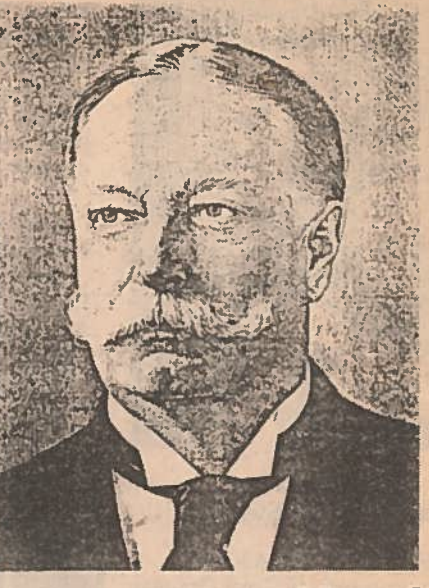


Bethinking of Old Orleans

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PRESIDENT TAFT SLEPT HERE

Recently I did an article on Sam Crawford the famous baseball player who visited and spoke here in Orleans County. I got to thinking that we have had a number of famous people come through here to make speeches, perform or visit for one reason or another. Here is only a very partial and incomplete list, but it perhaps gives you a vague idea of who's been here from out of the list. My list is as follows: Joseph Ellicott, surveyor; Henry Clay, statesman; Lafayette, statesman; William Morgan, anti-Mason; Horace Greeley, publisher; William F. Cody, as "Buffalo Bill"; Robert Ingersoll, orator; William Jennings Bryan, lecturer; Frances Folsom, (Mrs. Grover Cleveland); Louis Comfort Tiffany, glass designer; Marjorie Dressler, actress; Booker T. Washington, educator; Elbert Hubbard, author/craftsman; Al Smith, Governor; Franklin D. Roosevelt, as Governor; Eleanor Roosevelt, stateswoman; Thomas E. Dewey, Governor; Nelson Rockefeller, as Governor; Chuck Mangione, musician; Mitch Miller, conductor and more recently Governor Mario Cuomo. I'm sure the list could go on and on and I'm sure between the New York Central, the "Hojak", the Erie Canal and even stage coaches along the historic Ridge Road, many famous personages have at least passed through here.

It was not until recently however, that I came across the fact that ex-President Taft once visited Albion. On March 11, 1920 the Orleans American reported as follows: "We are informed that during the history of Albion, two former presidents of the United States have visited the village, the first the late Theodore Roosevelt and the second, William H. Taft." To the best of my knowledge that is still true of former presidents although F.D.R. was here prior to being president but never during his presidency.

As to President Taft, the Orleans American went on to say that he arrived in Albion on Monday, March 8, 1920 and was met at the 12:55 train by a committee of the Albion Chamber of Commerce consisting of William E. Karns, R. Titus Coan, Gerold B. Fluhrer, the County Judge; Thomas A. Kir-

by, Oscar Sammett, William H. Kenyon and George Whelan. These individuals escorted Taft to the Orleans House where he was given a fine luncheon attended by nearly one hundred people. Following the luncheon, the ex-President gave a thirty-minute address which was very well received. He spoke of the beauties of the village and was much pleased with its attractive and surrounding highlights. He also alluded to Socialism and the Bolsheviks and the depredations experienced in Russia. After his speech Democrats, Republicans and Prohibitionists alike, were glad to grasp his hand. At five o'clock ex-Pres. Taft was tendered a public reception in the Elk's parlors. In the evening he gave a forceful address in the Albion High School auditorium on The League of Nations. Every seat was filled. Music was furnished by the Albion High School orchestra. During his speech he made it plain to the audience how important it was for this nation to join the League of Nations. Everyone was impressed and pleased with the way he handled the fourteen points. The ex-Pres. remained in Albion that evening and slept at the Orleans House. At 6:35 the next morning he boarded a train for Titusville, Pa. via Buffalo.

Taft had the courage to break away from his old associates on the subject of the League of Nations proposed by Pres. Wilson. The Orleans American noted "...that this raised him in the estimation of millions of people and that he was more popular with the common people of America goes without saying."

William Howard Taft was born Sept. 15, 1857 in Cincinnati, Ohio. A Unitarian, he was educated following high school at Yale and the Cincinnati Law School. He married Helen Herron (1861-1943) and they had two boys and one girl. He was elected on the Republican ticket for President of the United States in the fall of 1908 and served one term from 1909-1913. During his presidency, New Mexico and Arizona were admitted as states in 1912. In physique he is always remembered as a very large man. He died in 1930 from a heart ailment.