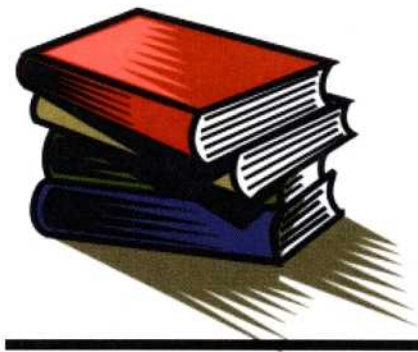


From the Bookshelf



Prairie City: The Story of an American Community

by Angie Debo

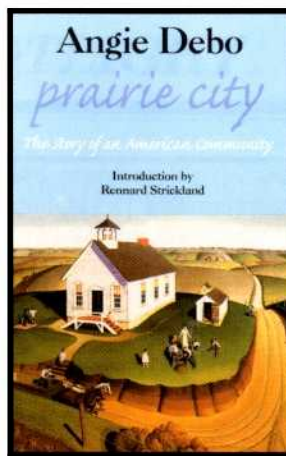
introduction by Rennard Strickland

University of Oklahoma Press
272 pages. 16 vintage photographs.
\$12.95 paperback.

The University of Oklahoma Press has done a great service in publishing a handsome paperback edition of Angie Debo's classic social history, *Prairie City: The Story of an American Community*. This fourth reprinting of the book, which originally was published by Alfred A. Knopf Inc. in 1944, is a worthy tribute to the compelling power of history told through the lives of ordinary people.

Angie Debo, who looked like a kindly grandmother, was a formidable scholar, an uncompromising researcher and a skillful advocate for the rights of Native Americans. In her long life of 98 years, she earned more national and international awards for historical scholarship than any other Oklahoman. Debo published 13 books during her career. Her most important and controversial work, *And Still the Waters Run*, was a documentary study of the theft and exploitation of Indian lands. It still is accepted in courts of law as the definitive record of that tragic episode in the nation's history. Ironically, in spite of her groundbreaking scholarship and prizewinning writing, she never was able to secure a teaching position at any Oklahoma institution of higher education.

Prairie City is the story of a small Oklahoma community from the tumultuous land run of 1889 through the end of World War II. Although the town closely resembles Debo's own



hometown, Marshall, Oklahoma, it is really America in microcosm. What happened in Prairie City has happened in every community. People are determined to tame the environment; they struggle against drought, pests, fires and floods. They love and laugh and raise families. They build businesses—some succeed, and some fail. There is patriotism, spirituality and neighborliness alongside racial prejudice, greed and suspicion. *Prairie City* is not traditional history but rather the gathering up of years of patient research in dry county records, old newspapers and legal documents sparked into life through the real life stories of men and women whom Debo had known in her own lifetime.

Written in a prose style that is closer to Willa Cather than to the typical academic historian, *Prairie City* contains the bone and sinew that make a good story so gripping and good historical writing such a joy.

—ANNE HODGES MORGAN

Baby Bird Portraits

by George Miksch Sutton

Watercolors in the Field Museum

by Paul A. Johnsgard

foreword by Benjamin W. Williams

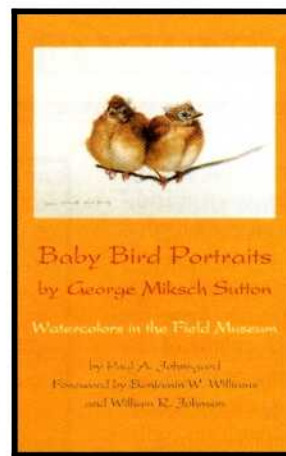
and William R. Johnson

University of Oklahoma Press

96 pages. 35 full-color plates.

\$19.95 hardback.

Devotees of the late—and truly great—George Sutton can be forgiven for initial mixed reaction to the publication of his marvelously endearing baby bird watercolors with narrative by another hand. How wonderful, we think, that 16 years



after his death, we have another book of Sutton paintings—most published for the first time. Too bad, we then lament, that his words cannot describe them for us, adding in his uniquely charming way his personal experiences with these fascinating creatures.

Fortunately officials of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, where this collection of Sutton's work resides, found a gifted and knowledgeable surrogate to supply the 19 "species accounts" that accompany the beautifully reproduced color plates. Paul Johnsgard, also an internationally renowned ornithologist, reveres the memory of "the kind and gentle artist I knew as 'Doc' Sutton" and successfully captures the flavor of Sutton's writings in his own descriptive passages.

Chicks, nestlings and fledglings were favorite Sutton subjects, "a natural creative outlet," Johnsgard suggests, "for his own gentle nature." These 35 paintings, many with penciled-in species identification and dates of execution, range from 1930-62—much of his long ornithological career. The collection was acquired by the Field Museum to be displayed in its Rare Book Room with original works by Sutton's friend and mentor, Louis Agassiz Fuertes.

When Sutton joined the University of Oklahoma faculty in 1952, his contemporaries already were ranking him with Audubon and Fuertes as one of the great American painters of bird life. His 30 years at OU—professionally active long beyond his 1968 "retirement"—cemented this position. All of his later books were published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

Sutton and his sister, Dorothy Fuller, bequeathed a great many of his paintings to the University of Oklahoma Foundation. They will be exhibited prominently in the new Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, formerly Stovall Museum, where he served as curator of birds throughout his long and distinguished OU career.

—CAROL J. BURR