

HR Mar 30, 2009

Homer Perry

Homer F. Perry, 97, of Grinnell died Thursday, March 26, 2009, in Beebe Hall at the Mayflower Community

A celebration of life service was held Monday, March 30, at the United Church of Christ-Congregational in Grinnell with the Rev. Dr. Susan K. Weier officiating. Interment was in Prairie Rose Cemetery, rural Corning. Memorials may be made to the United Church of Christ-Congregational, to the Mayflower Community Human Needs Fund or to Grinnell Regional Hospice, and mailed to PO Box 368, Grinnell.

In Loving Memory Of Homer Frank Perry

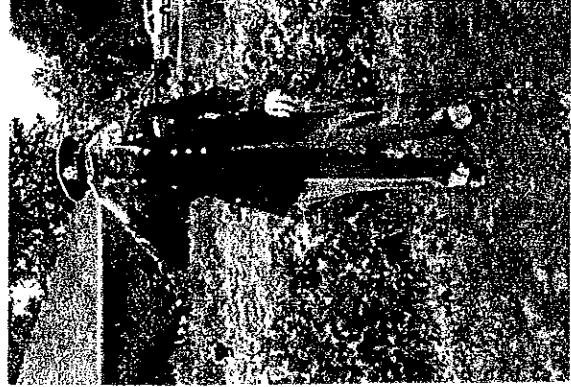
Homer was born the son of Earl D. and Grace Odell Perry on November 14, 1911, on the family farm southwest of Corning, Iowa. He grew to manhood there, attending the rural school 1.5 miles northeast of his home, and graduating from Corning High School with the class of 1929. After a year at home he attended Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, graduating with the class of 1935. Two of his college years he pastored the North River M.E. Church, and one year the Hartford, Iowa Community Church. From 1935-36 he was employed as a teacher at Pleasanton High School in Iowa, serving also as a pastor of the Pleasanton Methodist Church.

In 1936, he entered the Biblical Seminary in New York, serving two years as a teacher of the high school department of Springfield Gardens Presbyterian Church, L.I.N.Y., and two years as Youth Assistant and Pastor of Visitation in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Queens Village, L.I.N.Y. He also served as the summer supply pastor of the Prospect Park Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, NY, for three summers.



On May 21, 1939, he was united in marriage to Bonnie L. Bailey at the seminary in New York City. They had met at Simpson College in 1931, and in January of 1939, Bonnie had entered the Biblical Seminary in New York as a student. After Homer's graduation from BSNY in May of 1940, they returned to Iowa, where he became pastor of the Congregational Church at Sloan. In April of 1942, their daughter Dorothy Grace was born. In June of 1944, Homer entered the U.S. Army as a Chaplain. After graduation from Chaplain School at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA., Homer was assigned to the 97th Infantry Division Artillery, stationed at San Luis Obispo, California.

Following amphibious training on the Pacific Ocean, orders were cancelled and the 97th Division was sent to Europe for the "mop up." They landed at La Havre, France, March 4, 1945, and were committed to battle on Easter Sunday, April 1st, across the Rhine River from Düsseldorf, Germany. Following the surrender of the "Ruhr Pocket," the 97th Division continued to Czechoslovakia, where the Artillery was prepared to shell the city of Pilsen when VE Day occurred in May. Following a brief period of Occupation in Germany, the 97th Division returned home for 30 days, reassembled at Ft. Bragg in Fayetteville, NC, and shortly after the dropping of the atom bombs in Japan, convoyed by trains to Seattle, WA, and embarked by ships, combat loaded, expecting to fight their way into Japan.



However, the war ended while on the Pacific, and a period of seven months of Occupation Duty in Japan followed. The 97th Division was then deactivated, but having insufficient "points" for discharge, Homer was assigned to Occupation Duty in Korea for another five months with the 216th Quartermaster Battalion. He was honorably discharged in November of 1946, after which the family drove to Newton Centre, MA, where Homer enrolled for graduate studies at Andover Newton Theological School while pastoring the Sunset Avenue Congregational Church in West Bridgewater, MA. In July of 1947, the family returned to Marion, IA, where daughter Sylvia Louise was born in November. From January of 1948 to June of 1950, Homer commuted to Iowa City, IA, where he pursued further graduate study at the University of Iowa, graduating with a Master of Arts degree from the School of Religion, with further work also in the field of Education.

Further pastorates include: Congregational Church in Newburg, IA 1950-1954; Congregational Church in Madrid, IA 1954-1964; the Wilton Charge UCC (including Grace UCC at Wilton Junction and Trinity UCC in Moscow, IA); St. Peter's UCC at Mapleton, IA; yoked with the Castana, IA Community UCC 1970-1980; and the Immanuel Reformed UCC at rural Schaller, IA 1980-1987.

In November of 1987, Homer and Bonnie retired to the Mayflower Community in Grinnell, where they were active in volunteer capacities both at the UCC - Congregational Church in Grinnell and on various committees at the Mayflower Community. Homer has enjoyed gardening at each of his pastorates, as well as at their home in the Mayflower Community. He also participated in the painting class at Caring Adults in Grinnell, and in the Poetry Club, Men's Club, and the Couple's Club at Mayflower. For many years he participated in the CROP program of Church World Service, serving on the State Committee for several years, and also shared in the teaching programs of the Vacation Church School Institutes sponsored by the Iowa Council of Churches for several years. Through the years he held various offices in the Congregational and UCC Church, serving as Chairman of the Northwestern Association Youth Committee at the time of his retirement. From 1953-1993, Homer was involved with the Junior Camp Program of Iowa Conference UCC, serving as Dean or counselor for at least one camp each year.

Homer will be laid to rest in the Prairie Rose Cemetery near Corning, located on the same section of land as the south 80 acres of the family farm. With his brother Willard, Homer had mowed and cared for this cemetery in the summers of 1929 and 1930. His grandparents, parents, siblings, and his wife are all laid to rest there.

Homer is survived by his daughters, Dorothy (Franklin) Blazek of Pueblo, CO and Sylvia (Paul) Hain of Lone Tree, IA; his 7 grandchildren, Danni Blazek, Felisa Blazek, Jonathan Blazek, Bonita Clement, Heather Hain, Paul R. Hain, and Kristine Casey; his 9 great grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Homer entered into eternal rest on Thursday, March 26, 2009, at Beebe Hall in the Mayflower Community. He was 97 years of age and was preceded in death by his parents; his siblings, Willard, Vivian, and Neva Perry, and Lois Holmgren; and his wife Bonnie on December 5, 2006.

