

The Historical Society of Southern California

that one unscrupulous man could hoodwink an entire community for many years without being discovered." For those who are caught up in the new wave of psycho-history it should be noted that embezzlers are not always sweet little old ladies from Pasadena. Indeed, young Tom Hays was the president of the chamber of commerce, a 32nd degree Mason, chairman of the Republican County Central Committee, Exalted Ruler of the Elks Club, and mostly a good family man. His close friends stuck by him to the end, and it came at the age of thirty-nine. He was eulogized by the *Riverside Enterprise* which stated that death had taken him by "myocarditis—a form of broken heart." Cursed by many and for good reason, Tom was probably the most beloved embezzler any town ever had.

Continuing in her Preface, Mrs. Klotz writes that "this book also describes the City of Riverside from 1890 to 1907 when it acquired a new skyline, paved streets, the telephone, electric lights, parks, the automobile, and that astounding new amusement called the motion picture." For each of these she captures the excitement as well as the impact upon the lives of Riverside's citizens. With nearly as many illustrations as pages of text, her history treats of a period too often neglected by local historians.

Although much has previously been written about Frank Miller's Mission Inn, Esther Klotz does one of the better jobs of taking us inside and showing us around the historic structure. The visit of President Roosevelt is complete down to the last rose petal for decorations, not to mention the banquet dessert consisting of "homemade apple and mince pies, vanilla ice cream, lemon jelly, panoche, chocolate cake, lady fingers, kisses, macaroons, and fruit" followed by "American, Swiss, Imperial, and Edam cheeses served with hard water crackers, salted chips, nuts, pressed figs, dates, and clusters of raisins." No wonder we had a succession of barrel presidents.

And can you imagine taking your family out for a spin on Sunday afternoon in your new Magnolia automobile made in Riverside? Detroit wasn't threatened. And then there was coloratura soprano Mme. Helena Modjeska raising the roof at the Loring Opera House. After her last encore Frank Miller draped her with a Polish flag and the audience went wild. To get a beer in Riverside in those days you had to go to the drug store and ask the pharmacist for a "shoe;" he reappeared in a few minutes with a shoebox containing either one or two "shoes." It all happened before San Marino and Beverly Hills were thought of, an era when Riverside had the highest per-capita income in the nation.

This book's only flaw consists of two typographical errors that no one will notice because they will be too interested in the text. The book's merits are such that it deserves space in every collection of Californiana.

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FORT CUSTER ON THE BIG HORN, 1877-1898. *Its History and Personalities as Told and Pictured by Its Contemporaries.* Compiled and edited by Richard Upton. *Frontier Military Series VIII.* (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1973. 316 pp. \$11.50.) Reviewed by Richard N. Ellis.

Book Reviews

Built in 1876 following the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Fort Custer was in continuous existence until 1898. Its location near the junction of the Big Horn and Little Big Horn rivers and its proximity to the Crow and Northern Cheyenne agencies made it an important post which apparently also became something of a show place for the army. It was visited by many famous soldiers and frontiersmen, and troops stationed at the post were involved in incidents with the Bannocks, Crow and Northern Cheyennes.

Richard Upton, who became enamored with the story of the fort, has pieced together its history primarily from newspaper accounts. Most are from the *Billings (Montana) Gazette*, and they include material from both officers and enlisted men. Some are contemporary accounts; others appeared in the 1930s. Upton concludes with a description of his search for Fort Custer and its history.

While this composite picture of the post is interesting and readable and includes useful material on difficulties with the Crow in 1887 and on views of the enlisted men, the book is not of major significance. Unfortunately, although Upton did considerable research and utilized the appropriate military records in the National Archives, the text does not reflect this work. Instead Upton has let the newspaper accounts speak for themselves with minimal editorial comments. His technique of listing documentary sources in the bibliography will also prove frustrating to those who wish to do additional research. However, the book, which is a volume in the "Frontier Military Series" of the Arthur H. Clark Company, benefits from the usual technical skills of that press, and the collection of photographs is excellent.

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OCCUPIED AMERICA: THE CHICANO'S STRUGGLE TOWARD LIBERATION. By Rodolfo Acuña. (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972. 282 pp. \$9.35.)
Reviewed by Robert W. Blew.

Dr. Acuña has presented a provocative, stimulating, and challenging interpretation and view of the history of the southwestern portion of the United States. This well-written and well-researched book, originally designed as a text for college *Chicano* study courses, goes far in filling in gaps in traditional historical works. The title, *Occupied America*, instead of the more conventional *Occupied Mexico*, indicates the extent of the new point of view. Acuña is not presenting the history of a foreign territory, but, rather, he is presenting the history of a native people exploited by a conquering power. His major theme, that the United States has treated the territory acquired from Mexico as a colonial holding, will possibly be disturbing to some, but the facts support his thesis.

To develop his theme, Acuña divides the book into two sections. The first section is devoted to the events of the nineteenth century. He begins with a review of the causes of the Mexican War and of the racism rampant during the period. He is able to buttress his case, not with Mexican sources, but with writings of participants, which are generally ignored by western historians, and citations from such standards as Hubert H. Bancroft's perceptive histories.