

**THE POEMS OF ALEXANDER
LAWRENCE POSEY.
COLLECTED AND
ARRANGED, WITH A MEMOIR**

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The Poems of Alexander Lawrence Posey. Collected and Arranged, with a Memoir by
Alexander Lawrence Posey & Mrs. Minnie Posey & William Elsey Connelley

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**ALEXANDER LAWRENCE POSEY & MRS.
MINNIE POSEY & WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY**

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ALEX POSEY, THE CREEK INDIAN POET

THE POEMS
OF
Alexander Lawrence
Posey

*COLLECTED AND ARRANGED
BY*

MRS. MINNIE H. POSEY

*WITH A MEMOIR
BY*

WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY

Author of "Wyandot Folk-Lore," "The Ingalls Memorial Volume,"
"Quantrill and the Border Wars," etc.

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MEMOIR
OF
Alexander Lawrence
Posey

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I.

ALEXANDER LAWRENCE POSEY was a Creek Indian.

He was a poet of the first order, a humorist, a philosopher, a man of affairs. He achieved fame as an English-Indian dialect writer and journalist. He was the leading man of the Creeks and the one great man produced by the Confederacy known as the Five Civilized Tribes.

Posey was born in what is now McIntosh County, Oklahoma, eight miles west of Eufaula, August 3, 1873. He was accidentally drowned in the North Canadian river, near Eufaula, May 27, 1908.

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Posey's father was Lewis H. Posey, a Scotch-Irish native of the Indian Territory, who claimed to be one-sixteenth Creek blood. The elder Posey was born in the Creek country about the year 1841, and, his parents having died when he was a child, he was reared by a Creek woman who lived near Fort Gibson. It is quite probable that he had no Indian blood, for his children are officially enrolled as of half Creek blood by the Dawes Commission. His parents wandered into the Creek country from Texas, and little is now known of them. He was a jolly, mirth-loving man, who never lost an opportunity to perpetrate a practical joke. For some time he was a Deputy U. S. Marshal at Fort Smith. After his marriage to a Creek girl he established himself on a large ranch at Bald Hill, up the Canadian some eight miles west of Eufaula, where he lived until his death. He is said to have been the only white man of

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his time who could speak the Creek language perfectly. He attended a school taught by one Lewis Robertson, and there learned to read and write English, and he secured some knowledge of arithmetic. He is said to have been rather unruly at school, and it is related that when Robertson went away to get married he left his school in charge of Mrs. Mary Herod. She found it necessary to bring Posey up to the front and seat him where she could have an eye on him all the time, it being otherwise impossible to maintain any semblance of order in the school.

The mother of the poet is still living. She is the daughter of Pohos Harjo, but her English name was Nancy Phillips. She is a Creek of full and pure blood. She belongs to the Wind Clan, the strongest clan of the Creeks, and is a member of the Tuskegee Town or Band of the Muskogee Nation. She was married to Lewis H. Posey about October,

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1872, when but fifteen years old. Her famous son was born when she was in her seventeenth year.

The Harjo family is noted as one of big warriors, and is the oldest of the Muskogees or Creeks. It was also the largest as far back as we have any knowledge of this people, the tribal census of 1832 showing almost one-fourth of the tribe as members of it. This proportion diminished up to the time of making the final rolls, but even these show the family to be very large.

It is recorded of Mrs. Posey that she was a devoted mother, as most Indian women are. She gave her whole time to the comfort of her family, and saw to it that her children had at all times an abundance of wholesome food. If there was little left from the midday meal she would often bake an extra pan of bread, that they might have all they wished to eat until supper was served. She was a tidy

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housekeeper, and the dirt supposed to be indigenous to an Indian dwelling was not to be found in her home. She was careful of her personal appearance, and had the Indian fondness for decided colors. In hot weather she would frequently put cold water on her head and the heads of her children, believing it a protection from extreme heat. She is a very sincere and devout Christian and a member of the Baptist Church. Once she was in the house of a white woman who was dying, and who requested that some one should pray for her. Mrs. Posey offered the prayer, speaking in her own tongue, and those present always remembered the earnestness and eloquence of her appeal for the dying woman.

Concerning his parents I find this written by Posey:

"I was born near Eufaula, in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory, August 3, 1873. Both my parents were Creek Indians, but