

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Lafayette H. Beach

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"I love that person who squanders the self, who wants no thanks nor returns any, for that person gives all and does not save the self." —Nietzsche

Lafayette Henry Beach was born in Albion on April 2, 1856, the son of Calvin G. Beach and Juliette H. Beach. He received any formal education in the common schools and at the age of fifteen, with his brother Fred, he entered into their father's newspaper business which was known as The Orleans Republican. After the death of both parents, Juliette being the latter in 1900, Lafayette Beach became the sole owner and publisher of The Orleans Republican. In his political views Mr. Beach was a Democrat which in effect continued to make his paper a voice of Democratic Party politics. In 1909, after 38 years in the newspaper business, Mr. Beach retired, disposing of the paper and printing business to W. Crawford Ramsdale and Sanford T. Church. The Orleans Republican continued as a Democrat organ. In fact, Sanford T. Beach had married Florence Beach, making him a brother-in-law to Lafayette Beach. Although Mr. Beach had retired he did not completely give up his newspaper interest as he was a frequent contributor of historical articles and editorial features. Upon his death, The Orleans Republican noted that: "He stood for all things good and clean in newspaper work. He built up the reputation of his paper to be known as sound in all its views. He was a keen, clear thinker and so expressed himself in his writings." Mr. Beach was frequently asked to deliver speeches for special occasions. His paper noted this also by stating: "Many of his addresses were full of information, full of thoughts for good and the uplift of humanity." Likewise the other village newspaper in 1925, The Orleans American stated the following: "By means of his facile pen and with his gift of expression, easily translating into words the thoughts that came to him, Mr. Beach was able to record at times the worthwhile things, and these facilities coupled with his keen mind and memory made him a man sought after for facts of sympathetic and historic interest."

Following his retirement in 1909, Mr. Beach devoted his energy and time to community betterment and for the service of mankind. He served as the first president of the Virgil Bogue Home for Dependent Children from the time it was



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organized in 1911 to 1925. He was vice president of the Albion Chapter American Red Cross and during World War I devoted much of his time to the campaigns for Liberty and Victory Loans for our government's war effort.

In 1912 Mr. Beach became one of the original incorporators of the Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital. In 1914, at the organizational meeting of the hospital, he was chosen first vice president, becoming acting president thereafter, because of the inability of Mr. Gregory, who had been honored with the presidency, to take an active part in its affairs. Upon the death of Mr. Gregory in 1916, Mr. Beach was elected to the office of president which he held until the time of his death. Here he gave unsparingly of his time for the benefit of the hospital to the community.

Lafayette Beach also took an interest in young people, serving on the Board of Education of the Albion Union Free School as a director and later as president. For a number of years he served as superintendent of the Sunday School in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Albion. He was: "...a man of high ideals, patriotic purpose and sympathetic and kindly disposition." Indeed, Lafayette Beach left his mark on the Albion community. In 1937 and 1938 the old West State School in Albion was demolished and its site was turned into a children's playground. A sandstone marker dedicates this park to Lafayette Beach. The marker states: Lafayette H. Beach Park

Lafayette H. Beach Park
sponsored by
the Village of Albion
built by WPA
1938

Many refer to this park as Lafayette Park which suggests in fact, that people have forgotten that the park was dedicated to a man by the last name of Beach, not Lafayette.

Upon Mr. Beach's death he left his wife Jennie Roberts Beach and four children which included Herbert L., Floyd S., Leon C. and Mrs. Bessie Colton. Another daughter Ethel Williams predeceased him by a month.

"Devotion to humanity is our inescapable devotion."
Kenneth L. Patton