

## **Bottskill Baptist Church History Minute**

### **Church Historian Ken Perry**

**August 2025- Anna Buell Gray**

Returning to the names on our stained glass windows, this month's History Minute concerns Anna Buell Gray, found next to Nathan Stewart's window on the east side of the church. Born in Easton in 1841, she was a daughter of Elam Buell and Harriet Merchant. She married Dr. Henry Gray in 1867, and passed away in 1913.

One thing that I'd like to attempt is to focus on is some balance between the male and female members in the church history. The problem, however, can be seen in the names on our windows: two refer to prominent families, four refer to prior pastors, and of the remaining, only four women are mentioned.

In similar fashion, Anna's life story, like many of that period, lives under the shadow of her husband's larger than life impact upon the Greenwich community. One of Greenwich's sages, as far as family histories go, is Islay Van Horn Gill, whose name was given to the library's historical room. He had volumes of praise for Dr. Gray, but of the Buell family, he noted that Elam and Harriet had two daughters, Anna and Harriet. He said of Anna that, she was an unattractive, stodgy Victorian and a good Baptist. I'll leave it up to you to decide if those were requirements for being a Baptist. Her sister did not escape a similar review, as he said she was an unattractive old maid who, he thought, taught music but not in Greenwich.

Gill was off in several respects, as Anna's obituary shows that her sister was married and lived in Tarrytown, and that she had a brother, Lansing, who lived here on Cottage Street. From this same source, we learn that Anna was a graduate of the Emma Willard School in Troy, was an accomplished pianist, and taught music for some years at the Cambridge Academy.



[1] Dr. Henry Gray, husband of Anna Buel Gray.

Unfortunately, I've been unable to find a photograph of her, but here is one of her husband when he was Captain of Co. G, the White Creek and Jackson company, of the Washington County regiment during the Civil War. Dr. Gray's brother, Hiram, was a private in this same company. His brother Robert was in the 93 rd N. Y. Inf., and was killed at the Battle of the Wilderness, in May 1864.

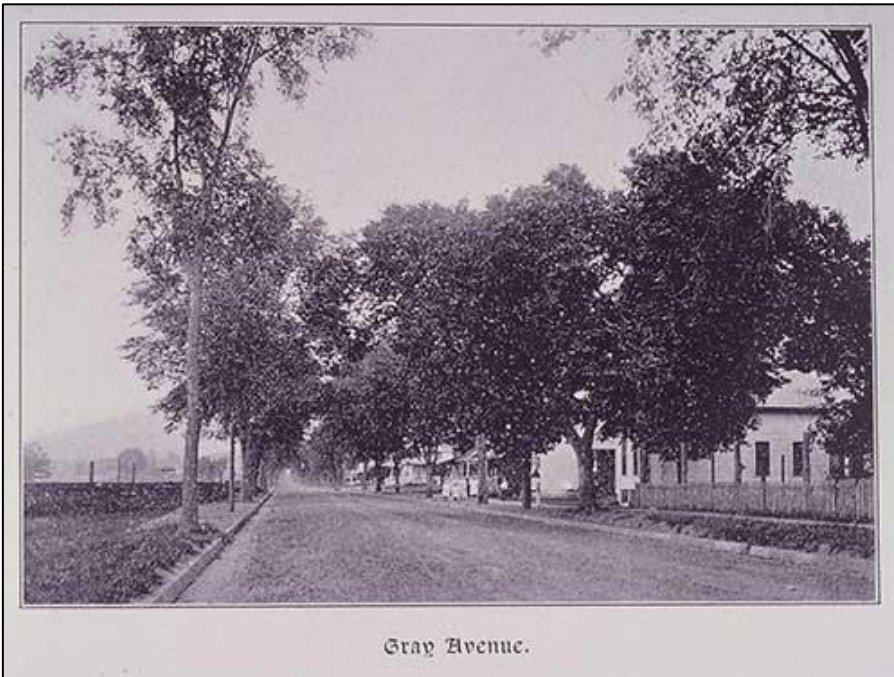


[2] 2025 photograph of the original Gray home, located on Church Street, Greenwich, NY.

Here is a later portrait of Dr. Gray [1] in his physician's role, one that was carried through his family for successive generations from Joseph Marcus Gray, who was a surgeon during the Revolutionary War. Dr. Gray studied at Harvard Medical College and after a short residence in Washington, D. C., came to Greenwich, where they lived at 18 Church Street, seen here [2] , the present home of the family of Marlene Sullivan, one of our current members. This home was previously the home of Dr. Cornelius Holmes and also has historical significance in the Underground Railroad. Gray Avenue, seen in an early photograph [3] , was

named in his honor, and most of the area of the Greenwich school was part of Dr. Gray's farm.

At one time, Dr. Gray was half owner of the American Tea Tray works, a factory located in Mill Hollow. He was also an organizer of the Greenwich Electric Light and Power Co., and one time president of the G&JRR, Greenwich Union Waterworks and, for 45 years, the Board of Education.



[3] Early photo of Gray Avenue and the Gray farm in Greenwich, NY.

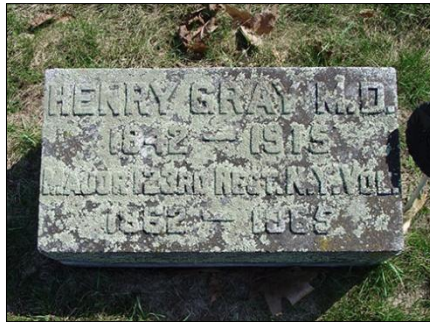
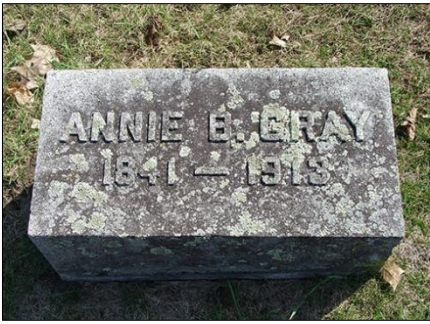
In her own right, Anna was a member of this church for 45 years. Her obituary further notes:

“Of a quiet and retiring nature, the genuine qualities of Mrs. Gray's character are pre- eminent in her home, her family life, and in her interest in her church... Of a devout Christian character, her life exemplifies, from any standpoint, the highest ideals of a true womanhood...”

Which is, to say, in the definition of that time period.

The Gray memorials [4] are located at the crest of the hill on Cottage Street extension of the cemetery, adjacent to

the Soldiers' Plot and near those belonging to Rev. Lewis N. Powell, of this church.



[4] Photos of the Gray memorials located at Greenwich Cemetery, Greenwich, NY.

For her devotion to this church and support of her husband, Dr. Henry Gray, in his many civic endeavors, we remember Anna Buell Gray.