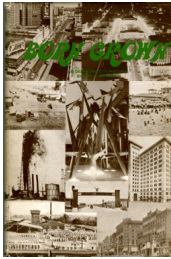


Born Grown

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 28 August 2008 02:49 - Last Updated Sunday, 22 November 2009 04:49



By Roy P. Stewart, published by Fidelity Bank, 1974, out of print, copies easily obtainable online, at second hand book stores for \$10 to \$30.

Review: Roy Stewart is a literal sort of guy. He's the product of many years of journalism, long service in the military, successful ranching, an avid thirst for history. His knack for description came in handy when he was visualizing his latest book.

"I remembered they blew a whistle at noon," he recalls of the Oklahoma run. "By dawn the next day, Oklahoma City was a reality. It was "born grown," as they say, so "Born Grown" became the title.

Stewart's book focuses on Oklahoma City, a community with much to write about. In Stewart's eyes, "this town has always had a good church representation, but it's been a bawdy lusty town from its beginning."

That "bawdy, lusty" image has fortunately been balanced by far-thinking leaders, he adds. "Born Grown" talks about them honestly.

The book is scheduled to appear Monday. More than two years research and writing has been invested by the retired newsman from The Oklahoman and Times, and Penn Woods, historian and civic leader in Oklahoma City.

"It's as authentic as we can make it," Stewart notes. "We left out much of the material that might have made it, well, more colorful, but we wanted it to be accurate."

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(Steve Lackmeyer's note: This is a shame. If only we could see today what was left out).

The idea for the book is credited to Jack T. Conn, chairman of Fidelity Bank. He did the same thing when he was in Ada, and it was a success there, Stewart says of Conn. It's just hearsay, but I understand Jack asked Mr. (E.K.) Gaylord for a suggestion on who could write it. Mr. Gaylord said, "Why, ask Roy Stewart."

Stewart says he was not overwhelmed by the asking. "I told him (Conn) I didn't have time. If I could get Penn Woods to do most of the major research, I said I might do it."

The rest is history. "Born Grown" was designed as a commemorative issue on the 85th anniversary of the Run of 89.

Stewart is the author, Woods research associate. The bank is publisher.

"Born Grown" matured into 27 chapters. The 126,000-word text is illustrated with about 200 photographs. Many of the pictures portray city history "that I'd never seen before," Stewart says.

Information came from the Oklahoma Historical Society, presided over by former Mayor George H. Shirk, the University of Oklahoma Archives, and many individuals who remembered events and the people who made history happen. Everyone seemed enthusiastic Stewart says, "and they were as interested in making it authentic as I was. Yes, I'm proud of it."

The first edition has produced 5,000 copies. Metro Press printed it. It was bound by a Dallas firm.

Stewart says he witnessed and participated in some of the historic events he chronicles. Even so, researching did not come easily.

"I make a lousy researcher," he grinned. "I'd get so interested in what I was doing, I'd get off the track. Something might have nothing to do with Oklahoma City but it would be fascinating."

His favorite part of the book?

"It's all good," he says in a candid appraisal. But he's quick to point to sections about Gov. Jack Walton, the removal of the State Seal from Guthrie to Oklahoma City, the "tent city" that sprang up after the land run, the early fights over control of the police.

"History is still living," he says. "It's going on now, an extension of what started back then. Of course, this not the first book on Oklahoma City, just the latest. I'd like to think it is the best."

- By John Denton, November 17, 1974, The Daily Oklahoman

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