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## Needed Information: A review of Kent Ruth's *Oklahoma Travel Handbook*

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## Needed Information

### A review of Kent Ruth's OKLAHOMA TRAVEL HANDBOOK

By Margie Cooke Porteus

If a person is an Oklahoma history buff, a trivia buff, or just interested in the world around him, there's something for him in Kent Ruth's OKLAHOMA TRAVEL HANDBOOK.

I've used it to settle an argument: There is too a town called Sand Springs. Uncle Jess used to work there." The book tells of oil-rich Charles Page, who built the town around a home he had established for widows and parentless children.

I used it when a map wasn't available and I wanted to know how large Roman Nose State Park is. It's a 540-acre park with a 55-acre lake and a 15-acre one plus a swimming pool, golf course, lodge, etc. All of this plus a thumb-nail sketch of Henry Roman Nose, for whom the park is named, is in the book.

I've used this book to answer an annoying question: "Johnny Bench is from Oklahoma, but where?" Binger, of course.

I've used it to thumb through during a leisure moment and discovered such interesting information as that found under **Seiling**: Carry

Nation, the hatchet-wielding prohibitionist, lived there in the early 1900's.

Listed alphabetically in the book are all proper place names found on Oklahoma maps. Under each name are the location, date of establishment, history, and information the author considered important or interesting. Information on Oklahoma City, for instance, uses parts of six pages, including several pictures; Ninnekah, population of thirty, is limited to six lines.

The handbook — which is really not what I think of as a handbook — is a book that travelers in Oklahoma should take along as they go through the state. As an instance, if they are traveling OK 37 and see the sign NILES, how else would they know that the area around Niles "has some of Western Oklahoma's finest off-trail sight-seeing?" If they didn't read the book, how else would travelers know that the country store at Orion is worth visiting or that workers in a plant in Pauls Valley can turn out two thousand frozen pecan pies an hour?

A quick look at the index will show that the book not only lists places, but can also be used as a quick reference for well-known Oklahoma people. Will Rogers has ten references; Chief Bacon Rind, only one.

The index also lists general subjects such as **railroads**, which has fifty-three entries plus a cross reference; **Amish Settlements** has three entries; **Archeology**, eight.

Kent Ruth, well known throughout Oklahoma as a writer of travel books and articles, was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1976.

OKLAHOMA TRAVEL HANDBOOK was published in 1977 by the University of Oklahoma Press. ■

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