

Written In Stone

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Conecuh Almshouse Cemetery

In the Joyner Cemetery, off CR22, you will find a marker dedicated to the memory of a couples' nine babies—seven boys and two girls—born to Floyd and Fannie Fuller Hawkins. Nothing to indicate when or how these children died is written on the stone. Imagine the loss of one child plus eight; it's un-imaginable for most of us. Such a loss could easily turn into bitterness or create a loving, more generous spirit.

Finding this couple in the 1900 Census in Precinct # 11, Town of Evergreen, makes me want to believe the latter. Floyd is 46 years old and living with his wife, Fannie, of 22 years. She is 39 years old and with them are a 19 year old daughter and his mother-in-law, Martha D. Fuller. The census reports that Fannie had had 10 children, only one of which was still living. What makes this household so different, and sets it apart from others, is that Floyd N. Hawkins is the Warden for the Conecuh Almshouse in 1900.

Almshouses, or poorhouses, were established 1000 of years ago, enabling people in need to retain their independence and to live in their local community. Almshouses were later created in other states as one means of caring for the poor, the indigent, and sometimes, mentally handicapped. Many of these places were for the benefit of those without family support.

The Conecuh Almshouse was located on AL 83 North, where the present DHR is today. In most of these homes and/or farms, a cemetery was located out back and this one is no exception. The Almshouse Cemetery was recorded in 1981 by the late Mr. Irby Ellis; with only one marker visible. It was for James Thompson, who passed away at the Poor House Farm, in 1924. According to microfilmed death records, there were four deaths in 1924, with James Thompson, aged 70 being just one of them. The others were Daniel Windham, aged 65; William Loften, aged 85; and Frank Weaver, aged 75.

1900 Census has residents with the following surnames: Barlow, Birch, Bobbett, Gibson, King, Mosley, and Stacey. Their ages range from 14 years old to 80 years old. The home in Conecuh was closed sometime after the 1940's; and a 1940's photograph is available of the Almshouse in the library archives.

To discover more about the history of the almshouse, poorhouse or poorhouse farm, located throughout America and AL, visit the following webpage: <http://www.poorhousestory.com/history.htm> or visit the archives of the Evergreen Public Library.