

# A Bevy Of Beautiful Beach Babes

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Several years ago my sister and I came across three pictures we knew included Grandmother Sarah Ann Beach Duffie and six women we believed to be her sisters. That was all we knew at the time. We didn't know names, let alone faces to put with those names. Dad had died in 1998, and Mom was in an assisted care facility. There were no other family members we knew of we could contact.



Our childhood memories of our family were centered on Canada. Our grandparents, Blake Monroe & Sarah Ann Beach Duffie, were both born in Canada. They were married in 1910 and lived their first few married years in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, before moving to Buffalo, N.Y. They were living in Canada in 1914, the year Dad was born.

*Picture 1: three sisters dress up as gentlemen, three as ladies, and one, Sarah Ann Beach (Duffie), as the chaperone.*

As children we had met several Great Aunts & Uncles in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and Buffalo, New York. However, with the exception of meeting his Uncle Will in 1960 at Grandmother Duffie's funeral, we had little contact with the Beach side of his family. We heard rumors of cousins somewhere in Northern Ohio and Michigan, but that was all we had.



*Picture 2: the girls introduce their beaux to the chaperone.*



*Picture 3: thankfully the chaperone falls asleep, and the couples get to do a little "spooning".*

All we knew of Grandma Duffie's childhood were stories of her crossing the American west in a covered wagon as a child. We understood that she had grown up in a sod hut on the plains of Nebraska. Family legends abounded of her walking miles in knee-deep snow to retrieve water for the family in the winter.

We even have a picture of the sod hut (below) with someone we assumed to be her father, Great Grandfather Hugh Percy Beach, sitting in front with two women and a young boy. As with the pictures of the sisters, we knew nothing about where in Nebraska they had lived, nor did we have any idea who the women and young boy might be.

I decided to take this on as a research project. I began my research using exclusively Internet research sites. Over the ensuing years I've put together what I consider to be a fairly accurate story behind the **Hugh Percy & Elizabeth Mary McCall Beach** family and the mysterious **Beach Sisters** pictures.

I started with the fact that Sarah Ann Beach Duffie had traveled from Canada to Shelby, Ohio, in 1914 for the birth of our father: Monroe Anderson Duffie. We knew that his middle name came from the doctor who had delivered him. The doctor was also somehow related. My first goal was to locate that Shelby, Ohio, family.



**Left: Hugh Percy Beach in front of his sod hut in Arnold, NE, ca 1886. The Custer County Nebraska Historical Society has suggested that Solomon Butcher might have taken this photo. Based on estimated ages, the woman on the left is probably Henrietta Beach (Anderson); I believe the woman on the right is Emma Beach (Carlyle). The boy is probably one of the twins: Alex or Will**

I found Dr. Willis & Henrietta Anderson in Shelby, Ohio, in the 1900 census. By a stroke of luck, Sarah Ann Beach was staying with them at the time. Her presence verified the link I was searching for. She was listed as "sister-in-law" to the head of the house. Therefore, I concluded that she was the sister of Dr. Anderson's wife, Henrietta.

I had located the first of the sisters, and the source of Dad's middle name: **Henrietta Beach Anderson**.

Still a mystery, however, was how **Sarah Ann Beach** had gone from Canada to somewhere in Nebraska, back to Ohio in 1900, then to Canada to meet and marry our grandfather, **Blake Monroe Duffy/Duffie**, in 1910.

I mailed letters to everyone in Shelby, Ohio, with surnames that matched all those I'd found on the 1900 census on the same street as the Anderson home. I received a phone call from a woman who had been a neighbor to the Andersons in the 1920s. Through her I located a distant cousin in California. He sent a picture of Rachel Beach (right). The picture was taken in Broken Bow, Nebraska, ca 1890. He also told me that she had married Clare Bloomfield in Shelby, Ohio, in 1910.

I now had sister number two: **Rachel Beach Bloomfield**. I also knew the most likely location of the sod hut and knee-deep snow drifts: Broken Bow, Custer County, Nebraska.

At the same time, I was also researching GGGrandparents Hugh Percy Beach and his wife, Elizabeth Mary McCall. I learned that:

- Hugh Percy Beach was born in Niagara Township, Ontario, Canada, in 1843, to William (b Wales) & Emerencianna Frith (b England) Beach.
- Elizabeth Mary McCall was born in Michigan in 1849 to Alexander (b N.Y.) & Margaret Vandecar (b Canada) McCall.



- Hugh Percy Beach & Elizabeth Mary McCall were married on October 16, 1867, in Norwich Township, Oxford County, Ontario, Canada.
- In 1870 they were living in or near Maidstone, Essex County, Ontario, Canada.

Hugh Percy & Elizabeth Mary McCall Beach left Canada in 1880 and traveled aboard the infamous covered wagon to Michigan where they farmed unsuccessfully for two years. Eventually they set out for the west, ending up in Arnold, Custer County, Nebraska, in 1885.

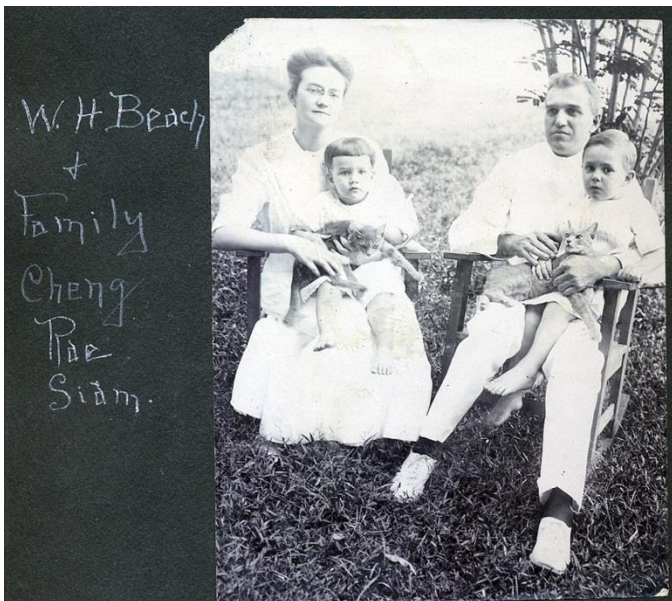
At some point over the next few years Hugh Percy Beach posed for the picture in front of his sod hut home. According to a source at the Custer County Museum, the photographer Solomon Butcher probably took the picture. He was known to have taken hundreds of pictures in the area, and it was sometime in the 1880s.

With the discovery of Henrietta and Rachel in Shelby, and thanks to dozens of archived articles from Mansfield, Ohio, newspapers, I soon put names to all of the **Beach Sisters**:

- **Emma Beach Carlyle**, born 1870, Maidstone, Ontario, Canada. Died 17 Aug 1949, Portland, Oregon.
- **Henrietta Beach Anderson**, born 1872, Maidstone, Ontario, Canada. Died 18 May 1936, Portland, Oregon.
- **Mary Elizabeth Beach Robinson**, born 1874, Maidstone, Ontario, Canada. Died unknown, Portland, Oregon.
- **Sarah Ann Beach Duffie**, born 1878, Maidstone, Ontario, Canada. Died 9 Aug 1961, West Alexandria, Ohio.
- **Agnes Beach**, born 1880, Maidstone, Ontario, Canada. Died 3 Oct 1910, Cleveland, Ohio.
- **Rachel Beach Bloomfield**, born 1887, Arnold, Nebraska. Died 28 Jun 1980, San Leandro, California.
- **Gertrude Martha Beach Mills**, born 1891, Arnold, Nebraska. Died unknown.

When I learned that Agnes Beach died in 1910, I surmised that she was probably not in the **Beach Sisters** pictures. I had determined the pictures had to have been taken sometime around 1910. I was also searching for a major event in 1910 that would have brought this widespread family together in one location. I decided that the death of Agnes Beach might have been that event.

So, then, who was the seventh woman?



To solve that mystery I turned to Sarah Ann Beach Duffie's brother, one of twins: Dr. William Henry Beach.

Dr. William & Elizabeth Beach were medical missionaries in Siam in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During my research I had learned that they worked at the Overbrook Hospital, Cheng Rae Province, Siam. They were in and out of Siam from about 1913 until they had to evacuate in 1939 at the advent of WWII. Dr. Will did return for an additional term or more after the war. Their four decades of travels left behind a long list of immigration records as they traveled to and from Siam.

The ships list of their return to the U.S. aboard the Minnekahda in 1930 showed that **Elizabeth Beach** was from Fremont, Ohio. The Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center website includes an obituary index for many Ohio counties. William and Elizabeth Beach

were known well enough to rate full obituaries in the local Fremont, Ohio, newspapers. I located Elizabeth's obituary and learned that her maiden name was **Wolfe**. This information was invaluable.

The Wolfe family was heavily involved in Beach family affairs from Elizabeth's marriage in 1910 until at least the 1930s. Census reports for 1930 indicated that during a tour in Siam from 1924 to 1930, Will and Elizabeth's children were living with various Wolfe & Beach families:

- **William Beach (b 1911, Virginia, MN)** was living with Elizabeth's brother, Stanley Wolfe, Fremont, Ohio.
- **Marguerite Beach (b 1913, Nan, Siam)** stayed with Elizabeth's brother, Francis J. L. Wolfe, in Bay Village, Ohio.
- **Richard Beach (b 1916, Nan, Siam)** stayed with George & Ava Carlyle Garratt in Portland, Oregon. Ava was the daughter of Sam and Emma Beach Carlyle.

Peter N. Wolfe was seven when his cousin, Marguerite Beach, came to live with his family in Bay Village, Ohio. Peter's widow, Margery Wolfe, told me that William and Elizabeth had met while working at the Wesley Memorial Hospital in Chicago (right). Elizabeth was a registered nurse. The Wesley Memorial Hospital is now the Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Margery also told me that the Overbrook Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, PA, sponsored Dr. Will's work in Siam. I e-mailed the church, and the pastor provided the information regarding Overbrook Hospital in Siam.



Not only was I searching for a major event that would bring the family together in 1910, I was trying to identify a focal point for such a gathering. Elizabeth Wolfe Beach's extensive family in Ohio added to my growing conviction that Ohio was the focal point for the Beach family. With in-laws in Ohio, a trip to Shelby for a Beach family gathering was more plausible. Each visit provided Elizabeth with an opportunity to visit her family.

I also learned that Mary Elizabeth Beach's husband, Homer M. Robinson, had family in Ohio. He was born in Wisconsin, but his parents and two siblings were born in Ohio. It is possible he had uncles, aunts, and cousins in Ohio, additional incentive for family get-togethers in Ohio.

## Conclusions

### Locations Of The Seven Beach Sisters From 1910-1930:

- *Emma Beach Carlyle, Forest Grove, Oregon (1910-1930)*
- *Henrietta Beach Anderson, Shelby, Ohio (1910-1930)*
- *Mary Beach Robinson, Shelby, Ohio (1910 single), Forest Grove, Oregon (1920-1930)*
- *Sarah Beach Duffie, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada (1910), DePew, N.Y., or McDonald, Ohio (1920-1930).*
- *Agnes Beach, died in 1910.*
- *Rachel Beach Bloomfield, Shelby, Ohio (1910-1930)*
- *Gertrude Beach Mills, Shelby, Ohio (1910 single), Oregon (1920), & Idaho (1930).*

In spite of all the data I had uncovered about family movement on into the 1930s, I was firmly convinced that the pictures had to have been taken sometime close to 1910 when the youngest sister, Gertrude, was nineteen and the oldest, Emma Beach Carlyle, was forty. I can believe that the women in the pictures range from nineteen to forty. I cannot accept another ten years.

I considered the possibility that the pictures were taken before Elizabeth Mary Beach and her daughters left Nebraska after Hugh Percy Beach died in 1900. Elizabeth, Mary, Rachel, and Gertrude moved to Shelby, Ohio sometime after that, but prior to 1904 when the picture (below left) was taken. However, Gertrude's age eliminates the possibility of the pictures having been taken pre-1904 in Nebraska. She would only have been thirteen or fourteen at the time.

This family portrait was taken in 1904 when Gertrude was thirteen. I believe she is front row, left. Elizabeth Mary McCall Beach is front row, second from the right.

My instincts tell me that the daughter left of Elizabeth Mary has all the appearances of the eldest daughter assuming the role of mother's protector. If my instincts are true, then she is Emma Beach Carlyle.



According to Rachel's grandson, the source of the picture, Rachel Beach Bloomfield is back row, second left, all grown up from her 1890, Broken Bow, Nebraska, picture. He also stated that his mother believed the woman to Rachel's right was Henrietta Beach Anderson.

All of that seems to fit. At the time Rachel was single and living with Henrietta. It stands to reason they would be close, much closer than either would have been to Emma who was married and living in Nebraska at the time.

That leaves only front row right, and back row second right: Mary Elizabeth Beach Robinson, born 1874, and Agnes, born 1880. Right front looks older, so I believe that is Mary Elizabeth. If all else is correct, then Agnes is back row, second right.

The gentlemen are the twins: Will and Alex, but neither looks like any pictures we have of them.

*October 5, 2007, E-Mail from Marcia Beach Ditter, Granddaughter of Dr. William Henry & Elizabeth Wolfe Beach: "...in the 1904 family portrait I am certain that the man in the center is my grandfather Dr. William Henry Beach. The other must be Alex. I never met Alex as he was killed in a train wreck somewhere in the northwest. I do not know if he was engineer, conductor or what. I just remember grandfather telling me about the train wreck and showing me pictures of same."*

The picture appears as though it could have been taken in the same place as the three pictures in question. I have little doubt that it was taken at the home of Dr. Willis and Henrietta Beach Anderson in Shelby, Ohio. The event that brought them all together in 1904 may have simply been moving Elizabeth and the girls back to Ohio after Hugh Percy's death in 1900.

From this picture we could conclude that it was possible for them to have posed for the Beach Sisters pictures at that time. However, Sarah Ann Beach Duffie is missing in this 1904 portrait, and she was in the series of pictures.

The picture to the right is further evidence that the three pictures were taken well before 1930. This picture is (L to R) Emma Beach Carlyle, Will Beach, and Henrietta Beach Anderson. Elizabeth Mary McCall Beach is sitting. She lived in Portland with either Emma Beach Carlyle or Mary Elizabeth Beach Robinson until her death in the 1930s.



Henrietta died in 1936 while visiting her sisters in Portland. It is possible that this picture was taken then. This picture was taken a minimum of twenty-five years after the Beach Sisters photos.

The most favorable opportunity for all the family to get together at a time when the age of all the sisters was appropriate was about 1910. That year brought several major family events conducive to such a gathering:

- *Elizabeth, Henrietta, Mary, and Gertrude were in Shelby, Ohio, in 1910.*
- *Rachel was married in Shelby, Ohio, in August 1910.*
- *Agnes died in Cleveland, Ohio, October 3, 1910.*
- *Will and Elizabeth Wolfe Beach were married in December 1910, probably in Fremont, Ohio.*
- *Sarah was married in December 1910, in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.*

Considering Agnes' death in October 1910, I can think of few events more likely to bring all of the sisters to Ohio. The only sister who had to travel any distance in 1910 was Emma Beach Carlyle coming from Forest Grove, Oregon. Sarah Ann Beach Duffie was in Canada, a relatively simple trip to Ohio. If she and Emma arrived in early- to-mid October, Sarah could stay through November then return to Canada for her marriage on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Four of the sisters, Henrietta, Mary, Rachel, and Gertrude were already in Shelby. Will and Elizabeth were either close-by in Chicago, or in Ohio making preparations for their December 7<sup>th</sup> wedding.

While the death of Agnes would weigh heavily on their minds at the time, Rachel was a newly-wed, Sarah and William each had upcoming weddings, so the family would have some reason for the type of levity displayed in these pictures. Also, unfortunately, I believe death at a young age was not the shock to the family it is today. Life was infinitely harsher then.

In conclusion, I believe the pictures were taken in October – November, 1910, in Shelby, Ohio. The participants were

- Emma Beach Carlyle
- Henrietta Beach Anderson
- Mary Elizabeth Beach Robinson
- Sarah Ann Beach Duffie
- Rachel Beach Bloomfield
- Gertrude Martha Beach Mills
- Elizabeth Wolfe Beach

### **October 4, 2007: I Love It When A Plan Comes Together!**



*I just had a significant portion of my conjecture confirmed when I received a phone call from Marcia Beach Ditter, the daughter of William Hugh Beach, and Granddaughter of William Henry & Elizabeth Wolfe Beach. She confirmed that her grandmother, Elizabeth Wolfe Beach, is in the pictures. She is sitting on the lap of her "beau", far right couple.*

*I believe the third from the right in that picture appears to be the youngest. Gertrude Beach was 18 or 19 in 1910, so I believe that is her.*

*Beyond those two, and excluding Grandma Duffie asleep in her chair, I still haven't got a clue!*