

Mary Catherine Rainwater Pettijohn

by Era Pettijohn Chamberlain

The following story is one that Mother (Mary Catherine Rainwater) told me on Mother's Day, 1940. She was 79 years old. She died a few weeks later.

"I was born in Ray county, Missouri in 1861 near Hannibal. Our family left there in 1863 (when I was about two years old) and got to Uncle John Rainwater's in Corvallis, Oregon. Uncle John had gone to Oregon from Fayetteville, Arkansas. He was freighting from Boise, Idaho, to Corvallis.

We took boats at The Dalles, Oregon; went on to near Albany where we rented a farm. We lived there 5 years, until I was about 7. We took a trip by team to Sacramento, Calif. in September. It took four weeks on account of fire and falling trees. We took a train at Sacramento, 1869 -- first railroad to Sacramento.

Mother's father, John Nelson Williamson, and family of eight had also come to Oregon, with my father, Jacob Rainwater, and they also lived near Albany. (*Evidently Jacob was restless in Oregon and move his family back to his old home country. Her story goes on...*)

Uncle Wiley Holman went back to Missouri with our family. When we got to Uncle Wynn Rainwater's, near Hannibal, Missouri, Grandpa James Rainwater came with his team and took us with his team back to Warsaw, near Sedalia, where he lived. We stayed in his big house on the Osage River. There was a fireplace in every room. It was an old olive plantation.

In the spring we all moved (grandfather James too) out of the timber up to the prairie country. Father rented land and built a house, and we lived there 3 years. My sister, Eva, was born there 24 Dec 1870. Aunt Nan Green Williamson came back from Oregon and stayed with us -- and it was a house full. So Susie and I went 1/4 mi. away to grandfather James Rainwater's house to sleep. I was nine and a half, Susie was eight.

We then moved to Kansas, Labett County. Great Aunt Catherine Baker, (James's sister) was there.

Then we went on to Lawrence Co., MO, near Mt. Vernon. We lived there 4 years.-- P.O. Roundi Grove. Dad farmed and raised cattle. Lucy was born Apr. 6, 1874 when I was thirteen. We waited that spring for grass to grow for the cattle and ox teams and then moved from Roundi Grove on the 1st of May to Colorado -- in the mountains, 30 mi. from Canyon City. A Dr. Albertson went with us. Dad built a big one room cabin there in the spring of '74 or '75.

Then we started off again for Dayton, Washington where Uncle John had moved from Oregon. Went by way of Colorado Springs, stopping at Denver for two days, and one day at Laramie. We ran into snow on the second day out. I drove the cattle on foot. Father and uncle John Green stopped and sheared sheep. Uncle John Green died on the trip, just a day's journey from Boise, and was buried by the Masons at Boise. Father and grandfather James are buried at Dayton.

Mary Catherine's father was Jacob C. Rainwater who married Catherine Lucinda Williamson.

Memoir of Mary Catherine Rainwater Pettijohn as recorded by Era Pettijohn Chamberlain, from the archives of Ann Pettijohn Tomlinson, zapt@cyberhighway.net