

Eighth Edition

Occupied America

A History of Chicanos

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PREFACE

History can either oppress or liberate a people. Generalizations and stereotypes about the Mexican have been circulated in the United States for over 124 years. . . . Incomplete or biased analyses by historians have perpetuated factual errors and created myths. The Anglo-American public has believed and encouraged the historian's and social commentator's portrayal of Mexicans as "the enemy." The tragedy is that the myths have degraded the Mexican people—not only in the eyes of those who feel superior, but also in their own eyes.

—Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation* (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972), p. 1.

The first edition of *Occupied America* was published in 1972. I intended it to be a monograph that explained historical events leading up to the 1970 Chicano Moratorium and the murder of Rubén Salazar, a former *Los Angeles Times* reporter and news director for the Spanish language television station KMEX in Los Angeles. My intention was to publish one edition, and then move on to my area of specialization—the history of northern Mexico. I had a contract to publish my dissertation on nineteenth-century Sonora, Mexico, and a verbal commitment to publish another book on “Los Hombres del Norte,” the Sonoran leaders of the Mexican Revolution—Álvaro Obregón, Plutarco Elías Calles, and Adolfo de la Huerta.

That was my intention. However, as Albert Einstein once said, “Information is not knowledge. The only source of knowledge is experience.” My experiences at San Fernando Valley State College, now known as California State University Northridge, and the growth of Chicana/o Studies changed my trajectory and my life. The experiences were unique, and teaching at a teacher's college shaped my priorities, which were in teaching, not research.

I came out of a public school teaching background. I was influenced by theorists such as John Dewey who cautioned that education was about teaching the child and not the subject. The question was therefore how to improve the teaching of Chicano history. For many teachers a textbook is a partner with whom they often do not agree but which they use as a tool to fill in the spaces and cover the basics of the course. The truth be told, new fields of study are products of scholarly articles, monographs, and teaching. The textbook summarizes them. So in my case the glove fit, and the evolution of *Occupied America* was a natural next step.

I had taught hybrid survey courses on the Chicano as early as 1966. Consequent to publishing *Occupied America* I published three K–12 books:¹ *The Story of the Mexican Americans* and *Cultures in Conflict* for elementary grades; *The Mexican American Chronicle* was a textbook for high school and community college students. In the introduction to the first edition of *Occupied America* (1972) I laid out the thesis of the internal colony. To my surprise it was successful—to the point that many people believe that I should have left it at that, and I probably would have if it were not for my teaching. The truth be told, to this day I have remained a frustrated eighth grade teacher and I take the questions raised by students seriously.

After a decade of teaching from the first edition of *Occupied America*, I decided to change it to a textbook. By this time the book had acquired a cachet so it seemed

dumb to change horses in midstream and begin from scratch. Besides, the title “Occupied America” said it all; I liked it. Students have to understand the subject in order to be able to identify patterns and make comparisons. So the main objective of the second edition of *Occupied America* was to systematize the learning of the essentials of Chicano history. This was no small task. One of the difficulties is that when a scholar writes Chicano history, she or he must constantly correct the errors of Euro-American historians, and at the same time form the field’s identity.

The textbook helps the student organize and analyze. The objective is to understand the historical processes. It keeps them on track, constantly asking, What is behind the story? Historical vignettes are offered to encourage the readers to question what happened. Deduction is a very important part of historical analysis; it should encourage inductive thinking, which is where the instructor comes in.²

Over the past 40 years, I have repeatedly corrected the previous editions. Each subsequent edition raised new questions and added new sources. My tenure at a teaching institution, however, had its drawbacks: Aside from growing the Chicano Studies Department, I taught 12 units a semester, was active in community and labor struggles, wrote columns for major newspapers, did research and published other books and revised the various editions of *Occupied America*. This all had to fit into my available time. I am not complaining because this pried me out of the library.

This edition of *Occupied America* takes into account new trends in education. In California education is undergoing a crisis. Tuition has mushroomed to the point that many students cannot afford it. The community colleges are jammed, and it is projected that at least one-third of their offerings will be online in the near future. Corporate America has refused to pay the social cost of production, shifting the entire burden to the middle class and the poor. In January 2012, “Gov. Jerry Brown . . . announced his plan last week to pressure state colleges and universities to expand their online offerings and reduce costs.”³ Online classes save the cost of classroom construction and maintenance.

This brings me to the question that many of you will ask and certainly one that I have asked. Why another edition? I wanted the opportunity to develop the student/teacher manual, which I believe is necessary.

Another reason is that since the last edition, a lot has happened. The immigration question came to a head in 2006 and 2010, and so did the reaction from racist forces who threw reason to the wind. Incredibly, they want to control the border by deporting 12 million undocumented workers and their families, an act that if taken to its logical conclusion would bankrupt the country. They don’t consider the economic and human costs of rounding up 12 million people. They don’t ask who would replace them in lower-paying jobs. How many teachers and merchants would be displaced if we lost 12 million people? It is the same sort of idiocy that got us to invade Afghanistan and Iraq while lowering taxes on the rich, running the country on a credit card and plunging the country into a depression.

The reelection of President Barack Obama in 2012 was a milestone for Latinos. Without over 70 percent of Latinos voting for Obama, it is doubtful that he would have been reelected. Consequent to the election, more attention is being paid to Latinos and immigration than ever before. Many wonder in contrast to Arizona punished the Republican Party. Since California voters in 1994 passed the Republican-sponsored draconian Proposition 187, Republicans have not been able to elect a statewide candidate. The Latino electorate there is a firewall that checks the manufactured crisis.

This is the eighth edition of *Occupied America*; throughout its history, I have attempted to make each edition less imperfect than the last. As mentioned, this edition was in part prompted by Arizona, but it was also a result of the entire decade: Gore v. Bush (2000), the Middle Eastern Wars, the great recession beginning in 2008, the irrational and unrelenting racist nativism beginning in the early 1990s, the crisis in education, and the shutdown of higher education as a stairway to the middle-class heaven. On a positive note the decade produced the Dream Act movement that built on the work of the Chicana/o generation in support of the foreign born.

This edition is more Internet course friendly. There are links to maps, and a skills section. The book has numerous hyperlinks to sources on the Internet. Every link was tested, but as we know, links often become obsolete. We encourage the readers to use their browsers and check for new web addresses in the event that any we give are not functional. The Internet is not static, and many sites are renamed or dropped frequently.

New to This Edition

- The text covers history from pre-Columbian civilization to the 2012 presidential election.
- New historical material, texts, and scholarship have been taken into account.
- Individual women have been given a bigger share of the narrative alongside organizational development.
- The Preface and the Epilogue have been completely revised.
- Chapters 15 and 16 have been rewritten and revised and emphasis is placed on the role of population growth in forming priorities.
- Special note is made of the heavy immigration of groups other than those of Mexican origin, beginning in the 1980s.
- The Student/Teacher Manual—or, as I call it, the “Mini-book”—is over 100 pages and is designed to accompany *Occupied America*. It is in chapter format with an introduction, hyperlinks, and discussion questions. The manual makes *Occupied America* more online friendly for teachers and students. It is available free of charge at <http://forchicanachicanostudies.wikispaces.com/>—click on the link “Occupied America Manual” and on the link for Center for the Study of the Peoples of the Americas <http://www.csun.edu/cespa/Acuna%20Manual%20Binder.pdf> Chapter summaries and overviews have been expanded or added where space allowed.

This text is available in a variety of formats—digital and print. To learn more about pricing options, and customization, visit www.pearsonhighered.com.

Acknowledgments

I thank Chicana/o Studies at California State University, Northridge. It has allowed me to teach part time into my eightieth birthday, giving me contact with 130 students per semester, which has extended my life. It gives me a sense of community and a feeling for what is continuously changing. Aside from the students in my classes I am always thankful to the Movimiento Estudiantil de Aztlán (MEChA) that has kept the flame of activism and caring

alive. Because of my students, teaching is not just a vocation; it is a way of life. I would like to thank the teachers, students, and supporters of the Tucson Unified School District for showing us that history is important and worth fighting for. Los Angeles is my hometown: I was born here, and I only left it for the 19 months of my tour in the army. I love LA, smog and all.

Thanks to the founding students of Chicana/o Studies, they founded CHS; it was not the faculty nor I and certainly not the CSUN administration. My good friend José Luis Vargas, director of the Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP), reminds me, EOP was there first and students created and sustained EOP and Chicana/o studies. Thanks are due to Mary Pardo, Jorge García, Gabriel Gutiérrez, and David Rodríguez, who find time to discuss history. I'd like to thank Benjamin Torres; he has been a good friend and supporter throughout the years. I am grateful to the members of the For Chicana/Chicano Studies Foundation and for their support of undocumented students. To the Dreamers who demand their rights as human beings: hopefully their appreciation of history will expand. I would like to thank the Pearson editor, Ashley Dodge. I also appreciate the contribution of the reviewers: James Barrera, South Texas College; Maria Eva Flores, Our Lady of the Lake University; Laura Larque, Santa Rosa Junior College; Manuel F. Medrano, University of Texas at Brownsville; and Mary Ashley Riley Sousa, West Valley College.

Not least, thanks to my sons, Frank and Walter, and my granddaughters and grandsons. My daughter Angela Acuña who I hope never loses her love of animals and maintains her principles; I admire her greatly and love her more. My life would not be the same without her. I just underwent the first of two eye operations and say that my wife, Lupita Compeán, literally es mis ojos. I could not have accomplished a tenth of what I have without her. My writing in newspapers, four of my books, six editions of *Occupied America*, and my suit against the University of California have all occurred on her watch. In addition, we co-edited a three-volume anthology with some 425 documents, and have accomplished much more. I owe her an intellectual and moral debt. I always feel safe because I know she has my back.

*Rodolfo F. Acuña, Professor Emeritus of Chicana/o Studies
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Notes

1. *The Story of the Mexican Americans: The Men and the Land* (New York: American Book Company, 1969). *Cultures in Conflict: Problems of the Mexican Americans* (New York : Charter School Books, 1970). *A Mexican American Chronicle* (New York: American Book Company, 1971).
2. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1970). Edwin Fenton, *Teaching the New Social Studies in Secondary Schools: An Inductive Approach* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).
3. David Siders, "Jerry Brown Carries the Day on Online Classes at UC, CSU," *Sacramento Bee* (Jan. 17, 2013).