

1909 African American Landowners in District 2, Haywood County  
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In 1860, 5 years before slavery officially ended in TN, people of African ancestry were more than 66% of the population of District 2 in Haywood County. This was the district that encompassed the Douglass, Dancyville, St. John and Good Hope areas. That percentage still held in 1888 when through the use of chicanery and election fraud just about total control of county government fell into the hands of redemptive segregationist and remained there until the 1960s.

The racial makeup of District 2 had not changed very much in 1909. African Americans were still the majority population. What had changed was an increasing number of black families that had been able over the preceding 44 years to purchase the land on which they lived and farmed. This is of importance because the enslaved were emancipated without any means to support themselves after over 200 years in an economic system that barred them from land ownership and the profits of their labor. According to 1909 Haywood County tax records for District 2 thirty-one (31) African Americans owned their farms. In the 1910 Census eight additional families reporting owning their homes.

Of course the possibility exists that some or all of the additional 8 owners are in the 1909 record but cannot be identified because of insufficient collaborating information, for example, Jim Austin in the 1910 Census may be the John Austin in the 1909 tax records.

The 31 landowners and the number of acres each owned are as follows: Dave Archibald - 115; Tom Armstrong -225; Richard Boyd - 88; James & Richard Boyd - 96; Charles Boyd - 110; Henry Carney - 108; Will Dodson - 50; Mose Dancy - 95; Mrs. Mariah Foster - 159; Anderson Foust- 50; Mrs. Burl Greer - 116; Esquire Jeter - 195; Louis & Dock Jamison - 119; Ed Jackson - 60; Orange Jones - 150; Louis Johnson - 50; Martin Peterson - 284; Mrs. Francis Rose - 30; Mrs. Lidia Ragland - 39; Richard Rives- 143; Louis Sweet - 60; Marion Sweet - 124; Alonso Short - 93; Mrs. Phoebe Thompson - 1; Robert Taylor - 113; Jacob Vaulx - 154; Dennis Williams - 93; Emmet Winters -43; Jake Walker - 70; Cato Walker - 255; and Dave Witherspoon - 112.

The accompanying picture is of Ed Jackson. He and his wife, Annette Bowles, owned a 60 acre farm that had been part of the Thomas Sheppard plantation. They purchased the farm from J. E. Douglass.