

**LUCIA CAROLINE  
LOOMIS  
FERGUSON**  
1887-1962



**NEWSPAPER  
PIONEER  
ADVOCATED  
FOR SUFFRAGE**

Lucia Ferguson started her writing career when her husband bought the local newspaper in Cherokee. She was fervently devoted to women's rights, advocating for equality in the family, in work and politics. Lucia was also famous as a nationally syndicated columnist whose column appeared in newspapers around the country.

Lucia Caroline Loomis was born in March 1887 at Boggy Depot, Choctaw Nation. She attended St. Xavier's Academy, an all-girls institution, until 1924, in Denison, Texas and attended two years at Hardin College and Conservatory of Music, once known as the "Queen of the Western Female Schools", in Mexico, Missouri.

She returned to Oklahoma in 1904, where she enrolled at the University of Oklahoma. She was a charter member of the college's first sorority Kappa Alpha Theta. She met Walter Ferguson, son of former territorial governor Thompson Ferguson. After receiving a fine arts degree in 1908, they married on November 7, 1908.

When Walter bought the Cherokee Republican newspaper, Lucia assumed the duties of subscription solicitation and bookkeeping and eventually wrote local items, interviews, editorials and special features. Like her famous mother-in-law Elva Shartel Ferguson, Lucia managed the newspaper while Walter was involved in politics as a state Senator from 1916 to 1920.

In 1912, Lucia soon found her niche in journalism by writing a regular feature entitled "Woman's Column." However, by November 1915, her column entitled "Several Reasons Why Women Should Not Vote" offered a sarcastic take on why women in the East should not waste their time working for suffrage. Additionally, she mentioned that women did not qualify as voters, because unlike men women did not get drunk, chew tobacco, and stand in the street indulging "in obscene conversation several days before the polls opened".

By 1916, Ferguson was concerned that women living in the strongly Democratic South would never gain suffrage. As she continually wrote about legal inequities, Ferguson saw the need for women's suffrage. Only then could they change the laws. With running a household, writing newspaper columns for several newspapers, and helping with the newspaper, she did not actively become involved in the suffrage movement until 1918.

While Lucia strongly supported women's suffrage, she was adamantly opposed the tactics of the militant suffragists who protested in front of the White House. She published her sentiment regarding this in a column entitled "Time to Keep Still". In September 1919 Ferguson served on Oklahoma's ratification committee for the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. After its passage in 1920, she was active in the League of Women Voters.

In 1919, the couple sold the newspaper and moved to Oklahoma City. After the birth of three children, Lucia believed that her journalistic career was over. However, she contributed an occasional women's interest column in her mother-in-law Elva's Watonga newspaper. In 1922, Oklahoma News editor George B. Parker asked Lucia to develop a women's column to compete with the Daily Oklahoman's Edith Johnson. Her popular "A Woman's Viewpoint" became nationally syndicated by the Scripps Howard News Service in 35 newspapers.

In 1928, the Ferguson moved to Tulsa, where Walter began a banking career. Under her maiden name, Lucia gave advice in the Tulsa Tribune's "lovelorn" column. After Walter died in 1936, she supported the Tulsa Symphony and various Chamber Music organizations, allowing one group to practice in her living room. She also served on the board of directors of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute, Urban League, and the YMCA.

Inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1937, Ferguson was a lifelong supporter of women's empowerment through the League of Women Voters. She helped organize the Planned Parenthood organization and worked with the Little Theater and Town Hall boards. While returning to Oklahoma from Tampa with Audrey Cole, mother of Tulsa pioneer architect Mary Catherine Cole, Ferguson was killed in an automobile accident in February 1962. She was posthumously inducted in the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame in 1999.