Ke-Ma-Ha: the Omaha Stories of Francis La Flesche

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REVIEWED BY MICHAEL HOBBS, NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

James Parins and Daniel Littlefield have put together an intriguing selection of mostly unpublished fiction written by Francis La Flesché in the early 1900s. La Flesché, after publishing one book of “narratives about his childhood experiences in mission school on the Omaha Reservation” (xi), began work on another collection that was never published. In Ke-ma-ha, Parins and Littlefield have gathered eighteen of the stories that La Flesché would likely have included in his second book. Aside from the stories, which alone would make this book worth reading, the editors have provided an excellent introductory sketch of La Flesché’s life as well as a textual history of his intended collection.

The stories are grouped into three parts: “Stories of Boyhood and Youth,” “Stories of Tradition,” and “Stories of the Recent Past and the Reservation.” Of the three, the first two provide the most satisfying reading, especially for those interested in depictions of the Omaha tribe’s oral tradition of storytelling and its folkways. In the last part, “Hal Baker” will interest readers studying the clash between whites and American Indians. Baker, a cattle rancher, represents the white man’s arrogant dismissal of American Indian culture when he says, “Perhaps we can find some way of helping our dusky brethren here toward a better way of living, although they seem to be perfectly contented to live in their own simple way” (116). Thanks to the editors’ skillful arrangement of the stories, their own simple way resonates with a bitingly angry irony, since La Flesché’s preceding stories provide a portrait of the Omaha Indians that is anything but “simple.”


REVIEWED BY BETH L. SAVAGE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Those of Little Note is a stimulating collection of essays concerning the inextricable interrelationship of gender, race, and ethnicity and the implications for revising approaches to historical archeology research accordingly. While analysis of class and ethnicity have a well-heeled record of study in historical and archeological investigations, the introduction of gender into the mix is a relatively new phenomenon. The authors included here claim that this development is absolutely