

Madison County; and Blackwell Cemetery in Morgan County.

The TVA Family Removal and Population Adjustment Case Files are on record with the National Archives and Records Administration (available through Ancestry.com). Most of the households investigated were sharecroppers or renters but there were some African American landowners among the records. Many of the affected landowners lived in the Beulah Land and Tanner communities. Other impacted communities included Harris, Little Elk, and Mooresville.

TVA field agents visited each home being considered for removal. For each visit, the agents filled out a questionnaire and took extensive notes. The case files include handwritten surveys and/or the typewritten summaries of the visits. Information recorded for each household included location; distance to prominent landmarks like the nearest school or church; whether the family owned or rented; how long they had lived in the house and the community; personal and family information such as marital status, birthplace, level of education, general health, number of children and if they still lived at home, and religion; description of the house, including number of rooms, water source, facilities. The questionnaires also contained entries for the newspapers and magazines the household regularly subscribed to as well as how many books were in the house.

As expected, a large portion of the questionnaire is devoted to finances, employment, and agriculture, including types of insurance, debt, employment history, and use of acreage. The TVA specifically sought information about those family members who left home after 1920 to find work elsewhere, what kind of trade the head of household engaged in, and what kind of trade they preferred. The TVA was also interested in how many acres farmers used within the “flowage area,” and for what purposes. Outside of this area, the TVA collected information about whether or not the household owned or rented land and how they used it. Expenditures, receipts, and sources of income were itemized along with such things as farm equipment, radios, cars, and other objects that could

contribute to a household’s operation and income. The goal of the questionnaire was to assess current living conditions and encourage preparations for moving, preferably to a better, or at least similar, location. The following examples describe families affected by the TVA Family Removal and Population Adjustments from their case files.

Charles Donald

Charles Donald was 59 years old at the time the TVA field agent visited in 1935. He lived in Tanner for 30 years, the last 15 on the same farm. The frame house the Donalds lived in was in fair condition. It had three rooms, two used as bedrooms, no electricity or telephone, a wood-burning stove for cooking and heating, a bath tub, an outhouse, and a well. The house was 12 years old at the time. Mr. Donald was born in Limestone County and had a 2nd grade education. Also from Limestone County, Mrs. Donald was 50 years old and had a 4th grade education. They had both been married before. Between them they had seven boys and four girls, although only 2 boys and 3 girls lived to adulthood. Their 19-year-old daughter, Louise, lived at home, as did their three-year-old granddaughter, Katherine, and two-year-old grandson, Willie James.

The Donalds were Missionary Baptist, and Mr. Donald was a Mason. They subscribed to *Progressive Farmer Magazine* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Although neither of the Donalds had more than an elementary school education, they owned a relatively high number of books. While most households in the area at that time had less than 5 books, regardless of race, the Donalds had 60 books. They did not own a car, but had a sewing machine and phonograph.

The Donalds owed \$100 on their mortgage, and Donald had \$150 of insurance for his funeral expenses, probably through the Masons. He had left home in 1923 to look for work and had a job with Alabama By-Product Company in Birmingham, but returned to Limestone County in 1925. In 1935, he worked as a farmer but would have preferred a job doing public work, perhaps for TVA or the county.

Donald farmed 36 acres of land, half of it within the “flowage area.” He owned 10 acres, but rented an additional 26 acres. He cultivated the entire 10 acres that he owned and 24 of the rented acres. Of the 34 acres he had in cultivation, 25 acres were planted with corn and nine with cotton. The land Donald rented was part of the Houston Estate and he paid 400 pounds of cotton for its use. He also had two mules, one cow, and 40 chickens. He owned a wagon, turning plow, planter, and harrow. The Donalds were able to produce butter, eggs, poultry, pork, corn, peaches, potatoes and sweet potatoes, honey, and wood for their household.

George Kirby

George Kirby lived with his wife Julia in Tanner where he had owned a house since about 1929. The house was five rooms with three bedrooms, no bathroom, no electricity, and no telephone. It was 25 years old in 1935 and in poor condition. Kirby was 48 years old and born in Giles County, Tennessee. He had a 3rd grade education and was in good health. Julia Kirby, was 34 years old and also from Giles County. She had a 5th grade education and was also in good health. Although there had been five boys and seven girls born to the Kirbys, only one boy had lived to adulthood. In fact, between 1925 and 1935, Frank Kirby, George’s father, had died of a stroke; Roosevelt Kirby, his grandson, had died from a stomach ailment; and the TVA case worker noted that “11 children have died in the last 28 years!”

Besides George and Julia Kirby, George’s mother, Jenny Kirby, aged 83 years, lived with them. Their son, George Kirby, Jr., 35 years old, lived in Decatur. The 1940 census shows the family living in Tanner.

The Kirby’s were Baptist and Mr. Kirby was a Mason. They subscribed to *Progressive Farmer Magazine* and had one book in the house, undoubtedly a Bible. They possessed a phonograph and a 1927 Ford automobile that Mr. Kirby bought two years earlier. They owed \$706 on their mortgage and Mr. Kirby had a \$500 life

insurance policy. While between marriages in 1924, Kirby went to Decatur and worked in a tanning yard, but preferred farming.

Kirby owned 13 acres in 1935. A total of 11 acres were used for corn and cotton. He also had one horse, one cow, three hogs, and 36 chickens. The farm produced butter, eggs, poultry, pork, corn, peaches, potatoes, sweet potatoes.

Adam Lucas

A resident of Tanner, Adam Lucas and his wife, Sarah, lived in a four room house. When the TVA case worker visited the Lucas home in November 1935, he spoke with Sarah. The case file notes that Rev. Lucas had a 5th grade education and Mrs. Lucas had a 4th grade education. They were both from Limestone County and had been married for 20 years. Although they were listed as having no children, this may indicate that no children were living at home. They lived on land that Lucas had owned for 23 years. They had two mules, two cows, some hogs, and some chickens.

The TVA case workers wrote that “Sarah is a dark brown slender woman, and appears to be very energetic.” Mrs. Lucas informed the TVA that Adam had cultivated the farm himself since he purchased it and although he was also a minister, he received very little pay for his work at the church. By November 1935, Mr. Lucas had bought ten acres of land about a mile from his farm and was

