

THE PRICHARD FAMILY

By VIRGIE McCASKEY

Before I was married, my name was Virgie Prichard. I was the eldest of the six children of Charles C. and Louisa J. Prichard. I was born at Olive Hill near Grayson, Ky., on May 7, 1886. We moved to Oregon in May, 1889. My parents also had a daughter, Estelle, two years old and a son, David, who was only three months old at the time. Father's youngest sister, Virgie, who was 13 years of age came to Oregon with us.

Father bought the homestead rights to 160 acres of land from a man named Isaac Schultz. There was a small clearing and a three room home steaders shack, so we moved in right away. J. C. Kilby and William Lowman were our nearest neighbors.

The postoffice was nearly two miles away. Dave Dorsey was the postmaster at that time. There was a store in the building with the postoffice where you could buy needles, pins, thread, ribbon, crochet hooks, etc. They also had a small stock of sugar, flour, crackers, dried fruit, beans and a small supply of canned meat and vegetables.

I started to school at Apiary when I was just four years old. My first teacher was Nettie Jones who later married Will King. She continued to teach after she was married, and after her first son Everett was born, she brought him to school with her. Sometimes she rode a horse, but part of the time she brought him in an old fashioned baby buggy



SHOWN LEFT TO RIGHT: ESTELLE ANDERSON, DAVID PRITCHARD AND VIRGIE McCASKEY

which had very large wheels. She lived more than a mile from the school house so it was quite a job to push a baby buggy over the rough roads and up the hills. She later had another son, Leo.

My next teacher was Walter Kyser followed by a Mr. Dillingham, Mrs. Zimmerer and Mrs. Way. I think there were more than 40 pupils the first year. We had only three or four months of school in the late spring and summer.

By this time I was nine years old and in 1895 Father took me to Rainier to stay with a family there and attend school. My first teacher in Rainier was Mr. W. A. Wood, and Mrs. Way taught the lower grades. There were just two teachers here then.

The next year, 1896, we left the homestead and moved to Rainier, and I have lived here since that time.

I was married to Frank McCaskey on Feb. 22, 1907, and we raised a family of four sons and five daughters. My husband passed away on Nov. 15, 1959, at the age of 87 years. I have lived in the same house for 58 years.

The picture of the three members of the Prichard family who still live in Rainier are also the ones who were born in Kentucky and came to Oregon with their parents when small children, was taken recently. They are Estella Anderson, age 78; David Prichard

age 77; and Virgie McCaskey, age 79. The three who were born at Apiary are Van Prichard of Lyons, Oregon; Dorothea Aspinwall of Salem and Dean Prichard who lives at Olympia, Washington.

My sister, Estella and I often visit. We spend hours talking about early days but cannot recall any of the pioneers except Carrie (Kilby) Hooker and Alice (Kilby) Lowman who are still living. Both are at Elmira, Oregon.

The Kilby family who were our nearest neighbors at Apiary by a strange coincidence had lived only a few miles from us in Kentucky and got mail at the same post office (Grayson), but the two families were not acquainted. Kilbys came to Oregon one year before we did.

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Girt were near neighbors. When I started to school in Rainier in 1895, a family named Anrys lived near the school. Mr. Anrys and Smith Kistner (Anrys and Kistner) had a store down town, dry goods and groceries. There were two Anrys boys, Walter and Fred. The house where they lived is two blocks from my home. It is still occupied and in good condition. (Mr. Anrys' sister Juliette, was the wife of Felix DeBast, Sr. Their families came from Belgium in the 1860's. The Felix DeBast family home staded south of Rainier in 1877 as recorded in Vol III, Columbia County History.