



**The River Has Never Divided Us: A Border
History of La Junta de los Rios (Jack and Doris
Smothers Series in Texas History, Life, and
Culture (Paperback))**

Jefferson Morgenthaler

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Winner, William P. Clements Prize, Best Non-Fiction Book on Southwestern America, 2004

Not quite the United States and not quite Mexico, La Junta de los Rios straddles the border between Texas and Chihuahua, occupying the basin formed by the conjunction of the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the Chihuahuan Desert, ranking in age and dignity with the Anasazi pueblos of New Mexico.

In the first comprehensive history of the region, Jefferson Morgenthaler traces the history of La Junta de los Rios from the formation of the Mexico-Texas border in the mid-19th century to the 1997 ambush shooting of teenage goatherd Esquiél Hernández by U.S. Marines performing drug interdiction in El Polvo, Texas. "Though it is scores of miles from a major highway, I found natives, soldiers, rebels, bandidos, heroes, scoundrels, drug lords, scalp hunters, medal winners, and mystics," writes Morgenthaler. "I found love, tragedy, struggle, and stories that have never been told." In telling the turbulent history of this remote valley oasis, he examines the consequences of a national border running through a community older than the invisible line that divides it.

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