

Rethinking of Old Orleans

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Although Pearl Coann died over 90 years ago, his name remains visible to this day. Patrons of the Swan Library will notice a framed illumination hanging in the main reading room, thanking him for his many gifts of books to the town library. Some may even have wondered who this man was. Here is his story.

He was the only son of Ezra T. and Marcia Clement Coann. Their family home was located on South Main Street in Albion. This residence was purchased in 1916 and transformed into the first Arnold

Gregory Memorial Hospital. He was married to Ethel James, formerly of Middleport, N. Y.

Mr. Coann was recognized as a very bright and progressive individual in spite of his very severe handicap. It seems that in his youth he was afflicted by a disease which left him completely deaf and unable to speak. This did not, however, prevent him from attending law school and passing his bar exams. He was an esteemed member of the Orleans County Bar Association, but did not appear in

court-related cases.

After the retirement of John Cunneen as editor of the Weekly News, Coann acted in that capacity for several years. He subsequently founded the Albion Free Lance. Eventually these newspapers merged into the Orleans American. Coann, along with Miss Annette Noble, collaborated on writing several books.

During the last five or so years of his life, Coann became an exporter of fruit. He founded a fruit company with headquarters in Glasgow which purchased and shipped

fruit to that city. He was considered extremely successful in this business venture.

It is noted in his obituary that while buying fruit in Virginia, he fell victim to lead poisoning and before recovering from that, developed pneumonia which resulted in his death. He was a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Albion.

"Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them"

Revelation 14:13

