

## McGilvary, Sophia Bradley (1839-1923)



Sophia McGilvary was the first woman missionary to serve in the [Laos Mission](#) and played a key early role in the introduction of women's education into northern Siam. She was the daughter of [Dr. Dan Beach](#) and Emelie Royce Bradley and was born in Bangkok on 8 October 1839. Her mother died in August 1845, and in 1847 her father took her and her two siblings to Oberlin, Ohio, where she went to school for a period. Her father, while in the United States, married Sarah Blachly in November 1848, and the family returned to Bangkok, where Sophia was home schooled by Sarah Bradley, one of the first women in the United States to receive a B.A. degree.

In 1860, Sophia married the Rev. [Daniel McGilvary](#), a Presbyterian missionary; and in 1861, they joined the S. G. McFarlands in founding a mission station in Phet Buri. In April 1867, the McGilvary family founded the Laos Mission when they moved to Chiang Mai. Sophia conducted women's literacy classes, assisted in the translation of the Gospel of Matthew, and in about 1875 started a small class for Christian girls that was the seed for the founding of the Chiang Mai Girls' School in 1879. The McGilvarys had five children, three of whom became members of the Laos Mission.