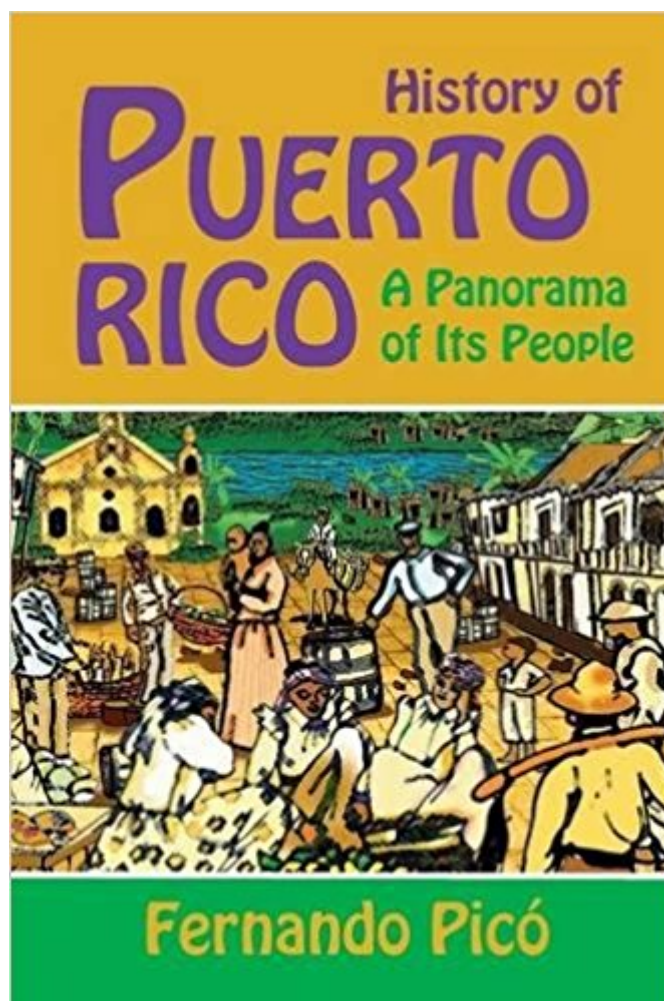


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# History Of Puerto Rico: A Panorama Of Its People



## Synopsis

One of Puerto Rico's leading historians, Fernando Pico has had tremendous influence over our current understanding of Puerto Rican society. Here, he examines the ways in which developments in the courts and commercial centers of the Americas, Europe, and Africa have affected the common people, who have tried since the nineteenth century to take control of their political, social and economic lives. Pico expands his book, "Historia General," for this first updated American edition to include movements and events as recent as the fight for Vieques. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An intelligent and up-to-date work." -- *Annales*"Superbly synthesized" -- *Hispanic American Historical Review*" Essentially, this is an updated and expanded version of the second edition of the brilliant work published in Spanish in 1986...Like all excellent histories of the Caribbean, this one is inordinately rich on the social aspects of community formation and the inevitable cross-imperial relations that invariably frustrated local administrators -- *Choice Magazine*"An intelligent and up-to-date work."- -- *Annales*"Superbly synthesized" -- *Hispanic American Historical Review*HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW vol 88.no. 4 2008 "Since 1986 students of Puerto Rican history have benefited from several editions of Fernando Pico's *Historia general de Puerto Rico*, which now appears in a welcome English version, updated and translated by the author. Simultaneously, *Ediciones Huracan* in San Juan has released a new Spanish edition under the original title. Pico is a leading historian of the island, having worked with primary sources and published on various topics and time periods; his knowledge of Puerto Rican historiography is broad

and deep. The book is especially recommended for the general public and for use as a core text in undergraduate surveys of Puerto Rican history. As the subtitle in English implies, the Puerto Rican people, in all their diversity, are placed at the center of Pico's analysis, and he argues that the processes they initiated "are more important than the decisions made by the ruling figures of the North Atlantic" (p. xi), at least in the long term. While Pico gives consistent attention to the initiatives and impacts of nonelites, it is clear that at times these were swamped -- though never anni-hilated--by those of foreign capital and governments. A second goal is to "address the claims made by" four currents of Puerto Rican historiography--great men/moralistic, institutional, and social/economic studies, and studies of "historians' own ambivalent practices" (p. viii)--which Pico accomplishes implicitly for the most part, even in the footnotes. Pico is unfailingly polite and jargon-free even when openly disputative. He chides the Taino roots movement gently for contributing to the marginalization of Afri-can heritage in Puerto Rico, courteously demolishes the notion that either the Bourbons or municipal authorities had much control on the ground in the eighteenth century, and casts doubt on the argument that a separate Creole bourgeoisie took clear form by the end of the iSoos. The most impassioned section of the book is the final few pages, which constitute a moving call to celebrate Puerto Rican diversity, achievements, and commit-ment to education and social justice. The narrative achieves a very readable synthesis of much of the progress in Puerto Rican historiography as a whole, incorporating political, diplomatic, and military hisÃ Ã-tory with social, economic, and to some extent cultural history, and beginning with a brief chapter sketching the geological zones and ecosystems of the island. The select bibliography lists several dozen secondary sources published since the first Spanish ediÃ Ã-tion of 1986, and a brief hunt through the notes, particularly for the last two chapters on recent history, reveals more. Pico often begins chapters by placing Puerto Rico in relevant broader contexts such as the early modern Atlantic World or the expanding United States hemispheric hegemony in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Organized chronologically, the book offers a quite even coverage of the four main periods (1510-17605, 17605-18205, 18205-18905, since 1898), --Hispanic American Historical Review --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Fernando Pico , University of Puerto Rico is author of several books including "Puerto Rico 1898: the War after the War" --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Fernando Pico wrote an informative history of Puerto Rico. This book is especially strong in offering detailed analysis of the Amerindian foundations of the Caribbean island, the devastating impact of

the European takeover, the contributions of various immigrant groups to the island, and the sad reality of the slave trade. Pico is a clear communicator who gave detailed coverage of the trade patterns, pirate activity, development of agriculture, demographic trends, and burgeoning industrial production of the island's residents. Pico provides helpful data in charts and graphs. I would have liked to see more maps as I feel that I did not learn much about the geographical and topographical diversity of the Caribbean nation. One of the highlights of the book is Pico's interpretation of the Spanish-American War of 1898. He correctly points out that the revisionist studies of recent decades offer compelling proof that the United States leaders were motivated to take over the island for economic and military reasons rather than by an altruistic need to protect the Puerto Rican people. He points out the shortcomings of the historiography of the interpretations of traditional Eurocentric approaches. Pico's coverage of the modern era between 1940 to the present is disappointing. He gives a description of political developments during the era and the economic problems of the last few decades. However, there is too little coverage of culture in Puerto Rico. This book is strong in economic, agricultural, political, and demographic analysis. It is weak in coverage about traditions, religion, literary, artistic, and culinary tastes and mores that give the reader an idea of the uniqueness of the Puerto Rican people. Pico's ideological biases are more apparent in the last three chapters of the book. He is a leftist interpreter who editorizes too much about current policies and developments. He is so motivated to show that Puerto Rico is a diverse conglomeration of entities that he fails to offer the reader an idea of what cultural traditions accurately represent popular behavior or customs. In short, the reader loses sight of the unique and special character of Puerto Rican culture because the author wants to promote the idea that Puerto Rico is a tapestry of numerous factions. Overall, this was an informative and scholarly book. I'm not sure if it is something that people who want to learn about cultural traditions and customs would enjoy. I came away from reading the book knowing more about the history between pre-Columbian explorations to the Spanish-American War of 1898. It is worthwhile reading, but I feel that I did not learn nearly enough about the cultures and traditions that make Puerto Rico a unique Caribbean society.

Bought this for school - interesting book

The information in this book is very informative. Thank you!

An excellent summary and updating of the tragic history of a people and their chronic colonial

problems. Wish Dr. Pico would write more about Puerto Rico in the Seventeenth Century.

Gr8 book! Very interesting. Needed 2 get this ASAP Thank God theres still good people out there! Seller said book was in good condition, no it was gr8! I T.Y. Wont hesitate 2 use Bookbyte 123 again. And delivered on time. What else can I say other than- ONE HAPPY CUSTOMER! 5\*

This textbook is easy to read. It is not like regular boring history books that put you to sleep. I enjoy reading about Puerto Rico's culture and the history behind it's people. The only thing that troubled me was that it didn't explicitly say if the book was in english or spanish. Luckily the book was in english and i wasn't forced to turn it.

Pretty interesting.

Yes, I enjoyed the book and learned much about our history as Puerto Ricans. There are many works available, including fiction that include the entire spectrum of human emotion and suffering: Avarice, cruelty, exploitation, prejudice, murder, violation, extermination and disregard for civil rights of free persons. You will find it all here and how it was logically explained as manifest destiny. Sounds familiar? I did pick up some interesting information that made much sense as I read this work. The book is being used as a text in schools of higher learning. I applaud the author for his attention to detail, his exhaustive research and a keen ability to fill in the blanks about key events where effects are witnessed but the causal factors behind many episodes in Puerto Rico history are lost within the compromise of truth and reality. Such is the nature of recorded history: the vanquished and their version of events has, as in the case of the Tainos, never been told. Hence, this untold story is not factored in the final equation. Several years back, I came by a comment concerning historians and authors. There is a unique difference in how the story is told, as opposed to what defines the story. If you have not heard it, I take liberty to repeat the lesson: Historians-Pico included- will strive to tell the reader just what happened, with no fluff. This is comparable to how Sargeant Joe Friday would ask for facts and to spare the details. Facts are layered upon facts, embellished with more facts. An author, conversely, will also give you the details but with one distinction: The reader experiences how the story makes you feel, such as witnessing history on a personal level. In closing, please remember that this is a definitive work by a renowned scholar. I read the book and went back to read several chapters that caught my attention. The work can be read by anyone who is interested in how Puerto Rico developed over the last five centuries and is

highly recommended. How you feel when you get to the end is another issue.

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