarchies by targeting the everyday mobilities of nonwhite drivers. These practices, as well as the ideologies supporting them, represent a continuation of the regulated ways racialized people have moved throughout the twentieth century. That is, the Rendezvous and the traffic checkpoints were two aspects of the same form of racialization: where the Rendezvous promoted nostalgia for a white American car culture, which erased Mexican American lowriders from the region's collective past, the traffic checkpoints actively turned public roads into volatile landscapes on which Latina/o drivers of various residency statuses were stripped of their ability to move in everyday ways. Ultimately, racial struggles over driving in inland Southern California demonstrate the ways mobility and place making have been central to constructing uneven power relations in the United States, particularly in practices that protect unequal access to land, labor, and claims to citizenship, as well as those that generate complex negotiations, contests, and even accommodation of hierarchical race relations.

I argue that mobility has been an active force in racialization over the twentieth century, one that has operated alongside "place" to shape regional memory and belonging in multiracial communities. As is examined in this book, tensions between police officers and Latina/o motorists have a long history in which racialized permissions and prohibitions on movement have been normalized in the region's social and spatial development, from bicycling ordinances targeting Japanese immigrants in the early 1900s to vigilante violence against African Americans who threatened suburban racial boundaries in the 1940s. This perspective underscores the shared ways that both the lowrider ban and traffic checkpoints stripped their drivers of mobility, and it prompts connections to how such practices position Latina/o residents as outsiders whose movements should be viewed with suspicion. With this recognition, one can move far beyond these particular cases to ask, how has the

criminalization of certain forms of mobility provided some groups grounds for making spatial claims while prohibiting others? Or, how have certain bodies become conflated with particular types of movement at specific points in time? Along these lines, we can also ask how vagrancy laws, slave codes, immigration enforcement, sobriety checkpoints, joyriding ordinances, and other means of policing movement share continuities or ruptures with one another. Focusing on racial formation over the course of the twentieth century, I demonstrate how contests over movement have shaped racial hierarchies and regional attitudes towards a diverse set of migrant and resident groups.

### INLAND CROSSROADS, THEORETICAL PATHWAYS

There are few places where mobility has shaped identity as widely as the American West and, more specifically, California. The state has been considered the “Land of Golden Dreams” for those seeking wealth in its mines, a port of entry for immigrants from the Pacific Rim and Western Hemisphere, and the definitive destination for Route 66 cruisers. But some locations and populations more than others sit at the state’s major crossroads. Such is the case for inland Southern California, known at different times as the Citrus Belt, Orange Empire, Inland Empire, and Inland Valley. All roads lead here, where numerous trail, rail, auto, and air transportation corridors intersect, and where the Santa Ana Mountains, San Geronimo Pass, San Jose Hills, and Mojave Desert form a physical passageway. These geographic corridors have since been expanded by fixed capital, including roads, boardinghouses, service stations, and warehouses to facilitate particular forms of movement. Distant points of influence stretch the region’s borders into a complex web of economic, political, and social relations both national and international in scope. Moreover, the area has been home to numerous waves of migrant and immigrant groups, each dependent on exercising effective mobility to traverse an expansive territory that encompasses farms, factories, prisons, and suburbs. The range of mobilities generated here is complex and has distributed economic and cultural privilege in unequal ways, but never without contest.

Today, inland Southern California is most commonly known as the Inland Empire. The area includes the eastern suburbs of Los Angeles County, divided by the Interstate 10 freeway and State Route 57, and western portions of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Its western edges, bounded by the mountains to the north and desert to the east, extend south from San

Bernardino to Temecula and stretch westward from Redlands to Pomona. But it has not always been so. Rather than forming around static political or even geographic boundaries, regional borders have stretched and twisted with the contours of equally supple cultural and economic identities. As regions without strict governmental boundaries, places such as the Inland Empire, the Sunbelt, and the Gunbelt reflect how regions are actively constructed around their topography, economy, memory, and race.<sup>16</sup> This book, rather than approaching the region as a material truth, takes a regional formation approach historically grounded in critical race and ethnic studies in order to uncover how the region is constituted, reproduced, and challenged. In emphasizing the study of race at the regional level, I draw upon the work of geographer Clyde Woods, who asserts that it is through examining how racial dominance operates within regional power structures that we can uncover how practices of ethnic supremacy frame power's operation at multiple scales.<sup>17</sup> Through these approaches, I demonstrate that practices and representations of mobility produce racial hierarchies with close ties to regional economies and their larger capital chains.<sup>18</sup>

In inland Southern California, citrus established the regional economy and its related networks. Beginning in the 1870s, citrus became synonymous with inland development; promoters popularized the name "Citrus Belt" and organized dense networks through which fruits grown in local soil traveled across the globe. Capitalism mapped space in its own image as groves, packinghouses, banks, and transit hubs transformed the geography of inland Southern California into the center of an "Orange Empire," a global collection of regions dedicated to citrus production and connected through commercial exchange.<sup>19</sup> A detailed review of the shipping records for lemons, one of inland Southern California's principal crops, provides a telling snapshot of the dense pathways emanating from this region. As early as 1908, only about 0.1 percent of lemons processed by the cooperative Cucamonga Citrus Fruit Growers Association were shipped locally. Instead, the vast majority of deliveries were destined for far-off places, ranging from Arkansas City to Wichita.<sup>20</sup> The commercial popularity of lemons, oranges, and grapefruits from California's Citrus Belt also extended far beyond the nation. In particular, its famed navel orange reorganized landscapes across the world, including Australia, Japan, and South Africa, each of which invested heavily in the fruit. By the beginning of the twentieth century, inland Southern California was well established as the citrus capital: the federal Department of Agriculture chose the region as home to the U.S. Citrus Experiment

Station, the “Sunkist” brand of the California Fruit Growers Exchange was a household name, and the local navel orange was the nation’s chief specialty fruit crop, an enterprise valued at \$20 million in California alone. Most centrally, the movement of people and products through a gateway with dense national and transnational commercial linkages, including but not limited to citrus, has consistently held a fundamental place in inland Southern California’s economic, political, and cultural life.<sup>21</sup>

The citrus industry also had close ties with Los Angeles, where association offices and wholesale markets comprised citrus’s financial centers. Capitalist relationships between rural production and urban distribution formed regional connections across this 60-mile-wide territory. It was through Los Angeles’s integration with inland Southern California that it came of age as a national metropolis. As William Cronon notes in *Nature’s Metropolis*, his influential text on Chicago and its hinterland, new transportation technologies, including the diesel truck and automobile, positioned Los Angeles to become the nation’s major twentieth century gateway. Just as Chicago’s rise in the capitalist orbit was linked to revolutions in the flows of meat, grain, and lumber from the countryside to the city, Los Angeles’s repositioning was contingent on the ecology and economy of its eastern hinterland. Likewise, as Los Angeles became increasingly central to capitalist development, inland Southern California became a crucial gateway through which commodities, people, and information moved. That is, Los Angeles and inland Southern California synergistically thrust each other into economic and population circulations that were both intimate and long distance in nature.<sup>22</sup>

My timeline is drawn around the region’s entry into the international citrus economy at the beginning of the twentieth century and concludes with its decline at the start of the twenty-first century. Over the long twentieth century, tensions between mobility and settlement were the topic of intense regional debate, particularly as migrants traveled long distances to acquire land and to labor in the fields.

In recent years, the Inland Empire’s population growth and warehousing industry has further tied the U.S. economy to an international trade system that stretches from Los Angeles across the Pacific Ocean. If, as economic geographers argue, gateways are fundamental to the maintenance of global capitalism, sites such as inland Southern California are “chokepoints” where transnational flows are locally experienced. By the 1970s, the connection between U.S. consumers and Pacific Rim products intensified with the advent of containerization, or intermodal freight transport, by which

shipping containers move from boats to trucks to warehouses, beginning at the ports of Los Angeles.<sup>23</sup> As one journalist explained, “If you own stuff made in China—the phone in your pocket, the shoes on your feet—chances are good that some of it passed through an Inland Empire warehouse.”<sup>24</sup>

In addition to its position in a dynamic capitalist network that ties regional development to scales both distant and intimate in reach, inland Southern California has been home to a significant multiracial and global population since the mid-1800s, thereby offering many compelling reasons why ethnic studies scholars should be interested in how racial formation and mobility unfolded in this particular region. Agriculturalists actively recruited workers from across the globe to pick, prune, and pack golden fruits, tend to growing households, and construct transportation networks linking Los Angeles to the rest of the United States. In the post-World War II era, the children and grandchildren of these workers settled in new residential communities while African American commuters found affordable housing with fewer restrictions in inland Southern California than those encountered in suburbs closer to Los Angeles. As a result, the contemporary national trend of immigrants and people of color increasingly choosing to settle in non-urban communities is an old story here. Notably, when compared to Los Angeles, which is often recognized for its population diversity, key areas of inland Southern California have held larger concentrations of Japanese, Mexican, and African American people at pivotal moments of social contention: in the era of the Yellow Peril prior to the beginning of the twentieth century, following passage of the 1924 Immigration and Nationality Act, and during the 1965 Watts Rebellion. Moreover, although the story of federal actions and global capitalism is alluring, their effects were experienced most frequently in their regional context. Specifically, efforts to manage workers’ movements, challenges to prevailing racial hierarchies, and efforts to construct interethnic spaces in places like inland Southern California have been key forces in race making. Struggles over national and cultural belonging materialize in palpable ways at the regional level, where the policies, social relations, and economic flows of other scales—from the body to the global—come together.<sup>25</sup>

Also of interest to ethnic studies scholars is the way marked waves of settler colonialism and migration shaped the Citrus Belt. What differentiates settler colonialism from other forms of colonization is its function as an ongoing process of Indigenous dispossession and elimination in which settlers seek to remap and remain permanently in a territory. The emphasis of this book is on white (particularly Anglo American—that is, non-Hispanic

descent) settler colonialism, but California experienced multiple waves of settlement on Indigenous territories, including the Spanish conquest (1769–1821) and Mexican secularization of mission lands (1821–1848). Part of possessing land has been transforming it into commodities through the exploitation of slave and nonwhite immigrant labor. In inland Southern California, the process of white settler colonialism included Native containment and the management of racialized labor towards the end of building agricultural communities in which whites dominated nonwhite groups.<sup>26</sup>

By “white” and “nonwhite,” I refer to historically and geographically situated categories that shift over time. It is well established that racial construction is a process rather than a biological truth. We can think of “whiteness,” for instance, as a set of hierarchically ordered groupings produced by the political and cultural circumstances of a society. White status has been a prerequisite for most forms of U.S. national belonging, and its stability as a category is contingent upon the exclusion of those considered nonwhite. For example, at different times Irish, Jewish, and Mexican people have slid in and out of the category of whiteness, depending on the given political context, individual class markers, and collective acts of violence against those with more tenuous racial statuses. As this book shows, one of the ways whiteness operates has been through exercising control over one’s own mobility and managing the mobility of others. Produced in relation to whiteness, we can think of “nonwhite” as a broad group including those who have undergone processes of racial othering, as well as those with an emergent nonwhite identity shaped by a multiracial context, often across multiple generations.<sup>27</sup> For nonwhites, racialization is experienced as the multiple ways their mobility and immobility is coerced through systems of power. Although usually thought of as fixed categories, what is white and what is not white is ever shifting. Class, gender, and citizenship are each implicated in these processes, through the criminalization of impoverished white “tramps,” immigration polices directed at preventing the entry of Chinese women and the formation of Asian American families, and staunch protest to the recruitment of Puerto Rican laborers with rights to U.S. settlement.<sup>28</sup>

Adopting a relational lens, this project breaks from binary oppositions between individual groups and a white center to uncover affinities and tensions manifested among and between aggrieved groups across the twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> As I discuss throughout this book, white American and European settlers arriving in inland Southern California in the 1870s established colonies in a multiracial region already occupied by Indigenous bands of Cahuilla,

Maarenga'yam and Yuhaviatam (Serrano), and Tongva-Gabrielino people, as well as resident Mexican Americans and the nearby Payómkawichum-Luiseño Indians. These white settlers were accompanied by Chinese laborers migrating southward from San Francisco where they worked in early rail and agricultural industries. Following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, agriculturalists turned to new labor sources, fostering the regional growth of the Japanese, Korean, South Asian, Mexican, and African American populations. Asian workers, comprising the majority of these nonwhite migrants, settled in farming camps and semirural neighborhoods at the outskirts of towns. Later, as a result of intensifying immigration restrictions on Asia and parts of Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century, a growing Mexican population came to fill the primary labor needs of industrial agriculture. Contests between Mexicans and whites occupied the center stage of regional racial relations until midcentury, but not exclusively so. Rather, concerns with Puerto Rican, Filipino, and white Dust Bowl migrants each threatened to unsettle regional racial hierarchies. Following World War II, inland Southern California diversified at rates much faster than that for suburbs located closer to Los Angeles, becoming a significant destination for African Americans in particular. In each of these cases, it was the continual struggle to remap settler colonial space and the region's position as a multiracial gateway that would position mobility as a central catalyst in racial formation.

In inland Southern California, mobility was a central means through which settler colonists centered whiteness in the region's "moral geography." Coined by political scientist Michael Shapiro, moral geographies are implicit assertions that shape political and cultural understandings of space. When considering mobility, moral geographies include where and how certain racialized bodies are expected to move, as well as the stories that are told about those movements. But they have not been exhaustive in their reach. Rather, alternative mobility practices disrupted regional claims invented by state powers and its constituents to suggest new forms of belonging that embraced heterogeneity. As described by American Studies scholar Melanie McAlister, "different moral geographies can coexist and even compete; each represents a different type of imaginative affiliation linked to certain ideas about significant spaces."<sup>30</sup> A crucial first step to unsettling the domination of white settler society and its dominant moral geographies is to return to the original encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies, and to recognize the ways racialized labor has been used to advance or resist white settler control of the region.

Clearly, multiscale tensions among global capitalism, regional identity, and American race relations originating here have manifested starkly not only in inland Southern California but throughout the United States—from the emergence of national networks exercising vigilante immigration enforcement, like the Minuteman Project and Save Our State, to the Warehouse Workers United campaign drawing attention to Walmart’s domestic supply chain and its negative impacts on workers’ health. With ramifications that stretch far beyond its physical geography, inland Southern California offers an exceptional site to study regional mobilities and racial formations that forge a central part of global capitalism’s operations.<sup>31</sup>

### THE INTERDISCIPLINARITY OF RACE, PLACE, AND MOBILITY

The present study builds upon a foundation of interdisciplinary scholarship concerned with the production of space and place to demonstrate that we cannot fully understand racial formation without also considering the role of mobility. As a starting point, I draw upon the influential scholarship of theorist Henri Lefebvre, who argued in *The Production of Space* (1991) that space is not a product, but a process linked to our social contexts and reproduced through the political economy.<sup>32</sup> In other words, when we recognize space as an active force in and of social relations, we are better able to recognize the ways spatial production and race making work synergistically. For instance, Kay Anderson’s seminal study of British settler society unpacked the process by which the idea of Chinatown defined racial difference in turn-of-the-century Vancouver, British Columbia. Her work demonstrates that government constructions of Chinatown as an unsanitary and morally corrupt district served to produce a group of Chinese outsiders. Racial ideas of “Chinese” were given meaning through spatial designations, which served as a foil to white insiders.<sup>33</sup> From Chinatown to Wall Street, the study of space has pushed scholars to consider the intertwined relationships between racial meaning, the built environment, and the active remaking of ethnospatial borders.<sup>34</sup>

While “place” has been widely adopted by social scientists and humanists as an analytic concept since the 1990s, a new “mobility turn” has only become evident in recent years. Its growth is indicated by the rise of international centers dedicated to mobility studies, thematic panels at professional conferences, and special journal issues examining the field, most notably in the

flagship journal of the American Association of Geographers.<sup>35</sup> But, with some notable exceptions, race and ethnicity have not yet emerged as major themes within these “mobility studies.”<sup>36</sup> In contrast, cultural theorists and ethnic studies scholars have been talking about mobility and immobility for several decades. However, they have used a different language to describe its effects. Examples of this work include historical studies on Indigenous travel and removal in Creek Indian lands, debates over slavery and African American migration in Louisville, travel restrictions on migrant workers in San Francisco, and the historical rise of incarceration in Los Angeles.<sup>37</sup>

This work also draws on the theorizations of migration scholars who have long been interested in immigration, labor, and transnational families.<sup>38</sup> Whereas the field of migration studies is primarily concerned with global flows of human movement, however, mobility studies open up questions about how channels of everyday movement and stasis are constructed and how they are governed at different moments in time.<sup>39</sup> Weaving these scholarships, I demonstrate tensions between the ways immigration policy and local industries shaped regional attitudes towards migrant groups and the ways settler communities sought to maintain racial hierarchies through contests over policy and law, public memory, and the built environment. Migration helped define mobility in settler communities shaped by agriculture, in which the management of migrant labor was central to maximizing regional economic flows.

This book takes as a primary concern critical race and ethnic studies, which have looked to racial formation to understand how bodies and societies are organized through structural and cultural forces. These efforts have more often than not led to uneven power structures defined by a “possessive investment in whiteness,” in which privilege is distributed along lines of whiteness and racial others compete against one another for those advantages.<sup>40</sup> These relationships are consistently and actively contested in “racial projects” that give race meaning in ways that allocate resources to the benefit of some groups and to the cost of others.<sup>41</sup> *Collisions at the Crossroads* focuses on policies and practices seeking to manage and give meaning to the ways people have moved, ways that in effect have shaped everyday experiences of race—from the arrival of white migrants to the Riverside colony and disavowal of Indigenous and Mexican American communities, to continued efforts aimed at populating the region with a global workforce from Asia and Latin America, predominantly Mexico, to the suburbanization of African American and Latina/o communities following World War II. In multiracial

places like inland Southern California where colonialism and empire collided through agricultural capitalism, these formations occurred in relational ways. That is, the meanings of race attached to one group formed alongside those of its neighboring groups.<sup>42</sup>

A mobility perspective brings to the cultural and ethnic studies table a focus on the ways actors move through space and how such acts potentially disrupt racial and place-based meanings through their bodies and the technologies that enable those movements. While the result has often been a possessive investment in whiteness, this is not always the case. This book aims to unpack the conditions under which this investment is made at some times and negated in others. Specifically, I examine the ways mobility has been an active force in racialization, operating alongside “place” to shape regional narratives, access to property, immigration policy, and claims to cultural belonging from 1870 to the present. Bridging relational race studies and mobility studies, this book advances our knowledge of how mobility shapes racial formation, from the regionally specific politics of mobility that shape racial meaning, such as who is included in bicycle races, to uneven access to systems enabling movement, such as drivers’ licenses. The ways in which different actors were able to access these systems, or not, were reflective and constitutive of racial hierarchies and were key battlegrounds through which power was shaped, experienced, and contested.

### MAPPING THE CROSSROADS

The archives that drive *Collisions at the Crossroads* are engaged as both a practice of reinterpretation and a recovery of history. Elite agriculturalists, writers, and politicians have been setting the terms of debates on mobility for centuries, contributing to what historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot describes as a silence at “the moment of fact creation.”<sup>43</sup> For this reason, the records generated by the dominant public sphere can only offer hints about how a multiracial workforce interpreted the values of migration, settlement, and place making. Nevertheless, from the sources available, scholars can draw inferences as to how laborers sought to mitigate the negative impacts of restrictions and regulations on their mobility.

I underscore these efforts in the coming chapters. For instance, Korean residents who migrated after the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) sought financial stability by building communal kitchens and bathhouses catering to the

needs of migrant citrus workers. Japanese residents subject to property restrictions after passage of the Alien Land Law (1913) called upon white allies to act as intermediaries in state courts. Mexican American youth living at the margins of metropolitan car culture in Depression-era California manipulated registration records to retain anonymity in response to new forms of police surveillance. It is difficult to assess the full cultural and social dimensions of how people targeted by mobility systems responded to these discourses and policies, but photographic records, the built environment, and reading between the lines of traditional sources offer clues as to how individuals and communities engaged mobility for personal, if not progressive, purposes.

From the 1930s to the present, the records of response become fuller. Family photographic records chronicle the significance of automobiles in workers' day-to-day lives, radio programs allow for alternative readings of popular culture, and the rise of oral history projects in the 1990s provide a repository of testimony by those who came of age in the mid-twentieth century. Their accounts uncover strategic efforts to navigate the push and pull of the citrus economy. At the same time, they reveal the limits of such efforts in a political economy stacked against them. Field visits and analyses of the material culture left behind further contextualize the dominant culture's vast efforts to re-narrativize the racial meanings infused in mobility. This work of historical recovery is a necessary first step to uncovering patterns of change and continuity over time. Where public memory is shaped by hegemonic structures that naturalize unequal race relations under the guise of neutrality, interdisciplinary scholars must produce a historical geography in which marginalized people are afforded recognition of their resistance, accommodation, entrepreneurship, compromises, joy, and movement.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the local and global significance of inland Southern California, its history has not been treated with the same reverence as other trade and migration centers. There is no dedicated archive to Inland Empire history. Likewise, mobility can be elusive, with records as fluid as the people it seeks to track. Reconstructing this story has been an interdisciplinary endeavor, both deep and wide in its scope. It has meant searching through the multi-nodal records of this region, from the halls of local libraries, to the filing cabinets of historical societies, to the basements of museums, to the planning records of city halls, to the dedicated research of local community historians, in order to thread together a cohesive, if not comprehensive, history of a region that even today defies stark borders. It has also meant scouring national records kept by the Department of the Interior, Department of

Commerce and Labor, and Department of Agriculture, reviewing individual Census entries and reading thousands of pages of the Congressional Record to uncover the details of racial contests both overt and covert, as well as regional and national in intention. At times, it has required searching for transnational evidence, such as citrus records originating in Brazil, international immigration agreements, and social science research by Mexican scholars, in order to unpack the multiscalar effects of a site where economic and social relations were far-reaching in origin and effect. And, it has meant encountering stunning gaps, where rich community histories deemed insignificant have been lost to scholars. These erasures are often betrayed by what historian Kelly Lytle Hernández calls the “rebel archive,” where those who would be eliminated created their own records and defied their own erasure.<sup>45</sup> Novels, songs, photo albums, popular media, and gated lots with modest traces of buildings constructed long ago each offer insight into the relationship of race, place, and mobility.

This book also represents over a decade’s worth of 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. As a frequent partner of IMH in its oral history and documentary projects, I have witnessed the challenges of collecting community histories in a political environment often hostile to the humanities, particularly those that rupture staunch mythologies protecting the status quo.<sup>46</sup> Consider that in a place where the *Rendezvous* festival’s ban on lowriders erased the long-standing presence of people of color from a celebrated national landscape and painted them as outsiders, traffic checkpoints could more easily occur as natural extensions of that same fictive past. This book seeks to uncover how these selective traditions operate as active agents in the ways we view our past, thereby revealing the intertwined histories of race making and mobility at this contentious crossroads.

As part of my methodology, I also examine maps as discursive texts that reveal racial and spatial relationships in the region. Often employed as tools of empire, maps have been used to lay new meaning on Indigenous lands and to assert racial boundaries in space. As discussed by critical cartographers, in mapmakers’ efforts to delineate boundaries between people and places, space is created as much as it is reflected, largely in the service of uneven power relations. Maps can also challenge the status quo and raise public consciousness in support of interventionist agendas.<sup>47</sup> Brought together, inland Southern California’s rebel archive reveals counter-mappings of the region that challenge

traditional cartographies. Drawing on this tradition, the maps on pp. xvii–xx foreground the intersectional histories of this book. Map 1 highlights the major geographic corridors moving through this region, with arrows pointing outside the region towards national and international sites of connection and influence discussed in the book. Maps 2 and 3 remap the region with contested histories of place-making and movement, with keys to sites discussed in the chapters that follow. Native territories, Mexican ranch lands, and county lines cross one another. This is inland Southern California, where the past is ever present in the landscapes, stories, and bodies that occupy this space.

Chapter 1 provides a foundation for understanding the shifting social and spatial relationships of the region, from the establishment of the fledgling Riverside colony to its emergence as the center of a burgeoning Citrus Belt region. Culminating in President Theodore Roosevelt's 1903 visit and his symbolic commemoration of the first navel orange tree, the chapter examines the ways white migrants promoting the citrus industry laid new meaning on this multiracial colony. Regional heritage was combined with city planning and immigration policy to position white agriculturalists as singular "pioneers," Indigenous and Mexican residents as outsiders, and Chinese immigrants as illegal residents. Underscoring the divergent ways mobility shapes processes of social differentiation, I examine the emergence of what I call an "Anglo Fantasy Past" in Southern California—a selective tradition asserting that white migration catalyzed regional development through commercial agriculture.<sup>48</sup> In this analysis, I investigate Roosevelt's visit and settler colonial mythology alongside the erasure of Indigenous and Mexican dispossession and the regional effects of the Geary Act (1892), which in practice criminalized Chinese residents' pursuit of farming—the economic and symbolic backbone of the region. From a relational perspective, practices and representations of mobility were a key battleground for determining social constructions of race and economic participation as the citrus economy took hold, thus laying the foundation for contests over exclusion and inclusion in the decades to come.

As the nineteenth century closed, multiple federal and state policies further restricted Asian immigration and land use. Targeting Japanese immigrants, these policy changes manifested in hardening regional racial hierarchies concerned with managing the local travel and residential patterns of all Asian residents. Focusing on these conflicts, Chapter 2 considers the ways in which Japanese mobility was restricted as white residents grappled with the tension between their need for nonwhite agricultural labor and their desire

for a white society complete with strict racial lines. Where Japanese residents, alongside other nonwhite workers, found their residential mobility limited to a few segregated sections of the town and its environs, bicycling became an important platform through which they claimed cultural citizenship. Where the bicycle was a national symbol of modernity and a popular regional sport, analysis of Japanese cyclists reveals how workers leveraged mobility to advance their social and economic positions across an expansive territory where advancement depended on effective movement. However, while Japanese men's widening regional mobility upon bicycles disrupted the social boundaries of public space and increased their work opportunities, the mainstream press claimed bicycling as a white sport and police officers targeted Japanese riders. Regional efforts to immobilize Japanese residents by enforcing rampant residential segregation and criminalizing bicycling were two sides of the same coin, each ensuring that mobile workers stayed in their proper place. Examining where these lines were successfully crossed, this chapter illustrates the ways one middle class Japanese American family, faced with the mortal consequences of restricted living, secured housing in a segregated neighborhood by embracing assimilation and policing potential residential incursions by other nonwhites, including working class Japanese, Mexican, and African American residents. This chapter suggests that policies targeting mobile Asian residents, whether they sought to move through the streets or to a new neighborhood, revolved around a perception of whiteness as fixed and denied communities of color the opportunity to move by conditions of their own choosing.

Where Chapter 2 is concerned with the question of how migrant groups were immobilized, Chapter 3 focuses on the conditions by which migrant groups were hyper-mobilized. It focuses on the ties between regional forms of racialization shaped by the citrus economy of inland Southern California and national debates over Mexican immigration policy. The efforts of regional agriculturalists to maintain an unhindered flow of immigrant labor produced sharp contradictions in their claims about ethnic Mexicans, including both the proposition that they were ideal permanent settlers with a commitment to home and that they were inherently "birds of passage" who naturally returned to Mexico at the end of the harvest without seeking permanent settlement in the United States. In each case, narratives of racial immobility and mobility provided a flexible "racial script" that eased the tension between oscillating local labor needs and federal concerns with immigrant settlement.<sup>49</sup> I focus specifically on the regional impact of World

War I citrus housing campaigns and a series of congressional hearings over Mexican immigration, known as the Box Bill (1926–1930). In the first hearing, ranchers argued Mexican immigrants were rooted familial workers in contrast to Japanese bachelors and impoverished white itinerant workers, whom they positioned as habitually mobile and undependable in times of labor shortage. Conversely, in the second hearing, agricultural elites claimed Mexican workers had a racial propensity towards mobility that ensured their voluntary return to Mexico. As ranchers called for Mexican immigration, they denigrated Puerto Rican and Filipino migrants. Exacerbating American racial anxieties towards Puerto Rico and the Philippines, territories that granted residents the right to free travel within the continental United States, Box Bill opponents successfully argued that circular migrants from Mexico posed much less of a threat to the racial integrity of the nation than “negro” colonial subjects. Examining the construction of a global racial hierarchy organized by each groups’ ability to move or stay in place, this chapter uncovers how Box Bill opponents used regional constructions of Mexican people to place immigrant workers in a favorable position vis-à-vis other racialized workers that ensured Mexican immigrants’ further vulnerability in the fields.

Chapter 4 follows the racial construction of Mexican “birds of passage” to its reverberating consequences in the Depression years. Agricultural production in the Citrus Belt required a choreographed movement through rotating harvest sites that made automobiles a necessity in Mexican households, thereby contributing to the appearance of cars in their songs, poetry, and photography. However, as car ownership became common across the nation in the late 1920s, Mexicans were actively erased from American ideologies of driving. For instance, social science reports denigrated Mexican drivers, and automotive showrooms routinely denied space to nonwhite consumers. This chapter examines the role of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans in early automotive practices, from when they outpaced Anglo Americans as motorists in the 1920s to the perception of driving as a white, middle class pastime that rendered Mexicans behind the wheel as suspicious by the 1930s. Specifically, this chapter employs cultural studies and social history to examine the increased policing of Latina/o drivers, particularly Mexicans, in the Depression era—emergent in the real-crime radio detective program “Calling All Cars,” popular novels, and juvenile arrest records in metropolitan Los Angeles. The backdrop of migration from the Midwest to metropolitan Los Angeles is telling here. Where Latina/o youth’s efforts to carve a space for themselves in the modern automotive culture were met by

racial profiling, progressive labor advocates successfully advanced publicity campaigns that recast white migrants as western pioneers and jalopies as modern-day covered wagons that legitimized claims to settlement aid. In both cases, depictions of automobiles, driving, and the road had expressly racial dimensions that fostered white mobility while constraining the mobility of Mexicans.

World War II and the postwar boom led to profound regional transformations with significant reverberations for spatial and racial relationships. Chapter 5 examines the transition of the Citrus Belt into the Inland Empire, an emerging regional identity that signaled the decline of the flagship citrus industry and investment in multiracial suburban development between 1945 and 1970. Focusing on Pomona, an important geographic crossroad bridging Los Angeles and the Inland Empire, this chapter examines an exemplary majority-minority community that broke from the patterns of racial segregation chronic to Los Angeles and its inner-ring suburbs. African American and Latina/o suburbanization proliferated here as Angelenos looked east for affordable housing and new residential developments enveloped this former citrus town. Looking to the Pomona Valley's emergence as a gateway for inland living, this chapter unpacks the means by which communities of color attempted to achieve social mobility through residential mobility, as well as the reigning ambivalence suburbanization would hold for African American and Latina/o communities. Moreover, it takes seriously the mobility and immobility of those who entered suburban communities by force. Specifically, the growth of the Inland Empire cannot be separated from the rise of carceral development. Stucco walls and steel bars rose with one another on former rural lands. The chapter turns on a paradox: suburban development at L.A.'s far edges helped support the residential mobility of African Americans and Latinas/os while prison expansion made the region synonymous with the forced immobility of the region's racialized surplus workforce. Together, these cases examine suburbanization as a process with profound impact on the most and the least mobile populations of color in metropolitan Los Angeles.

The concluding chapter returns to Route 66 heritage as a racial project shaping the cultural and physical contours of regional movement. As inland Southern California experienced white population decline in the 1990s, city officials and boosters adopted a nascent nostalgia for agricultural heritage along the popular highway with very different resonance for white and non-white residents. Redevelopment campaigns drew upon Route 66 iconography in an institutional celebration of Depression-era and postwar white migration

that firmly erased the multiracial past and present of the region. Specifically, this chapter focuses on the spatial and cultural effects of development around the Foothill Boulevard/Route 66 corridor and a regional lifestyle center called Victoria Gardens, an open-air mall designed to evoke the community's evolution from a rural citrus town to a modern main street. Of central importance is the reemergence of Route 66 nostalgia as the region shifted from a minority to a majority Latina/o region. With the historical context provided in earlier chapters, the Conclusion demonstrates the continuing need for social justice strategies that place the right to mobility at the core of their mission.

Across the broad stretch of inland Southern California history, the value placed on the mobility of racialized populations fluctuated. In each instance, the discourses, practices, and technologies of mobility were produced alongside racially uneven economic development, white property accumulation, and power over the movements of a racialized workforce. The legacy of these practices persists as an organizing principle of race with broad consequences. These are part of a larger, global manifestation of practices delineating lines of citizenship through movement, which are evident in the passbook system of apartheid South Africa, Israeli checkpoints along the Palestinian West Bank, and the erection of special administrative regions requiring mainland Chinese nationals to bear permit when traveling or working in wealthier regions. As *Collisions at the Crossroads* demonstrates, though uniquely expressed in response to each locality and time, mobility and place making consistently serve as agents delineating citizenship through the production of difference.