

Floyd Baylis, Retired Farmer And Old Railroad Section Hand Owns Mystery Farm Home With 4 Porches

Mystery Farm Home Number 102 belongs to a former section hand, who camped a very short distance from his house when he came to this section of the country in August of 1919 and later bought the land where the "section houses" were located.

Today the old Gulf and Ship Island Rail Road right-of-way serves as one of the roads leading to his house. Another drive leads into the new, paved Highway 13 near his house.

Floyd Baylis, now a retired and respected Negro farmer in the Pinebur community, says he had to do some more work on his house when the new road came through, because what was the back of the house became the front. To settle the front and back situation, Floyd built a porch all around the house.

Now, he says, if there is any breeze stirring, he can get on the right side of the house to catch it. And, if it's raining he can stay on the porch and get on the dry

side.

Floyd said that he was reared at Arm. He was transferred to this section of the railroad from the Mendenhall section. He stayed with Alonzo Peters in the house where he lives now, later buying the farm from Alonzo. Charlie Millis was section foreman when Floyd came down to help him because he was "short-handed".

Floyd had a crop, so he went back home and gathered it after being here a short while. In November, 1919, he went to Star and married a school teacher, Viola Thames, and came back to his section job and bought the farm.

When the railroad was pulled, Floyd says he could have transferred to some other section but preferred to stay at home, continuing to farm and raise a few head of cattle.

At one time he owned two forties of land but has sold down to about nine acres. Two of his daughters live nearby, and they own some of

the land.

The house is painted white. It is equipped with butane gas and electrical appliances, including a deep-well pump that furnishes water for the bathroom, kitchen and outdoors hydrants.

Floyd says he had two daughters when he and Viola married. Johnnie Mae married Johnnie Felix. Their children are Sarah Ann, John L., Armetta, Christine, Charlie, Loretta and Floyd. They live next door.

The daughters married brothers. Lonie Mae married Ad Felix. They and their daughter, Bessie Ree, live in Columbia.

Floyd and Viola have one son, James C. Baylis. He married Christine McLendon from Forest. They live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Their children are Peggy Joyce, Louise, Evelyn, Ellis Glenn, Edward Lawrence and the baby.

Viola likes to sew and to teach children, Floyd stated. She taught

after they were married. For the past three years she has been working at the lunchroom at Globe Academy and will be there another year, Floyd said.

Floyd says he likes to grow flowers. He says he can't do much work because his leg swells, but there were some mighty pretty flowers in the yard. He stated that he works around the house and Viola works inside.

In the army for a short time during World War I, Floyd stated that he got a "farming furlough" to come home and farm. He got as far as Kentucky while training.

Floyd likes to listen to the radio and has a television set. He says he soon got a "bate of watching wrestling" — it looks too pitiful and too rough. His favorite radio program is Lucile Cyrus on Sunday morning.

Floyd is a deacon of St. Mark's Baptist Church nearby and he and Viola belong to the Morning Star Benevolence Association at Hub.

