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perspective is not unique to Pinson, I feel it irresponsible to subject new generations to misinformation that supports continued oppressions. As one contemporary Indian woman comments, "I hear much of this type stuff from my momma's generation, too. I suppose it is in some way a real representation of how many of the women felt during that time, that all that was white was right, and blaming being Indian for all the hardships in life. I really hate the kids to hear them talk like that."

Jeanette Bushnell

University of Washington

Choctaw Tales. Collected and annotated by Tom Mould. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004. 256 pages. \$50.00 cloth; \$20.00 paper.

Choctaw Tales is a compilation of traditional stories from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, collected and annotated by Tom Mould, with a foreword by Chief Phillip Martin. Mould has gathered material from previously published works, the earliest being a creation story published in 1758 by French traveler Antoine S. le Page du Pratz, from interviews he conducted over several years with tribal storytellers in eight communities, and from unpublished transcriptions and tape recordings in the tribal archives. The result is a volume that deftly navigates between the conventions of academic discourse and the needs of the local community.

Instead of a comprehensive selection of stories from multiple tribes and geographical locations, the scope is limited to the Mississippi Band of Choctaws. Pantribal anthologies, like the excellent *American Indian Myths and Legends* (1984) or *American Indian Trickster Tales* (1994), edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, allow audiences a panoramic view of the American Indian storytelling landscape, but such breadth comes at the expense of historic, cultural, and political particularity. By contrast, the tribally specific approach adopted by Mould redirects our gaze, giving us a look both at the artistic range of stories themselves and at the practice of storytelling in the community. A lengthy introduction provides a historical overview of this band of Choctaws, who remained in their traditional homelands after others of their tribe were removed to the Indian Territory in 1830. It also offers a detailed discussion of previously published collections of Choctaw stories, giving insight into the circumstances of the storytellers and collectors. Most important, the introduction situates the stories not simply as artifacts preserved from a tribal past but as part of a vibrant Choctaw cultural life in the present.

Following the introduction, the main text of *Choctaw Tales*, instead of proceeding straight to the stories, begins with two key sections that make this an indispensable reference for those interested in the material for the cultural data it yields or the verbal art it represents. The first section, "The Storytellers," includes biographical sketches of the thirty-five tellers represented in this volume, both past and present, with photos wherever possible.

The placement here is strategic; academic texts, whether from a literary or ethnographic perspective, are more commonly focused mainly on the stories, with information about the source relegated to an appendix. Craig Womack notes the effect of this kind of rhetorical distance in a Creek story published by John Swanton, who also collected in the 1920s several of the stories included in *Choctaw Tales*. Womack observes that Swanton's habit of effacing the narrator disconnects the story from a living community: "The tellings occur in a vacuum. They are artifacts; they have no bearing on contemporary concerns" (*Red on Red* [1998], 98). Instead, Mould brings the tellers to the foreground, emphasizing the place of storytelling for people in the community. A few are artists and performers. Many are teachers, educators, social workers, or health workers who combine storytelling practices with their work in the community. Others are grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles, who sit on front porches and tell of Choctaw life.

The next section is a cogent, insightful discussion of "The Genres of Choctaw Storytelling," explaining the rationale for organizing the stories that follow. In keeping with his emphasis on narrative as process rather than product, Mould follows recent theoretical shifts in the field of folklore, which have moved away from previous practices of classifying material according to predetermined—and supposedly universal—narrative categories. Mould relies on emic rather than etic terms, taking his cues from both explicit and implicit modes of classification in the practice of storytelling. He begins with *shukha anumpa*, a Choctaw generic term that literally means "hog talk," although "hogwash" is a closer English approximation (40). *Shukha anumpa* stories are of two varieties: animal tales and humorous stories. What ties them together is a matter of tone, since both are primarily intended to be funny. They are also what teller Henry Williams calls "make-up stories" (42). The dual implication of the Choctaw-inflected English refers both to stories that are made up and to the practice of making up stories. "Talk of the elders," his term for another genre that has no specific Choctaw equivalent, are stories, more serious in tone, that are passed down through generations. The distinction is more complex than a simple opposition between funny and serious, however; Mould notes that these stories reveal a temporal axis at work in Choctaw storytelling. *Shukha anumpa* may be told by anyone; the responsibility for telling certain stories belongs to the elders. These two main genres are further subdivided: creation stories and myths, supernatural legends and encounters, historical legends, prophecy, animal stories, and jokes. Mould's attention to a temporal axis is something that sets this volume apart from many of its kind. His classification system recognizes that Choctaw literature is not limited to ancient myths but rather spans past, present, and future.

At the heart of *Choctaw Tales* are the more than 130 stories gathered here, reprinted from works published in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, supplemented by a considerable amount of material never before published. Sixteen stories have both English and Choctaw versions, a bonus for Native-language speakers. The material is meticulously documented, with a separate annotation for each story. The notes follow the same order as the stories, making it easy to follow along, although it can be difficult to find a

single entry. Previous editors did not always include attributions to a particular teller, but whenever possible, Mould identifies the source and provides detailed information about when and under what circumstances the story was collected. He notes whenever his own interviews were interrupted, even the brief pauses when a tape needed changing. But the volume's organization never allows the painstakingly researched academic apparatus to get in the way of telling the story. Citations and explanations are kept apart from the main body of text so that the individual stories appear with only the title, teller's name, and date collected or published. As soon as the tellings begin, the editor recedes into the background and lets the Mississippi Choctaws have their say. Mould is more facilitator than interpreter, and in *Choctaw Tales* he is not "explaining" the storytelling practices of the community to outsiders so much as arranging a meeting where they can talk among themselves.

Both previously published and new stories have been transcribed with minimal editing, and the resulting array of voices and styles serves as an object lesson in the complexity of representing oral literature in writing. Mould points out that in recording Pisatuntema's version of "Na Losa Falaya" in 1910, ethnologist and archaeologist David Bushnell presents a summary description of the supernatural being called *na losa falaya* instead of any specific narrative, a strategy that downplays verbal artistry while foregrounding elements of a belief system. Other translations have called attention to the literary value of the recorded material but by substituting written literary conventions for oral ones. Charles Lanman's 1850 recording of "The Spectre and the Hunter," translated and written by two Choctaws educated in English, J. L. McDonald and Peter Pitchlynn, is an intricately crafted and polished work, but the added literary flourishes lack the immediacy and intimacy of oral literature. By contrast, the newly gathered material allows the vocal richness of performance to infuse the written version. This is especially evident in two tales told by Cynthia Clegg to an audience of young children, whose questions and responses become part of the story as well. Their participation not only enhances the drama but also underscores the role of storytelling in the community. As told by Harry Polk, "Half-Horse, Half-Man" demonstrates a lively rhythm and flair for drama and humor. Together the stories and storytellers express creativity, wit, and a rich tribal heritage.

In the preface Mould describes a small, spiral-bound notebook used by Estelline Tubby to refresh her memory before beginning a story. *Choctaw Tales*, he says, is meant to be a sort of "communal notebook," a resource for the Mississippi Band of Choctaws and interested outsiders alike (xx). Unlike so many anthropologists who have written entirely for academic audiences, Mould has gathered stories from a community and helped to shape them for use by that community. *Choctaw Tales* deserves both praise and emulation.

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