



A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America

By Ronald Takaki

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Upon its first publication, *A Different Mirror* was hailed by critics and academics everywhere as a dramatic new retelling of our nation's past. Beginning with the colonization of the New World, it recounted the history of America in the voice of the non-Anglo peoples of the United States--Native Americans, African Americans, Jews, Irish Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and others--groups who helped create this country's rich mosaic culture.

Now, Ronald Takaki has revised his landmark work and made it even more relevant and important. Among the new additions to the book are:

- The role of black soldiers in preserving the Union
- The history of Chinese Americans from 1900-1941
- An investigation into the hot-button issue of "illegal" immigrants from Mexico
- A look at the sudden visibility of Muslim refugees from Afghanistan.

This new edition of *A Different Mirror* is a remarkable achievement that grapples with the raw truth of American history and examines the ultimate question of what it means to be an American.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This vibrant ethnographic history of America was on PW 's "best books of 1993" list.

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From School Library Journal

YA-Takaki traces the economic and political history of Indians, African Americans, Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, Irish, and Jewish people in America, with considerable attention given to instances and consequences of racism. The narrative is laced with short quotations, cameos of personal experiences, and excerpts from folk music and literature. Well-known occurrences, such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, the Trail of Tears, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Japanese internment are included. Students may be surprised by some of the revelations, but will recognize a constant thread of rampant racism. The author concludes with a summary of today's changing economic climate and offers Rodney King's challenge to all of us to try to get along. Students will find this overview to be an accessible, cogent jumping-off place for American history and political science assignments, plus a guide to the myriad other sources identified in the notes.

Barbara Hawkins, Oakton High School, Fairfax, VA

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From Library Journal

In his new work, Takaki (*Strangers from a Different Shore* , LJ 7/89; *Iron Cages* , LJ 3/1/80) calls for "a more inclusive and accurate history of all the peoples of America." But the book is limited to accounts of Native Americans, Africans, Irish, Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, and Eastern European Jews, prefaced with a discussion of English settlers in the 17th century. Even within these limits, this book is not the "story of multidimensional ethnic interaction" that the author desires. Beyond victimization, few common themes emerge. Still, the book is useful, notwithstanding the author's sometimes questionable generalizations, oversimplifications, and fuzzy chronology. Not even seasoned historians will be knowledgeable about all the groups included. Takaki fails to show us how to reunite American history, but he provides in one volume a very readable version of some lesser-known parts. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 2/15/93.

- *Robert W. Frizzell, Hendrix Coll. Lib. , Conway, Ark.*

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Users Review

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