

# Ada's History Story of State as Well

**H**UMAN beings are the only creatures who keep a record of their past and anticipate the future.

Before means of keeping permanent records were discovered, grandfathers related history to their offspring. Lore and legends were instruments for teaching to prepare the young for the future.

Many of us recall sitting on the porch in the evening breeze, listening intently to parents and visitors describing pioneer life, narrow escapes and unexpected adventures. Too bad we had no recorders.

In recent years, there has been significant expansion of interest in genealogy, as people have sought to trace their ancestors. Many have found that their families moved from place to place, searching for a home and livelihood. This was especially true in early Oklahoma.

These thoughts came to mind while we were reading "Cabin in the Blackjacks," a history of Ada, OK, by Roy S. McKeown. It is not the first "genealogy of a city" published in the state and, hopefully, it will not be the last. Every town of conse-

quence deserves one.

One reason that this new book has particular interest for this writer is that, although born in Texas, we grew up in Ada in the early years after statehood. The times, events and people influenced us.

More than that, this book is filled with anecdotes of the type formerly handed down by word-of-mouth. McKeown's parents moved to Ada when it was a small town in the Chickasaw nation and he obtained many of these historical facts directly from pioneer settlers.

He also served as news editor of The Ada News for more than 30 years, taught in the Ada schools and at East Central University. He had access to their files, as well as to previous books about Ada.

For most Oklahoma towns, statehood in 1907 was the time of "coming of age," but for Ada, 1909 was a more significant year. That was when East Central Normal School was established to bring culture to the frontier town and an orderly band of citizens performed a midnight execution of four men to bring

outlawry to a swinging halt.

From there on, the city grew with Oklahoma. McKeown's description of the ups and downs, successes and failures, good times and bad is largely a story of Oklahoma as well as of Ada.

Ada fared better than many other places during the Great Depression because the Pitts oil field was discovered in 1934. McKeown tells of the time in 1939 when the field was virtually shut down because there was too much oil and it was too cheap!

Books like "Cabin in the Blackjacks" — named for the first house in Ada — demonstrate that history may best be recorded while those who know what happened are still around to tell about it.

Too often, history is written after those who made things happen are gone, leaving its pages filled with political and military heroes but neglecting the citizens for whom the others existed.

Books of this type seldom earn a profit, but a true record of our past is a contribution to our future.