

Davis D. Joyce, Editor. *Alternative Oklahoma: Contrarian Views of the Sooner State*. (University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), pp. 249. \$19.95 ISBN 13:978-0-8061-3819-0

The 14-edited chapters of *Alternative Oklahoma* chronicle the state's history from the "standpoint of others." Such a point of view is modeled from historian Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, but for Oklahoma. In Davis' own words he states:

I prefer to try to tell the story of Oklahoma's prehistory from the point of view of the Spiro Mound people; of Indian removal from the view of the Cherokees; of the Civil War from the standpoint of the Seminole slaves; of the Run of '89 as seen by the Indians already there . . . (p xiv).

Davis, who also wrote a biography on Zinn, cobbles together progressive voices who tell stories of the state's overlooked and often marginalized past. The edited volume is introduced by Fred Harris, a former Oklahoma U.S. senator and presidential candidate who now teaches political science at the University of New Mexico. Harris writes in the introduction that although history is too often written by the winners and the elites, that "if we're really going to understand who we are as Oklahomans and how far we've come, we need to learn, and teach, history as it was lived by the loser, too—and those who had to fight hard to keep from losing" (p. xi). Although Davis reveals a glimpse of Oklahoma's "progressive streak," he admits that this edited volume is:

Not 'everything' your Oklahoma history text book got wrong is included herein; and some of what is included is essential material considered unworthy of inclusion in the textbooks—or too controversial (xvii).

While not even Zinn's thick 750+ pages can include a definitive American progressive history, this 249-page volume does not pretend to cover Oklahoma's either. Davis' edited volume is slanted slightly toward history as six of the fourteen contributors, including Davis himself, are historians, however, the rest of the authors are from a diverse range of disciplines: library science, sociology, English, journalism, religious studies, political science and even a community activist.

The 14 chapters cover a range of topics from Oklahoma's marginalized voices, such as pioneer women who were social historians, African- and Native-Americans, Vietnam Vets for Peace, Homosexuals, Radicals, and those who are religiously to the left. Each chapter's style is also diverse. On the one hand is Linda Reese's "'Petticoat' Historians," which is an academic exploration of women, such as well-known Angie Debo and Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Famer Anna Lewis, both of whom pioneered Oklahoma history research. On the other hand is Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's "Growing up Okie—and Radical," which is an adaptation from her book *Red Dirt: Growing Up Okie*. Ortiz's chapter is a poignant memoir of growing up poor and white in Oklahoma before World War II.

Davis' edited volume can easily inspire undergraduate or graduate students to look at history and even contemporary politics in Oklahoma with more open minds and a wider lens.

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