CHAPTER 2

Misrepresentation in Educational Media (1954–1999)

Abstract In this chapter, eight textbooks are analyzed from the years 1954 through 1999. From dissecting quotes, images, and maps within the textbooks, the textbook rhetoric is highly steeped in themes of White glory, White superiority, and White supremacy. There is excess justification on *why* White colonizers had to take over Native land, and very little mention on the plights of Mexican or Mexican American experiences in the 1800s Mexican-American War. Textbooks of this time were highly inaccurate and avoided the hard truths. Beginning in the 1980s, though, some of the analyzed textbooks started to improve by providing more accurate representations of the plights experienced by Native Americans, but the textbooks remain problem-ridden.

Keywords Colonization • White supremacy • Land • Mexican-American war • Misrepresentation • Silence • Inaccurate • Truth

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes readers through numerous history textbooks published in the second half of the twentieth century for use in United States public school classrooms. Touching on readings from each decade from the 1950s through the 1990s, the chapter highlights what has and has not changed regarding representation over time. In keeping with the book's

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primary themes, I focus on representations of Native American, Mexican, and Mexican American people. I also mention additional themes that illustrate how non-White stories are included or excluded when it is useful to explain shifts in textbook approaches over time.

THE 1950S: AMERICANIZATION AND GLORIFICATION

My data textbook sample begins in 1954. *Our Nation's Story* is a book by and for White people with a White supremacist agenda. It reflects the overwhelming socio-political dynamics of its time. At the opening section of each chapter the author makes sweeping assumptions about who their readers are—generally White middle-class high school students—through the use of the royal "We." These textual assumptions happen more than twenty times throughout the book, enough to make it a foundational flaw rather than an outlier. Though the intention may have been to create a sense of intimacy or connection with readers, it does not age well.

When read through the lens of cultural diversity, such encoded social assumptions seem bizarre. For example, several passages are highly assumptive: "At football games you have often watched the work of the officials. You know they are there to enforce certain rules…" (447); "You have probably followed political campaigns and listened to election returns. You are looking forward to the time when your vote will be among those counted" (448); "When you were a small child your home and neighborhood were all you knew of the world" (552). But what of the students who don't like football or don't like attending sporting events, or students from disenfranchised communities who view elections skeptically, or those who, for whatever reason, have had to grow up before their time? The homogeneous assumptions about reader character set the tone for this textbook. Such assumptions are further compounded by the way that information about groups of people is conveyed throughout the chapters.

Native American representation in the 1950s: Native Americans are repeatedly made invisible or subservient in *Our Nation's Story*. In a map early in the book, it shows what is now the United States as a tabula rasa, or empty slate, paired with the quotation, "This is the land on which Americans have found work to do, built their homes, and established a free nation" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 14–15). The map leads into passages that describe the Doctrine of Discovery, the notion that land unoccupied by Christians was land available for the taking and non-Christian inhabitants were colonizable. This concept is reinforced by section headings and word choices found throughout this book that leans on terms like "found" and "discovered" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 35).

In another example of invisibility, the colonization of California is recounted without mentioning Native American people at all. In a section on the Gold Rush of 1849, readers are simply informed that: "By the end of the year, the population of California was approaching 100,000" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 301–2), as if all 100,000 people were new arrivals in *terra nullius*. In a section heading labeled "Conflict with the Indians," White violence toward Native American people is subsumed under the term "conflict," suggesting mutual aggression (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 400–1), and this trend continues through nearly all the textbooks coded in this project. I went on to see the term "conflict" as the default term when talking about colonization through westward expansion. Conflict is substituted consistently instead of alternate descriptions that I, as a social scientist, might use to describe an intergroup dynamic more accurately, like "genocide toward" or "attempted annihilation of." Conflict means that both parties likely have responsibility for conflictual behavior, which ascribes less responsibility to aggressors.

The colonization of the Great Plains area saw intense violence and aggression towards Native Americans, yet the authors use avoidance language to describe it: "Before the plains could be settled, two formidable occupants had to be removed, the Indians and the buffaloes" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 400–1). First, comparing Indians and buffaloes plays into tropes about Indian savageness, rendering them like animals as opposed to humans. Second, this text places Native Americans as an obstacle that must be overcome. Because of the evolution in weaponry, particularly firearms, the authors reassure readers that "the white man could face his Indian opponents with confidence" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 400–1). The White supremacist convictions inserted into a text used in high school classrooms are revealing in taking the political pulse of the period.

As the story of the Great Plains concludes in the text, the authors use dehumanizing language—"They fought all the more savagely" (403)—but also make attempts to show that White violence toward Native American people was extreme. "The use of frightful methods of warfare was not limited to one side. The policy of the army in dealing with the Indian problem was based on the idea that the only good Indian was a dead one" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 403). The textbook describes how White settlers killed the bison at an alarming rate, until near extinction. Bison were the main food and clothing source for local tribes, and their mass killing condemned the latter to death or a dramatic change of lifestyle. In this telling, however, the same White people who were killing the Native Americans' way of life were also their saviors: "The desperate plight of the Indians appealed to the humanitarian instincts of people in the East" (403). Though parts of the Plains text appear sympathetic toward Native American people at times, the authors see no irony in the notion of White politicians wanting to solve a problem their fellow colonizers created in the first place. Nor is the irony evident in an image of a Native American guide pointing the way for White colonizers wearing Indian-inspired clothing, and illustrations that show both the reliance colonizers had on Indigenous knowledge for directions and basic survival, but also the power dynamic in which Native people had to serve colonizers in order to survive.

The blinders remain firmly in place throughout the discussion of reservations. The Dawes Act, which allowed the privatization and sale of traditional Native American lands, is presented as a salvation for poor people; detractors became a burden on the state. This is alluded to in the following passage: "Those who did not take advantage of the provisions of the Dawes Act remained the wards of the nation and continued tribal life on reservations. Efforts were also made to improve the lot of Indians by education … compulsory education" (404). Here, "compulsory education" is a less incriminating term than forced boarding schools, which is what the authors are actually describing.

Similarly, the erroneous term "ward" is used to describe those in need of government care once they had been forced off their lands and made indigent through intentional state policy. This textbook constitutes a strong example of Native American misrepresentation. In fact, students who read this book in their US history class most likely came away with a very different version of what actually happened to Native Americans.

Depictions of Mexico and im/migrant people in *Our Nation's Story*: Representation in *Our Nation's Story* does not improve when analyzed for depictions of Mexico or Mexican Americans. In a section about Mexico and the battles for the Alamo and Texas, the language of domination stands out.

> Mexico revolted from Spain and Texas became a Mexican province. Naturally a new arrangement was required … by 1830 the increasing stream of

> American immigrants caused some of the Mexican leaders to feel that the territory [Texas] might be seized forcibly by the US … superior Mexican forces pushed into the fortress [Alamo], killing all of its defenders. The ruthlessness of the Mexicans and the courage of the defenders aroused a spirited resistance among all the Texans. (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 284)

This passage is transparent in its agenda to lift White people at the expense of others. "Naturally" Texas could not stay part of Mexico, which was full of "ruthless" people rather than courageous ones.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is described with similarly problematic language. The authors write, "The war with Mexico had added a princely domain of 529,355 square miles of territory to the United States" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 292). The word "princely" adds an especially gloating feeling to what is already an intense colonial situation. The authors reinforce this, speaking about the war with Mexico as "a training school for a corps of junior officers who were soon to achieve fame" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 292). Though many wars are likely training grounds for military personnel to move through the ranks, articulating it in this way lends an air of utilitarian justification to the losses faced by Mexico—of both land and people killed—for the sake of bringing fame and promotion to US military figures.

An additional coding concept I followed throughout my textbook analysis was any discourse on immigration around 1890. This period was a turning point for division between White immigrants from Europe and newer immigrants from Latin America and Asia. The textbook authors seek to justify immigration restrictions and racist quotas by invoking cultural differences between original colonizers and those more recently arriving. Referring to newer immigration as "waves of people," the authors claim that these people "had in their homeland little opportunity to become familiar with democratic procedures and ideals. As members of persecuted minorities or of nations poor in natural resources they were accustomed to low standards of living" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 519–20). This highly generalizing and racist assessment seeks to justify closing the borders and imposing restrictions because people were not versed enough in democracy to be let in. By emphasizing that they were already accustomed to poverty, the text seems to be attempting to legitimize the treatment of abandoned migrants.

Treatment of White supremacy: Some political content very clearly crosses an ethical line. I routinely coded each textbook for mention of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) as an additional indicator of how racial violence is discussed. *Our Nation's Story* almost reads like KKK fan mail: "Denied the right to engage actively in politics, some of the former leaders of the South organized a number of secret societies … the Klansmen, wearing awe-inspiring regalia, would parade the streets or visit the home of a person offensive to them" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 332–3). Readers might have turned this page with the impression that KKK members were impressive but disenfranchised people who were compelled to behave as they did due to discrimination they faced.

In an attempt to be charitable to the authors, I can say that, while in later textbooks that I sampled the authors attempted to hide their political agendas even while reinforcing the same tropes of White supremacy, *Our Nation's Story* is at least honest about its intentions. For example, in their introductory remarks the authors write, "[W]e love our country and are proud of it and we want to increase your love of it and pride in it … The growth of our country is something we want you to know about—how the vision of courageous pioneers led to the settlement of this vast land" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 5). It is a patriotic textbook with the mission to increase patriotism. Deeply rooted in Rudyard Kipling's notion of the "White Man's Burden," the authors share a perspective that Kipling writes about (1899), that "our country has been obliged to accept the role of leader of the free nations" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 742). What began as new leadership during the post-World War II era of the 1940s and 1950s grew into a policy of American exceptionalism that continues to govern US relations both domestic and international.

1961: Honoring Christopher Columbus

In 1961, *Living in the United States* was published by the Macmillan Company.[1] Its dark-green hardcover showcases multiple images that belie its political orientation. First, the green and white globe centers the United States, which is logical since that is the factual geographic focus of the book. Next, a column of images on the left-hand side show a clear depiction of whose version of history will be explained within its pages. The top image shows a European explorer's ship en route to new land. In the next square, Christopher Columbus, in his shiny silver armor with his ship and the Spanish flag waving behind him, lords over obsequious Native Americans who recognize his suggested supremacy. The image of a Brown figure kneeling down in subservience to a hallowed Columbus is repeated within the text (King et al. 1961: 36), as are other images that similarly convey White conquest. Subsequent cover squares show the pioneer wagon trains used in westward colonization, and the creation of the Panama Canal, a major colonial benchmark for US commerce. All these images highlight White supremacy over subjugated peoples coupled with the success of colonization.

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[1] The target age-group for this book was not verifiable, but middle to high school is plausible based on the level of writing and kinds of activities recommended in the teacher's guide portion of the book.

Multiple passages in this textbook hail colonization as an unparalleled good: "Today we honor Columbus as the greatest discoverer of all time. He did what others of his time dared not do. He sailed westward across unknown waters and found a new land. His courage opened a new world" (King et al. 1961: 47). In fact, Polynesian explorers were also sailing the oceans, but Columbus's exceptionalism is a useful foundation for American exceptionalism. Regardless, numerous parts of the text reinforce stereotypes and inaccuracies. The 1492 narrative of Columbus's arrival in the "West Indies" reads simply: "They found only brown natives in crude huts. Columbus called these people Indians" (King et al. 1961: 46).

Living in the United States contains numerous passages glorifying Whiteness at the expense of Native Americans. For example, Native Americans are made to sound animal-like themselves, lacking social cohesion: "Some Indians lived in simple ways. They depended on the animals and plants they found as they wandered about" (King et al. 1961: 3). Similarly, the textbook *Our Nation's Story*, *Living in the United States* prefers euphemism to fact when discussing White violence toward Native Americans. The problems faced by early colonizers were also framed as the fault of Native Americans: "Trouble with the Indians kept the settlement small at first" (King et al. 1961: 286). Though later on the same page the authors acknowledge that Native Americans also facilitated colonial survival—"The Indians are bringing wild geese to the settlers" (1961: 286)—the overarching message is that White people prevailed despite Native American violence. Using the terms trouble or conflict, rather than a more accurate description of the attempted extermination of Native American people, deflects responsibility from White people.

In terms of how colonizers related to the original inhabitants of what is now the United States, the authors of this book are unequivocal in their bias: “The Pilgrims were fair with the Indians. White men and red men lived at peace with one another for many years” (King et al. 1961: 77). One of the regular keywords I coded each textbook for was “Thanksgiving,” which is described in this book with laudatory praise for the freedom it represents to the authors. “Thanksgiving Day is one of our best-loved holidays. Each year, on the fourth Thursday in November, Americans thank God because we live in a free country” (King et al. 1961: 77). In fact, the concept of freedom that Thanksgiving represents is a uniquely White Protestant celebration. Though many of us may now gather around food-laden tables with family regardless of our ancestry, *Living in the United States* reminds readers of the assumptions that are packaged with the holiday (King et al. 1961: 77).

Colonization in *Living in the United States*: The authors in *Living in the United States* manages to make almost no mention whatsoever of immigrants beyond this:

> The ancestors of the people who live in the Americas came from many lands, many countries, and many races. All of these people brought something with them. Many brought their ways of preparing foods, their songs and dances, their love of art. Some brought love of freedom. Others brought skill in farming or in manufacturing. Each has helped to make the countries of the New World what they are today. But the people of the New World are alike in one important way. They are all Americans. (King et al. 1961: 29)

This textbook is remarkable in its use of the third person passive voice to relinquish any responsibility for colonization. In a section titled “Far-away lands added,” the authors explain that:

> Our country added lands outside our borders until we had land in every hemisphere. Alaska was added far to the north. Then the Philippines, near the coast of Asia, Hawaii, and other islands on the Pacific were added. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, in the Atlantic, became part of our country.” (King et al. 1961: 421)

By becoming part of “our country,” these sovereign countries need not worry over the loss of their autonomy because now they have access to the US. Depicted as a booming society in the aftermath of World War II with railroads, steamboats, cars, and other industrial wonders that make it all worthwhile (King et al. 1961: 286–7), who wouldn't want to be part of it?

Living in the United States contains minimal mention of Mexico or Mexican-descendent people. In the passage regarding the aftermath of the US war with Mexico, the authors say, "Mexico lost not only Texas but also much land to the west of Texas. On the map … find the land given up by Mexico. After this war the United States stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific" (King et al. 1961: 366). Other than being briefly acknowledged as "giving up" the land that now is Texas, Mexico and its citizens are hardly acknowledged at all in this textbook.

Slavery, one of the wider subject indicators of racial politics throughout this study, appears quite problematically in this textbook. California is described as joining the Union in 1850 with a constitution prohibiting slavery (369), but there is no mention of White enslavement of Native Americans during colonization, which in fact was a widespread practice in the second half of the nineteenth century in California. While this particular silence is shared even across contemporary textbooks showing a great deal more inclusivity than this one, *Living in the United States* takes the approach of downplaying the need for and the reality of human enslavement. In nearly the only place it is even mentioned in the book, slavery is described as follows:

> You recall that in 1619 Dutch merchants brought the first Negro slaves to Jamestown. The Virginia planters welcomed them because there were few workers to hire. Soon more Negroes were brought. At one time slaves were used in every English colony in America.
>
> But Northerners did not really need slaves. Their small farms could be worked by the farmers and their sons. It was expensive to clothe slaves in the cold climate and to feed them on small farms. So Northern farmers began to sell their slaves or to set them free. Many Southerners also found that owning slaves did not pay. Tobacco plantations did not need many slaves. So some Southerners sold the slaves they owned or gave them their freedom. (King et al. 1961: 151)

The way enslavement is framed in this passage as an economic "need" for the South is particularly shocking. The North did not "need" slaves economically, so they were able to do away with them. At the same time, the South's complete dependence on slavery for wealth accumulation is dramatically downplayed. This understatement of what slavery actually was continues in the final passages when slavery is eventually mentioned regarding President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Southerners didn't respond to the requirement of ending the institution of slavery because they didn't consider Lincoln their president and "the slaves continued to help their masters" (196). The framing of enslaved people as appreciative helpers of beneficent masters perpetuates justifications of a practice that violated a litany of human rights.

I reviewed the teacher's annotated edition of *Living in the United States*, which, like most teacher's editions, contains suggested exercises and questions for classroom discussion that are meant to help teachers quickly translate the textbook content into daily lesson plans. In this case, many of the questions and activities in the book demonstrated ways to translate a White supremacist agenda into a curriculum for young people. By reinforcing stereotypes of BIPOC groups, deflecting White responsibility for human rights abuses of BIPOC people, and reframing colonization as a public service deemed right by God, *Living in the United States* perpetuates misrepresentation and silences across multiple identity groups. It is unclear when this book was rotated out of circulation for classroom use.

1966: Remaking *Our Nation's Story* in *United States History for High Schools*

The 1966 *United States History for High Schools* textbook has a hard blue cover featuring an eagle and the United States flag. It looks unassuming, yet contains numerous inaccurate representations of Native Americans and disparaging language toward them and im/migrant people. The book is authored by two of the same three writers who created the 1954 *Our Nation's Story* discussed earlier, and it is hardly surprising that many of the same tropes are evident in this more recent textbook. However, the intervening twelve years between the two textbooks were a highly political twelve years for racial politics. There are some small changes evident in how certain issues are presented in the newer *United States History for High Schools*, although the majority of its coverage remains in line with the older *Our Nation's Story*. I highlight here selected examples to show both the standard tropes as well as representation unique to *United States History for High Schools.*

"The Indian Problem" is a heading in the first pages of the book (6), casting Indigenous peoples as a problem White people can solve through violence. Over dozens of pages following this headline, Native Americans are cheated when they come to trade furs with Indian agents (45), and appropriated and stereotyped through the costumes worn by the colonists of the Boston Tea Party (72) and the mountain men who would wear clothing obtained by trading with Native Americans (75). Thanksgiving is described as an American tradition that began in 1621, without agency or even real identity ascribed to Native Americans in this story (77)—a common presentation of Thanksgiving across most of the textbooks I reviewed.

There are also mixed messages in the discussion of the frontiersmen Paxton Boys, who are described as both retaliating "against Indian attacks" and murdering "twenty peaceful Indians" (56). The language here perpetuates the false conception that Native Americans were constantly violent against settler-colonists, but also points out non-instigated White violence. The images and descriptions of White glory over Native Americans are rampant, from the Battle of Fallen Timbers (136), the Battle of the Thames (159), the Tippecanoe River Battle in 1811 (283), to White superiority in technology, with the image of a puzzled Native American listening to a telegraph wire (356).

Apparently, these authors consider "The Indian Problem" to be so considerable that this heading is used a second time in the book to differentiate between "good" and "bad" Indians. Doing so is an ingrained trope in US history and has been the inspiration for many Indigenous writers for potent satire. For example, Deborah Miranda (Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen) in her memoir, *Bad Indians* (2012), examines the way these binary categories of good and bad are overlayed on assimilatory processes of cultural renunciation.

Referring to some Native American groups, the authors of *United States History for High Schools* write, "They learned the ways of the settlers and adapted themselves to their culture. This was not true of the Plains Indians" (335). In this description, assimilation makes some Native Americans acceptable to mainstream White settler-colonial society, but because they refused assimilation, Plains Indians were seen as deviant. As in other books, there is some recognition that Indians were cheated (45) and that some of their violence was in self-defense or in defense of their traditional lands. In a section titled "Government Aid to the Indians," the authors reference the 1881 book, *A Century of Dishonor*, which argues that "a more humane Indian policy" is needed (338), and is described as a way to acknowledge wrongful treatment of Native Americans. Yet it is done under the banner of government assistance to Native Americans and is meant to inspire appreciation for the resources the US government has invested in Native communities.

Appreciation for aspects of Native American art, for example, happened after the colonization of the land was complete and it could be exotified as a relic of the past. In *United States History for High Schools*, this is visible in the photograph and its accompanying caption of a buffalo robe painting extolling Native American art (180). At the same time, a whitewashing of the past appears for White people as well. In another of the book's images showing a family camping by a lake with the caption, "Many Americans find pleasure and relaxation in reverting to the ways of life of their pioneer ancestors. They enjoy 'roughing it'" (78). The representation of recreational campers drawing on pioneer ancestry firstly makes clear who is going camping, and secondly sends a message about the idyllic contours of pioneer life, while downplaying its hardships.

Mexico and Mexican-Americans in *United States History for High Schools*: In 1966, *United States History for High Schools* had no reason to hide its endorsement for Manifest Destiny—the notion that colonizers had a God-given calling to expand control of Indigenous lands in what is now the United States. In a section labeled "The Triumph of Nationalism," Manifest Destiny is described as something that gained new land for the country, and in the process, provoked war with Mexico (Shafer et al. 1966: 231). Although the perspective taken by the authors is that Manifest Destiny was worth fighting for, the way this discourse plays out has distinct implications for how Mexico and Mexicans are represented in the text. As in *Our Nation's Story*, the history of the Alamo is told with a "poor Texans, bad Mexicans" trope (236).

However, in *United States History for High Schools*, the authors are clear that President Polk deliberately provoked the "Mexican War," as it was called from 1846–1848 so "that the United States could attack Mexico and say it was in self-defense" (246). Polk did not want to be accused of starting war, but even at the time it was widely understood that Polk "had purposely enticed Mexico into war over the Texas boundary question in order to get California and New Mexico territory which Mexico refused to sell" (246). The book labels Polk as deceitful to both the public and to Congress in order to acquire the territory (249). Yet even after such a recriminating description, the textbook leaves readers with a strong sense that, although Polk was wrong to provoke and deceive, the outcome was good for the United States. This justification for unethical means to an end is a worrying lesson for young people and for the society that it reflects.

US history textbooks mimic society in general by reducing migration to a story about assimilation as part of nation-building. The cultural value of countries of origin is usually ignored, replaced by a focus on learning English. Most curricular material presents im/migrants as people who need to be brought up to speed on norms of the arrival country rather than being accepted while maintaining their core identities. Also, migration is sometimes presented as the result of free choice rather than a forced process or one that is shaped by hardship, and this is something textbook analyses must especially address (Cetin 2020).

Most of the textbooks I analyze in this book use terms like "flood" or "surge" to describe a rising number of non-European immigrants who began emigrating to the United States beginning in 1890. This language is still used today in the media, usually as a way to arouse fear and dehumanize immigrants or distance readers from their experiences of emigrating by using terms reminiscent of uncontrollable natural disaster. *United States History for High Schools* describes that, prior to 1890, Britain, Germany, Norway, and Sweden were the main migrant-sending countries to the US, while southern and eastern European migrants arrived after that, fomenting social tension based on cultural conflicts (451). This discussion about the necessity to foster assimilation while also putting in place legislation to curb non-White migration is, in many textbooks, the precursor to talking about Mexican migration.

Assimilation: Native American people are conveniently dropped from the assimilation narrative, which includes passages such as, "The first immigrants from England established the patterns of American society and those who came later had to adjust" (452). Assimilation is discussed as an overt good at this time: "Motivated by fear of competition and repelled at times by 'foreign ways,' some treated the newcomers with suspicion. Nevertheless, ways to assist the immigrant in his assimilation were found" (453). In this narrative, US treatment toward newcomers was the same as toward Native Americans; first they are persecuted, and then the US government steps in to help them assimilate to White settler-colonial norms.

This concept of White saviorism is especially strong in textbook passages about the Mexican Revolution:

> The Mexican peoples, usually poor and illiterate, could not and did not develop the country's rich resources—the oil and the minerals—nor develop industries—smelters and factories. Foreign capital poured in; with it came foreign businessmen and engineers, and with them came foreign domination. For over thirty years, a dictator, Porfirio Diaz, kept order as he encouraged foreign investment. (Shafer et al. 1966: 501)

The textbook goes on to describe Diaz's ousting in 1920, and unlike the 1954 textbook, this 1966 textbook calls him a dictator (501). Making the generalization that an entire people are "poor and illiterate" may reinforce the stereotypes some readers hold, and further discrimination toward Mexican im/migrant people in the United States. The alleged inferiority of Mexico is reinforced by the description of US President Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy. "[W]ith his strong sense of responsibility, [Wilson] believed that the United States had a moral duty to restore order in Mexico and help in the establishment of a democratic government" (501). No mention is made of Wilson's financial interests in Mexico, and the passage leaves readers with the residue notion that Wilson was a good Samaritan rather than a racist robber baron.

1974: *LET'S VISIT CENTRAL AMERICA*

Although I mostly focus on US history textbooks in this analysis, during the coding process I came across a middle school textbook from 1974 in the GEI library titled *Let's Visit Central America*. Because the book adopts the same over-generalizing tone about Latin American people as the 1966 *United States History for High Schools*, it merits a brief comparative passage here. *Let's Visit Central America*'s conclusion includes this paragraph:

> We have learned that many people in Central America do not go to school, never learn to read or write. Some of the pictures in this book show that people live in tiny houses. There are villages so far out in the jungles and mountains that people are cut off from the rest of the world. There are fine homes in the big cities. But for the most part, Central Americans are poor and uneducated. It has often been easy for dictators to gain control because so many citizens are uneducated. It is difficult for an ignorant worker in the jungle or on a banana plantation to know much about democracy. (Caldwell 1974: 91)

Students assigned this book would conclude their literary tour of Central America with the admonition that communism in Central America would be the region's downfall (92–3), that the United Fruit Company should be thought of as a benevolent form of foreign aid (72–4), and that if only the rest of Central American countries were like Costa Rica, with no military, there would be no wars (94). While the book is clearly a timepiece, it captures stereotypes from textbooks both before and after its time.

1981: Native Americans in *A Short History of the American Nation*

Originally published in 1974, I analyzed the third edition of *A Short History of the American Nation* (1981), with its soft cover featuring a painting of a New England field. I also coded the book's companion teacher's manual, originally published in 1977. Author John Garraty states in his introduction that the textbook is intended for high school students.

In many ways, this book is more broadly inclusive and sensitive to issues of difference in comparison to textbooks from earlier decades. Specific to my categories of interest, there are multiple perspectives offered on both colonization and immigration. However, the Doctrine of Discovery trope is still reiterated throughout the textbook and teacher's manual. This section assesses the representation of both topics in turn.

A Short History of the American Nation perpetuates the notion that the United States was a tabula rasa, a blank slate; or *terra nullius*, an empty land. Use of phrases such as "a vast land, almost uninhabited" and "almost untouched land" (Garraty 1981: xxi, 1, 47) renders Indigenous people invisible as a population and neglects to depict the complexities of their interaction with the physical environment. These worn mischaracterizations are reinforced through exercises such as multiple-choice questions and television broadcast summaries in the teacher's companion manual (Garraty 1977: 2, 6, 55).

Garraty continues a reinvented story of colonization through his treatment of Thanksgiving as a mythic tradition of peacemaking (12), as well as through the well-worn description of Indians as "making trouble" (118) and as a "problem" (168). At the same time, Garraty also recognizes that "the settlement of America ranks among the most flagrant examples of unprovoked aggression in human history," (6) with White violence at its core. Yet on the same page, he tries to justify some of that violence by acknowledging that chauvinism and "cruelty, slavery, greed, and war existed in the New World long before Columbus" (6–7). Such behaviors, as reprehensible as they are, are not justification for genocide—the physical annihilation of people—or culturecide—the killing of culture. Garraty's text vaguely asserts that such violence might be justifiable because of the nation-building imperative that fueled the colonizers' mission.

Nearly on neighboring pages, though, Garraty also presents in-depth descriptions of Native American suffering as a result of White actions. For example, in the "Indian Wars" section, referring to Indian attacks on White settlers, he asserts that "Had the Indians been given a reasonable amount of land and adequate subsidies and been allowed to maintain their way of life, they might have accepted the situation and ceased to harry the whites. But whatever chance the policy had was greatly weakened by the government's maladministration of Indian affairs" (281). This framing is much more accurate to historical fact and contextualizes Native American violence not as acts of savagery, but as self-defense in the face of potential annihilation. Under the heading "Destruction of Tribal Life," Garraty writes:

> No more efficient way could have been found for destroying the plains Indian. The disappearance of the bison left them starving, homeless, purposeless. In 1887 Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act, designed to put an end to tribal life and convert the Indians to white ways of living. Tribal lands were split up into small units, each head of a family being given a quarter section (160 acres). (Garraty 1981: 282)

This more contextualized treatment of Native peoples does not mitigate the book's earlier destructive language about the United States as *terra nullius.* But while the inclusion of both themes—ignoring Native Americans as the original peoples of the land, and Native Americans as victims of White cruelty and incompetence—shows some evolution in the representation of ideas, but it is still a mixed portrayal. As the next section shows, this carries over into the same book's representation of Mexico and im/migrant people.

Mexico and im/migrant people in *A Short History of the American Nation*: As in *United States History for High Schools* (1966), Garraty describes President James Polk as the aggressor towards Mexico in 1845 and 1846 (187). This fact is reinforced through various lesson plan exercises laid out in the teacher's companion manual (Garraty 1977: 61). However, at the close of the US's aggressive maneuvers, Garraty then paints a different picture, one in which the US are victors, stating: "The Mexicans were thoroughly beaten, but they refused to accept the situation" (189). This US victory approach is further cemented by Garraty's summative statement in the concluding section about "The Aftermath" of the war. He declares, "The Mexican War, won quickly and at relatively small cost in lives and money, brought huge territorial gains" (189). This US-centric perspective is interspersed with continuing disparagement about Latin American and Caribbean countries in the lead-up to the immigration section. Garraty asserts that "the Caribbean countries were economically underdeveloped, socially backward, politically unstable, and desperately poor," (369) without providing context for the roles of the US and Europe in making it so.

Many of the textbooks I reviewed, from *A Short History of the American Nation* through more present-day texts, tell a similar story about shifts in immigration patterns that justify White supremacy. The story told by Garraty goes like this:

> Forgetting that earlier Americans had accused pre-Civil War Irish and German immigrants of similar deficiencies, they [gatekeepers in government] decided that peoples of southern and eastern Europe were racially (and therefore permanently) inferior to "Nordic" and "Anglo-Saxon" types and ought to be kept out. Organized labor, fearing the competition of workers and low living standards and no bargaining power, also spoke out against the "enticing of penniless and apprised immigrants … to undermine our wages and social welfare." (Garraty 1981: 315)

The need for large numbers of unskilled workers in industries such as mining meant that some companies were in favor of more relaxed immigration rules (Garraty 1981: 315), which is similar to the dynamic with agricultural industries today, many of which rely on undocumented workers and the low wages they accept to stay competitive in the marketplace. In the teacher's companion manual, Garraty provides a discussion question and lecture idea focused on why xenophobia appeared in the US after World War I (1977: 142). At the same time, he elides a long previous history of xenophobia that took place throughout the nineteenth century.

In line with earlier textbooks from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, Garraty notes that the 1924 quota adjustment in immigration policy created permissions to allow just 2 percent of people from a given country of origin the right to emigrate to the United States in a given year (415). By 1924, because immigration from northern European countries had substantially slowed, those populations routinely had empty quotas, while people from Latin America, Asia, and other Global South countries found themselves denied entry to the US because of the quota system (415).

One result of the 1924 immigration reforms was that, by the mid-twentieth century (1945–1964), there were so few newcomers that "the country seemed ever more homogenous" (489). By the 1960s, "over 95 percent of all Americans were native born. This made for social and cultural uniformity. So did the rising incomes of industrial workers and the changing character of their labor. Blue-collar workers invaded the middle class" (507).

This overview of culture change sets the stage for the political tumult of the 1960s and 70s, as identities are renegotiated in public spaces. This textbook provides a very short overview of Chicano and Native American protests over discrimination, but has more extensive coverage of Black power social movements (519). This is typical of textbooks in the last two decades of the 1900s, where discussion of the Civil Rights movement leads into a focus on the Black Panther Party and related developments, with Latinx and Asian American rights as much smaller additions to the main story. The teacher's manual meant to accompany the textbook lifts César Chávez, the founder of the National Farmworkers Association, but only briefly (1977: 173).

Overall, *A Short History of the American Nation* is an accurate representation of a particular period in US nation-building. There are overtures of inclusion, with some attempts to temper history as one long saga of White glorification with the impact of that glory on marginalized populations. However, the dominant tone of the textbook is still one that vaunts White glory and recognizes its necessity in taming the assumed empty wilderness of the New World. Native American people were treated unfairly sometimes, Garraty shows, but ultimately students would leave this textbook assuming that the ends justified the means. Similarly, Mexican-origin people are shown as newcomers who only play a minor role in the beginning of organized agricultural labor, rather than longtime inhabitants of the entire western and southwestern United States.

1981: *Freedom and Crisis: An American History*

Freedom and Crisis brings some improvement in racial and ethnic inclusion, but also more of the same rhetoric on Native American and Latin America and im/migrant origin people found in textbooks that proceeded it. Volume II of the third edition of this textbook is also accompanied by a teacher's guide. In brief, *Freedom and Crisis* avoids grand sweeping claims written in the same period about "uninhabited lands." Though it remains a very White-focused perspective on US history, it is written with slightly more racially sensitive language. For example, words like "Indian independence" and "white settlement" are used rather than phrases such as "expanding our home," which many other volumes used to convey a sense of entitlement to colonization.

Under the heading "The West: frontiers in transition," *Freedom and Crisis* discusses Native American people during the 1850s through 1900 in neutral language. Throughout an extended description, the authors show agency by "Indians" and dishonest treatment by Whites alongside extended coverage of many White atrocities against Indians (Weinstein and Gatell 1981: 100–516). There are multiple extended descriptions of settler colonialism and the resource quest by White people that led to infringement on Native American rights (505–519). In providing a more balanced and historically accurate perspective on White-Native American relations, *Freedom and Crisis* is a distinct improvement compared to other volumes available as of 1981.

This more balanced perspective is also visible in how *Freedom and Crisis* handles history in relation to US-Latin American politics. Though the authors perpetuate the rhetoric of the "friendship of our sister republics of Central and South America," they also note that President Wilson "used military force in Latin America even more than his Republican predecessors" (681). Similarly, on Mexico's revolution of 1910, the authors describe the reality of the revolution without praising authoritarian President Diaz (681).

On immigration and the racial and ethnic composition changes at the turn of the twentieth century, the authors' tone is informational and without a visible polemic, including a sensitive discussion of immigrants and racial dynamics from the 1890s onward (Weinstein and Gatell 1981: 586–596). Regarding US-Latin American relations in the post-World War II era, the authors maintain an accurate and progressive recounting of the facts.

> The United States faced a particular problem in Latin America, where it tried to maintain traditional hemispheric influence and safeguard nearly $10 billion of American investment. Strains developed in an area that many Americans regarded as their backyard. In 1954, after the Central American republic of Guatemala took a turn toward the left, Dulles denounced the existing government. But more than words were involved. The CIA helped finance Guatemalan groups opposed to the left-leaning government in a successful seizure of power. (Weinstein and Gatell 1981: 818–9)

The study guide that accompanies this volume of *Freedom and Crisis* similarly offers a mix of historically grounded facts with some phrases that lift the experiences of those oppressed by colonial and imperial forces of the United States, along with some that perpetuate unequal power dynamics. Viewed alongside comparable volumes of its time, *Freedom and Crisis* shows that it was possible to convey US history in the 1980s without relying only on the victor's history. The trend toward more inclusion of diverse viewpoints is echoed in the California-specific textbook that I analyze next.

1984: *The World and Its People: California Yesterday and Today*

In the 1980s, California textbook discourse shifted to acknowledgement of diversity while still firmly adhering to a settler-colonial portrayal of social studies. Broadly representative pictures span the cover and chapter divisions of *The World and Its People: California Yesterday and Today*, with people in wheelchairs and people of color, including Native American figures in traditional dress represented in the smiling faces of the nation. In the teacher's edition, the question under the cover image directs the teacher; "Have your class look carefully at the drawings of the woman and girl reading a map, the surfer with his surfboard, the mature farmer and her basket of produce, and the handicapped park ranger. You might ask your pupils to tell you what they think these drawings tell them about California." These directions are clearly prompting students to comment on how diverse California is, and how people can accomplish many roles regardless of their identities. Textbooks like this one are doing a very important job; they are breaking the silence of BIPOC invisibility by representing them in some form.

While the 1961 *Living in the United States* textbook managed to elide all mention of immigrants, by 1984 in *The World and Its People*, immigrants and BIPOC communities writ broadly are represented. But then the question becomes *how* are they represented? The answer here is mostly historical rather than contemporary fact. For example, in a state map of "Early Indian Tribes" that shows the traditional territory of Indigenous people color-coded on the map, the teacher's note instructs educators to ask students why so many of the names are unfamiliar today (Anema et al. 1984: 79). In fact, most of the tribes are still active tribes, although some are very small.

A charitable interpretation of the prompt could be that the names are unfamiliar because of settler colonialism. However, the numerous surrounding pages, which walk students through Native Americans' affinity for nature (78), housing (80), artisan production (81), boats (82), foods (83–85), and village life (86–88) is exclusively written in the past tense. There is an entire page description of traditional gathering and food preparation practices with illustrations of how to process acorns, for example, without recognizing gathering as a contemporary practice. While admirable to continue this Indigenous knowledge, the book almost exclusively refers to Native Americans in the past tense. So, while knowledge about Indigenous culture is being shared, students could easily assume that it is past, not present knowledge.

After ten full pages of historic description, one paragraph is allotted to "Indians today" (89):

> There are still many Indians living in California. Some live together in tribes. Others choose to live in towns and cities with other people. Many California Indians want to keep the ways of their parents and grandparents. The Indian traditions and customs are shared and taught to family members. All California Indians are very proud of their history. (Anema et al. 1984: 89)

Setting aside the romantic trope of the noble savage in harmony with nature that is clearly visible in this textbook, the relentless past tense descriptions are highly problematic, and are reinforced by most of the teacher's annotated activities. Students could very well learn a significant amount about Native Americans without ever realizing that many of their cultural practices continue today, and if not, how colonization was the protagonist of that story.

The misrepresentation of Indigenous California takes a different turn in the missions section. This is not surprising, as California maintained a required mission unit until 2017 that promoted a highly sanitized version of what missions were and how they affected Indigenous peoples. But this section shows the assimilationist ideology propagated at the time, that although work at the missions was hard, students should celebrate the accomplishment of adapting to something challenging, as several of the teacher's exercises promote.

Regarding Latinx visibility, the textbook offers a few paragraphs describing the reality for Mexicans who find themselves living on US territory following the cessation of much of the Southwest in 1848.

> For the United States, the end of the war meant that its lands now stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But for Spanish-speaking Californians, the end of the war had other meanings. The Spanish language would now in most places give way to the English language. Customs and ways of life that were once Spanish would become American. Under a law passed a few years later, Californians had to prove their right to the lands they lived on. Many had owned these lands for years but had no papers to prove it. So some of those living on the old ranchos for years now had to give up their lands. (Anema et al. 1984: 134–5)

Events such as the Mexican-American War of 1848 and subsequent ceding of much of what is now the western United States is presented with Mexico losing passively to the stronger and more entitled United States. Narratives like this, along with the accompanying absence of positive Mexican im/migrant-origin representation in the majority of the curricula, have two major impacts on student wellbeing, as my data presented later in this book reveal. First, they invoke shame or a sense of invisibility in Latinx students, and second, such curricula feels irrelevant to them, so they tune out academically.

This textbook, like its predecessors evaluated here, continues to be problematic particularly in what is *not* said. It does make many improvements on previous decades in that BIPOC people are visible in the text. At the same time, the use of antiquated tropes, the past tense, and ongoing neutral language to avoid ascribing responsibility for the dispossession of BIPOC people precludes fostering a real understanding of contemporary (for then) BIPOC issues.

1999: Native American Representation in *A History of the United States*

Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin's *A History of the United States* (1999) is a giant hardcover tome, the kind that strains shoulders lugging it to class. I note here that the third author is listed as "with Ruth Frankel Boorstin," an awkward author listing choice that acknowledges input without giving full credit for authorship. It is clear that the third author is the wife of the primary author, but her role in the manuscript preparation is not made clear. On the "About the Authors" page, it is stated that "Mrs. Boorstin has been an active collaborator on all her historian husband's books" (Boorstin et al. 1999: vi). Because of this, I list her as a third author when referencing this text and note that even this clarification itself is a product of the time in which the textbook was authored.

A History of the United States mostly paints a conservative, White-centric picture of US history. However, the authors combine their own generational biases with deeply researched historical scholarship. This means that while they reinforce problematic tropes within US historical storytelling, the authors also offer more than one perspective in many places and prompt some critical thinking on issues of the time.

As with textbooks from the 1950s and 1960s, Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin address Columbus as the beginning of United States history, but with a twist.

> He discovered a new world … If it hadn't been for Columbus, years might have passed before the people of Europe "discovered" America. But it was only for the people of Europe that American had to be "discovered." Millions of Native Americans were already here! For them, Columbus, and all the sailors, explorers, and settlers who came later, provided their "discovery" of Europe. (Boorstin, Kelley et al. 1999: 6)

Reflection on the impact of "discovery" is subtly pushed by the authors in the review section for Chap. 1, where they show a graph with declining lines indicating that the Indian population of Central America diminished dramatically from 1500 to 1620, and the accompanying question asks students to hypothesize on what happened to Indians during this period (Boorstin et al. 1999: 25).

However, this section points readers toward Spain as the real enemy, and in doing so, creates a responsibility loophole for White colonists. The authors write that a leading missionary figure, Father Junipero Serra "stood up for the Indians against the Spanish army" (Boorstin et al. 1999: 29). Yet on the next page, the Spanish are seen as forward-thinking civilizers, in whose missions "the Indians were taught Spanish ways of building, farming, and worshipping. But they were not allowed to leave these mission 'schools.' They were forever students of the friars" (Boorstin et al. 1999: 30). The mission system in California and throughout the Southwest was a particular case study I coded in each textbook that I reviewed. Much has been written about Native American enslavement in the California mission system and the politics around the fourth-grade mission unit in California's elementary curriculum (Keenan 2019; Kryder-Reid 2016; Risling Baldy 2017). Yet at the high school level, this history is generally sanitized in line with how *A History of the United States* handles it.

Discussion of Pocahontas is another standard case study I analyzed across the textbooks. Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin summarized her life with the statement "She married John Rolfe and died in England," with no mention of her abduction or forced marriage (37). Instead, the authors focus laudatory praise on the first colonizers and their attempts at governance rather than genocide: "We still revere the Pilgrim Fathers as the first successful settlers of the New England shore, who began an American custom—finding a way of self-government for every occasion" (40).

To be fair, the authors cite many instances of White violence against Native Americans, and in doing so they temper their own praise for Whiteness in some sections. From land theft, broken treaties, and speeches by Native American elders demanding their land back (201), to Andrew Jackson's Indian Removals (1820–1840) (234), corrupt Indian agents (387), and the termination of reservations, tribal status, and relocation in the 1950s (861), the authors show genocide, culturecide, and discrimination as the foundations of United States history. But they do not name it as such, and in some ways continue to excuse it or leave a deafening silence around White violence.

The colonization of California is one such topic that is discussed only in relation to the 1849 Gold Rush and mining life, with no mention of genocide against California tribes (394). There are also chapter review questions like this one that seem particularly insensitive to the impact of colonization on Native American communities: "How did the opening of the West affect business opportunities in your region?" (303). Moreover, the romanticization of the West, now a mega-industry in everything from theme parks to outdoor adventure tourism, continues to paint the "Old West" as "a place of romance—the scene for an exciting book, or movie, or TV program" (385). This romanticization persists into the characterization of Native American people: "White Americans did not understand what the Indians had achieved. With their spears and bows and arrows and different manner of living, they had mastered the ways of the American wilderness" (388).

Romanticization also goes hand in hand with the paternalism of the 1960s prior to the uprising of the American Indian Movement, which is barely noted in this textbook. Instead, a deficit approach shows presidential concern for what Lyndon B. Johnson called "the Forgotten American" in a 1968 message to Congress, noting "poor housing, their alarming 40 percent unemployment, and the fact that only half of the young Indians completed high school" (861). The interest in presidential intervention to help Native Americans did not extend to returning the Black Hills to the traditional owners, despite extended litigation by tribes asking for this in the face of White mismanagement (862–863).

The authors point out the deep inequity in how Native Americans were treated, noting that "they were here, of course, centuries before the first Europeans or Africans. As the US grew, their own cultures had not prospered" (860). The textbook data visualizations also show Native presence through basic numbers, including a chart of twentieth-century Native American population growth, from less than a quarter million people in 1900 to over two million in the 1990 census (861). The authors also show a photo with a caption describing how Native American students have access to bilingual schooling in order to maintain Indigenous languages (873), but without discussing why such languages came close to disappearing.

In sum, Native American representation in *A History of the United States* is an accurate snapshot of mixed White responses to Indigenous peoples in the 1990s. On the one hand, increased historical research showed the depth of White abuse of Native Americans that is factually depicted. On the other hand, ongoing trends to characterize contemporary Native Americans as lacking in their former self-sufficient glory, without situating this in structural violence perpetuated by colonization, leaves the trope of White paternalism as the new iteration of White conquest perpetuated in previous textbooks. Next, I turn to representation of Mexico and im/migrant people of Mexican origin within the same textbook.

Mexico and Mexican Americans in *A History of the United States*: As in multiple earlier textbooks, President Polk's "aggressive measures" to provoke war with Mexico in order to gain Mexican territory for the United States is clearly depicted (299). Polk's provocation is contextualized, though, in light of a dozen more aggressive senators who voted against Polk's recommendation to approve the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo because they wanted to annex Mexico entirely, rather than the Southwest territory delineated in the Treaty (302). In this way, Polk's agenda comes off looking like the less aggressive option.

As with Native American land taken over by colonizers, the map showing US territory acquired by taking it from Mexico is simply labeled "Growth of the US to 1853" (301). Additional maps are labeled "Relations with Our Southern Neighbors, 1898–1933" and show what was a US possession, what resulted from US military intervention, where US financial intervention was taking place, and what locations had special relationships with the US. This information is important to show how both colonization and imperialism were operating in the US at the time.

Given that I am an education politics researcher, I pay close attention to how schooling is depicted. Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin fall into the standard glorification of schools as important assimilation and Englishization mechanisms, with headings such as "The schools make Americans" (447). While it may be true that free public high school was "an American invention" and that "flourishing schools made the United States one of the world's first literate nations" (447), it is also important to note what was lost in the process of schooling. I have written elsewhere (Author 2023) about boarding schools as culturecidal spaces for Native Americans, where culture was killed in the classroom as a result of Indigenous languages being suppressed and White values forcefully inculcated.

This was also true for other minority groups, including Mexicans and Mexican Americans in California. The authors skirt this issue, instead contemplating the purpose of secondary schools through Dewey's work (1859–1952)—"Were schools mainly to prepare those who were going on to a 'higher' learning in college? Or should they be designed for everyone?" (764).

The textbook includes a photo of a Mexican Independence Day parade in Los Angeles, and notes that two thirds of all Spanish-speaking people in the United States were of Mexican origin when this book published in the 1990s (849). In fact, "By 1990 there were over 13 million Mexican

Americans in the United States and thousands more were entering the country every year. By far the largest number of them have continued to settle where their first settlements lay—in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas" (864). And yet there is almost no discussion of how schooling, and the linguistic and cultural assimilation required by it in states such as these, impacted im/migrant-origin students. Nor are these students imagined as target readers for the textbook, which replicates discourse and design primarily for White students seen in textbooks from the 1950s–1980s.

Most of the very limited discussions on Mexican and Mexican American people in this textbook fall into the "Brown Power" and César Chávez categories (865). These are the most regularly cited topics in US history textbooks from the 1990s to more recent times. The other discussion is focused on immigration as the threat to US stability. For example, under the heading of "Refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean" the authors describe "Another wave of unhappy people arrived from troubled Central America" and "More came from Mexico every day" (868). Using inflammatory language like "flood of refugees," that in the 2020s is understood to be a dog whistle to political right-wing White nationalists in the United States, the authors state "Many Americans felt that illegal aliens, many of whom received government assistance, took too great a toll on the nation's resources" (868–869). They never provide factual information that contradicts this claim—in fact, it is widely researched now that undocumented people contribute far more to the US economy than they take from it (NAE 2021).

Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin's portrayal of Mexican and Mexican Americans is most notable for its very limited content, revealing more absence than presence in the story of the United States, and for its conformity to xenophobic tropes that continue to cast im/migrant people as "others" who are targets of suspicion. In many ways they try to provide multiple perspectives and prompts for critical analysis, but this textbook does not demonstrate best practices that stand the test of time over the subsequent decades.

Conclusion

There has been significant evolution over time in how representation of Native American and Mexican im/migrant people takes place in textbooks. And yet what is truly remarkable is how much has stayed the same.

While some content is added to address requirements of diversity and inclusion that continue to evolve in US culture, only a small amount of older content is cut out of the textbooks reviewed here; outdated analyses of history are rarely deleted, but instead augmented with small additions of revised content. The politically correct terminology is updated, to be sure, to meet demands of subsequent decades. But the uncanny repetition of the same stories, told through very similar lenses, for much of the second half of the twentieth century, is concerning.

Essentially, the US history education my parents received in the 1960s is not all that far from what I was taught in the 1990s, or what my children are likely to learn in the 2020s. Given how problematic this representation is, I look to the future to find optimism that textbooks can do a better job in bringing contemporary presence and positive characteristics to discussions of Native American and Mexican im/migrant people in the twenty-first century.

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