James Harvey Gray was born in Maury County, Tennessee, on April 25, 1825, and came to Marion county, Illinois, with his father James and brother Joseph when four years old. His brother, Isaac Denton Gray, was born in Marion county.

Full of ambition, James Harvey Gray was successful from the start, though so young. When his father died at age ten in 1835, he planted his first crop for his mother. At eighteen, Harvey purchased a yoke of cattle and a horse on credit. He remained in the old place planting crops until ready to invest in a piece of land, which he did at the age of twenty-six by purchasing one hundred and sixty acres, partly paying with money borrowed. In 1840, his older brother Joseph had his first son and named him James Harvey Gray in his honor.

From that time, his career was onward. He rapidly accumulated property by his just and upright dealings, adding acre to acre until he could look over twelve hundred acres of land, all of which was in one body. He also had other valuable property.

He was a man of powerful mental ability, and men would go to him for advice, and he was always glad to aid his fellow man. Mr. Gray, at nineteen years and seven months old, was married on November 28, 1844, to Susanna Jane Hanna, who was born October 18, 1824, and she departed this life on December 24, 1862. To this union, five children were born. He contracted a second marriage with Margaret Lucinda Hanna in 1863. This lady, to whom three children were born, died in 1871. In the year 1872, Mr. Gray united in marriage with Mrs. Elizabeth (Clark) Boothe.

Elizabeth Boothe was the widow of Col. James W Boothe, who commanded the Fortieth Illinois Infantry during the Civil war. Before this, he was the first lieutenant in the Mexican war and was at the battle of Vera Cruz and Cerro Gordo.

Mr. Gray did not enjoy the advantages of an education, being too early deprived of a father and compelled, due to being the eldest son at home, to care for his family. He was a natural mathematician and could calculate the amount of anything mentally instantly.

He was six feet tall, stood erect, and was well-formed. His temperament was bilious, nervous, and sanguine. He had the power to endure mental and physical labor.

He and his brother, Isaac Denton Gray, joined Kinmundy Lodge #398 soon after the lodge received its charter in 1864.

Harvey Gray was one of the original stockholders of the Farmers’ and Merchants’ Bank of Kinmundy, organized in January 1870. The stockholders were Harvey Gray, his wife Elizabeth, and Thomas W. Haymond, a cashier. He soon became president, which position he held for the remainder of his life.

Isaac Denton Gray died on March 11, 1890, and James Harvey Gray died at seventy-six years and six months on October 25, 1901.

Mr. Haymond died two months after Mr. Harvey Gray. The bank was closed by Mrs. Gray, the only surviving stockholder.

Harvey Gray’s son, Mr. William Harvey Gray, was born on April 12, 1876, following his father's farming profession. He was a man that enjoyed his home life, and visitors were sure of receiving a warm welcome at his fireside. He was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason at Kinmundy Lodge No. 398, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, on July 10, 1897, and was a member of Rosedale Lodge No. 354, Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In his religious views, William Gray was a Cumberland Presbyterian. In politics, he was a Democrat of the old Jeffersonian school. William Harvey Gray lived until April 30, 1850, on the old homestead for seventy-two years, outliving all of his children.

Joseph Gray’s great-grandsons, Leland Lavern Gray and Don Dell Gray, became Master Masons at Kinmundy Lodge #398 in 1929 and 1930. Joseph Gray’s great-great-grandsons Charles Robert Gray and Robert Arthur Gray became Master Masons in 1944 and 1945.

*This paper developed from an article about William H. Gray; Page 452-456 Biographical and reminiscent history of Richland, Clay, and Marion Counties, Illinois. Indianapolis, Ind.: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1909.*