

LAFAYETTE NANCE

Born: 14 January 1874, Aid, Lawrence Co., Ohio.

Married: Flora Jane Jenkins

Died: 2 April 1954, Greene Co., Ohio.

Buried: Lodge Ridge Cemetery, Aid Twp., Lawrence Co., Ohio.

Children: Rufus Lee and possibly an infant who died.

Biography: Lafayette was the third child of William and Susanna Matilda (Platt) Nance. He was born in Lawrence Co., Ohio where his formal education took him through the sixth grade. He became a farmer and married to Flora Jane Jenkins, daughter of Amos and Mary Francis (Lambert) Jenkins, who was born on 7 October 1880. They married on 23 June 1901 at the home of Amos Jenkins. While Rufus was their one child,



Photographs of Lafayette and Flora Jane

there may have been a younger infant who died. Long after their son was grown and married, Lafayette called him "Roofie". Flora had a couple years more of school than her husband, completing the eighth grade. Having bought 140 acres of wooded land, Lafayette then cleared it and built a six room, one and a half story house in the Fall of 1901 and Spring 1902. He dug a 40 foot well there by the house, lined it with rocks and built a covering for it. He also cut logs to build a log barn for livestock and make rail fences. In a hill in back of the house, he dug out a cellar 8 feet wide and 12 feet long where they kept milk, vegetables and butter. In 1908, he is listed as a taxpayer in Cherryville of Aid Twp. In 1910, in Aid Twp., he is noted as owning his farm home free of mortgage. In 1913, Lafayette built a barn out of oak wood with a galvanized roof. Lafayette planted apple, peach and plum trees and also grew grapes and strawberries. He planted wheat, cane, and also some corn for grain to feed the livestock. They often took some of their produce to market in Ironton to sell. His World War I draft registration card, dated in 1918, describes him as having grey eyes and "light" hair. Lafayette, being so handy of a carpenter as he was, also later built with his son Rufus a home for Rufus and his wife in 1924 or 1925 - only hiring the chimney to be done. Lafayette had a good team of horses named Mollie and Seal and two good cows for milk and butter at their home. Each fall, Lafayette would

butcher two hogs for meat and Flora Jane would make sausage, seasoning it with sage and pepper. Flora Jane was remembered as being a very good cook. She enjoyed making quilts with the neighbor ladies. Most of what his son Rufus wrote in a 1978 essay about his parent's deals with his father's farming and farm construction. They got their first "Model T Touring car" in 1922. Late at night on 11 June 1937, Benjamin Addis, a son of Lafayette's next door neighbors, was at the Nance home. Also present was Ruth Sloan, Lafayette's niece, daughter of Newton Nance. Benjamin's wife Meda believed that he was having an affair with Ruth. She arrived on the scene and with a .32 caliber revolver she shot her husband in the chest there that night, killing him! The sheriff made the obvious observation that "jealously was apparently the motive". Meda briefly ended up in jail, but was soon out on bond. On Lafayette's 64th birthday (1938), his mother died, apparently right there at his home, as she was ill for two weeks there before she died! And then Lafayette's father-in-law died in the house the very next year! Lafayette and Flora Jane were Baptists, members of the Union Baptist Church. On 1 May 1950 at about 8:15 a.m., Flora Jane, for reasons not fully understood though probably in a time of deep depression and of ill health, committed suicide in the barn beside their home with a shotgun, shooting herself through the heart. The newspaper obituary did not mention suicide specifically, saying rather that the "body of Mrs. Flo Jenkins Nance . . . was found by her husband . . . She had died instantly. Coroner Payne and Deputies Payne and Willis say Mrs. Nance had been in ill health for some time." She was buried two days later. Signs of suffering mental health appear in a comment written in June 1947 by Nellie Nance saying, "Mother Nance is not well. Doctor says her nerves are shattered." In February 1949, she wrote that "Grandma Nance is not well," an observation that was reiterated in May that year. Three days after the death of his wife, Lafayette moved in with his son and daughter-in-law, living with them in Greene Co., Ohio. He died there on his son's farm near Cedarville, Ohio at 6:00 a.m. (newspaper account says 6:30 a.m.) on 2 April 1954 of "interstitial nephritis" or inflammation of the kidneys. On his death certificate under "Other significant conditions", is listed "Senility". He was buried by his wife on April 5th.

Children:

1) Rufus Lee, the only child of his parents, at least that survived, was born 26 May 1902 and died on 5 December 1979. A farmer, he married to



Lafayette Nance home in Lawrence Co., Ohio



Lafayette, Rufus and Flora Jane Nance

Nellie Mae Thornton, daughter of Albert and Dora Alice (Schaaf) Thornton, on 31 March 1923. They moved to Greene Co., Ohio in March 1938. Rufus and his wife were a part of starting a new Nazarene church in Cedarville, Ohio where they farmed for thirty-six years. Their home burned on 6 January 1940 only four days after the birth of their son Raymond. After their retirement, Rufus and Nellie moved to Jamestown, Ohio on 14 September 1974, to a home they had bought in 1967, and lived there until his passing. Even in retirement, Rufus remained active in farming, helping other relatives on their farms and in mowing the church lawn for many years. Rufus died at a Springfield, Ohio hospital following surgery for colon cancer. It was, however, blood clot to the lung that actually caused his death.

- a. Albert Lafayette, born 11 January 1931 and died the next day, 21 hours after birth. "Congenital weakness", was the cause listed. Obituary reads: "Albert Lafayette, son of Rufus and Nellie Nance, was born January 11, 1931, but in the Infinite wisdom of God, he was permitted to live but one day in this world, and then his spirit returned to God who gave it. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21." Rev. H. C. Little, pastor of the Ironton Nazarene church, spoke for the funeral.
- b. Glenna Marie, born 29 November 1932, at Ironton, Ohio. She married to Donald Lewis Brown on 6 September 1957.
- c. Raymond Lee, born 2 January 1940, and married to Jane Waneta Huff on 1 January 1964. They adopted a son, Brian, and then had a son of their own, Todd.



2) Possible infant, sex unknown. In 1966, Rufus stated his belief that there was another child born alive to his mother, but that had died. Indications are that this may refer to a child born to Flora Jane before her marriage, and so Lafayette may not be the father.



Sitting L to R:
Flora Jane Nance,
Lydia Wells, Jane
Alice Hall, Emma
Urlick and
Lafayette Nance.
Standing L to R:
Matilda Hall,
Oliver Hall and
Hannah Urlick.



**Lafayette Nance,
with granddaughter Glenna,
his mother Susanna Matilda and wife Flora Jane**



**An undated photograph of
Lafayette Nance**



Graves of Lafayette and Flora Jane Nance



Lafayette, Rufus and Flora Jane



**Lafayette and Flora Jane with son Rufus and grandson
Raymond in June 1947**