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According to the authors, the collapse of the Mississippian world completely changed the geopolitical landscape of the Native South. Out of the large chiefdoms of the 1600s emerged the smaller, politically decentralized, and egalitarian nations of the 1700s and 1800s, such as the Creeks, Choctaws, Caddos, and Cherokees. But the seventeenth-century Shatter Zone did not completely destroy Mississippian culture or traditions. Despite the dramatic transformation, southern Native Americans maintained many cultural institutions, such as kinship systems, corn agriculture, and blood revenge. Nevertheless, disease, warfare, incorporation into an Atlantic World capitalist economy, and slavery all contributed to the shattering of the Mississippian world. According to the editors and authors of this collection, understanding this collapse is vital to understanding the creation of the American South. Or, as they put it, “understanding the transformation of the Southern Indians during these two hundred years is necessary for understanding why the history of the American South unfolded as it did” (424).

According to the editors, *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone* is not meant to be the definitive account of the collapse of the Mississippian world and the reformation of new Native societies in the 1700s. Rather, it is a starting point, a first step toward a broader and comprehensive account of the transformation of southern Native American societies from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. As with any collection of essays, there are some spatial and temporal gaps, and some important Native American societies are not discussed. In order to complete the picture of the Mississippian Shatter Zone, Africans and Europeans could be better incorporated into the framework. Nevertheless, this volume is an excellent collection of essays that will no doubt stimulate further discussion and research. The editors should be commended for inviting a variety of scholars, thus emphasizing a multi-disciplinary approach that is vital to understanding Native Americans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Too often, scholars ignore others not in their particular discipline. Moreover, the framework of the Shatter Zone is a very useful way to conceptualize the transformation of southern Native American societies from 1534 to 1730. Scholars will be building on the ideas in this volume and filling in the missing pieces of the Mississippian puzzle for years to come.

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**Medicine Trails: A Life in Many Worlds.** By Mavis McCovey and John F. Salter. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2009. 339 pages. \$21.95 paper.

This fascinating and valuable work is the autobiography of a Karuk Indian medicine woman who was born in 1933 and lived her entire life not far from where she was born on the Klamath River in northwestern California. The “many worlds” in the title refers not to places but rather to the different facets of her life, for besides being a medicine woman, Mavis McCovey raised

five children and worked as a community health representative and a nurse. In this book she not only tells her own life story but also provides a wealth of information on local Indian culture, social customs, folklore, and history dating back to the 1830s. These things are described in intimate detail from a contemporary Native American perspective, and the style of the prose is so natural that it seems as if Mavis is actually speaking to you in person as you read. Often humorous in an ironical way, she explains things with considerable objectivity and detachment. The down-to-earth tone makes it all the more compelling when she recounts a history marked by genocide and makes her seem perfectly credible in speaking about the alternative reality she experiences on “the other side” in her activities as a medicine woman.

Coauthor John F. Salter deserves much credit for preserving the flavor of Mavis’s speech while organizing many hours of conversation into a unified text with seamless continuity. His introduction states that the book resulted from about seventy-five hours of taped conversations between him and Mavis that were recorded from 2004 to 2008. With family business and other interruptions, it typically took five or six hours to produce three hours of recorded material. Salter would then transcribe the tapes and edit the texts in order to eliminate repetitions, recombine sentences, and generally do what was needed to transform the conversational language into written form. Mavis would then review the edited version, and Salter would modify the text accordingly. A former student of the renowned anthropologist Gregory Bateson (d. 1980), Salter received his doctorate for a dissertation on the social ecology of the Salmon and Klamath rivers area and has worked intermittently for the Karuk tribe of California since 1968. He states that this collaboration was conducted with solid support from the tribe, and I do not feel Salter is exaggerating when he writes, “Young Karuk [people] repeatedly tell me that they are waiting to read this book, which they are confident will open their eyes to important aspects of local history and their own culture” (xv).

This book will have great appeal for general readers because there are many levels on which it is interesting from a humanistic perspective. Mavis overcame many personal hardships and tragedies in her life and yet finally emerges as a life-affirming force in her family and community. She also recounts a history marked by genocide and continued bureaucratic repression concerning the use of dangerous herbicides by logging companies in the area. Although serious and thought-provoking in these respects, the book is also peppered throughout with humorous asides like the story of one old guy who liked his red underwear so much that he wore them on the outside for clothes or when Mavis (jokingly) explains male purification customs by saying that the men used any excuse they could think of in order to avoid sleeping with their wives (40, 162).

Most importantly, the book makes a significant contribution in the areas of anthropology, folklore, California history, and Native American studies. It contains a wealth of facts, observations, and interpretations that are not found in any other sources concerning the Indians of this area—including the closely related Yurok and Hupa tribes as well as the Karuk or “Karak,” as sometimes identified in the literature.

Classic anthropological studies in this area were conducted with the assumption that these cultures would soon be extinct, and thus they focused mainly on documenting the Native cultures as they existed before whites invaded the area around 1850. This “salvage ethnography” preserved extensive information concerning the precontact cultures—some of the last in North America to be influenced by contact with whites, but (with some significant exceptions) the early anthropologists basically ignored the actual lives of Indian people they interviewed during the early 1900s and often did not even identify them by name in published writings.

*Medicine Trails* succeeds beautifully at documenting the other side of the story. It contains information on many subjects that anthropologists did not cover and also shows that Indian people in this area were capable of preserving their own history in oral tradition even during the most difficult decades when the anthropologists had been predicting their extinction. In this regard it should also be noted that—far from becoming extinct—Native American populations in California increased greatly during the twentieth century, and that tribes of this area have enjoyed an extraordinary renaissance in recent decades. Since the 1970s the Yurok, Hupa, and Karuk peoples have reestablished ceremonies and other cultural practices that were previously dormant for generations.

The book gives particularly detailed information on medicine making in the High Country and other similarly esoteric subjects, but readers who want to understand these things more deeply should also be aware of earlier publications such as *Yurok Narratives* by Robert Spott and Alfred Kroeber (1942). This book is comparable in many respects, for Spott—like Mavis—was an exceptionally knowledgeable and articulate person, and the texts give much historical information about events that occurred from 1820 to 1890. However, important differences exist between the two books with respect to the religious beliefs and practices they describe. Like many knowledgeable Indian people I interviewed during the late 1970s, Mavis refers often to the Creator or Great Spirit when explaining a belief system that is basically monotheistic. By contrast, the earlier religion revealed by Spott was animistic and based on the concept of prehuman beings and other spiritual entities that occupied the landscape and continued to influence human activities. Much information on this can be found in my book *Cry for Luck: Sacred Song and Speech among the Yurok, Hupa, and Karok Indians of Northwestern California* (1992). This also contains references to all sources available at the time it was published.

It bothered me that *Medicine Trails* did not contain references to other published sources (with one exception) or directions for further reading, because the literature is extensive, and I do not believe anyone can understand contemporary spiritual life without knowing more about the earlier beliefs and practices from which it derived. The memoir or autobiography may be an ideal vehicle for expressing an insider’s perspective, but it has inherent limitations for cultural understanding because it only represents the knowledge and viewpoint of one person. The need for references is particularly important in this case because of the transformations due to Christian influence and because Indian cultures of this area were (and continued to

be) extremely individualistic. As Mavis would be the first to tell you, Indian people on the river have many diverse opinions about things, and sometimes the person you least expect can teach you a lot.

A single example will show the practical value that references could provide. Mavis makes some comments about the Jump Dance that are undoubtedly true from her perspective but are likely to confuse the reader because she does not clarify the distinction between the public event and the esoteric aspects of the ritual that the public does not observe (24–25). An annotation would be useful here in order to provide more details and might also inform the reader that other Indian people from this area have described the purpose of the Jump Dance differently. At the very least there should be references to sources in which readers could find more information about the Jump Dance.

The publisher of *Medicine Trails* has been a pioneer and leader in books representing the Native American perspective for Indian people of California for many years, and it is possible that they wanted to avoid the academic tone that systematic use of annotations and references would have brought to the project. I feel that some attempt should have been made to recognize the published sources and address the difficult problem of reconciling contemporary beliefs and practices with earlier ones. I also think it was a bad decision not to include an index. A subject index would have been useful for anyone intending to use the book in future research.

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Society for Ethnomusicology

**Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance.** By Gerald Vizenor. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 336 pages. \$30.00 paper.

This book is a collection of thirteen essays chosen from Vizenor's lectures, publications, and original work produced during the course of the last twenty years. They range from a consideration of Native aesthetics to legal issues, politics in the university, historical issues, personal experiences, and Vizenor's mixed-blood identity. These topics are blended seamlessly in each essay, which is a characteristic of all of Vizenor's works: the linking of disparate and destabilizing concepts, characters, events, and language, thus creating his own literature of resistance. The singular, most important aspect of this collection of essays is its accessibility. It is instructive and thought-provoking enough for the reader familiar with Vizenor's work and appropriate for the first-time reader as well. Vizenor's use of cultural, literary, and philosophical references alone provides an education for all readers. It is actually a good introduction to the various themes in Vizenor's fiction and nonfiction and can be the starting point for a study of Vizenor. Although the themes are somewhat repetitive, they are not redundant; they serve to remind and acclimate the reader to Vizenor's critical theories and his construction of a critical vocabulary with which the reader may not be familiar.