

ALVIRA McATEE, who resides one mile west from Tygh valley, is one of the pioneers of this section and is a lady whose life has been such that she is the recipient of great respect and esteem from all. She was born in Logan county, Illinois, on March 4, 1836. Her father, James Hieronymus, a native of Kentucky, came from an old and prominent family of great renown. The first record of the family is from Syrian history where we see General Hieronymus, who operated some three hundred years before Christ. The next important one we mention, is the saint familiarly known as Jerome, who was Eusebius Hieronymus, and who is one of the most learned men known to those times. He was private secretary to Pope Damasus and later translated from the original tongues the version of the Scriptures commonly known as the Vulgate, from which comes the Douay Bible, the one now used by the English speaking portion of the great Roman Catholic church. The family came on down through the ages and in 1765, Henry Hieronymus migrated to the American colonies from Germany and became the founder of the American branch of the family, many members of which have been prominent in various offices and leading positions. Mrs. McAtee's father married Miss Melinda Thompson, a native of Tennessee, where also her parents were born. Her father fought in the War of 1812. The family is a large one and mostly given to agriculture, being wealthy. Mrs. McAtee was educated in the public schools in the start, but has been a careful reader and student all her life and is now well informed and abreast of the questions of the day. When eighteen she married James F.M. Steers, a native of Kentucky, and the son of Hugh and Elizabeth (Darnell) Steers. She came west with her husband across the plains with horse teams in 1865. They experienced great trouble with the Indians, had much sickness and several deaths in the train. They spent the first winter in the Willamette valley and the next year came over to Wapinitia flat, where they spent a year. Then they settled in Tygh valley, being the first white settlers there. Mr. Steers was ill when he settled here and shortly after-ward, he died. Mrs. Steers was called upon to meet great hardship with a family and in a new country with slight means. In the fall of 1867, she married Benjamin C. McAtee, a native of Illinois and from Scotch ancestry. He had crossed the plains with ox teams in 1852, accompanied by his mother. He took the homestead where Mrs. McAtee now resides, it being a very rich and valuable piece of land. In October, 1893, Mr. McAtee went to the Grande Ronde country to collect a large sum of money on his brother's estate, and it is supposed he was murdered for his money, as he has not been heard of since. Mrs. McAtee has three brothers, Benjamin R., John P., and Thomas H. Mr. Steers had one brother, Henry P. Mr. McAtee had one sister, Mrs. Drusilla Robinson. By her first marriage, Mrs. McAtee has the following named children: Alson W., a preacher of the Adventist church in Vancouver, British Columbia; Vincent P., a farmer near Tygh valley; Marion L., a stockman in Grant county, Oregon, and Melinda, the wife of Edward C. Fitzpatrick, who is mentioned in this work. By her second husband, Mrs. McAtee has two children; William H., with his mother; and John B., with Johnston Brothers in Dufur, Oregon.