

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF TENANCY:
AN EXAMPLE FROM THE
SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

An archeological reconnaissance near Manning, in lower coastal South Carolina, graphically documents how minimal the surviving archeological record may be at former tenant farm sites. Six small scatters, totalling less than 500 artifacts, were all the surface remains recovered at the locations of four tenant houses and two tobacco barns torn down within the past 25 years. Tenant households, the focus of life for an appreciable portion of late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century rural southern populations, may be archeologically almost invisible once the buildings themselves are gone. These kinds of household complexes, furthermore, while once common, are rapidly vanishing. Scatters of comparatively recent historic artifacts similar to those reported here have been encountered in rural archeological surveys throughout the southeast. Evaluation of these scatters as possible remains, of tenant structures should be attempted whenever feasible. Informant interviews and the careful inspection of aerial photographs and contour maps are advanced as particularly quick and effective methods for identifying recent house sites. The study helps

to illustrate the contributions even small archeological surveys can make to general archeological knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

In this study the archeological record at four twentieth century tenant house sites in central South Carolina is briefly examined. That the recent past can be a subject for serious research has been repeatedly stressed by historical archeologists (e.g. Leone 1972; Rathje 1974; South 1977; Schiffer 1977). This paper is an attempt to attract attention to a widespread, yet little examined, category of recent historic sites--the tenant household and farmstead. The remains of tenant house complexes, it is argued, constitute an important (and rapidly growing) part of the southeastern archeological record. They represent the habitation sites--the focus of family life--for a substantial portion of the local indigenous population. Archeological investigation of the post-Civil War rural poor in the south has, however, until recently been either minimal, or else directed toward unusual types of sites such as log cabins, stills, cemeteries, mills, or logging camps.

Archeologists can and indeed should consider tenant sites as possible subjects for investigation. Perhaps the most significant reason for devoting attention to the archeological record of tenancy is because that way of life is rapidly disappearing. In the present study, for example, part of a (former) 965 acre tenant/plantation complex was examined. This farming community operated during much of the first half of the twentieth century, and at its peak included 23 house and barn complexes. Only one of these

is still standing, even though most of the buildings were occupied as recently as the 1940s. All of the other structures have been torn down to increase the acreage under modern machine cultivation. This pattern has been duplicated throughout the southeast, where tenancy is increasingly the subject of historians and geographers (e.g. Prunty 1955, Ransom and Sutch 1977). Direct ethnography, exemplified in James Agee's (1941) "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families," is itself no longer possible. Instead, the oral history of a culture now known only in memory is becoming increasingly important, requiring an effort similar to that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century American ethnographers, who sought to reconstruct former Indian lifeways. Even this approach is limited by the life span of potential informants. Within another one or two generations archeology and history will be the only means available to study this way of life, as the people themselves pass on. As the photographs in the WPA's Farm Security Administration records replace the disappearing, on-the-ground structural evidence, so too will archeology have to play an increasing role in reconstructing and understanding this way of life.

The Origin and Nature of the Southern Tenant System

According to Ransom and Sutch (1977), whose arguments are summarized here:

One of the most dramatic and far-reaching developments of the post emancipation era was the decline of the plantation system of agriculture and its replacement by tenant

farming (Ransom and Sutch 1977: 56).

Before tenant farming became the standard pattern, however, other farming methods were tried and discarded. Immediately after the Civil War, in 1865 and 1866, an attempt was made to reestablish the prewar plantations using a work-gang system. Under the work-gang system, the freedmen were hired for fixed wages, with "rewards" offered as incentives for good work. In addition to the fixed wages, usually very low, the freedmen were given food rations and housing on the plantation, often the former slave houses. Frequently, a portion of the wages were paid monthly, with the rest of the payment to come after the season, as insurance that the Laborers would remain.

The first problem that arose with this system concerned the shortage of circulating currency in the South in the immediate post-war era. Planters found themselves unable to produce the cash necessary to pay the wages they had promised. One solution was to offer a share of the year's crop as wages instead of money. Thus, the laborer received his wages in the form of a portion of the crop at the end of the season instead of on a weekly or monthly basis. As money began to circulate more freely, however, these share wages became less frequent.

The postwar decline in the price of cotton led to lower offered wages. The dissatisfaction of the black workers with the wage system in general led to the virtual abandonment of the plantation system by 1867. To the laborers, the wage system too closely resembled slavery. The freedmen had discovered that they wielded enough power to insist

that a new system of organization be instituted. Sharecropping arose, in part as an alternative to regular wages. After 1867, when tenant farming became widespread, farm size and labor organization rapidly changed. Small farms of 50 acres or less began to appear, most of them run exclusively by family labor. Many of these small farms were operated by tenants rather than by the actual landowners. This new organization has sometimes been called the fragmented plantation (after Prunty 1955), defined as: "...a dispersed settlement (pattern) with tenant residences located closer to the fields which each individual tenant farmed" (Taylor and Smith 1978: 349). The planters acceded to these changes when they realized that the small scale tenant operations could produce rents probably equivalent to those extracted from the plantation system. In fact, instead of promoting the ownership of the land by the black workers, tenant farming tended to provide the landowners with reasons to increase and concentrate their land holdings. Thus, a small group of elite white landowners continued to control the employment and lifestyle of the majority of the rural black population.

Until the middle of the twentieth century tenant farmers in the rural south were predominantly poor blacks. According to one study done in the 1930s, black tenant farmers tended to remain on the same land longer than white tenants; they also tended to stay farmers longer than the whites (Woofter *et al.* 1936: 110). According to this study, in 1934:

The typical cotton plantation operated by 5 or more families...included a total of

907 acres, of which 385 were in crops, 63 were idle, 162 in pasture, 214 in woods, and 83 in wasteland...

The typical plantation was occupied by 14 families, exclusive of the landlord's family of which 3 were headed by wage hands, 8 by croppers, 2 by other share tenants, and 1 by a renter. Of these families, 2 were White and 12 were Negro (Woofter *et al.* 1936: xxxii-xxxiii).

As to the living conditions of the tenants, Woofter *et al.* found:

Fuel and house rent are part of the tenant's prerequisites but the houses furnished are among the poorest in the Nation. Unpainted four room shacks predominate. Screening is the exception rather than the rule and sanitation is primitive. In a study of farm housing in the Southeast in 1934, it was found that wells furnished the source of water for over 80 percent of both owner and tenant dwellings (Woofter *et al.* 1936: xxvii-xxviii).

Woofter felt that the decline of tenant farming was due in part to the lack of any written contract between landowner and tenant and to "the fact that the tenant (had) no legal claim and (received) no recompense for improvements he may make on the property" (Woofter *et al.* 1936: 114). These things, Woofter believed, robbed the tenant farmer of any incentive to remain stable and, due to his agreement with the landowner which required him to devote a high proportion of his land to cotton, he was further prevented

from developing his property (woof-ter et al. 1936: 114). The climax of the tenant era came in the 1920s and quickly declined after this time, corresponding to the rise of mechanized agriculture and the northern and urban migrations of the rural poor.

The Archeological Survey

From December 21 through 23, 1981, the authors conducted an archeological reconnaissance of 123.8 acres in the proposed Clarendon County Development Board, which was in the process of acquiring the land for development as an industrial park. The project area was located four and a half miles south-southwest of Manning, South Carolina, and one mile southeast of the intersection of I-95 and U.S. 301. The tract lies between and is partially bounded by the upper reaches of Fellowship Branch and Davis Branch, two minor tributaries of the Pocotaligo River, which is in turn a tributary of the Black River (Figure 1). The project area, between the Santee and Black River Drainages, is in roughly the center of the South Carolina coastal plain.

The survey tract which is characterized by level terrain exhibiting minimal relief, is located at an elevation of 140 feet above sea level, in the interriverine portion of the central coastal plain. Soils in the immediate area consist of deep, moderately well drained loamy sands and fine sands in the flats, sloping quickly to poorly drained sandy loams along the tributary channels (Gerald 1976). The more poorly drained areas, small swampy depressions or sluggish runoff channels, tend to be no more than a few feet below the surrounding terrain,

and almost all have been ditched to facilitate drainage. Local conditions are considered fairly conducive to agriculture, given only the need for adequate drainage.

Previous Investigations

Prior to the December 1981 reconnaissance, no archeological investigations had been conducted near Manning. Most archeological and cultural resource investigations conducted within Clarendon County have, in fact, until quite recently, occurred immediately along the Santee River. A summary of this work through 1979 details both the historic and prehistoric investigations, and the cultural resources, to be found along and near the Santee in Clarendon County (Anderson, Newkirk, and Carter 1979). Only one cultural resource survey has been conducted to date along the other major drainage in the county, the Black River. This work, along a short transmission line corridor, took place roughly 10 miles northeast of Manning (Drucker and Anthony 1981a). In the interriverine areas of the county, away from the Santee and the Black Rivers, only one formal archeological survey has been conducted to date, at the site of a wastewater treatment plant near Summerton, some six miles southwest of the Manning Industrial Tract site (Drucker and Reeves 1981). From this admittedly limited record, it appears that most prehistoric sites away from major drainages in the area are likely to be small and uncomplicated; even the sites reported along the Black River (Drucker and Anthony 1981a) do not begin to compare in size or density with many of those found along the Santee River. Few historic sites have been reported in Clarendon

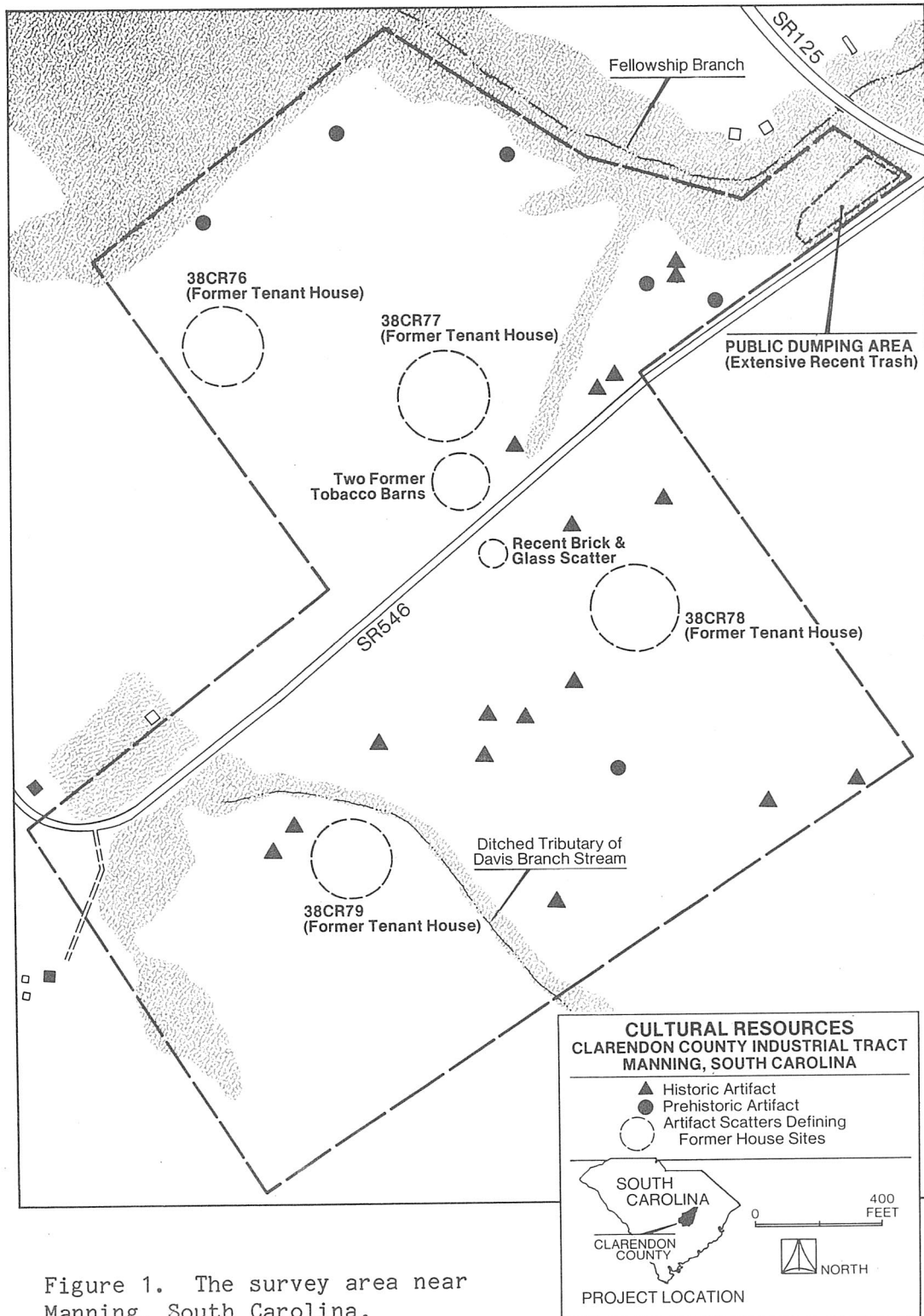


Figure 1. The survey area near Manning, South Carolina.

County. The sole exception, 38CR1 (the Revolutionary War period Fort Watson), was the subject of two seasons of investigations in the early 1970s (Ferguson 1975). Historic sites from the interior of the county (away from the Santee), as reported in the surveys cited above, tend to be small nineteenth or twentieth century artifact scatters, possibly reflecting tenant occupations like the four reported here.

Field and Laboratory Procedures

Project investigations included fieldwork (on-site inspection) and historical research. At the time of the reconnaissance (December 1981) the 123.8 acre tract was almost entirely in open, freshly plowed fields, offering excellent surface visibility. The preceding season's crops of cotton and corn had been harvested and plowed under, and the fields had lain fallow and exposed to rain for roughly two months. Surface visibility was therefore ideal (100%) over the open fields which made up most of the tract. Wooded areas were present (under 10 acres), but consisted exclusively of narrow treelines along two tributaries and recent drainage ditches. Deep soil profiles were available for inspection both along the drainage cuts and the tributaries themselves, which had been ditched in sections, although no evidence for deeply buried sites was noted.

The entire project tract was examined by pedestrian survey employing transects spaced roughly 10 meters apart (as paced). All observed artifacts were collected, with the locations recorded on aerial photographs of the project tract (Scale: 1"=400', December 1980 flight). The only exception to this

collection strategy was bricks and brick fragments, which were counted and left in the field, and obviously recent trash. The margin of Fellowship Branch (at the extreme eastern edge of the tract) had been used as a public dump by local residents in recent years, and this debris was noted but was otherwise left unexamined (for future archeologists?). Six small scatters of twentieth century historic artifacts were encountered, characterized by window and bottle glass, pottery sherds, and brick fragments (Figure 1). A local informant identified these scatters as the locations of four tenant houses and two tobacco barns that had been torn down within the past 20 years. In addition to the six scatters, 24 isolated finds were recorded, 18 of them recent historic artifacts probably associated with the tenant activity. The remaining six were flaked stone artifacts indicating minor prehistoric use of the area.

In conjunction with the field survey, a background investigation was conducted to document the land use and history of the project tract. Recent landowners and former tenants were identified, and attempts were made to contact and interview these people. The primary informant was Mr. Cary Lee Raulinson, whose family had owned or farmed the land throughout much of the twentieth century. Mr. Raulinson, who farmed the project tract for almost 30 years, had actually dismantled the structures represented by the six scatter. It was therefore possible to obtain a description of each building, and a brief history of its occupation and use.

Archival records consulted included the Statewide Archeological

Site Files, records and publications at the South Caroliniana Library (University of South Carolina); the South Carolina Department of Archives and History; the Santee-Wateree Regional Planning Council; and the Clarendon County Library (Manning). Land use information proved particularly valuable in the present study, since it helped document former house site locations. Information about the specific occupations represented by the six scatters discovered during the survey was obtained from USDA Soil Conservation Service aerial photographs and from USGS topographic maps. The former tenant complexes were clearly visible both on aerials (e.g., Gerald 1976: Map 30; 1958 overflight) and on the 1943 15-minute USGS Summerton (South Carolina) topographic quad, which depicted land use (i.e., roads and buildings) as late as 1941.

Upon completion of the survey, four Statewide Site Inventory numbers (38CR76-79) were obtained from the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, and were assigned to the four former tenant house sites. Site forms were completed for each site, and were filed with the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, the Charleston Museum, and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Catalog and accession numbers were obtained from Mr. Allen Liss of the Charleston Museum, the curatorial repository for the records and collections of the survey. All recovered artifacts were washed and cataloged using indelible India ink; individual specimen numbers were reported with artifact descriptions in the Appendix of the original contract report (Anderson and Muse 1981). Identification of recovered recent historic artifacts employed standard references, in-

cluding Newman (1977), McKearin and McKearin (1948), and other similar sources (cf. Taylor and Smith 1978: 301-312).

DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSEMBLAGES

Four archeological sites and 29 isolated finds were recorded within the boundaries of the survey tract (Figure 1). It should be emphasized that the recovered artifactual assemblage represents an almost complete record of what was on the surface at the time of the survey. Due to the excellent visibility, it was possible to virtually vacuum the project tract, and tie artifacts in to tight proveniences using the aerial photographs. While the pieceplotting of every observed artifact would have been the ideal field procedure, in practice the artifacts within individual scatters were gathered as a general, single locus collection. This procedure appears to have been quite successful; collections from one site (38CR77) resolved three discrete scatters, reflecting the original farm house and two associated outbuildings.

The artifact assemblages and informant descriptions from each of the four sites are summarized below. It is important to remember that the scatters reported here comprise the surviving archeological record from tenant house complexes typically occupied for one or two generations by families characterized by two adults and several children. The scatters do not, furthermore, reflect only house sites. Each of the four houses had associated outbuildings, minimally a well and a privy (typically on opposite sides of the house), and two of the four also had mule or tobacco barns present. While most traces of these buildings are

gone (except for the artifact scatter), features undoubtedly remain, largely undisturbed, below the plow zone. The wells and privies associated with the four houses, for example, were filled in with stumps, brickbats, and loose soil when the structures were dismantled (Cary Lee Raulinson: personal communication). Thus, even when all surface traces of house complexes like these are gone, some subsurface remains will probably survive.

Site 38CR76

Site 38CR76 was characterized by a fairly tight cluster of brick, glass, and other debris within an area roughly 40 meters in diameter. The size of the site is actually illustrated as about 80 meters in diameter (Figure 1), since occasional artifacts were observed out to this distance from the approximate center. A four room tenant house with an associated well and privy stood in this area until 1977, when it was dismantled. The house was occupied by a Mr. January Dingle, who had built it in the early forties. Prior to this time, Mr. Dingle had been living in the house complex reported here as site 38CR78, around which he farmed as one of the tenants for the Raulinson family. The 38CR76 house was described by Mr. Raulinson as one of the best constructed in the area, with glass windows, a porch, and beaded ceilings. In his last years Mr. Dingle, who died in the 1970s, moved in with his son, who lived in a house located just outside the project tract. The 38CR76 scatter, from the most recently abandoned and dismantled structure, was the most extensive. Several intact (machined) bricks and a number of brick fragments were observed, and 186 arti-

facts were collected (Table 1). Surprisingly, no nails were recovered at this or any of the sites; the only metal artifacts found were an aluminum cigarette lighter, a small scrap of tin, and a hinge. The artifact inventory at 38CR76 was more diversified than at the other three house sites, with a wider range of ceramics and glass, supporting Mr. Raulinson's contention that it was one of the best houses in the general area.

Site 38CR77

Site 38CR77 was defined by three fairly discrete scatters of artifacts corresponding to the location of a house and two tobacco barns that were torn down in the late 50s. These scatters, ranging from 30 to 90 meters in diameter, were poorly defined, and characterized by comparatively few artifacts (Table 1). The house was described as a fairly typical four room wooden structure on brick supports, occupied by a family that farmed the surrounding land (Raulinson: personal communication). The main period of the occupation was from the 1920s through the early 1940s; when the buildings were demolished, the house had been vacant for many years. A well and privy were associated with the house, although the locations are now unknown. The tobacco barns were elevated on pilings and built of notched and layered boards chinked with clay. Only 55 artifacts were recovered from the entire area, a surprisingly small record given the former existence of three buildings (Table 1).

More brick fragments were noted at this site than at any other, however, suggesting that not as many were scavenged or used as well fill

as at the other three sites. Only a few fragments were noted in the northern scatter, where the house originally stood. A moderate number of fragments (about 40 pieces, equivalent to 10-15 complete bricks) were observed in the central scatter. The low artifact density and relatively undiversified assemblage may reflect a comparatively impoverished household, which is reported to have been the case, or, alternatively, fairly thorough salvage and/or cleaning operations when the house was dismantled. The two northern scatters are situated in the exact area reported for the house and barns (which are also shown on the 1958 aerial and on the 1943 USGS quad); the southernmost scatter, across the road, may be an

unrelated outbuilding or, equally likely, may be where debris was dumped during the demolition, or during the construction of State Road 546 which was built in the 1960s and was only recently paved.

Site 38CR78

Site 38CR78 was a fairly light scatter of historic debris over an area roughly 100 meters in diameter. A tenant house with an associated well, privy, and small (20 by 40 foot) hay barn were originally located in this area. These structures were built sometime around the 1920s and were occupied for about 25 years by the family of Mr. January Dingle, who later moved to the house

TABLE 1

A SUMMARY OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS RECOVERED
FROM FOUR FORMER TENANT HOUSE SITES
(38CR76-38CR79) NEAR MANNING, SOUTH CAROLINA

	38CR76	38CR77a (house)	38CR77b (barn)	38CR77c (barn?)	38CR78	38CR79	Totals	
POTTERY	64	6	-	-	53	21	144	(30.6%)
Whiteware	(51)	(6)	-	-	(43)	(17)	(117)	
Stoneware	(3)	-	-	-	(2)	(2)	(7)	
Porcelain	(4)	-	-	-	(7)	(2)	(13)	
Other	(6)	-	-	-	(1)	-	(7)	
GLASS	109	27	4	17	49	100	306	(65.0%)
Window	(7)	(3)	-	-	-	-	(10)	
Bottle	(102)	(24)	(4)	(17)	(49)	(100)	(296)	
MISC.	13	-	1	7	2	5	21	(4.4%)
Marbles	(2)	-	-	-	-	(1)	(3)	
Rubber	(8)	-	(1)	-	(1)	(3)	(13)	
Metal	(3)	-	-	-	(1)	(1)	(5)	
TOTALS	186	33	5	17	104	126	471	(100.0%)

reported here as site 38CR76. The site 38CR78 house was a typical four room wooden tenant structure on brick piers. The local informant, Mr. Cary Lee Raulinson, said that this house, as well as the house reported here as 38CR79, had wooden shutters instead of glass windows. While it is difficult to conceive of twentieth century structures without glass windows (even in the rural south), it is interesting to note that in fact no window glass was recovered at the two sites where wooden shutters were reported, and that window glass was found at the sites where windows were described (Table 1). Woofter *et al.* (1936: xxvii) note in their descriptions of tenant houses (cited previously) that "screening is the exception rather than the rule," suggesting that glass windows may indeed have been uncommon.

The buildings comprising 38CR78 were torn down in 1960, although by this time they had been abandoned for a number of years. The number of artifacts recovered appears low ($N=104$), considering this was a family residence and farm complex for at least a quarter of a century; few brick fragments were observed in the field, and the site offers mute testimony to the low archeological visibility of occupations of this kind.

Site 38CR79

Site 38CR79 was characterized by a low density scatter of brick and other historic debris extending over an area roughly 100 meters in diameter (Figure 1). The area was originally the site of a typical four room tenant house with associated well and privy that burned in about 1960 and was subsequently re-

moved. This house, like most of the others in the area, was occupied during the second quarter of the century; at the time it burned it had been vacant for a number of years, according to the informant. Only a few brick fragments were observed with the general scatter. The house is reported to have been fairly well made, with a good porch; wooden shutters were used instead of glass in the windows. No window glass was recovered in the surface collection, supporting this report, and the site artifact assemblage ($N=126$, Table 1) exhibits moderate diversity, suggesting either a fairly long occupation, or one economically (comparatively) better off than the one at 38CR77, for example.

Isolated Finds

A total of 29 "isolated" artifacts, 24 historic and 6 prehistoric, were recovered from the project area. The locations of these finds are illustrated in Figure 1. Only 24 locations are indicated in the figure; the 24 historic artifacts included several pairs, and actually came from 18 discrete locations. The historic artifacts all date to the twentieth century, and most probably derive from the tenant occupations. If not derived directly from the house complexes (possibly scattered by cultivation), they may reflect debris along dirt roads that linked each house. These roads, it should be noted, for the most part no longer exist, although their locations can, like the house sites, be determined from early maps and aerials. In the immediate study area, the rise of mechanized farming led to a deliberate realignment of the local road network to increase field size and to better accommodate the operation of tractors.

The Decline of the
Tenant System: An
Archeological Perspective

Within the past few years literally thousands of structures and artifact scatters have been reported in archeological surveys across the southeast that have been interpreted as remains of tenant farming systems. These sites have (typically) been recorded during cultural resources management related projects, and a large number have been reported from the immediate South Carolina area (e.g. Taylor and Smith 1978; Hanson *et al.* 1978; Drucker and Fulmer 1981, to cite a few examples). Over the region reporting standards vary considerably, although the practice of ignoring or overlooking recent historic sites, common in surveys conducted during the early to mid 1970s (e.g. House and Schiffer 1975: 47) has been replaced by reporting and documentation. Even so, much can be improved in contemporary survey and reporting. The presence of possible tenant (or other) house sites is often inferred, rather than documented, for example, when recent historic artifact scatters are encountered in survey project reports, although important exceptions to this trend exist (e.g. Drucker and Fulmer 1981; Kern and Tordoff 1982). In most cases, it is argued, only minor effort is needed to positively identify recent artifact scatters as former house sites. This effort, often requiring little more than the careful inspection of old contour maps or aerial photographs, should be undertaken whenever possible since it can only facilitate the accurate interpretation of the archeological record.

In the South Carolina area,
Taylor and Smith (1978: 132-137)

have provided a discussion of local correlates of the tenant system, and pointedly illustrate that this way of life is rapidly becoming an archeological, rather than an architectural, phenomenon. They report that piedmont pulpwood companies, for example, deliberately raze any and all standing structures, to reduce the taxes that could be assessed on their property. As they indicate: "this, needless to say, has had a tremendous effect on the integrity of these resources" (Taylor and Smith 1978: 195). Unlike the present survey, where a fair range of artifacts were recovered, Taylor and Smith (1978: 352) report finding little beyond ceramics at most of the sites they interpret as possible tenant farms. This may reflect differing survey conditions. The Taylor and Smith survey, in the Richard B. Russell reservoir area of the central piedmont, was largely in forested or overgrown terrain, greatly reducing surface visibility. Under such conditions, it is probable that ceramics (typically white colored) would be more likely to be detected than other categories of artifacts.

In the area of the survey referred here, in the central South Carolina coastal plain, the rise of modern (mechanized) agriculture, rather than timber management practices, is responsible for the destruction of many tenant complexes. The entire survey tract, as noted, was part of a 965 acre farm owned and managed by the Raulinson family. From the 1920s to the early 1940s up to 23 tenants lived on this land, working 25 to 75 acre parcels. The Raulinson plantation included a commissary providing for most of the needs of the tenants, forming a closed economic community. The size of the share tracts varied depending

on the number of mules in a given household; typically 25 acres could be worked by a single mule. Most of the tenants worked 25 or 50 acre parcels; only one with three mules worked a 75 acre tract. The appearance of tractors quickly transformed this way of life, although the decline of the tenant system must be recognized as a complex phenomenon related to and interlinked with a number of factors (cf Ransom and Sutch 1977). In the immediate project area, the rise of mechanized agriculture resulted in a marked reduction in local population, the removal of numerous structures, and even the realignment of (dirt) roads. Of 23 tenant complexes standing on the Raulinson tract in the 1940s, only two buildings now remain (Cary Lee Raulinson, personal communication). These phenomena, repeated across the region (e.g. Drucker and Fulmer 1981: 68), have greatly transformed the southern landscape over the past 20 to 30 years.

CONCLUSIONS

Rural southern tenant life can, it is argued, be an appropriate subject for archeological research. A number of important inferences have been made during the course of this report that warrant consideration by the archeological community. First, it is becoming increasingly apparent that most of the tangible evidence (i.e. people and structures) from the tenant way of life is rapidly vanishing. Tenant house complexes, the focus of family life for an appreciable portion of late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century rural southern populations, are disappearing from the landscape. Furthermore, once the structures are removed, these complexes may be archeologically almost invisible.

Habitation sites occupied for a generation or more by entire families can be reduced to collections of a few dozen glass, sherd, and brick fragments. Given removal of the surface record, (i.e. structures) the only surviving features at sites of this kind may be filled-in wells and privies. These features, while difficult to find, may one day be regarded as valuable time capsules of a vanished way of life. The identification and documentation of suspected tenant sites can, however, be accomplished by a number of methods, including the use of informant interviews and the careful inspection of aerial photographs and old maps.

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