

# Gray Silver, Sr.



Gray Silver was a warm, intelligent, individual who was concerned all of his adult life with the problems faced by farmers and was dedicated to working for the improvements of the nation's agriculture. He has broad interests in agriculture and operated apple orchards in Berkeley County and farms in Illinois and Arkansas.

A believer in farmer organizations, he was one of the organizers of the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1919 and served as director and member of its Executive Committee from 1919 through 1926. Mr. Silver is generally credited with organizing the so-called "Farm Bloc" in Congress in 1921 and guiding it for several years during its period of greatest influence.

Mr. Silver served in the State Senate from 1907 to 1915 and was President of the Senate from 1911-1913. It is generally agreed that he sought office and served in the Senate primarily in response to the call of the agricultural interests of his district and the State. For many years, he also served as legislative representative for the West Virginia Farm Bureau.

He received many awards for his work, including the Master Farmer award conferred by West Virginia University in 1930 and was decorated by the French Government in 1923 for distinguished service to agriculture. His influence in national agricultural affairs is attested to by the numbers and kinds of organizations with which he was associated. He was a member of the National Bureau of Economic Research; served as vice-president of the Federated Fruit and Vegetable Growers, a national cooperative; was a member of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences; was a member of the American Farm Economic Association; was an officer in the Eastern Grain Growers Corporation; and a director of the United Growers of America, a cooperative corporation organized under the Farm Relief Law.

At the state level, in addition to those activities already listed, Mr. Silver, during World War I, served as Berkeley County Chairman of the Liberty Loan Board, Controller of Food and Fuel, and representative of Labor Distribution. He served as President of the Potomac Farm Loan Bank; was a director of the Martinsburg Fruit Exchange; was president of the Inwood Fruit Growers Cooperative; and served as Lecturer for the West Virginia State Grange in 1900-02.

He also served on several national commissions and fact finding boards.

Mr. Silver has been described as a man of the highest character, great courage and capacity, a sure instinct for fundamentals, and unusual ability in handling and dealing with men.