

Police Violence, Activism, and the Changing Rural United States: A Digital History and Mapping Narrative

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Abstract : Chicana/o Activism in the Southern Plains Through Time and Space, a digital history project available at PlainsMovement.com, helps reveal an understudied portion of the Chicana/o Civil Rights Movement: the way it unfolded on the Southern Plains. The project centers around an approachable interactive map and timeline along with a curated collection of materials. Therefore, the project provides a digital museum experience that has not emerged within the region's museums. That is, this digital history project takes scholarly research to the wider public, making it is also a publicly facing history project. In this way, the project adds to both scholarly and socially significant conversations, showing that the region was home to a burgeoning wing of the Chicana/o Movement and that instances of police brutality largely spurred this wing of the social justice movement. Moreover, the curated collection of materials demonstrates that police brutality united the plains' Mexican population across political ideology, a largely overlooked aspect within the study of Mexican American civil rights movements. Such a finding can be of use today since contemporary Latina/o social justice organizations generally ignore policing issues even amid a rise in national awareness regarding police abuse. In making history accessible to Mexican origin and Latina/o communities, these same communities may in-turn use the knowledge gained from historical research towards the betterment of their social positions—the foundational goal of Chicana/o history and the related field of Chicana/o Studies. Ultimately, this digital history project is intended to draw visitors to further explore the Chicana/o Civil Rights Movement within and beyond the plains.

Keywords : Chicana/o Movement, digital history, police brutality, newspapers, protests, student activism

Conference Title : ICDH 2021 : International Conference on Digital Humanities

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : November 11-12, 2021