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**The Life of Okah Tubbee.** Edited by Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. xlv + 159 pages. \$19.95 Cloth.

I have looked forward to this book for ten years. It was ten years ago that I first read Okah Tubbee's autobiography, *A Thrilling Sketch of the Life of the Distinguished Chief Okah Tubbee . . . of the Choctaw Nation of Indians* (New York, 1848), edited by L. Leonidas Allen. It was a remarkable story, the story of a Natchez slave who won his freedom by his wit, his musical abilities, and upon the claim that he was actually the son of a great Choctaw chief. The book also provided a vivid sense of the "town" slaves. These people lived lives which were in many ways quite different from those of the plantation slaves. The slaves in the towns, for example, were sometimes apprenticed to trades. Tubbee was apprenticed to a blacksmith. The line between slave and free was not quite so sharply drawn in the towns; in Natchez it was a bit more blurred than elsewhere. And Tubbee eventually managed for himself fairly well to obliterate the line.

I found the book intriguing for other reasons as well. Tubbee was not literate, and so if this book is what it purported to be, it is one of the very earliest of the as-told-to Indian autobiographies. And I wondered, as have other readers, about Tubbee's claim. I wondered, too, about just how this book came about. Tubbee was not literate. How did Allen and Tubbee work together? To what degree did this autobiography embody Tubbee's own point of view?

Then, a few months later, a friend asked me if I knew that there was another edition of the book at the Library of Congress: *A Sketch of the Life of Okah Tubbee* (Springfield, Mass., 1848). This edition did very little to answer the questions posed by the first edition—and it added many more. In the first place, it was edited not by Allen, but by Tubbee's wife, Laah Ceil Tubbee. She had added to the material in the first edition, among other things, Tubbee's account of his years as an itinerant musician (c. 1840–1848). Allen's introduction appears again in Mrs. Tubbee's edition, but it is reparagraphed and reordered—and Mrs. Tubbee inserts whole new passages into this introduction, some of which make nonsense of the original. And then Mrs. Tubbee's edition has much more to do with music and the harmonizing of the races, and visions.

I found myself thinking what a crush of scholars there would be standing in line to answer such questions, eager to get out an authoritative edition had this awkward little autobiography been written by Shakespeare, say, or even Hemingway. Tubbee's autobiography, I thought, may not have been born to blush entirely unseen, but it did seem that it would waste its cruxes upon the desert air. Obviously, I had not counted upon the industry and the acumen of Daniel Littlefield.

First of all Littlefield leaves us in little doubt as to Tubbee's Indianness. Whatever Tubbee may himself have come to believe, it seems clear that he was born to a slave woman named Franky. As a child he was known as Warner. He was not an Indian.

Littlefield has also managed to untangle the editions of Tubbee's autobiography; indeed, he found two other, later editions—a lightly edited second 1848 Springfield, Mass., edition and an 1852 Toronto edition. According to Littlefield's entirely plausible argument, Mrs. Tubbee (who was herself an Indian) took down the episodes of her husband's life and sent these to Allen for editing and publication of the first edition. In the later editions, she was amanuensis and editor both. And by dint of research in contemporary newspapers, broadsides, court records, and county records—from Toronto to New Orleans, Natchez to Baltimore—Littlefield has managed to piece together a coherent historical and biographical context which allows us to understand much of what is obscure and puzzling in the autobiography as it comes to us from Tubbee's first editors.

Littlefield describes, for example, the lecture circuit which provided Tubbee with rather a good living during his best years. Tubbee would do some preaching among the Indians; and in the cities, "before the elite," he would play music, tell episodes of his life story, and lecture upon Indian subjects. The Indian autobiographer George Copway spoke on the same lecture circuit; indeed, Tubbee's editor, Allen, knew Copway well and introduced him to audiences in Washington during his lecture tour in 1847.

What Littlefield and Tubbee tell us about these lectures allows us better to understand this phenomenon of the Indian as edifying entertainment. Many Indians—and many Indian autobiographers—followed these lecture circuits. Charles Alexander Eastman, Luther Standing Bear, Joseph K. Griffis (Tahan), and Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins come most immediately to mind. In fact, several of the Indian autobiographers must have been

aided in their autobiographical endeavors by their lecturing. Littlefield points out that it is much easier to understand the production of such a book as Tubbee's if we remember that, while he may not have been literate, Tubbee had had a good deal of practice turning the events of his life into narratives acceptable to a literate audience.

Littlefield is even able to explain the changes in Tubbee's narrative from one edition to the next. He asks us to see that Tubbee's autobiographical project was intended to be promotional. In the first edition, Tubbee and his wife are anxious to legitimize his claim to be an Indian, to deny any possibility that he might be a mere "nigger"; the second 1848 edition describes his musical feats at just the time when his music was his best source of income. By the time of the 1852 edition, Tubbee was doctoring, curing cancer, cholera, toothache, chills, dyspepsia, diarrhea, and other ailments. He assured prospective patients that he worked his cures with good, ancient Indian knowledge of herbs and other medicines. And so the 1852 edition includes episodes having to do with his healing. And the 1852 edition includes numerous letters testifying of his cures.

Littlefield bases his edition on the 1852 edition. This is, of course, just what he should do, since it was Tubbee's and his wife's final version of the autobiography. But this is unfortunate in some ways. In the 1848 editions, we read little about his cures. On one occasion at the height of his musical career, he played upon a flute which he said had cost him but 37½ cents. Littlefield quotes a Washington newspaper account of the performance:

he commenced, producing the softest and sweetest sounds . . . and as he proceeded, he produced music between "me and myself," being a first and a second at the same time. The air warbled, as it were, above his fantastically comparisoned head, while the counterpart, with a rich fullness, lingered about the flute. He brought out from behind a screen, what he denominated a sauce-pan, being shaped like one. He blew into it and fingered the handle; and the piano forte . . . sweeter than the music of the birds, threw the audience into rapture. (page xxxi)

Tubbee played many instruments—and some of these he made according to directions given him in dreams. It is easier to like this dreamer-musician than it is the quack-curer of the 1852 edi-

tion. But, of course, they were the same man, a man who managed to escape slavery by blacksmithery, music—and autobiography. He was a man with a family to care for, a man who made the Indian identity he chose for himself serve many turns.

Littlefield's work is not on the same scale as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, but it conveys the same Blochian lesson as to the fascination and the *worth* of historical investigations into the lives of the obscure.

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**The Arapaho Indians: A Research Guide and Bibliography.** By Zdeněk Salzmänn. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. 128 pages. \$35.00 Cloth.

Zdeněk Salzmänn has compiled a list of published sources, government documents, archival manuscripts and records, and museum collections that pertain to the history and culture of the Arapaho Indians. Works on both the Arapaho of Wyoming and the Southern Arapaho of Oklahoma are included. In addition, the author gives a brief historical and ethnographic sketch of the Arapaho.

The bibliography of published works is extensive. It contains 702 items, including theses, dissertations, and some newspaper articles. Each entry is assigned a "content category" (for example, Contemporary Affairs, Culture Change, Dance, Kinship, and so on). A topical index follows, thirty-four categories in all. The topical index is useful, although the reader should not rely on it completely; a work whose title does not suggest a particular category may not be assigned to that category. For example, James Mooney's classic account of the Ghost Dance movement among the Arapaho is not listed under Culture Change, and Inez Hilger's monograph on Arapaho childlife, which includes material on foods and their preparation, is not listed under Food Preparation. On the other hand, the category Pictorial Documentation, not typically found in a bibliography, is very useful, including as it does works that contain photographs of Arapahos.

The list of public documents that contain information pertaining to the Arapaho includes documents in the Congressional