



OKLAHOMA

A RICH HERITAGE

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

ABOUT THE BOOK

Francisco Vasquez de Coronado gazed across the Great Plains looking for “Gran Quivira,” where the natives ate from golden bowls and walked through silver-paved streets. On April 22, 1889, 350 years after Coronado’s quest, 60,000 land-hungry boomers stood at the borders of the Oklahoma Territory, waiting anxiously for the land run to begin. Some gazed across the same plains as Coronado—dreaming, as he did, of wealth and opportunity.

Oklahoma: A Rich Heritage by Odie B. Faulk and William D. Welge is the colorful history of Oklahoma’s early pioneers: cowboys and outlaws, soldiers and Indians, ranchers and politicians are just a few of the history-makers depicted. Among the cast of characters is Judge Isaac C. Parker, “the law west of Fort Smith,” who reduced lawlessness in post-Civil War Oklahoma; Tom Slick, who boasted that he could smell oil-laden sand before a drill bit touched the earth; and Kate Branden, who courageously fought for reforms in the state’s early government.

This lively narrative captures the essence and panoramic history of a state with immense growing pains. The last twenty-five years have included moments of difficult tragedy such as the Murrah bombing in Oklahoma City and the oil bust and bank failures of the 1980s. However, there have also been incredible moments where people came together in support of one another—such as the dark days following the terrible domestic terror attack against innocent people on 9/11.

The “Sooner State” is fast approaching a second century of progress. The people are more diverse in ethnic makeup. There is a large and growing Hispanic and Asian community, a more aggressive Indian partnership, and a better environment for people of all colors.

The state’s economy has evolved since the early 1980s from being a generally two industry climate of oil and agricultural, to now include biomedical, aviation, manufacturing, and service providers. This transformation of a two dimen-

sional economy has led to greater growth and job opportunities for the businesses and industries who have roots in the state or have just relocated to Oklahoma.

The text is illuminated with more than 400 illustrations. A special chapter, “Chronicles of Leadership,” further highlights the contemporary history-makers—the business and industry leaders—of the area. Finally, an illustrated chronology of significant events is offered, which enhances and supplements the text. *Oklahoma: A Rich Heritage* brings the state’s history to life. It is a family heirloom to be read and treasured for generations

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Odie B. Faulk holds a Ph.D. in history from Texas Tech University and has served as a history professor for over twenty years. A three-time Pulitzer Prize nominee, he has authored 60 books as well as numerous scholarly journal articles, encyclopedia articles, and book reviews. Dr. Faulk is the recipient of the Outstanding Educators of America Award; the Award of Merit from the Texas Civil War Centennial Commission, and an award from the state of Arizona for historical research. He has also been listed in Who’s Who in America.

William D. Welge is a native of San Antonio, Texas. He earned his bachelor of arts degree in journalism from the University of Oklahoma and his master’s in southwestern studies from Central State University where he graduated with honors. He has been associated with the Oklahoma Historical Society since 1977 and has been director of research since 1990. Welge has published a number of articles and has edited three books. He also teaches courses in archives with the School of Library Information Studies at the University of Oklahoma.