



Lucile Foster Fargo

Dakota Images

By 1930, Lucile Foster Fargo, a librarian and library educator, was considered *the* expert on school library administration in the United States. She was also a prolific author whose fictional works included *Prairie Girl* (1937) and *Prairie Chautauqua* (1943), two semiautobiographical novels that describe the experiences of a girl growing up in South Dakota in the late nineteenth century.

Fargo was born 18 October 1880 in Lake Mills, Wisconsin, to Emily Foster Fargo and Joseph Eliot Fargo. The family arrived in Dell Rapids, South Dakota, around 1882 and, except for some months of homesteading near Mitchell between 1882 and 1884, remained in Dell Rapids until 1901. Many of the locations, people, and events in Fargo's novels were taken from her South Dakota experiences. Her fictional Rocky Run, for example, was modeled on Dell Rapids. The Duck Lake Chautauqua grounds were really those of the Lake Madison Chautauqua, which Fargo visited in the 1890s.

Fargo attended both Sioux Falls College and Yankton College before moving with her parents to Walla Walla, Washington, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Whitman College. After obtaining a certificate in librarianship in 1908 from the New York State Library School in Albany, Fargo worked as a high school librarian in Spokane, Washington, until 1926. In that year, she joined the staff of the American Library Association in Chicago, where she was asked to write a book on school libraries. The resulting work, entitled *The Library in the School*, appeared in several editions between 1928 and 1947 and established her reputation in the field. Fargo was assistant director of the library school at George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee (1930-1933), a research associate at Columbia University School of Library Service (1933-1936), and an associate professor on the faculty of the Western Reserve School of Library Science in Ohio (1937-1945).

During this period, she also wrote several other books and articles for library professionals and some novels, including *Marian-Martha* (1936), *Come, Colors, Come* (1940), and her two South Dakota novels. She retired to Berkeley, California, in 1945 and continued to write, publishing *Spokane Story* (a history of Spokane, Washington) in 1950. She died on 5 July 1962, after residing for several years in a nursing home.

by RISË L. SMITH

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