



## Hamilton Joseph Clay

Hamilton Clay or “Ham” was born on November 23, 1895 in Adair, Iowa to Hamilton Clay Senior (1865-1951) and Carolina Charlotte Cook Clay “Carrie” (1869-1919). Ham was one of eleven children.

The family owned and operated the Dakota County Tribune in Farmington from 1911 to 1999. All of the older children were involved in some aspect of the business and having them away at war was going to cause a hardship. Three Clay boys would end up serving. First Ham and his brother Claude would leave. Then younger brother, Earl who was still in high school would join one month before graduation. When the boys returned from France, they all decided to go to college making the time without their help longer. The paper struggled to survive during the time. Hamilton Senior published less frequently and accepted stories written by others. He also filled the pages with letters and photos of the boys fighting in France.

Ham Jr registered for the draft on June 5, 1917. He was 21. He requested an exemption per his father’s request but it was denied. He enlisted on February 26, 1918 at the age of 22. Trained as a Corporal, Ham was transferred to Camp Logan in Houston, Texas where he was responsible for Squad #13 which consisted of 12 men. They drilled from sunrise to sunset under quarantine because of the sickness that would be named the Spanish Flu Epidemic in later months. Finally he was assigned to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Division, Company G, 129<sup>th</sup> Infantry. He would work in the Motorcycle Department as a bugler/signal man which, as he wrote to his parents would put him in front of the rest of his company. On May 10, 1919 they sailed on the SS Covington from the Hoboken port to the New York harbor. Six days later, they sailed on the SS Agamemnon for France. Just short of one-year later, Ham received a special discharge and is sent to Camp Mills, Long Island to be processed. His mother is gravely ill. He boards the SS Rochambeau, a French ship which arrives in Hoboken, New Jersey on April 14, 1919. He is mustered out five days later.

Ham attended the State University until his mother passed away in November of 1919. Ham helps his Dad out until the fall of 1920 when he enrolls in the Journalism program at the University of Minnesota. He applied for and received a tuition bonus in the amount of \$176. On June 6, 1922 he married a school teacher named Harriet Moes. A year later, after his father injured his hand in the printing press he would lease the business from his father and in 1925 would purchase it outright. Ham and Harriet had two boys, Eugene born in 1923 and Roger born in 1928. Both would work in the newspaper business. Roger served in WWII and both boys would form a partnership and buy the Paper in 1964.

Hamilton Junior was very involved in the newspaper business in Minnesota. He helped organize and promote the Editor’s Short Course which was a meeting of the minds that took place every May on the St Paul campus of the University of Minnesota.

Hamilton Clay Junior died on December 14, 1978 in Farmington. He had just turned eighty-three. He is buried at the Corinthian Cemetery in Farmington with his wife and both of his children.