**Project Description**

A Brown Interdisciplinary Team UTRA will help develop a working prototype of an interactive platform that recovers and makes visible lost and obscured histories of racial violence in Texas from 1900 to 1930. This project is supported by the Center for Public Humanities at Brown University. *Mapping Violence* will enrich current understandings of histories of racial violence in the humanities, offer a model for using digital technology to present findings in the humanities to wider publics, and engage educators and wider publics with this under-explored historical topic. *Mapping Violence* addresses fundamental questions on the best practices for visually representing histories of racial violence to a broad audience. How does one visually represent a history of loss? How does one visualize a database of events of racial violence for a public audience? What are the best methods for giving faces and names to the dead and to those that lived in the wake of state sanctioned violence? This interdisciplinary project is at the intersection of ongoing conversations in the fields of American Studies, US History, Ethnic Studies, Digital Humanities, and the Public Humanities that explore how best to narrate histories of racial violence in the United States. Finally, at this notable time of national discussion around race relations with government criminal authorities, *Mapping Violence* will provide a model for informed public engagement with challenging topics.

This platform will include digital maps that mark the location of illegal killings of racial and ethnic minorities in Texas to help deepen public understandings of US histories of violence. Each event marked on the interactive site will allow site visitors to click on the event to read a brief historical narrative, to select digitized primary sources related to the event, and to provide suggestions for future research at public institutions (archives, museums, libraries) that hold more information for further research. Highlighted events will be narrated to include the aftermath of violent events to draw attention to the long effect these events had on individuals, families, communities and regions at large. The platform will also host narratives that will profile early civil rights pioneers that helped to bring change to a culture of violence in the early twentieth century. By charting episodes of anti-Mexican, anti-Black, and anti-Native violence in Texas, this map will reconfigure popular understandings of racial and gender violence in the early twentieth century. This project will allow for comparative and relational understandings of racial violence to bring about public awareness of this tragic history and to prevent future histories of violence from reoccurring. *Mapping Violence* will make archival material accessible to publics nationwide that are not able to visit the physical sites of the archives. This map will prove to be an invaluable resource for future researchers by making a database of racial violence available for public use and will inspire new research in this area of the humanities. To reach diverse audiences and bring the humanities to life for the American people, this project will create curated content to make this history accessible and engaging and create educational resources for educators. The interactive platform will have teaching modules for educators in K-12, as well as in higher education, who are required to teach Texas history in public schools.

**Project Resources**

*Mapping Violence* makes use of a unique database developed by the primary investigator and enhanced by graduate and undergraduate research assistants at Brown University. The database is the first to document racially motivated violence against African Americans, Mexican Americans, Mexicans and Native Americans. Historical institutions (state archives, university libraries, etc.) neglected to keep accurate records of racially motivated killings. While many
would assume that accounts of racial violence, both in historical documents and in community memory, are ephemeral and difficult to locate, research has found that state, local, and private archives have an abundance of sources that allow researchers to document these events. Sources that will be made available to the public include oral histories, court cases, photographs, letters of correspondence, police reports, newspaper articles, state senate investigation records, and federal investigations. For example, claims filed by widows of men who died at the hands of state violence through the General Claims Commission of 1923 of the United States and Mexico offer hundreds of pages of information about how women navigated court systems and the charges they made against the state. Until now, however, only legal scholars gave these digitized and easily accessible court cases limited attention.

In collaboration with the Brown University Center for Digital Scholarship, Mapping Violence will develop a data management plan for the unique database. Funding agencies are increasingly requiring data management plans as part of grant proposals. This collaboration will help strengthen future grant applications. Moreover, utilizing the Brown Digital Repository as a place to store and preserve digital content.

The 2014-2015 academic year proved to be a period of research and development for this project. The primary investigator and a graduate research assistant explored mapping platforms including Omeka's Neatline, ArcGIS' StoryMaps, CartoDB, and Google Maps. Basic prototypes were developed on many of these platforms, and a more advanced prototype was built using ArcGIS' StoryMaps platform. The Mapping Violence ArcGIS StoryMap allows visitors to explore the violence by clicking on any plot point to learn more. Visitors can also explore versions of the map where the data is color coded by the identity of the aggressor or the identity of the departed. In this exploratory stage of development only events of anti-Mexican violence from 1910-1920 were mapped. Exploring these platforms has allowed the project team to develop a better understanding of what we want the digital map to do, and confirm that there is no existing platform that does all this. In addition to researching mapping platforms, the team dedicated a significant part of this past year to building a robust database of the incidences of violence and drafting narrative entries for key events.

In the fall semester of 2015, with the generous support of a Karen T. Romer Team UTRA award a team continues developing narratives for highlighted events and will develop a prototype of a curated tour of the database. Students learned digital skills, archival research skills, and writing skills for narrating histories of violence. They added metadata to the database, developed curated content for the prototype, and developed strategies for visualizing violence through a curated tour.

The scale of Mapping Violence invites opportunities for a team of students to help create curated content for the platform. Students will learn important archival research skills. Students will also learn how to work with metadata and how to build a digital repository. Students will also think creatively to find visualization solutions for the project. More than being a large project with opportunities for students with a range of interests, this project needs a group cohort to help support students participating in the research. The content of racial violence requires students that show intellectual and emotional maturity. However, regardless of the student abilities, researching this topic and developing content in a group can help students process the difficult
content to move toward critical analysis. Applications for grants are currently pending to take a research group to Texas for one week to mine archives in state repositories. The majority of the research and student efforts will be completed on campus in a group setting. Students during some portions of the research will work independently, but I will secure a classroom for student collaboration. Research goals will be developed as a group and I will meet with the group several times a week throughout the summer. Students will also come together to for workshops to help develop their research skills.

Mentoring Strategies and philosophy of faculty
As an undergraduate at Brown University I learned research methods through the generosity of the Karen T. Romer Undergraduate Research Assistantship. Through the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) I then was introduced to the possibilities of a long career in the academy. The mentorship provided by the MMUF and the faculty at the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) enabled me to enter graduate school. In turn, I mentored underrepresented minorities in Yale College, at the University of Texas at Austin, and now at Brown University. For six years I served as the curricular co-coordinator and teacher at the Institute for the Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) summer seminar at Philips Academy, which helps prepare underrepresented minorities for graduate school. Now, as a professor I mentor Mellon fellows and a broader group of underrepresented minorities by creating research opportunities and demystifying the academy. I also mentor underrepresented PhD students who are navigating graduate programs at Brown.

My effort to bring academic research to the public shapes my teaching. Inspired by the 250th anniversary of Brown University, students in my seminar last fall explored the history of race at their own school. They mined university archives, wrote research essays, and collectively developed an online exhibit for the public. The final digital exhibit Remembering Race at Brown is an example of how committed mentoring allows students to develop academic skills while grappling with difficult content. Students felt inspired by the long legacy of student activism on campus and empowered to contribute to ongoing public dialogues regarding access and equality in higher education. Students in my courses develop a new respect for their own place on campus as young scholars. I look forward to working with more researchers on campus and helping them to develop their potential to conduct independent research in the future.