

new as 1948, in a country which even in the 1920s held that education should not be available to the populace for it would spoil them for work. If these women poets had been born earlier in the century they probably would not be in their present position of speaking for the many still unsung voices in Jamaica.

— Faythe Turner  
Nichols College

**Ann Hodges Morgan and Rennard Strickland, eds. *Oklahoma Memories*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981) xii, 308 pp., \$12.95.**

Oklahoma looms large in the legends and imagination of westering Americans. Much more than one of the most northeastern of the Southwestern states, Oklahoma in the hearts and minds of many amounts to the fiction of Edna Ferber's *Cimarron* or John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. "Okies" assuredly have their own mystique if not their own stereotype. Anne Hodges Morgan and Rennard Strickland, the editors of *Oklahoma Memories*, seek to document that the "history" of Oklahoma, as recorded by people who have traveled across it and settled it from Indian Territory days to the present, is just as fascinating as its "story." And much of that fascination, as this collection of first-hand reminiscences and reporting shows, focuses on the various Native American peoples—generally the so-named Five Civilized Tribes—who have played every bit as large a part in defining Oklahoma as place, idea, and myth, as the oil derricks which stake the state and various and sundry millionaires wheeling and dealing in Tulsa.

Certainly Oklahoma's history, like that of the larger Southwest and nation, is multi-racial and multi-cultural. And this volume attests to that too. We find selections which portray—in terms that many will find rather too sentimental and cloying—the nostalgic regionalism of a Colonel native-son surviving the punishments of captivity as a prisoner of war in Vietnam because of fond thoughts of Thanksgiving at home. And we read the more or less random listings of first impressions by newcomers to Oklahoma City during the (for some reason) specific year of 1978—all of which sound as promotional as Sunbelt Chamber of Commerce or Welcome Wagon brochures.

Other selections from the more contemporary period which are every bit as human but more critical and convincing include accounts by the president of the University of Oklahoma during the 1970s concerning the

rise and fall of segregation in state-supported graduate schools like those at OU, as well as Clara Luper's explanation of the NAACP's struggle for civil rights during the 1960s by staging lunch-counter sit-ins and other demonstrations in Oklahoma City. Luper's remembering of how the segregated walls of the Katz Drugstores came tumbling down is by itself worth turning to first for the feeling of triumph over bigotry which it evokes.

For the most part, however, the main proportion and attraction of the volume are the selections which deal with the early, frontier era in Oklahoma history. Alice Mary Robertson's "Christmas Time in Indian Territory"; Emma Ervin Christian's "Memories of My Childhood Days in Choctaw Nation"; J.H. Beadle's "Indian Territory in the 1870s"—such accounts as these verify just how intrinsically Native American Oklahoma is in its ancestry and atmosphere. Outside of Beadle, who was the western correspondent for the *Cincinnati Commercial* and wrote for an audience of prospective settlers, most if not all of the authors are average men and women who wrote these reminiscences in a straightforward way, based on keen observation and a spirit of inquiry. Thus *Oklahoma Memories* is representative of people's history and shines all the more for its blemishes and bumps.

Ann Hodges Morgan, now Vice President for Programs at the Kerr Foundation in Oklahoma City, and Rennard Strickland, Research Professor of History and Law at the University of Tulsa, deserve the reader's gratitude for their good taste and sense in selecting, arranging, and commenting on twenty-seven "memories" of interest to both professional historians and amateur buffs.

— Robert Gish  
University of Northern Iowa

**Ngugi wa Thiong'O. *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*. African Writers Series, No. 240. (Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982) xxiii, 232 pp., \$6.00 paper.**

In December, 1977, one of Africa's most celebrated novelists, Ngugi wa Thiong'O, was arrested by the government of Kenya and imprisoned for a year without being charged, tried or convicted of any crime. *Detained* is his prison diary.

It is not only an account of his "preventive detention," but is also a harsh indictment of the government of Kenya. Ngugi indicts Kenya for being controlled by "foreign capital" and "foreign economic interests,"

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