

E. JOYCE MORIARTY; SR.
BORN SEPTEMBER 17, 1893
DIED JULY 21, 1956

Like all other young people in love, we were happy, although we had no money. He had never worked, and the only money he had was, I think, \$10.00 a week allowance his father gave him. He told his father and mother we were married, so his father gave him a job in the tailoring shop at \$40.00 a week and paid him one week in advance. He went around the corner to a jewelry store and paid \$2.00 for a small gold band ring.

He had been on the Mexican Border with the Chicksaw Guards. World War I was started and before the Company left the Border, the Captain said, "Anyone that would like to join the Regular Army now, raise their hands." Joyce raised his hand because all the others did, but he really did not know what the Captain had said, so that is how he joined World War I.

I have two sisters. All three of our husbands left together for the camp. We all three girls went home and stayed with our parents at the old home place, "2080", as we called it. My husband was a Private. Bessie's husband was a Captain, and Margaret's husband a Designer of War Ships.

I got me a job as a cashier in a drug store. I only received \$30.00 a month from the Government but saved every check.

The boys were gone over eighteen months overseas. Joyce was shell-shocked and gassed. They all came home. Joyce went back to work with his father. In a few days his mother came out with the chauffeur. She had a Commercial-Appeal in her hand and said, "Marie, come on with me. I am going to find you and Joyce a place to live." The ad said "Rooms for Rent." I did not know that anyone lived in "rooms". I thought everyone owned and lived in a house to themselves. We found a stucco bungalow on Faxon. The lady's husband had just died. It was five rooms so we rented two and shared the bath. Did not even have a sink. We had it papered and painted and only paid \$25.00 a month. It turned out to be the prettiest apartment you ever saw. Joyce's mother gave me \$50.00 and also bought a swing for the front porch and paid our rent for several months and said to Joyce, "I hope you will always be as happy as your father and I have been." We lived there five happy years. My son was born there the fourth year. It took us five years to save \$1700.00. We lived on his salary and saved mine. We paid \$500.00 down on a pretty clapboard new house and my brother bought the one across the street just like it. They looked like doll houses. We had wicker furniture in the living room and a fire place. We also bought a Ford. It cost \$500.00. My brother and his wife bought one also.

Now all this time Joyce was so sick he could not eat anything only raw eggs and consomme. All those years he had a cot that he would go and rest on in the third floor of the tailoring shop. Sick as he was, he wanted to do something to make extra money so he bought a formula from the Government of a chicken tonic to make chickens lay. He called it "Make-Em-Lay". It had a picture on the label of a chicken. He bought a wash tub and at night he would mix all of this.

E. J. MORIARTY, SR. (cont.)

I remember it had grits, sand, red pepper, Epsom salts, and a lot of other things in it. I packed the containers and labeled them. He wrapped them and addressed them and mailed them on the way to work the next morning. It was fun. He advertised in a group of small-town newspapers. The letters started coming in. Finally it was more than we could handle. In each letter was \$1.00 for a box. It must have been good. One man in Memphis wrote and said, "how can I keep my hens from laying?" Another one wrote and said, "I only have thirty hens and get thirty-five eggs a day." We stopped because winter was coming and we had to leave Memphis and go to Florida as we did each year because he needed the warm climate. I still have the formula. It must be good for several years later we received letters asking where they could buy it by the box.

We went to Jacksonville, Florida. While we were there, Joyce had to go to the Flager Hospital. They said he could not live. There I was in Jacksonville, Florida. I sure was blue that day by myself. I do not know what made me do this but I caught a bus and went forty miles to St. Augustine. I knew I had to do something so I located the prettiest all glass and stucco building on the Mantanza Bay right among all the fine hotels. A lady and her son built it and had gone to New York to buy the stock for a candy shop and on the way back both were killed in a car. So I went to the agent and rented it for \$50.00 a month. Then I went to the millinery department in a large department store and asked the manager to give me an old millinery magazine showing where I could buy hats wholesale. He gave me one and also sold me some hat stands. I bought my license and wired for six dozen hats. It was called "The Little Hat Shop". I had never sold a hat in my life and was scared to death. The hats came. I opened them and sold out the first day. I had not told Joyce yet. He was better so he came to St. Augustine later. He stayed about three months and then he wanted to come back home to Memphis. It was spring-time. I sold the stock to a lady in five minutes after I told her it was for sale. She paid \$1500.00 cash. I started with \$300.00. As we left Memphis to go to Florida that fall, Joyce's father stuck a piece of paper, like he always did, in my hand and said, "This is for you. You might need it." It was a check for \$300.00.

Joyce had gall stones. Back in Memphis again he went back to the store with his father. An agent sold our house. We made \$1,000.00 profit. I cried, so Joyce said, "I can build a better house than that." So we got started. He built about twenty houses. He gave me the first one he built. It had a beautiful large tree in the front. We used to walk around the block after the show each night before we were married and he would say, "Some day I am going to build you a pretty house on that lot." So he kept his promise. The number, 2189 Jefferson. We lived there a while and then sold it in 1921. It is still there. That was thirty-five years ago. Joyce built for two years. They were all pretty. It was fun. We had no labor trouble, no grief, and made a little money. He was liked by everyone and I was so proud of him.

E. J. MORIARTY, SR. (cont.)

Winter came and back to Florida. My brother, Tony, was building in Miami. Also, Blanchard, my other brother, an architect, was the biggest builder there. Joyce was sick again so he only built one house on the beach at Jacksonville Beach. It was sold before it was finished.

On our way back to Memphis, we stopped at Jackson, Mississippi. We rented a pretty furnished house in front of Livingston Park. Joyce said, "Let's stay here for a while." We stayed one year. We were busy. Made a lot of friends and some money.

Tony owned some mineral land out of Jackson, Mississippi. The water would heal any kind of cut. It was good for rheumatism and a lot of ailments. Joyce formed a Medicine Show. He sure did like it. He had a large truck for the music and men who did the work. They had a regular minstrel show every night in a small town. The manager would give a talk about the medicine, then they had the show, and during the show they sold hundreds of bottles at \$1.00 a bottle. They came for miles around and bought and reordered by mail. Joyce used his own car for himself. He paid the men a salary and paid their board and room. He said it sure was fun. That lasted until my brother sold the land. The medicine was called "New Iron". That was in about 1925.

Joyce could not work any more. Went from one hospital to another trying to get well. No one could tell him what was wrong. They said it was nerves and stomach. He used to say, "Don't charge anything. If you can't pay for it, you can't afford to have it. Wait until you can pay for it and then you can sleep at night." He used to say, "You don't know how bad I feel." A lot of people thought he was lazy but I knew better. He was smart enough to always have something put away for a rainy day. He had a horror of being broke. No matter how sick he was, the last thing at night he would come to my bed, tuck my feet in, kiss me and bring me some water, and tell me he loved me, kneel down and say his prayers. He always ended by saying, "Thanks, Dear Lord, for giving Marie and me another day together, and if I go tonight, please take care of her." I don't know much about love, but I believe he loved me. There were six children in our family. We had a happy home life, not a worry in the world, best father and mother in the world. They proved in every way, in everything they did, that they loved us, used to praise us, but they never came out and said, "I love you." They never did. He made me feel like I was important.

After 1925, he only wrote, could not work, so we took lots of trips and enjoyed each other. We lived quiet and easy. With plenty of colored help, I really never had a hard time. He managed to send our son to good private schools. He was a good father. We traveled a lot and had more than most people. Some years on the coast we would board. We took drives, fished, caught gars, sat on the sea wall, took long walks, and would sit for hours on the screened porch looking at the beautiful Gulf. When the sun shone on the water, it looked like one thousand sapphires. The moon on the water was beautiful. We

E. J. MORIARTY, SR. (cont.)

talked, planned, and reminisced. sometimes he would get a daily paper and say, "Let's buy a cheap house today and sell it." So we would pick out a place with a small down payment and then sign up to buy it, have it cleaned, the yard, windows, etc., then put a home-made sign in the yard, "For Sale" and run an ad for a few dollars. In a few days someone would come up and say, "I would like to buy that house." We sold each for \$1,000.00 down so we made about \$500.00.

Sometimes he would say in the middle of the night, "I can't sleep. Put a few things in the overnight bag. Let's drive to New Orleans, eat breakfast, spend the day and the night and then back home." It was only seventy-five miles. The trip would be restful. On our way back, we would stop at Bay St. Louis, go to St. Stanalaus Boys Boarding School and spend a few hours with our son.

Sometimes we would go down to the docks and watch the ocean vessels come and go. We talked to all the sailors and help. We loved the Gulf Coast and water and easy living. My people used to worry about us. Said we were living like Gypsies.

When he felt like it he would get into a skiff and go out five miles in the Gulf in front of the house. He always took a colored man with him. He thought the man went to help him but I sent him to take care of him. He found a good hole and the fish were easily caught. They would come back with the boat full. We would call the neighbors on the telephone to come and take all the fish they wanted. Sometimes he put out crab nets and would catch dozens of crabs and would give them away. We bought our fish and sea food at the Fishery. It was already cleaned and packed.

In the winter we had a large fire place and burned pine knots. They make a pretty fire. We got them free by sending a truck to the woods. They were roots of the pine trees that had been pulled up. They looked like snagged teeth.

We ate our meals on the large front screened porch facing the Gulf. We always took a nap after lunch in a hammock on the porch. I believe if we had stayed there, Joyce would be well today, but we were always running back to Memphis.

In 1932, Joyce said, "Well, the Government says I am psycho. If I am, they will have to pay me. I was not that way when I went into the Army, so I have decided to sue the Government." He went to a lawyer friend of his and asked him could he sue, but the lawyer said, "They will think I am crazy." Well, they did sue, but the case was tried in the Federal Court, with a Jury. He was awarded his \$10,000.00 War Risk Insurance for his nerves. That was in 1933. His diagnosis was n.c.m. His nerves were bad and his stomach, but he had a good mind and he grieved because he was sick and could not cope with the world. So things went as usual for the next years. I bought a house at 855 Charles, with fifteen acres and lots of trees like in the country. Something happened in our life then (it is a secret). A sad thing for all three of us, my son, for Joyce, and me. We were all hurt. Our hearts were.

E. J. MORIARTY SR. (cont.)

It was decided that Joyce should go to California and go into a hospital and try to get better. He had sisters and brothers there. We thought it was best. The trouble was not money, women, nor madness, so on about July 1st, 1947, he went out there. We all cried. Then I lost my mother and our son. I turned on my husband. Then my father was bedridden for three years and died. A lot happened in those years we were apart. Yes, I met him in El Paso one week end. He must have thought that he had cancer. He was so sick and he said, "I am sicker than you think." I told him I could never leave Memphis for California. Memphis was home. Yet it was a long time to be apart. But our lives had a happy ending, sad as it was. He knew he was going to die and said he would be waiting for me and not make it too long, and as for me, I am ready any time.

Dear Lord, thanks for everything and for letting me be a part of his life.