

JOHN BERRY ETHEREDGE was born Mar 30, 1887 at his parent's home near Wolf Springs, Lawrence Co., AL. He was the second son (third child) of BENJAMIN THOMAS and MARTHA CLEMENTINE (SANDERSON) ETHEREDGE.

He probably attended public school for 3 or 4 years in, or near, Wolf Springs. His parents moved to Town Creek in May 1887 and he entered the public schools there that autumn and continued until about 1903. During this time the school occupied the first floor of the Masonic hall. The terms were short, irregular, and grade levels were ignored. By 1919 the school had 5 teachers and almost 200 students - when he attended it was much smaller.

(A new school was completed in 1919 at which time teachers were paid by the County for 7 months and school patrons paid for an additional 2 months. In 1923 it was changed from 11 grades to 12 and became state accredited in 1925. A separate high school was built in 1939 largely with federal funds.)

For approximately 6 months, John attended an academy - around 1903/04 - away from home (probably in Decatur) - after which he took over the operation of the drug store which his father had established in Town Creek.

MAUDE BELLE MORGAN was born on Oct 20, 1888 at her parent's home near Littleville, Colbert Co., AL. She was the 5th, and last, child of JAMES TALTON and SARAH (REA) MORGAN.

In 1892 or 1893, the family moved to a farm near Good Springs, Franklin Co., AL. about 5 miles north of Russellville. Around 1895, MAUDE entered the Siloam school about 2 miles from her home and continued in that school until 1905 or 1906 at which time the family moved back to Colbert county to a farm near LaGrange. That school, too, had short, irregular terms without grade levels.

During the civil war the economy of the South had been largely destroyed and the post-war period was one of "hard times" and especially so for the small farmer with little capital where the land fertility was marginal. Additionally JAMES TALTON had 4 daughters and only 1 son which did not provide the additional labor needed to attain any significant level of affluence. So, while food was plentiful, they lived at a low economic level. MAUDE recalled that a family visit to Russellville - 5 miles away - only happened once a year - in the fall - and was a big event in her life.

By 1906, MAUDE had completed all the education she could get at the local rural school. To continue her education she took up residence near Town Creek in the home of her brother-in-law and sister, Will and Lula Ann Morgan, and entered the Town Creek public school. From time to time she had occasion to make purchases in the local drug store where she met JOHN. Their acquaintance developed into romance and when she returned home in the spring of 1907, JOHN became a frequent visitor. Engagement followed, and JOHN obtained a marriage license on Oct 14, 1907 from Oscar G. Simpson, Judge of Probate (Colbert Co., AL. Vol H Marriage Records p 159). The license included a \$200 bond which was signed by: JOHN B. ETHEREDGE, E. E. ETHEREDGE, and J. T. MORGAN (Maude's father). The bond portion reads in part:

"The Condition of the above obligation is such, That whereas a License to solemnize Marriage between MR. JOHN B. ETHEREDGE and MISS MAUDE B. MORGAN has this day been issued by the Probate Judge of said County, at _____ request: Now, therefore, if there is no lawful cause why such marriage should not be celebrated, then this obligation is to be void: otherwise it is to remain in full force."

The State of Alabama did not collect this \$200 bond for the wedding took place at the home of MAUDE's parents near LaGrange, AL. at 2:00 p.m. on Oct 20, 1907 - her 19th birthday. The ceremony was performed by Rev. C. C. Godbey. The "best man" was Edgar Emerson Etheredge who, together with JOHN, drove over to LaGrange from Town Creek on the morning of Oct 20.

JOHN and MAUDE resided briefly in the home of his parents pending completion of a house a hundred yards or so down Meredith street which was a gift of his father. For the next 16 years their life was quite comfortable and secure. Their 3 children were born in 1908, 1912, and 1916.

In the operation of the drug store, Dr. Benjamin T. Etheredge both wrote prescriptions and filled them. But after his death in 1915, the drug store had to be sold since JOHN could not render this service. Shortly after, JOHN purchased and installed a gasoline-driven grist mill on the main street of Town Creek which was used to grind corn into meal for farmers on a toll basis. He soon expanded the business to the buying of farm produce (eggs, chickens, hides, tallow, etc.) and shipping it to dealers elsewhere.

This business prospered from the beginning - and particularly during World War I when food prices rose and he bought and re-sold scrap iron which was in particularly heavy demand. Around that time he started to lend money to farmers which operation led to the loss of all of his money including the business during the panic of 1921. His security for money loaned was in the form of a mortgage on the crops grown which had been adequate when crop prices were high. But in 1921 the price of farm products dropped to a such a low point that the farmers could not pay their debts and the value of the crops was not sufficient to pay for the cost of harvesting them. This wiped out all his assets except his home.

In 1921, JOHN and MAUDE sold their home in Town Creek, moved to Sheffield, AL. and JOHN established a fruit store which also failed.

In 1922, the family moved to Russellville where JOHN found work temporarily as a section hand with the Northern Alabama Railroad @ \$2.08/day which was low even in that day. During that time, economic conditions were very depressed and work was intermittent and at low wages. MAUDE supplemented the income at times by taking in a boarder and by keeping a cow which provided the family with milk.

In 1925, JOHN obtained work as a carpenter and concrete form builder near Santallah, N. C. where Stone & Webster Co. was building a dam. This job paid fairly well but only lasted a few months. However the income gave the family sufficient feeling of affluence that they purchased a model "T" Ford touring car for \$515 on the instalment plan. Hazel, their oldest daughter, had graduated from high school in 1925 and had obtained a teaching position at a rural school which paid \$50/month - for 4 months.

In the summer of 1926, JOHN went to Detroit, MI. with MAUDE's adopted brother - Walter - who had obtained work there several years earlier and was back in Alabama for a visit. JOHN obtained work at Budd Wheel Co. @ \$6.00/day which was a high wage in those days. In Aug. 1926 MAUDE sold all the furniture and the family travelled to Berkley, MI. in the 1926 Model "T" Ford - taking 4 days en route. The family lived briefly with Walter Morgan who had left his family in Alabama.

While industrial activity was at a high level during 1926/28 employment for unskilled workers was intermittent. In 1928 JOHN was working for the Graham-Paige Motor Car Co. With the stock market crash of 1928 and 1929, the automobile manufacturing business declined rapidly - and so did business generally. In 1929, JOHN worked in the building of the Detroit Zoological Park at 10-mile Road and Woodward Ave., and in 1930 in the building of the palatial home of Senator James Couzens.

Around 1930, the family moved to Detroit, but as the depression deepened, work became almost non-existent. MAUDE, who was an excellent seamstress, work at home and, at times, in tailor shops to bring in income. In 1932, JOHN established a business on Hastings St. where he installed a grist mill, imported sorghum molasses from the South, bought and sold used clothing. But trade was at such a low ebb that income was meagre and more and more of the family income was provided by MAUDE.

About this time JOHN's health began to fail primarily from asthma which grew progressively worse. For awhile he worked as a night watchman for Hanley Dawson Chevrolet Agency. However, Hazel had married in 1927 and James had been largely self-supporting since 1929 - so family financial need had eased somewhat. James married in 1935 and Blanche in 1937.

With the advent of World War II, JOHN obtained work in a factory that manufactured war goods and from 1942/45 the family savings grew. With these savings, they bought in 1946 a large house at 2663 Myrtle St., Detroit, which provided an income from the rental of rooms. From this income and from saving, they bought the 2 houses adjacent to the first one and rented them.

In April 1952, JOHN began collecting Social Security and in Nov. 1953 MAUDE began collecting it based upon her own earnings. This income plus that from roomers and house rentals provided an income well beyond their needs for the first time since 1921 and they built up sufficient savings to provide for their financial independence.

JOHN's asthmatic attacks became more frequent and increasingly severe and on Jan 4, 1955 at 8:20 p.m. his heart failed and he died at home. The funeral was held on Jan 7 at 1:30 p.m. at the William R. Hamilton Funeral Home, 3975 Cass Ave., Detroit and on the same day he was buried at Roselawn cemetery located at 12 Mile Road and Woodward Ave., Berkley, Michigan. The grave is located in Sec 20. Lot 26.

The death certificate shows JOHN's birth date incorrectly as Mar 30, 1886 - the correct year was 1887 (Detroit Dept. of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Local File No. 204, Jan 7, 1955).

MAUDE continued to live at 2663 Myrtle St. which area had deteriorated into a slum. But in the 1960s, a Redevelopment Agency was formed by governmental authorities which eventually bought all of the property in the area and from the proceeds MAUDE bought in the late 1960s a house at 15079 Bentler in the Redford section of Detroit where she lived for the rest of her life. During her final years, her daughter and son-in-law (Blanche and Stewart Morrison), who lived only about 6 blocks away, took care of her house maintenance and looked after her physical needs. MAUDE died Jun 7, 1986, age 97 yrs. 7 mos. 18 days. She had lived longer than her parents, her brother and all of her sisters.

Her funeral was held Jun 11 at 11:00 a.m. at Ross B. Northrop Funeral home - officiating Rev. William York. Internment Roselawn Park Cemetery, Berkley, MI Sec 20 Lot 26 Grave 6.

ISSUE OF JOHN BERRY ETHEREDGE and MAUDE BELLE MORGAN

HAZEL REA b. Dec 5, 1908 Town Creek, AL.
m. Harold Janes Aug 18, 1927 Toledo, OH.
4 children - Margaret, Harold Jr., Gladys,
Ruth Ann
d. Jul 7, 1987

JAMES BENJAMIN b. Apr 13, 1912 Town Creek, AL.
m. Ruth Evelyn Noyes Jul 3, 1935 Detroit, MI
2 children - Lynn Morgan Lloyd Stanley
d. _____

BLANCHE EVELYN b. Nov 22, 1916 Town Creek, AL.
m. Stewart Morrison May 28, 1937 Detroit, MI
1 child: Beverly Jean
d. MAY 9, 1990