



*Lawrence K. Fox*

## *Dakota Images*

Throughout his twenty-three-year career with the South Dakota Department of History, Lawrence K. Fox advocated good scholarship and worked persistently to collect resources for future historians of the Northern Great Plains.

Fox was born 6 November 1894 at Doon, Iowa, to James and Charlotte Gillespie Fox. After his parents divorced when he was thirteen, he traveled to Washington State, where he worked as a farm laborer. He eventually returned to live with relatives in Iowa, graduating from high school in 1911 and attending Upper Iowa University in Fayette. He taught school in Iowa and Nebraska until 1917, when he joined the army to serve in France and Germany. Following his discharge, he attended the University of South Dakota, graduating in 1922. In that year, he married Jennie E. Lamkin of Inwood, Iowa, and moved to Pierre, where he became assistant superintendent of the South Dakota Department of History.

In 1926, he succeeded Doane Robinson as superintendent and secretary of the South Dakota State Historical Society. During his tenure, he produced a number of volumes in the *South Dakota Historical Collections* series. Under his direction, the department also published scholarly research endeavors like Annie Abel's *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark* and, from 1935 to 1937, a quarterly research journal entitled *South Dakota Historical Review*. Fox also worked diligently to assemble complete collections of the state's newspapers and to build an excellent resource library. In the course of his work, he corresponded with a number of well-known authors who were researching their works on the region, including Charles Eastman, Hamlin Garland, John G. Neihardt, and Mari Sandoz.

A long political fight for control of the State Historical Society culminated in Fox's resignation and his family's move to Louisiana in August 1945. He received a master's degree in history from Louisiana State University in 1946, the same year in which his daughter, Harriet Fox Deer, graduated from the same institution.

Lawrence Fox went on to teach history and economics at McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois. He later returned to Louisiana, founding the Bayou Book Company, a mail-order business specializing in antiquarian books. He continued working in the book business until his death on 6 September 1974. He is buried at Magnolia Cemetery in Baton Rouge.

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