

A Career Soldier from Haywood County TN
Dorothy Granberry, Geneva Miller Historical Society

In June 1870 when the ninth U. S. census was taken, Edward Shepard was an 18 year old living in his father's household in District 2 of Haywood County, TN. His father, Hartwell Shepard, had come to Haywood County nearly thirty years earlier in 1842. Sometime between 1870 and 1879, Edward moved to Memphis, TN where he worked as a laborer. In January, 1879, he enlisted in the U. S. Army where he stayed for thirty years, becoming a career soldier.

When Shepard first enlisted in January 1879 for a 5-year stint, he was listed as being almost 22 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches tall with black eyes, hair and complexion. No record survives that provides clues as to Shepard's motivation for becoming a career soldier. Perhaps he was impressed by the USCT that were in the area during the Civil War. Edward was assigned to Company B, of the 24th Infantry, United States Army.

Five years later in 1884 when he re-enlisted, Edward was stationed at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, the oldest military reservation west of the Mississippi River and the home base of the cavalry units known as Buffalo Soldiers.

Edward Shepard served at Ft. Grant in Arizona Territory during the 1880s and re-enlisted at St. Louis in 1889. For the next 20 years, he served in Utah and Montana with service in Cuba in 1898 during the Spanish American War. Throughout his army career, Shepard received excellent character ratings from his commanding officers.

Ed Shepard retired from the U. S. Army with the rank of sergeant in 1910. He returned to Memphis and lived with his sister, Eliza Boyd, until his death in 1928 at age 75. Edward Shepard, career soldier, is buried in National Cemetery in Memphis.