

BIOGRAPHY OF FRANK MUNRO DODGE & MARY STRONG DODGE

Frank Munro Dodge was born January 27, 1850 at Sharidan, a country town off the shores of Lake Erie in the county of Chautanqua, New York, Buffalo being the nearest large city. He lived on a farm with his parents, Baxter and Wealthy C. (Munro) Dodge. The family, considered fairly well-to-do, consisted of the following sons and daughters in their order: Anna P., Frank Munro, Sarah E., Flor and Walter L. All are deceased. He grew up as a farmer lad, using oxen for their farm work in his earlier youth. Here in this small country town he acquired all the education offered.

When about sixteen years of age, he and his father had a grave disagreement which resulted in his leaving his home in New York at the age of 21 and coming to live with friends of his family, a Mr. Groesbeck and wife, who had moved to Salt Lake City, Utah for the sake of the Mormon Gospel. Mr. Groesbeck was, at the time, overseer of the construction of the Canyon Hotel and gave him a job on the building. He liked that sort of work and by the time the building was completed was working as a regular carpenter with his own tools.

After the Canyon Hotel was finished, he joined a company of freighters going to California by team. They encountered a desert sand storm so severe the men were nearly choked. They were forced to keep a chew of tobacco in their mouths to keep the saliva coming until they could reach water. He returned to Salt Lake with the first outfit coming to the city.

He then took up railroading from Ogden to Santa Fe, California. It was while working as a breakman of the Santa Fe railroad that he was crushed through the stomach and bowels while making a running switch. This accident put him in the hospital in Los Angeles for six months and nearly cost his life. After this long illness, he returned to Salt Lake and soon after got a job at the quarry from which the rock for the Salt Lake Temple was taken.

It was at about this time he met Mary Lodema Strong whom he married December 25, 1880 at the home of her parents, Wm. and Harriet Strong, by the Bishop of the 10th Ward in Salt Lake City, Adam Speirs.

Mary Lodema Strong was the third child in a family of thirteen, born March 7, 1861 at Springville, Utah, a little town south of Provo nestled at the foot of the Grand Wasatch Range. Her father, among other pioneers, was called by Brigham Young to make a home and establish the Church there, according to the customs of the time. Her father was a polygamist, having three wives and being the father of twenty children. In the year 1865 the family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. They also had a small farm in Emigration Canyon, about five miles from their city home. It was while staying with an uncle and aunt in Cottonwood that she met Frank Munro Dodge, whom she later married and converted to the Church five years after that marriage.

Frank Munro and Mary Lodema Strong Dodge had a family of nine children, the first one, a daughter, being born November 17, 1881. When she was about a year old Frank Munro was employed as a breakman on the tramway that ran from the Alta mines to the Smelters at Sandy. He suffered a crushed leg when some cars on which he was riding broke away and became

derailed. The cars piled up and he very narrowly escaped death. The doctor said the leg should be amputated, but neither he nor his wife would give their consent. The leg healed and although the doctor declared he would never be able to walk on it, he was able to walk with only a slight limp.

Their second daughter was born on August 11, 1883, then on February 17, 1886, a son came to stay only six weeks. His death was almost the undoing of his father. He was grief-stricken and was too young in the Church to be comforted by either it's influence or reason. His wife's prayers and patient reasoning guided him again into the light of the gospel, and although he did not take active part in the Church until later years, his faith was never shaken again.

His varied occupations while they remained in Salt Lake City included being conductor on a freight train, carrying mail from Wasatch to Alta, carpentering at Fisher's Brewery and other places, and a little farming.

On April 2, 1890, the third daughter and fourth child was born and when she was two months old, Frank Munro left for Idaho, arriving in Idaho Falls (at that time Eagle Rock) June 2, 1890. He selected a one hundred sixty acre homestead, worked through the summer and sent for his wife and three small daughters who arrived here August 21st of the same year.

Mary Lodema was not very delighted with the wilderness of grey-green sage that met her gaze but went along with her husband and together they set about to make a home. He worked at a saw mill on Snake River and took rough lumber for pay that summer and in the winter took a job at carpenter work for Gib Wright building the C. W. & M. building. He took part cash and the rest in finishing lumber, two windows and a door. The house was a one room building about 18'x20'. Mary Lodema was a splendid housekeeper and everything was neat, clean and homey. The home was built in a sea of sage brush, the only sign of life by day was the little curl of smoke coming from a far away stove pipe which happened to be the home a. A. D. Taylor, a very fine neighbor. The only sign of life by night was the cry of the coyote. The sage was so tall a light could not be seen in any direction.

Then came the task of clearing the land of the sage. Two or three men would bring their teams and they would hitch six to eight head of horses to a railroad rail, the men adding their weight by standing on the rail, then drive up and back, pulling up or breaking off the brush. Then they would haul the best of the brush for fuel, the rest his wife and children would pile and at night all hands would burn the piles. These fires often acted as a social gathering for the families of the neighborhood.

Together, Frank Munro and Mary Lodema helped to lay away a great many bodies for burial. He being a carpenter, made nearly all the caskets, and she being a beautiful seamstress, helped to line and cover them as well as make burial clothes.

In the fall of 1896, they started to build a new home a half mile north on the same homestead. The house was finished the next spring. This house was rustic, with three rooms, two bedrooms and a large room that served as kitchen, dining room and living room. They had only been in this home a few weeks when a third son was born.

Frank Munro was among the first few men to undertake diverting the waters of the mighty Snake River to the thirsty land. The work consisted of rip-raping and making dams of rock and sacks of dirt to force the waters into the Great Feeder. He also worked on the Farmer's Friend, Harrison and Fairview Canal systems. He, with George Cramer and Robert Andrus, contracted a portion of the railroad that connects Idaho Falls with the Upper Snake River Valley through Ucon. The same three men also contracted a stretch of railroad through the Mackey district. He was one of the carpenters of the first flour mills in Ucon and many of the other first business buildings. He had attended the Morgan's Business School in Salt Lake City and became very proficient in the use of the compass, protractor and other engineering implements, so was able to draw his own plans of carpenter work.

He was especially good in sickness and was often called in to help with the sick, both young and old. He was very quiet, a great reader of deep books, and a radical Democrat. He met with many financial disappointments but never gave up; he could always see a new place to strike back.

On July 24, 1899 their last girl was born, and on October 1, 1901 the fourth boy was born, but on December 3, 1902 the baby in some way never known, received burns about the face and neck which caused his death nine days later. Mary Lodema's arm was severely burned while smothering the fire. Her health began to fail rapidly and she was never really well again. However, on the 26th day of September, 1904, husband and wife and children went to the Logan Temple where they were sealed in marriage and had their children sealed to them.

On August 2, 1905, their last son was born, making a family total of nine children. Mary Lodema suffered intensely after this and grew steadily worse until June, 1907 when she became bedfast. After an operation on September 9, 1907, she passed away without regaining consciousness. Her funeral services were held in the Willow Creek Ward Chapel. The large chapel was filled to capacity with loving and sympathetic friends and neighbors. She was laid to rest in the Ward Cemetery, her life of faith and loving service finished.

Frank Munro was never quite the same after his wife's death. In 1911 he married Susie Lowe Morgan, but his health soon began to fail and in October, 1920 he had a very severe illness from which he never fully recovered. Brights disease set in and he gradually grew worse and after two years of suffering he peacefully passed away on March 3, 1922, with all his family at his bedside. At the time of his death he held the office of High Priest in the Church. He had worked as a Ward Teacher for many years but his work in the Church was otherwise devoted to physical labor in serving the Lord and His people.