

**Clarence Washington Berry** was born in Redfield, Arkansas near Hot Springs on **March 7, 1894**. Later, the Berry family moved to Benton, Arkansas. Clarence's father, **Walter Scott Berry**, farmed and worked in a saw mill near Benton. He did much of the fine finish for wood cabinets and other wood products.

In early 1900 there was a scarlet fever epidemic in the county and many children, including Clarence, were infected with the disease. Because of this illness, he lost his hearing and became deaf-mute. Soon thereafter, he was enrolled in a school for the deaf in Little Rock, Arkansas where he continued his schooling until he graduated. While there, he learned the trade of a tailor.

While he was in school in Little Rock, he met **Fannie Cornelia Taylor**, who also had been stricken with scarlet fever. Fannie was from Tupelo, Arkansas where her father farmed. There are still many Berry's in Benton County.

On **September 2, 1917** Clarence Berry and Fannie Taylor were married in Tupelo, Arkansas. Clarence opened a shop there providing cleaning and pressing and tailoring. Fannie tended the garden and raised chickens and they began to plan a family. The first addition to their family was **Jerome Taylor Berry** who was born on May 29, 1919 in Tupelo in the family residence. As both of his parents were deaf-mute, neighbors had to teach him how to talk while he learned to communicate with his parents through signing.

On November 11, 1918, World War I was over and America's industrial potential ignited. Industry flourished and one of the biggest and newest industries was the automobile industry. Earlier, BF Goodrich had founded a small rubber factory in Akron and now that Detroit auto makers needed more and more tires, Goodrich's plant in Akron took off. Soon, other tire-makers, including Goodyear, Firestone and General, also opened major manufacturing plants in Akron. Akron became the rubber tire capital of the world.

Working in a rubber tire plant was conducive to many people who were deaf because of the noise that the process produced. Deaf people flocked to Akron to work in the tire plants, including many classmates from the deaf school in Little Rock as well as friends of both Clarence and Fannie Berry. In 1920, after a number of letters, the Berry's decided to move their tailor business to Akron to take advantage of the boom in the city and to be with other deaf people there. So, off they went, from Tupelo, Arkansas to Akron, Ohio, Clarence, Fannie and one-year old Jerome.

Upon arrival in Akron, Clarence got a job with the Read-Benzol Company which was an industrial fabric cleaning company. The company cleaned drapes and other expensive fabrics for the wealthy property owners and hotels of Akron. Clarence started as a "presser" and soon became the manager of the pressing operation. He also worked as a tailor on the side. Soon after arrival, the Berry's rented a home in what is called Goodyear Heights, a subdivision built by the Goodyear Company for its workers.

**Katherine Marjorie Berry** was born into the Berry family on March 23, 1922 followed soon thereafter by **Lauretta Taylor Berry** on July 23, 1923. Finally, **Clarence Lou Berry** was born in Akron on November 6, 1929. Jerome and the other Berry kids grew up in Akron in the Goodyear Heights neighborhood and attended public schools there. But, just as Clarence was born in 1929, the great stock market crash occurred and the Great Depression began.

Clarence continued working in Akron and was active in the various deaf organizations there.

In 1973 he started having mental problems and his son, Jerome, arranged for him to live in a nursing home in Rolla, Missouri. Clarence died there on **September 10, 1973** at the age of 79. He is buried in Akron with his wife.

**Fannie Cornelia Taylor**, born 22 Jan 1898 Jackson Cty Arkansas, died 1 Nov 1981 Alexandria Virginia  
*daughter of Lucius Jerome Taylor and Annie Lee Brazeale.*