

**Multi-Generational African American Farmers of the Midwest**  
Anna-Lisa Cox  
Library of Congress AFC Archie Green Fellowship

**Date of interview:** August 23, 2021

**Names/s of those interviewed:** David Butcher

**Primary Interviewer:** Anna-Lisa Cox (ALC)

**Secondary Interviewers:**

**Interview Location:** David Butcher's house in Tablertown, Athens County, Ohio.

**Transcriber:** Breana Nolan

**Abstract:** David Butcher farmed land in the area where his family has lived and farmed since the 1830s. He has been doing research on his family, as well as the community of Tablertown, and runs a small history museum on his property.

David Butcher and his wife both work jobs outside of farming, and in the end they could not afford the taxes the county kept raising on their land, and David had to sell much of his land and stop farming.

David had a small diversified farm of good river-bottom land. He raised goats and sheep, and was the only farmer I interviewed who created a farm-direct business relationship with African immigrants in a nearby city, who he sold his products to.

David Butcher and his wife raised four children on their farm, and are both community leaders who are justly proud of their heritage in the area. They are of African, German and Native American descent.

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[0:00] Introductions to David Butcher and Dr. Anna-Lisa Cox. David talks about his father's work with horses.

[5:00] David discusses his father's horse breeding and his mother's background.

[10:00] David discusses issues with flooding in river-bottom farm land, and the ways he created markets for his goods by creating relationships with Somali immigrants in Columbus, Ohio. Explains different methods of raising/butchering goats and sheep, and the butchering skills of the Somali immigrants.

[15:00] David talks about feeding the family with things from the farm, the garden, and methods of preserving food.

[20:00] David discusses hunting, how they enriched the garden, and picking fruits and vegetables.

[25:00] David talks about fishing, how hunting has changed, and his family owning property.

[30:00] David and Anna-Lisa talks about getting/making butter, his ancestors fighting in wars, and how David would racially describe himself.

[35:00] David talks about raising cows and horses as well as buying/raising corn.

[40:00] David discusses his grandfather making moonshine, the challenges of farming, and being raised in a big family.

[45:00] David talks about his great aunt being a midwife and shares stories about his family.

[50:00] David talks about his Uncle Cecil Tabler, who also taught him about farming, and ways that would encourage people to go into farming.

[55:00] David discusses high taxes, the price of land, and buying land so it could stay in the family.

[1:00:00] David talks about the racism he experienced, the history his uncle taught him versus what the school was teaching him. He also talks about a fundraiser in his school that he attended where they “sold” and “purchased” people.

[1:05:00] David talks about making sure ancestors are remembered and preserving his family’s history.

[1:10:00] They discuss family reunions and sign off.