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My Grandfather

My maternal Grandfather Benjamin Franklin Gray was as fine and successful man as was his name sake – Benjamin Franklin, statesman, diplomat, author, scientist & inventor of the 1700’s. Although my Grandfather did nothing great hat has been recorded in history he was a man that lived in the hearts and minds of his family and his many friends whose lives he touched in unforgettable ways.

Benjamin Franklin Gray was born in 1850. Was married in the early 1870’s and was the father of 7 children, all who lived lives that spanned many more years than did his. Yet in his 79 years he touched the lives of so many of the common folk that made up the fabric of the country life about him.

Grandfather was the owner and operator of a small country drug store at Frazier, Mo. As time passed his drug store grew and became the official Post Office. Then as customer needs and demands adapted his store to an all around supply center for the community, he stocked hardware, groceries, and even dry goods. He drove miles to pick up precious supplies – there was nothing he would hesitate to do to meet the needs of his customers and friends. People came to him for advice, consolation, and help with reading & writing letters and other documents. It seemed everyone knew “Ben Gray” & came to him for help. If there was a sick child during the night, the parents knew they could depend on “Ben Gray” to open his store and supply the needed medication. If a neighbor needed a deed written up or a promissory note, they knew he would know how to write it for them. Cash was hard to come by and it was a common practice to "write it on the account book” and pay him later when they were able. Yes – It seemed everyone knew him and looked to him for help.

Grandfather was a very devout Christian and drove his family to church every Sunday morning quite a few miles to Mt. Moriah church near Gower, Mo. In his home the bible was read before every meal, especially at breakfast. He parented 7 children of which my mother was next to the youngest. She told me and I can just visualize those seven children seated around a large breakfast table, wiggling, playing with their napkins and making “faces” at each other, as they tolerated his long, drawn out, reading of bible verses.

Grandfather was an avid believer in education as he himself had graduated as one of those earliest graduates of Missouri University at Columbia, Mo. Each of his 7 children were offered and encouraged to attend college. All of his 4 daughters did go on to college and two became dedicated teachers. One son graduated from a University and became a government employee of note. Among the other children, 2 sons became successful farmers near Gower, Mo. and the other 2 daughters married successful business men and raised families – one of whom was my mother.

Yes, I think it could be said that my Grandfather lived up to his name sake in more ways than one!