

Abram Hey Eulogy
likely written by Ruth Hey
addition by Jan Hey Dean

Abram Hey was born September 25, 1889, to John P. Hey and Elizabeth Baer Hey in Jordan Township on a farm south of Penrose. He joined an older sister Mary and two older brothers, Clement and Henry. Later, a brother Ira and a sister Verna joined the family. He was educated at nearby Stone School, completing grades 1 through 8. He also attended Sterling Business College.

As young teenagers, Abram and his brother Ira lived for a brief time in St. Louis where he worked for a jewelry store. When he returned from St. Louis, he was employed by a Sterling Newspaper where he learned to set type. A short time later, his brother started a milk business calling it Clement Hey Milk and Cream; and before long, Abe was working for Clement driving a milk route with a horse and wagon. When he had saved enough money to invest in Clement's business, he became Clement's first partner on December 9, 1906.

In 1910, the business became known as Hey Brothers, and the production of ice cream as well as milk began in a new building located at 212-214 East Third Street in Sterling. At this time, Ira Hey and Mary Hey Harshman entered into the business with Clement and Abe. In 1919, Henry Hey and Verna Hey Harshman also joined the partnership.

In 1911, Abram and his father took a trip West which included a stop at Denver and Colorado Springs. On that trip they hiked to the top of Pikes Peak. This was just one of many trips he took in his early years. By 1927, Abram had traveled to all 48 states in the United States. One of those travels was a trip to California on motorcycles with his brothers Clement and Ira.

Around 1914, Hey Brothers purchased a dairy and an ice cream business in Marshalltown, Iowa. Abe went to Iowa to manage the new acquisition. Because he started a route that delivered milk before breakfast, he was able to build a profitable business in a short period of time.

In 1915, Mr. Hey married Alberta Book. Alberta and their twin infant sons died in the influenza epidemic of 1918.

In 1917, Abram worked at the Sterling Post Office as a clerk. At least part of that time, he delivered mail on rural routes using his much loved Indian

motorcycle and sidecar. Sometimes he decorated his motorcycle and sidecar and drove them in parades.

The Quakers conducted a Sunday School at the Stone School House near Penrose. Mr. Hey attended this Sunday School during his younger years. At the age of 16, Mr. Hey became a Christian by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. He later became a member of Trinity Evangelical Church located on the corner of 5th Avenue and 3rd Street in Sterling. He was a member of the choir there and also served on the board as well as serving as Sunday School Superintendent and delegate to the Evangelical Conference for several years.

In 1924, Abram traveled to Detroit, Michigan, to learn to install, maintain and repair electric ice cream cabinets. These were made by Kelvinator. Upon his return, he installed the first electric ice cream cabinet in Illinois. This was installed in [Fred Eberley's Drug Store](#) located on the northwest corner of 3rd Street and Locust. For a time, he took care of installing, maintaining and repairing the cabinets that Hey Brothers provided for their customers. Abe also taught others how to service the cabinets. This was one of the aspects of the ice cream business that he enjoyed the most.

Besides being the first business to install ice cream cabinets in Illinois, Hey Brothers, in 1930, became the first company in Illinois to deliver their ice cream and milk in trucks. They also became the first company to package gallons of ice cream for home use. They were also the first Illinois business to sell ice cream in square gallon and quart cartons. Another Illinois first was Hey Brothers furnishing milk or cream coolers to farmers to insure premium quality.

Over the years Mr. Hey had also worked with his father building houses. Two of these are located on Sixth Avenue in Sterling.

In 1926, he purchased 50 acres of farm land on the Freeport Road from Mr. Russell Allabaugh. From time to time, he acquired more acreage until he had a total of 240 acres. He leased this land to several different farmers as ownership of adjacent land changed. In 1950, Mr. Hey was approached by a developer and was asked to sell a small portion of this land for the purpose of building a number of houses on what is now 19th Avenue in Sterling. This was the beginning of what was to be known as Hey's 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and Northview Heights addition in Sterling. The last portion of the farm was sold in 1988 for the construction of Christ's Lutheran School.

On November 19, 1927, Abram Hey married Ruth E. V. Holtzman at Woodbine, Illinois. They resided in Dixon at 412 E. McKinney Street from 1927 to 1929. Abram and Henry managed the ice cream business there. A son, Philip, was born to the Heys in August of 1929. In the fall of that year, the Heys moved to Sterling residing at 1513 First Avenue. The family was completed with the birth of Janna in 1931 and Susan in 1935.

Mr. Hey was an avid photographer and left us with many interesting and educational movies of his trips. He provided both family and friends with many hours of entertainment by filming historical events as well as special family occasions and vacations. In later years he still went horseback riding with his family and still enjoyed a good toboggan ride down the slide at Sinnissippi Park. He enjoyed gardening and raised beautiful roses as well as fruit trees.

Mr. Hey continued in the Hey Brothers partnership until it was dissolved and the business sold in 1950. At the time, he began working for Hey Brothers in Dixon one day a week and more as needed. He also worked at the Sterling Tax Assessor's office. He was employed by both businesses until the time of his death on October 9, 1967.

Of all of Mr. Hey's accomplishments in his lifetime, none was more important than the reputation he acquired of being a man of honesty and integrity in his business dealings as well as being a kind and generous man to many in need. This is his greatest legacy to his family.