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of information, much like museum wall text, which allows for ease of assimilation. Text broken up into short segments to accompany the reproductions allows the reader to come and go as he or she pleases, digesting small bits of information at each sitting. It simulates the experience of going through an exhibition and reading wall text while viewing the works.

First Artist of the West was produced in a very affordable paperback edition. It is especially reasonably priced, considering the fact that it contains so many high-quality color plates. Informed by Troccoli's text, the viewer of the works collected here will be afforded insight into one of the most fascinating—and telling—figures of nineteenth-century American history and those native peoples who were his subjects.

Jennifer McLerran
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The Fus Fixico Letters. Edited by Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. and Carol A. Petty Hunter. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. 302 pages. \$37.50 cloth.

Jointly edited by Carol A. Petty Hunter and Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *The Fus Fixico Letters* is the first published collection of Alexander Posey's satirical pieces written in the persona of Fus Fixico. These sketches circulated in Oklahoma's American Indian newspapers in the early 1900s. Posey (1873–1908), a Creek poet, humorist, journalist, and educator was the owner and editor of *The Indian Journal*, a newspaper printed in Eufaula, Indian Territory. The newspaper served not only a local Creek readership but a non-Indian public that extended into the adjoining Oklahoma Territory, Kansas, Arkansas, and Texas as well. *The Indian Journal* was one of many Indian newspapers circulating in what is now Oklahoma before it was admitted to the Union as one state in 1906. Those newspapers often carried dialect columns given over to humorous federal, local, and tribal sociopolitical commentary. Active in politics as well as journalism, Posey became the secretary in 1905 of the Sequoyah convention, an Indian group pushing for dual statehood for Oklahoma. The proposed arrangement would allow the western part of the state to enter the Union as Oklahoma and the eastern part to enter as the state of Sequoyah. Oklahoma would be governed by a white majority and Sequoyah

by an Indian majority. After first opposing the dual statehood movement, Posey later did an abrupt turnaround and supported it, both in his political activities and in the Fixico letters; but the Sequoyah movement, like Posey himself, who died at the age of thirty-five in a drowning accident, was short-lived.

Unlike the other dialect columns of the period, Posey's articles are brilliantly written and have literary merit that extends beyond the journalistic genre into which they fall. Linguistically rich and metaphorically resonant, the letters articulate an Indian voice that recalls the old ways and passes judgment on the present. They also offer a valuable insight into Creek history and thought during the period of tribal dissolution. The Fixico letters, influenced to some extent by the work of humorists such as Charles Henry Smith, C.D. Lewis, George Ade, and Seba Smith, deal with Creek politics and tribal political figures as well as Oklahoma's non-Indian, prestatehood politicians. Posey exposes local factional chicanery and makes pronouncements on the workings of the federal government in regard to issues ranging from Indian affairs to foreign diplomacy. He takes on members of the Dawes Commission, particularly the chairman, Tams Bixby; the leader of the Creek conservatives, Chitto Harjo or Crazy Snake; the secretary of the interior, Ethan Allen Hitchcock; the local "grafters"; and Theodore Roosevelt. Women as well as men are targeted for comment. After attending a reception for Roosevelt at the Muskogee train station, Posey alleges that Alice Mary Robertson, missionary to the Creeks and founder of Kendall College, bought the platform the president stood on for his eight-minute speech, "made a bedstead out of it and distribute[d] the sawdust and shavings among the full-bloods to look at." Posey's satire is hard-hitting, but the narrative voice of his columns is sometimes whimsical and occasionally sadly resigned; for example, Christians are "those who will eat chicken in Zion." After years of economic, social, and political exploitation by non-Indians, "the Five Civilized Tribes didn't have anything to live for but statehood and the removal of the restrictions."

The Fixico letters anticipate the later columns of the Cherokee, Will Rogers, but are themselves markedly Creek in content and linguistic style and quintessentially Indian in tone and point of view. They are written in a type of English that another Creek writer, Charles Gibson, terms "Este Charte," a corruption of the Muskogean word *este-cate*, which means "red man" or "Indian." The use of the Este Charte dialect defines Fus Fixico as a Creek

speaker, while the thematic line of his conversations indicates his place in Creek society. From the letters, we learn that Fixico is a member of the Creek Nation and entitled to the spoils of the General Allotment Act of 1887, an act that mandated the change of Indian land holdings from commonality to severalty. We further learn that, although Fixico is a "progressive" in some endeavors, he chooses the company of conservatives or "full-bloods," and it is their conversations he reports. The men he associates with are medicine men, busk ground leaders, and representatives of the old warrior class—Choela, Hotgun, Tookpafka, Micco, Wolf Warrior, and Kono Harjo. Hotgun, the medicine man, comments on the events of the day. The others occasionally respond, but more often they simply nod, grunt, or spit into the back of the fireplace. The issues about which they are most concerned are the implications of impending statehood.

This edition of the Fixico letters was begun by the late Carol Hunter, assistant professor of English at the University of Oklahoma. After completing the much-needed work of collecting Posey's satirical writings, which had never before been assembled and were largely unavailable for study, Hunter became terminally ill and designated LaVonne Ruoff, her colleague at the University of Illinois at Chicago, executrix of the manuscript. Upon Hunter's death, Ruoff asked Daniel Littlefield, a noted scholar in American Indian literature and a recent biographer of Alexander Posey, to finish the work. He did, and the end result is a meticulous piece of scholarship and historical research. Littlefield arranges the letters in chronological order and heads each letter, or sequence of letters, with its date and the sources of publication. The headings are followed by an explanation of the political situation to which the letters refer. Each section concludes with footnotes. In this instance, the notes are not intrusive but serve to contextualize the letters in a way that is quite helpful to readers unfamiliar with Creek and Oklahoma history and public figures. A key to the names of persons mentioned in the letter, headnote sources, additional notes, and an index complete the editorial commentary. *The Fus Fixico Letters* is a carefully annotated collection of heretofore little-known but highly significant political writings. The work is a valuable contribution to American Indian studies particularly, and to the study of American history generally.

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