



## IN FOCUS

## The Dawes Act

**I**N 1887, PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO DEMANDS FOR REFORM OF U.S. TREATMENT OF Native Americans, Congress passed the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act. The Act divided tribal lands into plots to be allotted to individual Indian owners and decreed that only Indians agreeing to private property ownership (and rejection of communal ownership) would be granted U.S. citizenship. Whatever the intentions of the reformers who backed it, the Act's chief result was the further devastation of tribes and tribal cultures and the further reduction of land remaining in Native American hands, with unallotted land opened up to white settlers. As Mark Rifkin has argued, the Dawes Act also forced American Indians into family and gender structures that resembled the patriarchal model idealized in American law and culture; the insistence on private property devastated Native cultural models under which gender roles and family structures looked radically different.

John Milton Oskison's short story "The Problem of Old Harjo" highlights the impasse between American and Native cultures by focusing on the family. Portraying a loving Indian family that comprises two wives and one husband, and a Christian missionary torn between U.S. law and custom and respect for this family, Oskison's story brilliantly unsettles the status of "the American" family as a viable model for all Americans, or for the nation. Written for Native people in the Indian Territory that the Dawes Act carved out, Alexander Posey's *Fus Fixico* letters reflect on aspects of life there and examine the question of whether or not the Territory should become a state (it did—the state of Oklahoma—in 1907). While the Dawes Act does not have direct bearing on other Native selections in Volume C, they situate the Act and its effects within the larger context of the genocide waged against Native peoples and cultures and the resilience as well as the losses that Natives peoples' lives entailed.

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 U.S. CONGRESS
 

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*from The Dawes Act (1887)*

An Act to provide for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians on the various reservations, and to extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in all cases where any tribe or band of Indians has been, or shall hereafter be, located upon any reservation created for their use, either by treaty stipulation or by virtue of any reservation or executive order setting apart the same for their use, the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, authorized, whenever in his opinion any reservation or any part thereof of such Indians is advantageous for agricultural and grazing purposes, to cause said reservation, or any part thereof, to be surveyed, or resurveyed if necessary, and to allot the lands in said reservation in severalty to any Indian located thereon in quantities as follows:

To each head of a family, one-quarter of a section;

To each single person over eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section;

To each orphan child under eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section;

and  
To each other single person under eighteen years now living, or who may be born prior to the date of the order of the President directing an allotment of the lands embraced in any reservation, one-sixteenth of a section....

[A]t any time after lands have been allotted to all the Indians of any tribe as herein provided, or sooner if in the opinion of the President it shall be for the best interests of said tribe, it shall be lawful for the Secretary of the Interior to negotiate with such Indian tribe for the purchase and release by said tribe of such portions of its reservation not allotted ... *Provided however*, That all lands adapted to agriculture, with or without irrigation so sold or released to the United States by any Indian tribe shall be held by the United States for the sale purpose of securing homes to actual settlers and shall be disposed of by the United States to actual and bona fide settlers only tracts not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres to any one person, on such terms as Congress shall prescribe, subject to grants which Congress may make in aid of education; *And provided further*, That no patents shall issue therefor except to the person so taking the same as and for a homestead, or his heirs, and after the exploration of five years of occupancy of said lands so taken as a homestead, or any contract touching the same, or lien, thereon, created prior to the date of such patent, shall be null and void.... And if any religious society or other organization is now occupying any of the public lands to which this act is applicable, for religious or educational work among the Indians, the Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized to confirm such occupation to such society or organization, in quantity not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres in any one tract.... That upon the completion of said allotments and the patenting of the lands to said allottees, each and every member of the respective bands or tribes of Indians to whom allotments have been made shall have the benefit of and be subject to the laws, both civil and criminal, of the State or Territory in which they may reside; and no Territory shall pass or enforce any law denying any such Indian within its jurisdiction the equal protection of law.

And every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States to whom allotments shall have been made under provision of this act, or under law or treaty, and every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States who has voluntarily taken up . . . his residence separate and apart from any tribe of Indians therein, and has adopted the habits of civilized life, is hereby declared to be a citizen of the United State. . . . And hereafter in the employment of Indian police, or any other employees in the public service among any of the Indian tribes or bands affected by this act, and where Indians can perform the duties required, those Indians who have availed themselves of the provisions of this act and become citizens of the United States shall be preferred.

...[N]othing in this act contained shall be so construed to affect the right and power of Congress to grant the right of way through any lands granted to an Indian, or a tribe of Indians, for railroads or other highways, or telegraph lines, for the public use, or condemn such lands to public uses, upon making just compensation.

[N]othing in this act shall be so construed as to prevent the removal of the Southern Ute Indians from their present reservation in Southwestern Colorado to a new reservation by and with consent of a majority of the adult male members of said tribe.

Approved, February 8, 1887.  
United States Congress

## ALEXANDER LAWRENCE POSEY (CREEK) 1873–1908

Alexander Posey's life was cut short on May 27, 1908. At the age of thirty-five, the Creek writer drowned while crossing the flooded Oktahutché River. It was barely a year since Indian Territory and the tribal governments within it had been dissolved. Born in the Creek Nation, Posey died in the brand-new state of Oklahoma. The end of tribal governments and the advent of statehood were long, bitterly contested transitions. As a poet, politician, and political satirist, Posey had a strong and complicated voice in the deliberations.

Often called a "progressivist" because he believed that Native peoples needed at least partially to assimilate to white culture in order to survive, Posey criticized "traditionalists," calling them "pull back" Indians who couldn't possibly survive in the imminent future. Nevertheless, he respected older Creeks who remembered another way of life. Posey has been somewhat reviled among Creeks for his participation in the bureaucracy surrounding the dissolution of tribal government and for his subsequent activities as a real estate speculator in formerly tribal land. However, he is recognized as having penned some of the most cogent and far-sighted critiques of both that bureaucracy and the greed for Indian land. Posey lived during a complicated period of change for the Creek Nation, and his motivations were never simple. They are still difficult to decipher, perhaps because they are so often couched in humor.

Posey's mother was half Creek and half Chickasaw. Because she was from the tribal town of Tuskegee and Creek clan membership follows matrilineal lines, Posey himself was a Wind Clan member of Tuskegee. Although Posey's father was born to white parents, he called himself Creek. He was raised in the Creek Nation from the time he was orphaned, he spoke Creek fluently, and he was a member of the Broken Arrow tribal town. Young Alexander spoke only Creek; when he was fourteen, his father insisted that he speak English and punished him if he spoke in his native language. From that time, Posey received a formal education, including three years at Bacone Indian University in Muskogee. His mixed-blood status, his estrangement from the Creek language, and his education fostered his ambivalence toward Creek traditionalism; this ambivalence separated him from his own culture but gave him a powerful critical voice within it.

Posey began writing while a student at Bacone. Influenced by the conventional English forms he studied in school, Posey's poetry pays homage to Whitier, Longfellow, Kipling, and Tennyson. Naturalists who wrote in English, like Thoreau and John Burroughs, also influenced the aspiring Creek poet. A lover of nature, Posey was passionately attached to the Tulledega Hills, where he spent his childhood. Not satisfied with the English language's abilities to translate Creek experience, Posey tried to replicate in his English poetry the rhythms and cadences of the musical Creek language. His poetry achieved moderate success, regularly appearing in Indian Territory publications. In 1900 and 1901, a few poems appeared in publications in the East and Midwest.

Soon after leaving school, Posey became involved in Creek politics. His leadership skills, intelligence, and personal charm proved highly useful to the struggling Creek Nation. Elected to the Creek National Council at age twenty-two, he would continue his political involvement until his death. By the turn of the century his interest in poetry had waned, and in 1902 he started a career as a journalist, setting the stage for his most effective writing. As owner and editor of the *Eufoala* (Okla.) *Indian Journal*, Posey achieved national prominence in the United States for establishing the first Indian-published daily newspaper. More important, he was recognized for comic letters written by his fictional persona, Fus Fixico (Heartless Bird), which he printed in the *Indian Journal* as substitutes for editorials. A full-blooded Creek, Fus Fixico wrote to the paper about his everyday life or sent in transcriptions of speeches that he had heard the Creek medicine man Hotgun deliver to an audience of other old men—Kono Harjo, Tookpaŋka Micco, and Wolf Warrior. The monologues are in dialect and achieve a wickedly satirical perspective on Creek culture and politics.

Sometimes read as expressions of nostalgia for a vanishing way of life, the Fus Fixico letters are also cogent political commentary aimed at influencing Indian Territory, Oklahoma, and United States politics. Across the years when Posey wrote and published the Fus Fixico letters, politics in Indian Territory was a veritable Gordian knot. The Curtis Act of 1898, which decreed that Indian land held in common by tribal governments be broken up and allotted in small portions to individual tribal members, was being implemented, and debates about statehood were raging. Not only were Native peoples ambivalent about statehood, there was a very real possibility that Oklahoma would be admitted as two states—one white, one Indian. Posey was a strong advocate of the two-state proposal and was secretary of the 1905 convention to organize Sequoyah, the proposed Indian state. The Fus Fixico letters satirized every aspect of the debate. Posey was frequently approached by U.S. newspaper syndicates that wanted to publish his Fus Fixico letters nationally. He refused permission. His political satires were intended for Indian Territory readers, and he knew that their dialect and humor would suffer in translation for a national audience that knew little of the intricacies of Indian Territory politics.

Dialect literature was hugely popular at the turn of the twentieth century. Posey's father liked to tell stories in black dialect, and Alexander Posey's favorite poet was Robert Burns, famous for his Scottish dialect poems. Posey read the dialect literatures of poet James Whitcomb Riley and Paul Laurence Dunbar and dialect humorists such as Josh Billings and Max Adler. He was doing far more than simply catering to U.S. national taste, however. He switched from poetry to dialect writing as he became more politically active, and his dialect writings represent Creek life more effectively than does his poetry. Though his characters speak Creek English, the dialect writings are representations of Creek oral culture. Posey had no patience for writers who wrote dialect simply because it was fashionable: "Those cigar store Indian dialect stories . . . will fool no one who has lived 'six months in the precinct.' Like the wooden aborigine, they are the product of a white man's factory, and bear no resemblance to the real article."

Posey was mourned throughout the Indian Territory after his premature death. He remains a complicated figure in Creek culture, remembered with mingled respect and suspicion. Two years after his death, his wife collected and

published much of his poetry, but his Fus Fixico letters remained uncollected until the 1990s.

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#### PRIMARY WORKS

Edward Everett Dale, ed., *The Journal of Alexander Lawrence Posey*, January 1 to September 4, 1897, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 45 (Winter 1967–1968); Minnie Posey, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Lawrence Posey*, 1910; Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. and Carol A. Patter Hunter, eds., *The Fus Fixico Letters*, 1993.

### Ode to Sequoyah<sup>1</sup>

The names of Waitie and Boudinot—?

The valiant warrior and gifted sage—

And other Cherokees, may be forgot,

But thy name shall descend to every age;

The mysteries enshrouding Cadmus' name<sup>2</sup>

Cannot obscure thy claim to fame.

5

The people's language cannot perish—nay,

When from the face of this great continent

Inevitable doom hath swept away

The last memorial—the last fragment

10

Of tribes,—some scholar learned shall pore

Upon thy letters, seeking ancient lore.

Some bard shall lift a voice in praise of thee,

In moving numbers tell the world how men

Scoffed thee, hissed thee, charged with lunacy!

15

And who could not give 'nough honor when

At length, in spite of jeers, of want and need,

Thy genius shaped a dream into a deed.

By cloud-capped summits in the boundless west,

Or mighty river rolling to the sea

20

<sup>1</sup>Sequoyah (George Guess) invented the 86-symbol Cherokee syllabary.

<sup>2</sup>Brothers and leaders of the Cherokee Treaty Party, they supported voluntary Cherokee removal from Georgia to what would become Indian Territory in the West, leading voluntary emigration in 1837. Stand Watie (1806–1871) became a Confederate general. Elias

Boudinot, who changed his name from Chuck Watie, edited the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Born in 1802, he was assassinated in 1838 by the Anti-Treaty Party headed by tribal chief John Ross. Volume B contains his "Address to the Whites."

<sup>3</sup>Mythological figure to whom origination of the Greek alphabet was attributed.

Where'er they footsteps led thee on that quest,  
Unknown, rest thee, illustrious Cherokee!<sup>4</sup>

1899

### Hotgun on the Death of Yadeka Harjo<sup>1</sup>

"Well so," Hotgun he say,  
"My ol'-time frien', Yadeka Harjo, he  
Was died the other day,  
An' they was no ol'-timer left but me.

"Hortulk Emathla he

Was go to be good Injin long time 'go,  
An' Woxie Harjoche  
Been dead ten years or twenty, maybe so.

5

All had to die at las',  
I live long time, but now my days was few;  
'Fore long poke-weeds an' grass  
Be growin' all aroun' my grave-house, too."

10

Wolf Warrior he listen close,  
An' Kono Harjo pay close 'ention, too;  
Tookpafka Micco he almos'  
Let his pipe go out a time or two.

15

1908

### Fus Fixico's Letter 44, April 29, 1904

#### Eufaula [Creek Nation] Tribune

[Hotgun and his friends are discussing the sale of Creeks' and other tribes' land in Indian Territory after the General Allotment Act (1887) and the Curtis Act (1898) effected this sale as well as the end of tribal government. Posey's four fictional "traditional" Indians, all elderly, are disturbed both by dishonest white land brokers and by Indians' enthusiasm for whites' commodities.]

"Well, so," Hotgun he say, "the Injin he sell land and sell land, and the white man he give whiskey and give whiskey and put his arm around the Injin's neck and they was good friends like two Elks out for a time."

"Well, maybe so," Tookpafka Micco he say, "the white man was cut it out when the Injun was all in."  
Then Hotgun he make the smoke b'il out a his pipe good and answer Tookpafka Micco, "Well, so the Injin was had to go up against it to learn and, maybe so, after while he catch on, same like the white man and go to Mexico and bunco the greaser."<sup>1</sup>

Then Hotgun he take another puff and go on and say, "Well, so like I start to say history was repeat itself. The Injin he sell his land in the old country (Alabama) and he sell his land in Injin Territory and was had a good time out here like back there in olden times. But back in old country he was live different, 'cause he was sit on a long chair like a fence rail—but he was no mugwump.<sup>2</sup> Now the Injin was sit on a chair that was had fore legs and hind legs too, like a oxen, and also a cushion soft like moss. He was got civilized and called the old chair a bench. He wear a white shirt now and black clothes and shoes that was look like a ripe musk melon. Then he was buy bon bons for his papoose and drop-stitch stockings for his squaw and part his name in the middle, J. Little Bear.

"Then the white man he tell the Injin, 'Well so your wagon was out of date and you better buy you a fine buggy; or, maybe so, a fine surrey.' The Injin he grunt and say, 'Well, so let's see um.' Then the white man he say, 'Well, so I sell it cheap like stealing it—sell it to Injin the fine buggy and harness and all for hundred and fifty dollars. That was cheap, 'cause Injin he was sell land and got it lots a money and was out of date riding on two horse wagon.' Then the Injin he look at fine buggy a long time and make good judgment and buy um. His little pony mare team look mighty weak and woolly and got colt, but they was pulled the fine buggy home all right. Then when the Injin was got home he was put the fine buggy under a tree to look at like fine painting."

(Tookpafka Micco and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was look in the fire and spit in the ashes and pay close attention like they was interested.)

Then Hotgun he go on and say, "Well, maybe so about three years from now the starch was go out a the Injin's white shirt and make it limber like a dish rag, and his black suit was fade like the last rose a summer and his breeches was get slack like a gunny sack, and his big toe was stick through his tan shoes like a snag in Deep Fork,<sup>3</sup> and his fine buggy was tied together with bailing wire and his old fillies was made good crow bait pulling the fine buggy to stomp dances." Then, Hotgun he go on and say, "Maybe so the Injin was awakened up to his sense a duty and earn his bread by the sweat a his brow like a good republican or maybe so a democrat."

And Tookpafka Micco he say, "Well, maybe so he be a middle of a the roader."

<sup>4</sup>Sequoyah disappeared while looking for Cherokeees who had gone to Mexico rather than "remove" to the West.

<sup>1</sup>Posey's tribute to the much-respected Yadeka Harjo, who had died at an advanced age, is spoken by the fictional central character of

his *Fus Fixico Letters*. Hotgun, several other figures cited in the poem also appear in the *Letters* (see next selection). Posey published this poem in the *Eufaula (Oklahoma) Indian Journal* of January 24, 1908.

<sup>2</sup>The reference is to the Creeks' 1832 agreement to give up their land in the Southeast and move west.

<sup>3</sup>Postbellum Republican Party reformers, whom Hotgun casts as compromisers, or "fence-sitters."

<sup>3</sup>The Deep Fork River served as the southeastern boundary separating the Creek and Choctaw nations. A snag: a tree stump or other item protruding from the river's surface.

Then Hotgun he say, "Well, so they was only two sides to a clapboard and it's the same way in politics. The Injin couldn't cut any ice or raise any softy sitting on top a the rail looking at the crabgrass."<sup>4</sup>

(Then Tookpaŋka Micco and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was grunt and spit in the ashes again and say, "Well, so we vote it straight.")

1904

### Fus Fixico's Letter 45, May 7, 1904

"Well, so," Hotgun he say, "It was time to go barefooted and quote poetry and spark some widow woman that was had a good family history on the *Loyal Creek roll*!<sup>1</sup> 'cause every evening after sun down the frogs was give a concert, like the Muskogee Merchants Band, and the old plow filly was picking up on the green grass and scattering lots a dead hair where she wallows."

(Tookpaŋka Micco and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was grunt and look way off towards the creek like they want to go fishing.)

Then Hotgun he smoke slow and look at red ants on the ground, go on and say, "Well, so I don't know what the newspapers was had to fill up on, 'cause Crazy Snake was made a assignment and gone out of business and retired to cabin to fix up the fence around his softy patch and clean out his old spring and start over again."

"Well, so," Tookpaŋka Micco he say, "the newspapers could finds lots a stuff to fill up on, like the removal a the restrictions so the niggers could squander they land for a blue sun of clothes and rubber-tired buggy and make room for progress, while the Injin he look on and learn a good object lesson."<sup>2</sup>

Then Wolf Warrior he join in and say, "Well, so the newspapers was had lots other news 'sides that to fill up on, like when Chief Porter go to St. Louis and get married and Secretary Its Coked was approved the matrimony, or maybe so, when Muskogee was had the state capital and all the railroads and street car lines, and all the senators and congressmen and members a the legislature and judges and road overseers and coroners, notary publics and things like that."<sup>3</sup>

Hotgun he look at the red ants and smoke a long time and say, "Well, so all that kind a thing was looked good in print, but it was not made spifty

<sup>4</sup>Hotgun is saying that the middle of the road position that Tookpaŋka Micco suggests is the equivalent of the *Mugwumps* fence-sitting.

<sup>1</sup>Hotgun is proposing that he court a widow whose family is on the list of Creeks loyal to the Union during the Civil War. At the time of this writing, it appeared as if the loyal Creeks might receive a cash settlement in payment for Civil War damages. The fictive

widow would then be in line for a small amount of money.

<sup>2</sup>Many freedmen who had received allotments after the Civil War lost their land when restrictions on sale were lifted.

<sup>3</sup>Wolf Warrior is referring to the possibility that Muskogee would become the state capital if Indian Territory were to become its own state.

reading like bad news from Hickory Ground, where the Snakes was uprising and throwing tomahawks at the pale face prisoner for practice."<sup>4</sup>

"But," Hotgun he go on and say, "like I start to say, Crazy Snake he was called his people together and made a motion to give it up.

"He says, 'Well, so I was want to advise you they was no hope—and no provisions neither. So we better give up and be reconciled, like the Chinese.<sup>5</sup> The United States was break treaty and break treaty, and the white man he has come from Arkansas and come from Arkansas and stay and write back to our folks and say this was the garden spot a the earth and you better come out here before it's all gone. So that way the country was settled up and settled up, and they was no game left but swamp rabbits. We couldn't had any fish fry and stomp dance like in olden time. The white man he was make town and make town and build railroad and build railroad and appoint federal judge and appoint federal judge to say it was all right and we couldn't help it. So if we was had a council to talk it over, the marshal and soldiers was arrest us for trying to kill the president and put us in jail to catch consumption and maybe so lice. So I was make a motion to give it up and see what become of us anyhow.' Everybody was give a big grunt and the motion was carried." (Tookpaŋka Micco and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was look mighty sorry.)

"Well, so," Hotgun he go on and say, "that was made me think about the old chief that was want to die long time ago, because he knew too much. The old chief he think he learn everything and maybe so he better lay down and die. So he was called his warriors around his buffalo hide and made 'em long talk about how to run the government when he die. Then he called for his pipe so he could die in peace, and was ask a little boy to get him a coal of fire. The little boy he go to the fire and bring the coal on some ashes in his hand instead of a chip or maybe so bark. The old chief he was watch him do it and jumped up and say, 'Well, so I was a damn fool and was had lots of sense to learn, maybe so from a little boy.'"

1904

### Fus Fixico's Letter 46, May 13, 1904

Well, so Hotgun and Tookpaŋka Micco they was talked politics and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was paid close attention and grunt.

"Well, so," Hotgun he say, "they was lots a good political timber decaying 'cause we didn't had statehood, and maybe so some of it was rotten enough to make fox fire and lead Bony Parts a long chase for nothing."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Hotgun is distinguishing between news that looks good and news that is interesting; "progress" is boring, whereas insurrection is thrilling. Hotgun is suggesting that the possibility of resistance is over, though, in fact, the Snakes and Chitto Harjo were not acquiescent.

<sup>5</sup>China was divided into "spheres of influence" by European nations.

<sup>1</sup>Fox fire is the dim light cast by decaying wood. The implication is that Charles J. Bonyparte, who was sent to Indian Territory to investigate allegations of fraud by federal agents, was not able to discover the truth.

(Tookpaŋka Micco and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was grunt soft and study about it, while Hotgun was filled his pipe so he could warm up to the occasion.)

"But, maybe so," Hotgun he go on and say, "we could afford to let the timber go to waste, 'cause they was plenty more where that was come from 'sides the improved variety that was shipped down here from the states on fifty years trial."

And Tookpaŋka Micco he say, "Well so who was the most prominent before the people anyhow and was stirred up the most feeling?"

And Hotgun he say, "Well, so I think they was most prominent among themselves and the people didn't had nothing to do with it and was innocent. It was like this way: These politicians was get together like wolves when they was get hungry and want to forage—and the wolf in front was Plenty So Far.<sup>2</sup> He was sit 'round on the knolls a Cooweescowee prairie looking for signs till he was had big callouses on his hips. When congress was get in session and was busy with statehood bills and didn't had no time to look after the Injun, then Plenty So Far he was sit down on top of a knoll and look 'way off and howl lonesome. Pretty soon Judge My Fee hear him 'way down on Kendall Heights and howl back and pretty soon come to him with lots a black wolves from Cane Creek. Then maybe so the constable 'way down about Eufaula come and join with lots a cayotes [sic]. Then maybe so directly the postmaster down to Okmulgee come trotting up with a big following. So that way they was come to him from Wildcat and Twine till Plenty So Far could look back over his shoulder and see a big pack behind so hungry they couldn't hardly stay together."<sup>3</sup>

(Tookpaŋka Micco and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was listen so close they pipes was go out and they didn't know it.)

Then Hotgun he go on and say, "Well, so it was the same way among the Democrats too and it was about a stand off. They was two, three down to Choctaw nation and Chickasaw nation howling with they packs. But I think maybe so Old Hailey was prowling 'round in the hills close to South McAlester with the biggest pack, while Bob Willing was sneaking 'round on the Blue with a few cayotes and Mayor Dick was sent up a lonesome howl from down about Ardmore.<sup>4</sup> So these was the Democrat wolves, but the trouble with them is they was too hungry to stay together and much disturbance among the sheep. The Republican wolves was better organized and had better hunting ground."

<sup>2</sup>Pliny Soper was the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Indian Territory and was heavily involved in the systematic practices of defrauding Native Americans of their land.

<sup>3</sup>Hotgun is painting a portrait of the social geography of Indian Territory. He is saying that the African American populations in

areas like Cane Creek, Wildcat, and Pine, who mostly voted Republican, are all rallying behind Soper.

<sup>4</sup>Hotgun is describing prominent Democrats, many of whom went on to benefit from statehood. Robert Lee Williams went on to become governor from 1915 to 1919.

(Then Tookpaŋka Micco he was passed 'round the "homemade," and Hotgun and Wolf Warrior and Kono Harjo they was pinched off some for a fresh smoke.)

Then Tookpaŋka Micco he ask Hotgun, "Well, so who all want to be large delegates and little delegates to the big convention in the states to nominate a new president?"

And Hotgun he say, "Well, so the Republicans was already picked out plenty So Far from the Seminole nation and Cherokee nation and Quapaw agency to lead the delegates from the rest a the Territory. He was had a Choctaw Injun in the bunch that was not old enough to vote and was had to had a white man go with him to show him how to cast his ballot and make excuse for him."<sup>5</sup>

"Then," Hotgun he go on and say, "The Democrats was had lots aspirants to be large delegates and little delegates to trot out nominee for president. The most prominent ones was Cliff Jack's son and Jim's Living and Lick's Broke and Sam Rather Ford and C. B. Stew It."

"But," Hotgun he go on and say, "like I first start to say, the people was busy putting in more land and building shacks and say nothing. Maybe so when the time was ripe they was take a hand in politics and make these spoil hunters look like an order on the store for merchandise during the Loyal Creek payment."

1904

## ■ JOHN MILTON OSKISON (CHEROKEE) ■ 1874-1947

John Oskison was born at Vinita in the Cherokee Nation, to a Cherokee mother and a white father. He began his college career at Willie Haisell College in his home town; one of his classmates was the future movie-star cowboy Will Rogers, who became his lifelong friend. Leaving Indian Territory, Oskison embarked upon an exclusive education, finishing his B.A. at Stanford in 1898, then going to Harvard to study literature. He had already written for Cherokee Nation publications and for the Stanford magazine *Sequoia*, but Oskison's career as a writer took off while he was at Harvard. In 1899 he submitted his short story "Only the Master Shall Praise," which borrowed its title from Rudyard Kipling, to the *Century* magazine competition for college graduates. Oskison won the covered prize, which brought him to national attention, and he embarked upon a long, flourishing career as a writer.

<sup>5</sup>Hotgun is pointing out that the Republican delegation from Indian Territory to the national presidential nominating convention is almost entirely white.