Abstract: High assessments on African American-owned land became a common, if often invisible, feature of Jim Crow governance. Discriminatory modes of property taxation served as a weapon of social control, an instrument of land speculation and redevelopment, and a vehicle for the unequal distribution of public services. This essay traces the strange career of the property tax from the period of Reconstruction to the age of Jim Crow, situating racial differentials in the assessment and collection of ad valorem taxes within the broader framework of white supremacist governance, and provides a case study of property tax discrimination in civil rights-era Mississippi. In the summer of 1966, black residents of the town of Edwards, Mississippi, launched a boycott of local businesses in response to a series of discriminatory actions by town officials and local employers. The following year, Edwards’s board of supervisors retaliated by grossly inflating the assessed value on almost all black-owned homes in the town, an action that was ultimately upheld by the US Supreme Court in the Bland v. McHann (1972) decision. While mostly forgotten by scholars and left out of histories of the civil rights movement, the Edwards boycotts and resultant fallout shed new light on several key issues of importance to the history and geography of racism, state power, and the black freedom struggle in America. In particular, this essay argues, the actions of Edwards town officials reveals the bureaucratization of Jim Crow and the emergence of more subtle, and ostensibly legal, mechanisms of administering racial privilege. Conversely, the story of Edwards's black community, and its efforts to secure a more equitable distribution of tax revenues, testifies to the importance of fiscal policy and administrative reform and in the long black freedom struggle.