

Oral history narration Ethel Benefield recorded around 1967.

*"First natives in the land where they were born and raised was there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said, this is my own, my native land."*

December 26 1885, while rain and snow fell, Ethel was born at Silver King in the Arizona Territory. Her father, John Meehan was foreman of Silver King mine.

Ethel's brother Tom at 12 or 14 years old, was a pick boy in the mine.

Ethel lived in a dugout in the hillside at Silver King.

At 6 months old her mother left Ethel in a basket out by the doorway. She also left a pie out on the window sill to cool. A Javelena or wild pig came along and ate the pie, fortunately not baby Ethel.

One little brother of Ethel is buried at Silver King.

Ethel's Godparents ran the hotel at Silver King.

Four hundred to five hundred miners lived at Silver King around 1888.

There used to be a swing on the hotel porch at Silver King.

Ethel used to swing in the porch swing around dinner time, the miners would walk by and give her a push.

In 1888 silver prices dropped and John Meehan went over to Goldfield, Arizona.

During this time, Ethel's mother Mary was left with five children.

One night Mary couldn't sleep because a group of Apaches were seen moving toward the Four Peaks area. 12 people were left in Silver King at that time.

On December 25, 1893 at Goldfield, Arizona all Mary had left to feed herself and the kids were two cans of corn beef and some flour.

It was a stormy Christmas.

Ethel remembered this time because she would be eight years old the next day.

George Laub Sr. and John Meehan were the first to prospect around Superior, Arizona.

George kept the mine and "sold out to superior".

Two fellows (possibly cattle thieves) lived a little ways away from Ethel.

As a child Ethel enjoyed playing with these fellows neice and with their bloodhounds that they used for hunting cougars.

In the valley on the other side of Stoneman's Grade there used to be walnut trees where they used to have picnics.

Mrs. Ennis had a big corral where Ethel used to watch rodeos.

The big corral was also where the only well was left in town.

Oral history narration Ethel Benefield recorded around 1967. (Continued)

Ethel spent eight to twelve years in Goldfield, Arizona.  
Ethel said that it took two days to get from Silver King to Goldfield in a covered wagon.

Ethel related one story which occurred on the fourth of July.  
An Englishman went down to work in the mine, because he didn't believe in celebrating the holiday. The mine caved in, and John Meehan was the only person who showed up to rescue the Englishman. The Englishman lived. However one year later on the same holiday, the Englishman was working in a mine in Cripple Creek, Colorado. The mine collapsed and killed the Englishman.

John Meehan was born in County Mayo, Ireland.  
His wife Mary was born in County Donegal, Ireland.  
At 18 years old John was a glassblower in England.  
But as grandma Ethel said, he was "too much Irish".  
A brother gave John money to come to Virginia City, Nevada.  
John's brother ran a boarding house in Virginia City.  
John traveled in steerage to New York, then by train to San Francisco.  
John had two married sisters in San Francisco.  
They had been in the U. S. for "quite a few years."  
Then John moved to Virginia City, Nevada.  
He went back to San Francisco to the old St. Mary's Church which burned down possibly 1875.  
John met Mary Callahan.  
They were married and moved back to Goldhill, Nevada.

Mary Callahan's Story.  
In Ireland, Mary's sister sent her money from Philadelphia.  
Mary moved to Philadelphia and worked as a children's nurse -she was 18 or 16 years old.  
Mary and three other Irish girls left New York on a ship and travelled across Panama by train.  
Then they took a fruit boat to San Francisco.  
One girl married the man who sent for her, another went to live with her family in Fresno California- ("It was hard to get their then.")  
Mary went to work as a nurse maid for one of San Francisco's most prominent lawyers of the time.

Ethel's brother Tom was born in Goldhill, NV. along with Agnes, Elaine and Ellen.  
Ethel and Lena were born in Silver King.  
Ethel's brother Tom later owned the wholesale liquor house in Casa Grande, Arizona.  
Ethel's oldest sister Agnes was sent to San Francisco for an education where she lived with John Meehan's sister.

Agnes married a lawyer in San Francisco named Lamoreaux, soon they moved to Canada. Cathryn moved to Tucson where she was married.  
Ella, Elaine and Ethel moved to Phoenix.

Oral history narration Ethel Benefield recorded around 1967. (Continued)

In 1903 after John Meehan died, Ethel worked as a secretary for the Phoenix Water and Railway Co.

Ella married Will Voita, who was a bookkeeper for the Goldman Co.

Elaine married George Jay and had two sons at Narco, Arizona.

George Jay was the head of Wells Fargo there.

Ethel married Frank Benefield who worked for Pacific Gas in Phoenix as an electrician.

Lena worked in Goldwater's store for many years- she was the head saleslady.

She married Elmer Bodie, who owned the J Bar X Ranch in the White Mountains near San Anches.

Ethel's brother Tom died first, then Agnes died.

Agnes had three boys and two girls one of boys, who was a Mountie, walked all the way to Lena's ranch-"pretty good for a Canadian".

John Meehan's best friend struck it rich up in the Klondike, he sold out his interest in his claim to the Guggenheim Interests, then he sent money down and put Ethel through business school in Phoenix .