

Charles Herbert Gray Biography

Charles Herbert Gray's life was very short. He was born in March 1930 to Robert Fisher and Angline Gray. Charles died on May 31, 1930 at six weeks old. The cause of death was inanition with a contributory factor of lues. Inanition is defined by Merriam-Webster as "the exhausted condition that results from lack of food and water or the absence or loss of social, moral or intellectual vitality or vigor." Today this condition would be called a failure to thrive. Lues is defined in the same dictionary as syphilis. Charles might have contracted syphilis from his mother through the birth process.

Angline Gray contracted with Andrew J. Winters to bury Charles in Mt Olive Cemetery. Winters had promised to convey Angline and a neighbor Ada Parchman to the cemetery but he failed to do so. The women went to the grave later in the week, and the mother expressed displeasure about the burial. The newspaper does not explain what made her unhappy, but Winters informed her that it would be very expensive to move the body. Whatever made Angline Gray unhappy about the burial prompted her to return with F. J. Malone, the county health director, M. W. Sanderson, the sanitary inspector, and Constable W. T. Perry. They found Charles buried in a Hercules powder box with only three inches of dirt over it.



The Hercules Powder Company was a small explosives company that was owned by the Du Pont Company until 1912 when it was forced by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to divest some of its explosive companies. The Hercules Powder Company still exists as Hercules Inc. It is now a chemical company with headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware.

Andrew J. Winters was charged with violating the vital statistics law of Tennessee for the improper burial. He was also charged with obtaining money from the county under false pretenses because he represented to the county that he was burying Charles in a pauper's coffin and was credited \$12 as part payment of Winters's privilege taxes.

Winters pled guilty to the charge of violating the vital statistics law and was fined the maximum of \$50. The paper did not report on the results of the fraud charge.

The 1930 Montgomery County, Tennessee census, taken in November 1930, lists Angline Gray, age 23, living at 1020 Eleventh Street with daughter Ella, age 6, and son Walter, age 4. The census lists Angline as a widow. No record has been found for Robert Fisher.

There is no record of Charles Herbert Gray's reburial. Since his first burial was in Mt Olive and his mother was a pauper, it is logical that he was reburied in Mt Olive. He is recorded as a resident of Mt Olive Cemetery.

Bibliography

- Encyclopedia.com, s.v. "Hercules Inc," last modified May 29, 2018,
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/economics-business-and-labor/businesses-and-occupations/hercules-inc>.
- Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "inanity," accessed May 11, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inanity>.
- Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "lues," accessed May 11, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lues>.
- Montgomery County, Tennessee Census (1930).
Tennessee Death Records, 1908-1958; Tennessee State Library and Archives; Nashville, Tennessee.
- "Trial of Fraud Case is Delayed." *Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle*. June 27, 1930.
- "Winters is Fined \$50 and Held on Count of Fraud." *Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle*. June 28, 1930.