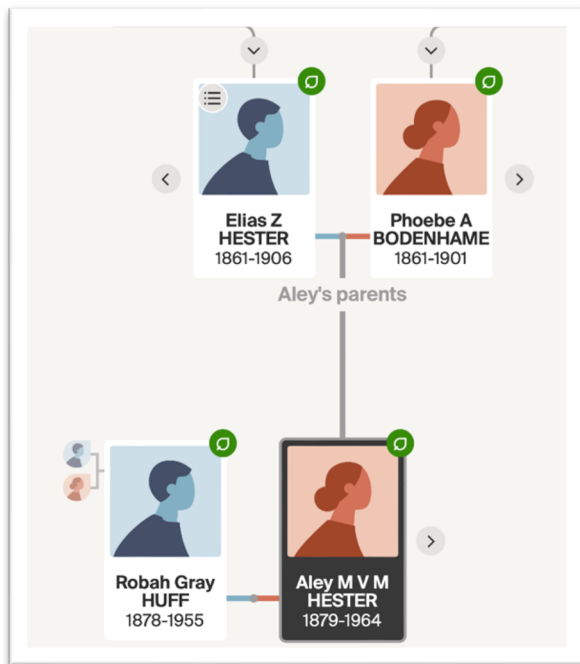


# Aley Mahaley Viola Maye Hester

*A grandmother who grew up in Appalachian farm country*



Aley Mahaley Viola Maye “Maye” Hester was born March 23, 1879, in Middle Fork Township, Forsyth County, North Carolina, to **Elias Zebedee Hester**, age 18, and **Phoebe Augusta Bodenhamer**, age 17.<sup>1</sup> Elias was a farmer and Phoebe took care of the household. Maye lived her whole life in Forsyth County in the outer Appalachian Mountains.



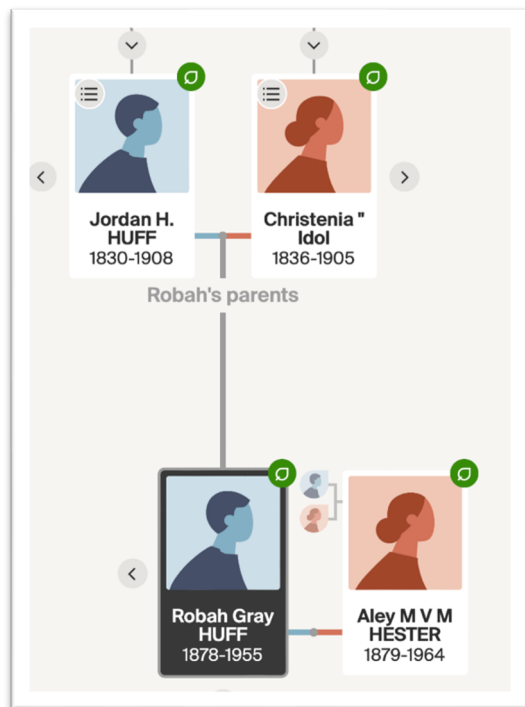
Maye was the first of nine children born to Elias and Phoebe, though six of these children died before the age of two: **Lewis/Louis Elijah**, **Ida Florilla**, **Effie Lueller**, **Anna Augusta**, **Elias Zebedee**, and **Cletis/Cletus Abigail**.<sup>2</sup> Around 1888, the infant mortality rate in America was nearly 200 per 1000 births, and newborn mortality was about 50 per 1000 births. Many deaths were due to infectious diseases such as diarrhea, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and

<sup>1</sup> North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate, record number 38066 (stamped), registration district no. 34-95, registrar’s certificate no. 1725 (penned), Maye Hester Huff (1964). See [Appendix Figure 1](#).

<sup>2</sup> *Find a Grave*®, memorial ID 8892159, digital image, 6 August 2021, by “kirby heard,” gravestone for Lewis Hester (Loves United Methodist Church Cemetery, Walkertown, Forsyth County, North Carolina); memorial ID 8892082, digital image, 19 November 2018, by “Billy Medlin,” gravestone for Ida Hester; memorial ID 8892057, digital image, 6 August 2021, by “kirby heard,” gravestone for Anna A. Hester; memorial ID 148076399, added 20 June 2015, created by “Apollymi,” memorial for Cletus Abigail Hester; memorial ID 8892069, digital image, 6 August 2021, by

tuberculosis.<sup>3</sup> Maye grew up with her surviving sisters **Carrie “Lottie,”** born in 1888, and **Iola Mabel,** born in 1891.<sup>4</sup>

Maye married **Robah Gray Huff,** age 21, on October 25, 1899, at age 20, in Walkertown, North Carolina.<sup>5</sup> Maye and Robah lived with Robah’s parents, **Jordan** and **Christine Huff,** in Middle Fork. Robah was a farm laborer at the time, likely on the Huff family farm.<sup>6</sup>



Robah was born August 9, 1878, to **Jordan H. Huff** and **Christine Elizabeth Idol.**<sup>7</sup>

Christine was born March 29, 1836, in Stokes County, North Carolina, to **Caleb Idol** and **Sallie Bodenhamer.**<sup>8</sup> She married **Joseph Idol** on July 22,

“kirby heard,” memorial for Effie L. Hester; memorial ID 8892062, added 9 June 2005, originally created by “SleepingDog,” memorial for Elias Zeb Hester. Alternative spellings and middle names from the Hester Family Bible, provided by a family member.

<sup>3</sup> Shulman, S. “The History of Pediatric Infectious Diseases.” *Pediatric Research* 55, 163–176 (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1203/01.PDR.0000101756.93542.09>

<sup>4</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Forsyth County, North Carolina, population schedule, Middle Fork Township, enumeration district (ED) 27, sheet 18, dwelling 357, family 395, Elijah Z. Hester household; NARA microfilm publication T623. [See Appendix Figure 2.](#)

<sup>5</sup> “State of North Carolina, Forsyth County, Office Register of Deeds,” page 172 (penned); “North Carolina, U.S. Marriage Records, 1741-2011,” *Ancestry* > Forsyth > Marriage Licenses (1849-2012), Robah G. Huff and Viola M. Hester license October 24, 1899. [See Appendix Figure 3.](#)

<sup>6</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Forsyth County, North Carolina, pop. sch., Middle Fork Township, ED 0027, sheet 21, dw. 403, fam. 442, Jordan Huff household; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1194. [See Appendix Figure 4.](#)

<sup>7</sup> “U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918,” *Ancestry* > North Carolina > Forsyth County > All, Draft Card H, Registration Card A2556, Robah Gray Huff. [See Appendix Figure 5.](#)

<sup>8</sup> *Find a Grave*, memorial ID 100600259, added 12 November 2012, by “Dan Stevenson,” memorial for Christenia Elizabeth “Christina” Idol Huff (Oak Grove Moravian God’s Acre, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, North Carolina)

1854,<sup>9</sup> and they had three children: **Delphina Idol** in 1857, **Alice Idol** in 1859,<sup>10</sup> and **Victoria**, born in 1860.<sup>11</sup> Joseph died in 1860 of “brain fever” before Victoria was born.<sup>12</sup> Christine married Jordan on December 24, 1865,<sup>13</sup> and they had four children together, and Victoria was raised with the surname Huff:<sup>14</sup>

- ∞ **Emma Elizabeth Huff**, born 1868
- ∞ **Charles Curtis Huff**, born 1870
- ∞ **Carrie Mae Huff**, born 1876
- ∞ **Robah Gray Huff**, born 1878



Over the next few years, Maye and Robah had at least three children<sup>15</sup>:

- ∞ **Phoebe Abigail Huff**, born October 19, 1900
- ∞ **Christine Reitzel Huff**, born September 14, 1902
- ∞ **Ruth Irene Huff**, born February 18, 1905

In 1910, the family was living in Belews Creek. Robah’s mother, Christine, had died in 1905 and his father, Jordan, in 1908, and Robah was working the family farm as the owner. Robah’s brother, **Charlie Huff**, was married and had five children, and they were living on a farm in Sauratown, Stokes County, possibly his wife’s family farm.<sup>16</sup>

### Living in Middle Fork, North Carolina, in 1900<sup>17</sup>

#### Community Life:

Middle Fork, located in the southern part of the state, was a small, close-knit community in 1900. Most residents were farmers, relying on agriculture as their main source of income. The community was diverse, with people from various ethnic backgrounds, including African Americans and European immigrants. Despite the racial segregation and discrimination prevalent at the time, residents often came

<sup>9</sup> “North Carolina, U.S., Marriage Records, 1741-2004,” *Ancestry* > Forsyth, North Carolina Register of Deeds, Marriage Records, page 99 (penned).

<sup>10</sup> 1860 U.S. Census, Forsyth County, North Carolina, pop. sch., Middle Fork District, page 124, dw. 998, fam. 944, Joseph Idol household; NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 897.

<sup>11</sup> *Find a Grave*, Memorial 13728027, added 25 March 2006 by “SierraBravo,” memorial for Victoria Charlotte Huff Williard (Saints Delight Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, North Carolina).

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880. Joseph Idol, March 1960, Forsyth County NC, farmer.

<sup>13</sup> “North Carolina, U.S., Marriage Index, 1741-2004,” *Ancestry* > Forsyth, North Carolina Register of Deeds, Marriage Records, page 99 (penned).

<sup>14</sup> 1880 U.S. Census, Forsyth County, North Carolina, Middle Fork Township, ED 79, page 16D, dw. 169, fam. 170, Jordan Huff household; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 963. [See Appendix Figure 6.](#)

<sup>15</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Forsyth County, North Carolina, Middle Fork Township, ED 58, sheet 3B, dw. 65, fam. 67, Robah G. Huff household. NARA microfilm publication T624 roll 1110. [See Appendix Figure 7.](#)

<sup>16</sup> 1910 U.S. Census., Stokes County, North Carolina, Sauratown Township, ED 185, sheet 712A, dw. 207, fam. 208, Charlie C. Huff household. NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1128..

<sup>17</sup> Living in Middle Fork, North Carolina, USA, in 1900 by *AncestryAI*.