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Review of Roadside History of Oklahoma

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Roadside History of Oklahoma. By Francis L. and Roberta B. Fugate. Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1991. Foreword, sources for additional reading, index. 456 pp. \$24.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.

Writing local history for the general reader requires a harmonization of scholarship and literary skill. *Roadside History of Oklahoma* at best provides stereotypical entertainment at the expense of regional coherence, accuracy, and pluralistic interpretation.

By visiting the state's libraries, county historical societies, and museums, the Fugates have collected "interesting stories" about Oklahoma towns and historic sites that vary from one-liners to several pages. These colorful "stories about conflict, settlement, enterprise, and victory" are accompanied with a wealth of photographs.

Rather than organizing the guide by historic division or culture area, twelve disproportionate chapters cover such perplexing non-regions as "Boomers and Sooners" (72 pages on white Oklahoma), "Land of the Osages," (18 pages on Phillips Petroleum and little on the Osage people

or their land) and "Indian Nations in Transition," (15 pages on leftovers not included in other chapters). Some places are discussed in more than one chapter while maps provide locations of only a few of the largest towns examined.

Although citation is absent, students of Oklahoma history will recognize the work of Grant Foreman, Angie Debo, Edward Everett Dale, and other early Oklahoma writers. George Shirk's *Oklahoma Place Names* (1974) and John Morris' *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma* (1977) were evidently used to fill the gaps. Still, this book is laden with errors. The statements that the *Cherokee Phoenix* had been published in the Cherokee Nation in Georgia since 1822, not 1828 (p. 31); that the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek removed the Cherokees, not the Choctaws (p. 71); and that the Curtis Act came in 1839, not 1898 (p. 45) are a few of the blunders of date and fact. And though they may search diligently, tourists will never find the town of "Eufala" (p. 51, properly spelled Eufaula).

Native American readers will be offended by slurs like "wild Indians" and "attractive Cherokee maidens," (p. 37). The Fugates' infatuation with "uprisings" and scalping, and their omission of allotment atrocities reflect an unrealistic view of Native peoples that should not be condoned during the state's \$26 million "Native America" tourism campaign and the proclaimed "Year of the Indian" (1992) or afterward.

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