

Sarah Elizabeth (Hawkins) Alderson

At the age of 20 Sarah traveled by covered wagon with her family from Missouri to the Verde Valley.

Born: 12/25/1854 Independence, MO

Died: 12/26/1879 Cottonwood, AZ

Burial: Cottonwood Cemetery - Cottonwood, Arizona

Sarah Hawkins was one of ten children born to William Henry Hawkins Sr. and Harriet “Hattie” Melissa (Stayton) Hawkins. On September 25, 1873, she married James Minter Alderson in Cass County, Missouri. At about twenty years old, she joined her husband and several other families on a wagon train departing from Independence, Missouri, bound for the Verde Valley in 1875.

She became part of the first generation of pioneer settlers who were born in Missouri and ultimately laid to rest in the Verde Valley of Arizona. Sarah’s life was cut tragically short in 1879. She is buried in the pioneer section of the City of Cottonwood Cemetery, resting beside her brother, [John S. Hawkins](#). Her grave remained unmarked for nearly a century and a half, until a marker was finally placed in April 2026.

Parents:

William Henry Hawkins Sr 1820–1883

Harriet Melissa Stayton Hawkins 1827–1895

Spouse: James Minter Alderson

Children:

Harriet Lou Alderson

James William Alderson

Sarah's brothers and sisters-in-law include Constable [James Gabriel Hawkins](#) and [Mariah May \(Dickinson\) Hawkins](#)

If it was not for Sarah's untimely death, she would have been the aunt of James' and Mariah's children, Charles Thomas Hawkins 1883–1936 and Minnie Lee Hawkins-Smith 1886–1974.

Additional information about Sarah and her family can be found in the book
Jennie's Journal: 1875 True Story of a Verde Valley Pioneer
by Wyona Holmes Jaffe
[Available on Amazon](#)

Submit and See Verde Valley Pioneer Biographies at VerdeValleyPioneers.com

Verde Independent News Article 3/7/2026

https://www.verdenews.com/features/verde-heritage-perils-of-cooking-over-an-openfire/article_905e4115-d618-4616-a054-380c6bf8399a.html

Sarah's father, William Henry Hawkins Sr. was born on 28 February 1820, in Paris, Henry, Tennessee, his father, Williamson Hawkins, was 26 and his mother, Rebecca Ann Littleton Butts, was 20. He married Harriet Melissa Stayton on 17 October 1850, in Independence, Jackson, Missouri. They were the parents of at least 7 sons and 6 daughters.

In 1870 William Hawkins, aged 50 and working as a farmer with his wife Harriet M, aged 43 and keeping house at Mount Pleasant township, Missouri, with their children: David E, aged 18; Sarah E, aged 15; William H., aged 13; John, aged 11; James, aged 9, Laura Bell, aged 7; Louisa J., aged 6, Leander, aged 3 and Emery E., aged 1.

In 1875, the Hawkins family, along with many other families, took a trek from Missouri to Yavapai County, Arizona. That part of Arizona was filled with beautiful green trees and mineral rich soil for growing food. They and the other families decided to call it home. In October 1876 William was on the election board of the Upper Verde Valley.

[Submit and See Verde Valley Pioneer Biographies at VerdeValleyPioneers.com](https://www.verdevalleypioneers.com)



Submit and See Verde Valley Pioneer Biographies at [VerdeValleyPioneers.com](https://www.verdevalleypioneers.com)