



Sarah Elizabeth “Lizzie” Woody *(1853-1919)*

Wife of one of Missoula’s co-founders, Frank Woody. As a child, she traveled with her family by wagon train from Iowa to Montana. During the trip, she fell into a campfire, losing the end of her little finger and injuring her hip so that she walked with a limp and had to use a cane for the rest of her life. Sarah was a teacher in various Montana schools and organized the first Sunday school in Missoula. She was married to Frank Woody for 45 years.

- **1853-Birth.** Sarah was born on January 6, 1853 in Yuba County, California on Dry Creek. Her parents were Horace and Elizabeth (Payne) Countryman.
- **1871-Marriage.** Sarah married Franklin Hargrave Woody on December 10, 1871 in Missoula, Montana. They had nine children – Frank, Alice, Rose, Flora, Ruth, Rachel, Robert, Beth, and Rebecca.
- **1855.** The Countryman family moved via Isthmus of Panama to New York. Sarah was 1-1/2 years old.
- **1860.** The Countryman family moved to Marysville, California. The trip took six months. There were 75 wagons, 5 women, 3 children. Horace Countryman was the captain of the outfit. According to a great grandson, Sara fell into a camp fire and was badly burned. She lost the end of her little finger and injured her hip so that she walked with a limp and had to use a cane for the rest of her life.
- **1865.** The Countryman family moved to Virginia City, Montana. During this time, Sara’s father put up the first quartz mill at Summit, built the Masonic Hall in Virginia City and a mill and Masonic Hall in Philipsburg. He rode from Stillwater, Montana (now Columbus) to Helena to carry the news of the massacre of Custer and his men.
- **1865.** Sarah was a teacher in Philipsburg, Montana. She had few students but they were lively. In Iowa the teachers boarded with families on rotation. In Philipsburg, Sara lived at home but at noon she was besieged to go home with the students for lunch. She went with a different student every day so that no one would have hurt feelings.
- **1869.** The Countryman family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah so Sarah and her brother could attend St. Mark’s Episcopal school under the care of Bishop Tuttle. The trip took three weeks. Sarah was ill at the time.
- **1870.** Sarah and her father traveled to Deer Lodge, Montana. It was a bitter cold trip. So cold that on another stage, a group of Chinese men froze to death. The rest of the Countryman family joined them in June of that year.
- **July 5, 1870.** Sarah accepted the teacher position in Missoula, Montana. It was the second term held at the school. In a letter written by Sarah Woody, she stated “There were 6 women in Missoula at that time.” This may be inaccurate. The women wore heavy, linsey clothing in the winter and calico dresses in the summer. Almost all the clothes were handmade, with calico selling at 50 cents a year. Sunbonnets were the popular millinery wear.
- **1870.** Sarah organized the first Sunday school. Among her pupils were Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists. Adults as well as children attended her classes.
- **1870.** Sarah’s mother died in Deer Lodge. Sarah returned to tend the family until the following spring of 1871.
- **1871.** Sarah married Frank Woody. The Rector from Deer Lodge came to town to perform the ceremony. Over the next twenty-eight years, nine children were born with five of those dying as children. Sarah and Frank were married for 45 years. At the time of Frank’s death, he had lived in Montana longer than any other white man.
- **1919-Death.** Sarah died on July 15, 1919 after a 3-month illness with a form of Parkinson’s Disease.

