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Lost Creeks: Collected Journals. By Alexander Posey. Edited and with an introduction by Matthew Wynn Sivils. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 200 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

Reflecting on the critical implications of what Robert Warrior has termed the “ascendancy of the novel” in Native literary studies, critics in recent years have rediscovered and reengaged the vast archive of American Indian nonfiction writing scattered throughout the nation’s libraries, archives, and personal collections. As a result, numerous works have emerged that have dramatically influenced how we think about and practice Native literary studies today—from anthologies devoted exclusively to various forms of Native nonfiction; to scholarly collections of the complete writings of individual authors; to the collected writings, critical readers, and critical biographies of contemporary figures like Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Gerald Vizenor, and Vine Deloria Jr. Despite this momentum, much work remains, particularly with respect to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Matthew Wynn Sivils’s *Lost Creeks: Collected Journals* represents a significant contribution to the recovery of this period and affords for the first time a glimpse into the personal life and critical mind of one of Indian Territory’s most accomplished, if not enigmatic, figures. Culled from archival materials held in collections in Oklahoma and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the journals—including two biographical pieces—document an eleven-year period in Posey’s life, from his time as director of the Creek Orphan Asylum in 1897, through his work as translator and field agent for the Dawes Commission from 1905 to 1906, to a final entry recorded only twelve days before his death on 27 May 1908. Although much of the material is made available for the first time, some pieces were previously published but suffered from factual errors, transcription inaccuracies, and numerous editorial elisions. *Lost Creeks* thus seeks “to free Posey’s works of previous errors inserted by shoddy editors and to present this material in a manner meant to facilitate the study and enjoyment of this remarkable work” (46). To this point the volume succeeds brilliantly, complementing Daniel Littlefield’s biography, *Alex Posey: Creek Poet, Journalist, and Humorist* (1992), Littlefield’s and Carol A. Hunter’s publication of Posey’s *The Fus Fixico Letters: A Creek Humorist in Oklahoma* (2002), as well as Sivils’s own comprehensive collection of Posey’s poetry, *Songs of the Oktahutche: Collected Poetry* (2008).

Additionally, Sivils provides extensive contextual information—just more than half of the text’s 187 pages—that specialists in Indian letters and generalists will find useful. Scholars unfamiliar with Posey’s work, Creek national history, or the political climate in Indian Territory during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will find these materials particularly invaluable. Recounting a tense encounter between Posey and Creek resistance leader Chitto Harjo recorded in “Journal of the Creek Enrollment Field Party,” the preface usefully frames the collection through the complex politics of Allotment Era Indian Territory. Drawing extensively on Littlefield’s biography, supplemented by materials from Sivils’s own research, “The Life of Alexander Posey” offers a condensed biographical sketch that locates the writer firmly

within the historical, social, and political contexts of the Creek Nation. A literary introduction, which provides useful synopses of the journals and a brief publication history, also situates Posey's work within Creek oral and Euro-American intellectual traditions, discusses disciplinary trends responsible for the erasure of early Native writers in Native studies, and considers how engaging this body of work can inform and productively challenge contemporary literary critical practices. Researchers interested in furthering Posey scholarship will no doubt find the appendix enticing, as it lists the holdings of Posey's library held at Bacone University in Muscogee, Oklahoma.

As with other scholarly attempts to position Posey intellectually and politically, Sivils devotes some time in these introductory materials to the writer's ostensible ambivalence with respect to Creek national politics. Though a harsh critic of federal graft and a supporter of Indian political autonomy, Posey also advocated allotment and eventually served as translator and field agent for the Dawes Commission. Although he held great respect and admiration for Creek traditionalists like Harjo, Posey often represents them romantically and is, at times, "patronizing" and condescending to their attitudes about modernity (13). That he apparently profited from land speculation attending the allotment of Creek national lands further complicates Posey's position. Thankfully, Sivils resists the temptation to read this context as a Manichaeian conflict between progressives and traditionalists or to translate Posey's political ambivalence into a tortured, conflicted sense of his own Creek identity. Recognizing the complexity of Creek cultural and political history, emphasizing the impossible situation that allotment policies engendered in Indian Territory, and informed by Posey's journals, Sivils rightly notes that Posey's writing reflects "a figure not so much torn between loyalties as a man trying to pursue his dreams at one of the bleakest moments in Muscogee history" (8).

If the challenges of collecting, recovering, and making available archival materials has been one impediment to a nuanced understanding of Posey's work, Sivils also indicts critical tendencies that ignore early Native writing, focus on fiction at the expense of other genres, or privilege a given historical or cultural context above all others. Together, such practices produce and perpetuate "an incomplete picture of the development of American Indian letters" (48). This becomes infinitely problematic with respect to a bicultural, Western-educated figure like Posey. Citing Maria Kosminder's *Tricky Tribal Discourse: The Poetry, Short Stories and Fus Fixico Letters of Creek Writer Alex Posey* (1998) and Craig Womack's *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999), Sivils argues that where the former translates cultural mediation into an irresolvable identity crisis, the latter's privileging of Creek tribal-national contexts frustrates considerations of how writers like Posey engaged, imitated, and indigenized extranational artistic forms for their own purposes. Only by considering all influences, Sivils suggests, are we able to conclude that "while Posey's journals take the standard forms of the Euro-American examples he read, they remain texts that are uniquely American Indian, uniquely Muscogee" (54).

Although I appreciate Sivils's attention to the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches and sympathize with his attempt to walk this critical

tightrope, his representation of literary nationalism as a rigidly dogmatic approach seems misplaced. Collaborative texts like Jace Weaver, Womack, and Warrior's *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2005) and Womack and colleagues' *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (2008) evidence the breadth of concerns and the diversity of opinions and approaches capable of being incorporated into nationalist discussions. In many ways, Sivils approaches Posey's writings through a Creek nationalist frame, as he makes it clear that being Creek is tied more to family, culture, community, and place than to formal education, artistic forms, or intellectual ideas. In this sense, the problem isn't so much literary nationalism as it is nationalist frames that conceive of Indian nationhood and national identity in overly reductive terms.

The real strength of *Lost Creeks* is less Sivils's understanding of literary nationalism than his offering of these archival resources for scholarly examination. The volume's personal confessions, details of daily life in the Creek Nation, poetic reflections on the natural landscape to which Posey was so powerfully drawn, and critical commentaries on social and political issues in the Creek Nation and abroad humanize Posey in ways that his poetry and political tracts can't. They give us a glimpse not only into the mind of a great Indian intellectual but also into the thoughts and feelings of a husband and father, devoted friend, savvy businessman, and man greatly committed to his homeland and his people. If, as one critic notes, Posey stands as "one of the great semi-secrets of American literature," *Lost Creeks* will undoubtedly go a long way in making that secret known.

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Simon J. Ortiz: A Poetic Legacy of Indigenous Continuance. Edited by Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez and Evelina Zuni Lucero. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. 432 pages. \$27.95 paper.

Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez and Evelina Zuni Lucero's sincere tribute to Simon Ortiz's literary legacy is a testament to Ortiz's storied poetics, indigenous persistence, and generous heart. The scope of *Simon J. Ortiz: A Poetic Legacy of Indigenous Continuance* is ambitious. Ortiz's work—prose fiction, nonfiction, poetry, edited collections, and children's literature—from the 1970s to the present is assessed from varied frames of reference. Most critical collections based upon a single author's work are comprised solely of critical essays such as *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays* (2001), edited by Louise K. Barnett and James L. Thorson, or *Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook* (1999), edited by Hertha D. Sweet Wong, though Wong's work includes two short interviews with Erdrich and Michael Dorris. However, Brill de Ramírez and Lucero's *Simon J. Ortiz* has three sections: interviews with and personal essays by Ortiz, personal essays and poetry by Ortiz's friends and peers, and a selection of critical essays. Another distinction is that each section opens with a poem written specifically for Ortiz. The additions present new ways of thinking