

The Grinnell Herald

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HENRY M. BRAY ANSWERS CALL

One of Grinnell's Honored Pioneers
Reaches Close of Long and Useful
Life.

FUNERAL SERVICES WERE
HELD THIS AFTERNOON.

Mr. Bray Exercised a Potent Influence
in Building Up This Community.

When a pioneer dies whose life has been marked by industry, thrift, good deeds and honest living, a thrill of sadness passes over the community in which he has lived for so many years. Henry M. Bray and his young and worthy wife came to Grinnell in 1869. They located for a year on the Dr. Lewis farm west of Grinnell just over the county line. For a few years they lived on the Bailey farm about three miles north-east of the business center of Grinnell and then Mr. Bray brought the large farm which he conducted until 1882 with great success. He was fond of stock and although he came from a locality where the chief product of the soil was rocks, where the ground barely gave the farmer a reasonable subsistence, he early appreciated the delights of stock farming and during his years on the large farm now known as the Mehlh farm, he gave his attention to raising and shipping stock. He was a successful farmer and his wife was an able helper to him in forwarding his plans for success and competence.

Henry M. Bray was born in Granby, province of Quebec, January 10, 1843. He died at 7:30 o'clock, July 7, 1926 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. M. W. Swisher, at the age of nearly eighty-three and one-half years.

He was the second member of a family of ten children, two of whom died in early life.

When he was ten years old his parents moved to Danville, Vermont, where he was raised and educated. In the winter of 1863 he enlisted in Company G, 17th Vermont Infantry, serving until the close of the war when he received his honorable discharge. With his brother Tom he was in the Army of Virginia and took part in many of the hardest fought battles among which were the Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor and in the battles around Petersburg. In one of these battles his brother Tom was seriously wounded and Henry took him and made his way through shot and shell to the rear of the lines where he was cared for and finally re-covered. At Petersburg Henry was taken prisoner and was confined in Libbey prison for several months.

It will be noted that he enlisted when he was just past twenty years of age and was still a young boy, but he was imbued with the patriotic fervor of many another hardy youth of the north and risked his life in defense of the Union which he had learned to love though only a resident of this country for ten years. When he returned from the war he entered the employ of the Fairbanks Scale Company, then well known and reliable manufacturers of platform scales, and now one of the great manufacturing plants of the country. During his two years employment in St. Johnsbury he met the estimable lady who became his wife March 4, 1867, Miss Helen J. Hughes.

They started on a farm near Danville where they lived for two years. However, the disadvantages and the lack of opportunity in the old home place were irksome to the ambitious young couple and in 1869, after two years of attempting to make the soil yield them a suitable return for their labors, they packed up and came to Grinnell, Iowa. Just what influence brought them to this little town on the prairie, is not known. But after only a few years of hard labor and the practice of economy, they were enabled to buy the large farm which was recognized as one of the best in the community.

After moving to Grinnell in 1882, Mr. Bray entered into partnership as a shipper of live stock with Stillman Needham, one of the best known stock buyers in this vicinity. Mr. Bray himself had an aptness for the business, although he had had but a few years opportunity to acquaint himself with the needs of the Chicago market. He at once jumped into prominence as an appraiser of the weight and value of stock and became at once one of the leading shippers of the middle west. Afterwards C. L. Roberts, well known Grinnell man, became a member of the firm and later when the others and Mr. Bray separated partnership, his son became a member of the firm and the business was conducted under the name of Bray & Son. However, the son entered other business and for years Mr. Bray was a shipper in his own name.

Mr. Bray was a man of great sagacity. He foresaw what many another man had failed to note that there was a great future for this country. Although his main business was the shipping of stock he also became the owner of many large farms and accumulated for those days what was considered much wealth.

Although the last few years he has been, on account of his age and gradually failing strength, not so active in business as in the years before, he was recognized as a man of good judg-

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Henry M. Bray Answers Call

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ment whose advice was sound and many a young man has profited by the friendly words of Mr. Bray.

In his home life Mr. Bray was almost a perfect man. In his public life, as member of the City Council of Grinnell, he was recognized as a man of good judgment, of public spirit and of keen foresight, and was ever and always willing to do that which would be best for the city.

Notwithstanding his wide business interests, his acknowledged superiority in the shipping field and his activity in city and political party affairs, he had the tender heart of a woman. No one ever heard Mr. Bray speak a harsh word. Gentle, kind and generous, he tempered his daily activities with the spirit of the broadest humanity. Both Mr. Bray and his wife appreciated the necessity of a higher education and when they moved to Grinnell their children entered the public schools, and passed through the entire course, graduating from high school with exceptional merit and promise. Their teachers recognized in them the gift which they had received from their ancestors, of devotion to their work, a beautiful and studious disposition, and perfect attention to the duties for which they were in school.

Four children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Bray; Florence, now Mrs. M. W. Swisher of Grinnell; Katherine, now Mrs. Katherine Bray Haines of Des Moines; Edward J. Bray of Seattle; and Will H. Bray, who died several years ago. The wife and mother passed away at their home in Grinnell, July 24, 1911, and since her death Mr. Bray's home has been with his daughter, Mrs. M. W. Swisher. There survive him the three children named above, and five grand children, Virginia Swisher of this city, Robert Haines of Des Moines, Haworth and Henry Marshall Bray, of Grinnell and William H. Bray, Jr., who lives in California.

During the past years while Mr. Bray has made his home with his daughter, he has received every comfort which a loving and faithful daughter could give and during the last few months of his serious and almost helpless sickness, she has attended him with the gentle and loving service of one who loved to excess.

Although Mr. Bray had been in ill health for some time his death was due to a second stroke received about a week ago, followed by an attack of pneumonia, which took him off just as the light of day was fading into a glorious sunset.

Aside from his activities in his own business, and as member of the City Council of Grinnell for many years, he was also an ardent and devoted worker for the party of his early faith and gave attention, especially in his

life he was a member of the Grand Army Post in Grinnell, of the Elks Lodge in this city and also of the Odd Fellows.

The funeral was conducted at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Swisher this afternoon at 4:30 o'clock today services being in charge of his friend and family pastor, Rev. E. M. Vittum. There were two songs by Mrs. E. B. T. Spencer and amidst the fragrance of flowers and loving remembrances of many warm, life long friends, the body was borne to its last resting place in Hazelwood and placed by the side of his wife.

Bearers were Hon. T. C. Cessna, I. S. Bailey, Ernest J. Harris, C. O. Phelps, F. C. Wilson and W. C. Ray.

If the writer were to add his last testimony to the life of a man whose activities were varied, whose success was unquestioned and whose life was one of honor and worth we should say that here rests a man of real fortitude and strength of character with the tender and gentle heart of a woman.