

Jackson Family of Pleasant Ridge, KY

By Jerry Long

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 14 December 1992, p.1C:

Former slave lived story of rags to riches

By Laura Skillman, Messenger-Inquirer



Theodora Jackson Smith

Theodora Smith remembers her grandmother as a regal lady who went from being the slave of a Daviess County landowner to becoming a landowner herself.

"She was quite a lady," she said. "In those days they rode side-saddle and she could still ride at age 95."

Smith's grandmother, Judy Jackson, was able to buy land with money her husband saved and hid inside a tree.

Charles Jackson and his family were slaves owned by Kit Jackson, who lived in the Masonville area. Judy was the housekeeper and Charles worked the farm. Kit Jackson allowed them to raise some tobacco on their own and keep the money. The slaves accumulated \$500.

"They say he saved the money and went down in the woods to a big tree and measured up so far," Smith said. "He cut the bark out and used a chisel to work out a spot big enough to put in a can, then tacked the bark back on."

Charles Jackson went off to join the fighting in the Civil War, leaving the money hidden in the tree.

He never came back from the war. Smith said she wasn't sure how he died.

But before he did, he told a friend where the money was hidden and for him to relay the message to Judy Jackson.

"He told her to keep shoes on the children's feet until they were old enough to take care of themselves," Smith said.

Her grandmother did just that. But she also bought some farmland near Masonville for herself and her four children. Judy Jackson continued to work for Kit Jackson for a number of years after the end of slavery.

For several years, the family lived at Masonville, but there wasn't a "colored" church or school nearby, so she sold that land and bought 160 acres at Pleasant Ridge.

At Pleasant Ridge there was a church and school for them to attend. The three boys only went to school three months a year, spending the rest of the time working, Smith said.

Smith is the daughter of Finley Jackson, the second eldest child of Charles and Judy Jackson. Their other children were Tazwell, Melinda and Charles. Smith is the only grandchild still living, but four great-grandchildren live in the area.

"When Granny died, they divided up the estate," she said. "There was this old trunk and we got it."

Inside the trunk, they found a comforter, a small oval-shaped tin can and papers. The can was the one Charles Jackson used to hide his money inside the tree and the papers included a copy of a U.S. Interior Department document that awarded Judy Jackson \$8 a month in widow's pension for her husband's military service. The document says the pension became effective April 11, 1866 - a year after Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

Smith still has the trunk and the tin can as well as the papers. She can recall her grandmother awaiting the arrival of her pension, which increased a bit over the years.

Judy Jackson was approximately 100 years old when she died, Smith said. No one really knew her exact age. But Smith remembers she was 9 years old at the time.

She doesn't know as much about her family's history as she would like.

"Isn't it funny how you don't pay any attention to those things until you get old," she said.

Over the years, she said all the original land her grandmother bought in Pleasant Ridge has been sold. Her father bought land near the original homeplace and Smith still owns the 100 acres today along with the house.

They moved into the home in 1910 when she was 6 years old.



The Daviess County, KY 1850 census slave schedule recorded that Christopher D. Jackson owned 18 slaves and the 1860 slave schedule reported that he owned 28 slaves.

Messenger & Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 6 February 1884, p.3:

CHRISTOPHER D. JACKSON.

Death of One of the Oldest and Wealthiest Citizens
of Daviess County – A Sketch of His Life.

The death of Mr. C. D. Jackson occurred last Friday night, after a lingering illness, at his residence near Masonville. Mr. Jackson, being one of the wealthiest and oldest citizens of Daviess county, was probably as well known as any other person within its limits. He was born on the farm of his father, nine miles east of Hartford, on December 13th, 1797, and was consequently over eighty-six years old. There was at the time of his death only one man in the county older than Mr. Jackson – Mr. Henry Carico, who is eighty-eight. But one of a family of fourteen children, Mrs. Jesse Moorman, of Breckenridge county, who is eighty years old, survives him. In the days of Mr. Jackson's youth only the commonest branches of education were taught in the schools, but he was gifted with a natural taste for reading, and to this was largely due his education, and especially his extended knowledge on historical subjects. He was married in November, 1821 [sic – should be 1827], to Camilla Lucile Shanks, a sister of Col. Quint Shanks, of Hartford. He had previously lived on his father's farm, occasionally having charge of the business of the place; also for two years was a magistrate and for two terms sheriff of Ohio county. He was subsequently a magistrate of Daviess county, for eighteen years, and also served as sheriff. Directly after his marriage Mr. Jackson moved to the farm he lived on until his death. Few settlers then lived in that neighborhood. Mr. Jackson was always a man of vigorous habits. Everything he undertook he pushed with energy and enterprise, was always successful. At the time of his death he was considered one of the wealthiest, if not the wealthiest man in the county. He began with two hundred acres of land and now his estate embraces more than four thousand acres all lying in Daviess county, save some in Jefferson, near Louisville. In addition to this he had large amounts invested in bonds and bank stocks. His wife after ten years, leaving four children, all of whom are now dead. But three heirs survive him, the children of his son James, who are Christopher, who married Anna Kroh; Adelle, who married Dr. J. H. Hickman, of this city, and Nina, who recently married Mr. Theo. Schwartz, of Louisville. He was a Mason and a member of the lodge at Masonville. The life of this man was in many respects a remarkable one. With all his business sagacity and shrewdness he was a man of large heart and benevolent inclinations. It is said that on much of his land poor tenants have lived for years without paying rent so great was his indulgence. His life was an epoch in Daviess county history that will not soon be forgotten. The funeral occurred Sunday and the interment was at Elmwood.

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Christopher D. Jackson married Camilla L. Shanks, 1 November 1827 in Ohio County, KY. The History of Daviess County, Kentucky, (Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, pp.126-127) adds that:

... Mr. Jackson in December, 1827 moved to Daviess County, KY, where he has since resided. "At that time there were 625 whites and 518 blacks in the county over sixteen years old... Mr. Jackson had some 200 acres of land, four negroes, one of which is still living with him... He owns a fine farm of 3,000 acres in one tract where he resides. He also owns 418 acres in Vanover Precinct and 100 acres in Knottsville Precinct. Mr. Jackson is the largest landholder in the county and the wealthiest man in the county."

The farm that Christopher D. Jackson resided on was just south of Masonville. It laid on both sides of the Old Hartford Road (now Highway 231) in an area known as Jackson Flats. He was buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro. His monument was a very tall and imposing obelisk. It contained an engraving of his face that formerly could be seen as one drove past on the

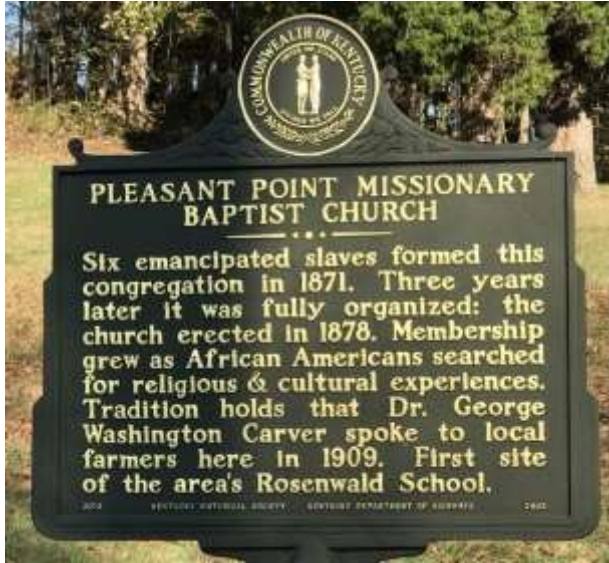
Old Hartford Road. A tornado that struck Owensboro on 3 January 2000 blew the monument over and it was broken into multiple pieces.



This writer (Jerry Long) on 13 October 1987 visited and made a transcription of the monuments in the Pleasant Point Baptist Church Cemetery at Pleasant Ridge in Daviess County, KY. On 20 May 1988 I interviewed Theodora Jackson Smith (1904-2003), of Pleasant Ridge, KY and Paul Lawrence Jackson (1909-2000), of Owensboro, KY. Theodora was the daughter of Finley

W. & Mary Ann Jackson and granddaughter of Charles & Judith Jackson. Paul Jackson was the son of Theodora's first cousin Harvey H. Jackson (1881-1929).

Mrs. Theodora Smith said she has a book that states that the Pleasant Point Baptist Church at Pleasant Ridge was founded in 1874. Services were first held in a local school and the present church building was erected in 1878.



Marker is on Kentucky Route 764 just south of U.S. 231, on the right when traveling north.



Pleasant Point Baptist Church, Pleasant Ridge, KY

Mrs. Smith said the members of the Jackson family buried at the Pleasant Point Baptist Church Cemetery in Pleasant Ridge are descendants of her great-grandfather, John Brown Jackson, who was born in Virginia about 1812. He had been a slave of Christopher D. (Kit) Jackson, an early settler of the Masonville area of Daviess County, KY and who has a large monument in Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery. John Brown Jackson has a monument at the Pleasant Point Baptist Church Cemetery in Pleasant Ridge. The inscription on his gravestone is – "John B. Brown died 26 December 1887 ages 75 years, husband of Eliza J."



Gravestone of John B. Brown (c1812-1887)
at the Pleasant Point Baptist Church Cemetery

The Owensboro Daily Messenger, Wednesday, 4 January 1888 (p.1) reported in the Pleasant Ridge community column:

“Brown Jackson, an old servant of the late C. D.
Jackson , died at his home in Red Hill last week.”

Brown Jackson appears in the 1866 tax list of Daviess County, KY; the first year that emancipated blacks in the county were first taxed as free citizens. John Brown Jackson was listed in the Masonville Precinct in the 1880 census of Daviess County, KY., his family was listed as: Jackson, Brown 69 (Va.-Va.-Va.); Eliza 45 wife (Va.-Va.-Va.); Mary 17 daughter (Ky.-Va.-Va.); Martha 15 daughter (Ky.-Va.-Va.); & Wilson 10 adopted son (Ky.-Ky.-Ky.). Eliza may have been his second wife. Besides the children listed here, John Brown Jackson's children also included: Charles (born about 1838), Mathew (born 1839), Jerry (born about 1845), Jefferson (born about 1851) and Sallie (born about 1853).

Mathew Jackson, born 20 January 1839 Daviess County, KY; died 13 March 1921 in Ohio County, KY near Buford. His death certificate records his father as Brown Jackson. He is listed in the 1880 census of Daviess County, KY, 1900, 1910 & 1920 censuses of Ohio County, KY. He married Anna Noel about 1864. She was born 24 May 1844 Daviess County, KY and died 8 March 1932 Buford, Ohio County, KY. The 1900 & 1910 censuses report that Anna was the mother of 9 children, only 2 of whom were then living. Their children included – Marie (c1871-before 1900); Albert Arthur (20 May 1875 - 21 May 1966, wife Ella H. Shaw) and Hardin H. (22 February 1877 - 11 November 1951, wife Lora Frances Payne). Mathew & Ann and their sons, Albert and Hardin, were buried at the Pleasant Point Church.

Jerry Jackson, born about 1845 Daviess County, KY. He married Annie Jones, 24 May 1877 in Daviess County, KY. He is listed in the home of his brother, Mathew, in the 1880 census of Daviess County, KY; he was then widowed or divorced. He married Clara Barnes, 26 April 1888 Daviess County, KY. Jerry & Clara are buried in unmarked graves at the Pleasant Point Church, among their children were daughters, Rachel and Emma.

Jefferson Jackson, son of Brown Jackson, was born about 1851 Daviess County, KY. He is listed in the 1870 and 1880 censuses of Daviess County, KY. In the 1880 census he was listed immediately following the listing of his father's home. He married M. A. Gains, 2 September 1868 in Daviess County, KY and Melvina Fields, 5 January 1876 in Daviess County, KY. In 1880 they had one child, Alfonso, born 1879. Jefferson died in Owensboro, KY on 5 April 1931. He was buried at the Pleasant Point Baptist Church in Pleasant Ridge; his grave is unmarked.

Sallie Jackson, born about 1853 Daviess County, KY. She married Moses Alexander Mason at Pleasant Ridge, Daviess County, KY. on 20 December 1877. He was born 4 July 1853 and died 28 January 1922 in Daviess County, KY. Sallie Mason was living Owensboro, KY in 1930. Mason & Sallie are buried in unmarked graves at the Pleasant Point Church. Their children included: William H. (1877-1934, buried Pleasant Point), Stanley (?Stanford), Malinda wife of John Haynes, and Nannie.

Charles Jackson, son of John Brown Jackson, fought and died in the Civil War. He enlisted in the 6th US Colored Cavalry on 29 November 1864. He was mustered into service at Owensboro, KY on 12 May 1865. On his enlistment he reported that he was 26, born Daviess County, KY, and his occupation is farmer. He died of pneumonia on 10 April 1866 in the post hospital at DeValls Bluff, Arkansas. His military papers state he left a widow, Judah ' Judith Jackson, of Owensboro, KY. It is not known where he was buried.

Judith ('Judy') Jackson, widow of Charles, died of la grippe near Pleasant Ridge on 15 February 1916 at the age of 95 years. Her death certificate recorded that her parents were Peter & Dolly Wilson. The 1870 and 1880 censuses suggest she was born during 1831-1844 in Kentucky. In the family it was told that Judith Jackson had formerly lived on a plantation near Hawesville, in Hancock County, KY. She has a monument at the Pleasant Point Church. The death certificates of her sons, Taswell & Finley give her name as Judith Wilson and the death certificates of her children, Malinda and Charles, gave her maiden name as Hawes.



Gravestone of Judith Wilson Jackson (c1831-1916)
In the Pleasant Point Baptist Church Cemetery

Before going away to the war Charles Jackson put \$500 in a can and hid it in a tree. He told only one person, his friend Steve Simmons, of it's whereabouts. He told him that if he did not return to give it to his wife, Judith, which Steve Simmons did upon learning of his friend's death.



The can in which Charles Jackson hid his savings of \$500; his widow bought a farm with the money (picture from “From Field Hands to Federals,” by Isaac G. Settle, Daviess County, Kentucky: Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015, Daviess County Bicentennial Committee, 2015, p.70).

For the service of Charles Jackson his wife, Judy, was granted a pension of \$8.00 per month. On her application for a pension she reported the names and birthdates of their four children as – Tazwell (6 September 1859), Finley (16 April 1861), Melinda (19 March 1863) and Charles (4 June 1865). Charles & Judith’s children were born on the Christopher D. (‘Kit’) Jackson farm near Masonville, in Daviess County, KY. At the time of the 1870 Daviess County census she and her four children were residing with Nick Smith, a German butcher; they were enumerated immediately following the residence of Christopher D. (‘Kit’) Jackson. With Judith in 1870 were – Tach (15), Finley (12), Malindy (10) and Charles Jackson (6). At the time of the 1880 Daviess County census Juda (49, born KY) and her children were living in the Masonville Precinct – Tazwell (20), Finley (19), Malinda (16) and Charlie (14). They were living near her husband’s father and brothers.

Tazwell Jackson, son of Charles & Judith, was called Tack. He married Nancy Talbott, 29 December 1880, Daviess County, KY. Her family was from Calhoun, McLean County, KY; she had brothers, Sam and Preston Talbott. Tack and Nancy are buried at the Pleasant Point Church in unmarked graves. Tack died 31 October 1926 in Daviess County, KY near Pleasant Ridge. His death certificate gives his parents’ names as Charles Jackson & Juda Wilson. The death certificate of Nancy Jackson records that she was the daughter of Press Talbott; she was born 15 May 1874 and died 28 June 1928 near Pleasant Ridge. Tack & Nancy Jackson’s children were all buried at the Pleasant Point Church. They were – Blaine, Harvey H. (1881-1929, married Florence Henry & Georgia Howard), Nina (1887-1973, married James Albert Tinsley), Gertrude (1893-1945, married Hollis Douglas French) and Cora J. (1896-1986, married John McHenry Higgs).

Finley W. Jackson, son of Charles & Judith, died 1 April 1938 at Pleasant Ridge, in Daviess County, KY. He married Mary Ann Robinson, 18 August 1892 at Newburgh, Warrick County, IN. Mary’s death certificate records that she was the daughter of Thomas Robinson & Primas Mack; she was born 9 February 1863 and died 15 September 1928 at Pleasant Ridge. They were buried at the Pleasant Point Church, they were the parents of Theodora E. Jackson Smith (1904-2003), of Pleasant Ridge, Ky. Finley Jackson’s obituary stated he was survived by a daughter, Theodora Jackson, and a sister, Malinda Williams.

Melinda Jackson, daughter of Charles & Judith, married Morris Williams, 4 September 1886 Daviess County, KY. Melinda Williams died on 26 December 1945 in Owensboro, KY, where she was buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Her death certificate gave her parents as Charles Jackson & Judy Hawes. She was survived by two children, Olivia Smith and Charlie Williams.

Charles Thornton Jackson, son Charles & Judith, according to his death certificate was born 4 June 1864 and died 23 May 1917 Daviess County, KY. His grave at the Pleasant Point Church is unmarked. Paul L. Jackson reported that his great-uncle, Charles, Jr. married Emma and he had a son, William.

