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ONLY THE NECESSITIES: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF
TENANCY AND CERAMIC ACQUISITION

By

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ABSTRACT

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Virginia Carol Ellenburg

There is an association between the nature of postbellum plantation tenancy and the use of ceramics by plantation tenants in the American South. This thesis argues that this link can be demonstrated archaeologically. In order to explore that connection, the ceramic assemblage from a tenant site at Old Town Plantation in Georgia was examined in the context of a model of ceramic acquisition and use. This model was based on information known about the nature of tenancy and associated consumer behavior as well as the nature of ceramic assemblages from tenant sites located on plantations in South Carolina and Mississippi. The Old Town data were examined on the basis of attribute analysis and the results of these were used to define the link between the attributes of ceramic assemblages associated with tenant sites and the nature of the behaviors responsible for ceramic acquisition by tenants.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Tenant plantations were one of the most common agrarian units in the American South during the period between the end of the Civil War and World War II. However, little is known about tenant farmers and their material culture despite the fact that they constituted a large portion of Southern rural society. This thesis seeks to improve that situation through the archaeological investigation of a tenant housesite at Old Town Plantation, located in Jefferson County, Georgia.

Archaeology is an important discipline that can be used to discover information about past cultures. Culture consists of a system of learned knowledge and beliefs which members of a society or group of people share. "Artifacts are the physical manifestations of culture. By means of artifacts, people are studied by the archaeologist in the hope that general statements can be made about those people and about their culture" (Adams 1980:25).

One aspect of culture that has been studied by archaeologists is social stratification. The identification

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of artifact groups or artifact attributes that may indicate class or status is an important part of archaeological investigation. Many archaeologists have endeavored to determine if and how socioeconomic status is reflected by the archaeological record. That this determination is considered possible is most concisely stated by James Deetz (1973:20): "Depending on an individual's place within the socioeconomic scale, the artifacts with which he furnishes his household will vary in quantity and quality". This kind of research may be best conducted in historical archaeology because of the added historical and social information available with the use of historical documents.

The plantation is one kind of settlement whose remains easily lend themselves to the investigation of the material associations of social groups. That is because distinctly different social groups are known to have lived and worked on plantations (Adams and Boling 1982:59). These plantation groups were linked to the organization of production and based on occupation within the labor hierarchy. Therefore, plantation status ranking was based on occupation and had social and economic ramifications (Stine 1990:38).

Individual households which existed on a plantation were part of a larger cultural system that imposed uniformity within and contrast between social groups. It is believed

that these different social groups would have had different lifeways, and therefore different material cultures. These differences in material culture of social groups should be visible in the archaeological record (South 1977:86-88).

This study will take into account the tenant plantation cultural system of which the site and archaeological deposits are a reflection. Then reasoned arguments will be used to structure testable propositions about the expected content of the ceramic artifact assemblage. Ceramic artifacts will be the concentration of this study because ceramics are a good class of artifacts to use for addressing status-related research questions. Ceramics have long been at the center of investigation by archaeologists because ceramics are durable, widely used, and "potential sources of valuable information for analyzing and interpreting historical period lifeways" (Majewski and O'Brien 1987:99). Ceramics are useful in addressing issues related to status because ceramic items have sociotechnic attributes which can be related to status (Spencer-Wood 1987c).

The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that tenants were an impoverished occupation-based cultural group, united in a socioeconomic stratum which had distinct consumer behaviors regarding ceramics. Because of this,

their behavior may be examined through the context of ceramic acquisition and use. The primary argument is that a link between the nature of tenancy and ceramic acquisition exists and can be demonstrated archaeologically. The end objective is to characterize possible status-related ceramic acquisition behaviors.

In order to achieve this goal, the following steps will be undertaken: (1) identify the nature of tenancy, (2) identify the possible archaeological ceramic attributes which can be associated with the impoverished nature of postbellum plantation tenancy, and (3) propose consumer behavior, based on the nature of tenancy and the consumer behavior associated with it, which was responsible for the ceramic artifact assemblages found at tenant sites. This study will explore possible status-related behavior patterns through the examination of the relationship between archaeological ceramic patterns and documentary indications of the tenant socioeconomic group.

Before the attempt is made to fulfill the above goals and purposes, it will be helpful to present the organization of the following study. Chapter 2 details the research framework. Included are discussions concerning disciplinary background and theoretical orientation. Chapter 3 develops a model of tenant lifestyle using

documentary evidence. Plantation social stratification and socioeconomic status of tenants are discussed. Chapter 4 provides a general environmental and historical background of Old Town Plantation. This information will place the site which was excavated into historical and cultural context. The archaeological investigation conducted at Old Town Plantation is examined in Chapter 5. This includes information concerning site background, description, excavation, and a presentation of ceramic analysis procedures. Chapter 6 consists of the research interpretation. The hypotheses are presented and assessed. The final conclusions are discussed in Chapter 7. This includes a review of the thesis procedures and findings, an assessment of research conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The following chapter is an examination of the disciplinary background, research methodology, and theoretical orientation of this thesis. Several different fields and methods of research were drawn from in order to pursue the study at Old Town Plantation. Each of the following areas of scholarship contributed to the design and purpose of this study. It is believed that the explanation of these topics is necessary for the proper understanding of the foundation of the current archaeological inquiry.

DISCIPLINARY BACKGROUND

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

This thesis is based, at the broadest level, in the discipline of historical archaeology. Historical archaeology is "the study of human behavior through material remains, for which written history in some way affects its interpretation" (Deagan 1982:153). Therefore, historical archaeology combines the use of both

archaeological and historical resources for research concerning human cultures.

PLANTATION ARCHAEOLOGY

A plantation refers to "an agricultural enterprise in which a number of workers of a subordinate class work together to produce a crop for someone else to be sold in a market" (Degler 1979:11). Because the research at Old Town was a practice of historical archaeology at a plantation, it can be placed into the subfield of plantation archaeology. Plantation archaeology involves the investigation of sites located on former plantations. This subfield has emerged only recently as a distinct area of inquiry within historical archaeology. However, the study of plantations has become an important part of historical archaeology. Moreover, historical archaeology has made significant contributions to the scholastic examination of plantations which could not have been made through any other means. "Plantation archaeology provides the best means for providing tangible information about the material culture used at southern plantations and provides evidence for the historical and cultural life on ... plantations" (Orser 1988:14). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss

plantation archaeology as the context for the research at Old Town.

The majority of archaeological research involving plantations has centered upon antebellum plantations in the American South. Specialized issues which have been written about are slave lifestyle, the regularities of plantation remains, and the differences between artifact assemblages of owners and their slaves.

TENANT PLANTATION ARCHAEOLOGY

One area of research which has expanded the understanding of plantation society beyond the era of slavery is the study of tenant plantations. A tenant plantation can be defined as "a continuous tract of land of considerable area under the general supervision or control of a single individual or firm, all or part of such tract being divided into ... smaller tracts, which are leased to tenants" (Coulter 1913:878). This type of tenant plantation was widespread across the South from the end of the Civil War until the beginning of World War II. The tenant plantation was part of a plantation framework that required a subservient workforce and provided means by which planters kept their labor force under control. The distribution of wealth and power was unequal among inhabitants of a tenant plantation because of the differing

relationships they maintained to the mode of production. The result was a social and economic gap between the planters and tenants. The tenant plantation occupance form was significant because of its widespread use during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although the literature concerning postbellum plantations is appreciable, two publications are predominant in the body of literature and are cornerstones for the background research of this thesis. In the 1980 report entitled Waverly Plantation: Ethnoarchaeology of a Tenant Farming Community, William Hampton Adams discussed investigations which had been conducted at Waverly Plantation in Mississippi (Adams 1980). The research at Waverly was a practice of ethnoarchaeology - the study of a community using combined historical, archaeological and ethnographic data- and was the first intensive archaeological exploration of a tenant plantation. The research of Charles Orser at Millwood Plantation (Orser 1988) also focused on a tenant plantation. Orser's work, The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation, was important because the investigation focused upon a Piedmont plantation located in South Carolina and provided data for geographical variation. Orser illustrated the material basis of a tenant planation through the examination of

settlement patterns, labor arrangements, and social relationships between planter and tenants.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is documented that Old Town Plantation experienced a period of occupation during which tenant farmers comprised the majority of the residents and the labor force. Also, archaeological remains that are likely to have been produced as a result of their presence were present within the plantation boundaries. The lives of tenant farmers therefore could be examined with the methods of historical archaeology. In order to guide research investigations, two hypotheses were formulated for testing. These hypotheses focused upon the socioeconomic character of tenants and its relationship to material culture. It is hoped that the examination of these hypotheses with the use of archaeology will confirm expectations regarding the social and economic character of tenants in order to increase knowledge known about their behavior. The hypotheses developed for testing were:

Hypothesis 1: Tenant farmers were an impoverished socioeconomic group. The artifact assemblage from the tenant site at Old Town Plantation will reflect This impoverished nature of tenant culture.

Hypothesis 2: Tenant farmers were a cohesive group, united into a single culture which regulated consumer behaviors. The artifact assemblage from the tenant site at Old Town will be similar to artifact assemblages from other tenant sites.

A basic assumption behind these hypotheses is that there are classes of artifacts that are sensitive indicators of social position. Also important is the assumption that there exists patterned regularity within the archaeological record that reflects regularities in behavior. In order to test the hypotheses, data will be needed which will relate to the socioeconomic character of tenancy. The hypotheses will be addressed using several concepts utilized within the field of historical archaeology. These concepts will be discussed below within the explanation of theoretical orientation.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, SOCIOECONOMICS AND PATTERNING

Historical materialism is a theoretical orientation which is comprised of a complex body of thought. The historical materialist model of society is composed of three parts: the economic base, the political structure, and the social ideologies. Although historical materialism

is not economic determinism, it assumes that the economic base constitutes the footing for all else in society and that human production is of primary importance in history (Orser 1988:7). Production includes most of the tangible actions and products of people including modes of production, relations of production, means of production, and mode of distribution. Production is significant because the social and economic status of people are often determined by their position in a hierarchy of production.

According to this perspective, the concentration of energy, resources and means of production is the main causal factor of social stratification. Social stratification is "a heuristic concept pertaining to the hierarchical ordering of the members of a society into strata according to several criteria of rank" (Tumin 1970:14). It has a variety of meanings related to power, social status, and economic class. The concentration of power involved in social stratification "tends to become fixed as socioeconomic status levels within a society" (South 1988:25).

Socioeconomic status indicates the relationship between economic and social position associated with economic role, particularly occupation. The historical materialist framework is connected to socioeconomic status

because it is primarily concerned with explaining economic differentiations in terms of relationship to production (Spencer-Wood 1987:13). Occupational category is considered the most objective measure of class and status differences (Edwards 1939; Reissman 1959:144; Hodges 1964:95).

The individuals who belong to a particular occupation category constitute a single cultural subgroup. That is because members of "occupational categories share a level of income, social interaction, leisure time, shared knowledge, and values" (Spencer-Wood 1987:324) (See Barth and Watson 1967:394, Engel et al. 1978:116). Therefore, the members of a particular occupation form a united group which has standards of social and economic behavior.

Many scholars from a variety of disciplines agree that occupational categories are important factors involved in the formation of social and economic behaviors. Studies in the United States found that status is best indicated by occupational category in a factor analysis of nineteen status-related variables (Kahl and Davis 1955). Historians (e.g., Hershberg and Dockhorn 1976; Katz 1972), economists (Engel et al. 1978; Martineau 1958), and sociologists (Hodges 1964; Reismann 1959) have all considered occupation to be the most objective indicator of socioeconomic status. This multidisciplinary agreement supports the archaeologists

(e.g., Spencer-Wood 1984, 1987; Branstner and Martin 1987; Orser 1987) who have used occupation to denote affiliation in a socioeconomic group. Occupation has also been considered the major determinant of wealth and accompanying status-related behavior (Spencer-Wood 1987:324). "Economic anthropologists (See Douglas and Isherwood 1979:25,116-119), as well as economists (See Dusenberry 1971) and sociologists (See Warner et al. 1960:168-169) consider income or wealth, usually determined by occupation, as the major factor limiting consumer choices" (Spencer-Wood 1987:325). The consumer behaviors of an occupational group are patterned within the group and differ from other occupational groups.

Overall, historical materialism supports the connection between occupation, as the primary indicator of socioeconomic status, and the consumer behavior of members included in the cultural subgroup of an occupational category. This supposition has been supported by scholars from the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, economics, history, and sociology.

Consumer behavior is responsible for the consumption of material culture. Therefore, because the consumer behaviors of occupational groups are regulated, the material culture should be also. The material culture of

past societies forms the basis of the archaeological record. As a result, the archaeological record should consist of patterned material culture which was a product of the regulated behavior of a cultural subgroup. Archaeological data should link material culture to consumer behavior and the socioeconomic status of occupational subgroups.

The idea that archaeological deposits should exhibit a certain patterned regularity underlies much of archaeological research. In historical archaeology, the idea was first explored in detail by Stanley South (1977). South wrote that members of past cultures lived their lives in culturally patterned ways. He maintained that this basic anthropological concept should be visible in the archaeological record.

The idea that the patterns of culture are visible in the archaeological record led to the further postulation that "the socioeconomic status-related processes leave their indelible mark within the archaeological record" (South 1988:25). Additionally, this means that stratification should have direct material correlates in the archaeological record. The ultimate objective of examining the patterning in material culture is to reveal patterns of human activity that can be used "to gain

insight into the behavior patterns of the people responsible for the archaeological record" (South 1977:327).

Efforts have been made to examine the connection between archaeological data and consumer behavior distinctions among and within socioeconomic groups. It has been suggested that "there are some systemic connections between patterns in the archaeological data and pattern of participation in consumer behaviors of cultural subgroups" (Spencer-Wood 1987:1). In archaeology, the main interest is the association between the socioeconomic status of past occupants of a site and the procurement and ownership of goods. The kind of material possessions acquired by people are affected by their socioeconomic status. Furthermore, "research in anthropological archaeology and on ... consumer behavior both find strong relationships between economic roles, social stratification, and types of material culture owned by households or excavated from sites" (Spencer-Wood 1987:2) (See Warner et al. 1960:123; Laumann and House 1970:327-328; Hoffman 1974:36).

In archaeology, the study of socioeconomic status has been approached from many angles. However, the most common method is the direct analysis of "the range of artifacts from a given site... or a particular class of artifacts"

(Lewis 1985:122). There is a growing body of research in historical archaeology that has been concerned with the analyses of artifact attributes that have been related to economic roles and behavioral distinctions among socioeconomic strata (e.g., Drucker 1981; Deagan 1982; Geismar 1982; Schultz and Gust 1983; Otto 1984; Garrow et al. 1983; Singer 1985; Orser 1988; Joseph 1991). Many historical archaeologists have also related archaeological ceramic assemblages to occupational status (e.g. De Cunzo 1982; Heberling 1985; Raffa 1983)

In conclusion, historical materialism can be used as a framework "to analyze relationships between aspects of production represented by occupational roles, and variations in archaeological patterns". When applied through archaeology, this framework can "link production, through occupation ... to consumption patterns" (Spencer-Wood 1987:12).

CERAMICS AND STATUS ASSOCIATIONS

In order to address the research hypotheses, the ceramic class of artifacts will be examined in detail. Although it is possible for other classes of artifacts to reveal information regarding status, ceramics are an effective class of artifacts for this purpose. The study of ceramics has been important in historical archaeology, and

there have been many studies that have concentrated on an analysis of historic-period ceramics (e.g., Miller and Stone 1970; Price 1979; G. Miller 1980, 1991; Adams and Boling 1991). Ceramics have been used in archaeological analysis for many reasons. Ceramic items are widely used and durable, and can serve as temporal or economic markers. Many studies, such as those by John Otto (1975, 1977, 1984) have emphasized the role of ceramics in reflecting social phenomena. "The importance of ceramic studies in signaling social distinctions in past societies can be demonstrated by the use of ceramic data in addressing social hypotheses" (Orser et al. 1987:523-524).

One of the most important uses of ceramic data is the search for evidence of socioeconomic strata in the archaeological record. Ceramic materials have been used by archaeologists for this purpose for many years. In fact, "ceramics as an indicator of socioeconomic status is probably the most thoroughly studied artifact class" (Lewis 1985:133).

The most influential investigation involving the use of ceramics to search for socioeconomic evidence in the remains of a plantation was conducted by John Solomon Otto. In his analysis of the ceramics from Cannon's Point Plantation, a late-eighteenth cotton plantation located on

St. Simon's Island, Georgia, Otto found that ceramics used by slaves, overseers, and planters were distinctly linked with these socioeconomic groups. Otto (1977) discovered that both ceramic type, vessel form and decoration were related to socioeconomic groups. Otto's trailblazing work was valuable and many archaeologists have followed, validated, and expanded upon his concepts (e.g., Handler and Lange 1978; Drucker 1981; Spencer-Wood 1984, 1987c; Adams and Boling 1991).

According to the historical materialist framework, the division of labor and relations of ownership form the relations of production. The occupational position within the mode of production- the way in which people produce items such as food, clothing, shelter, and cash crops- is a measure of wealth and correlating socioeconomic status and is determined by the relations of production. It follows that the choices that consumers make should be influenced by their socioeconomic status level. This idea has been studied by historical archaeologists. Some historical archaeologists have investigated "the degree of correspondence between occupation, as a primary documentary indication of socioeconomic status, and the relative quality and price of ceramics that consumers decide to buy

and subsequently discard or lose" (Spencer-Wood 1987:323) (See DeCunzo 1982, Dyson 1982, Geismar 1982, Orser 1987).

It is expected that, in general, the value of archaeological ceramic assemblages will reflect the connection between socioeconomic status and consumer choices. This is expected because ceramics include types that can display status and because ceramic items are produced in a wide array of choices, with a variety of qualities and prices. "Historical archaeologists can test these expectations by contrasting and comparing the results obtained with methods for measuring socioeconomic status" (Spencer-Wood 1987:326).

Many methods have been used to examine ceramics artifacts for evidence of socioeconomic correlates. However, the most valuable has been the analysis of various attributes within the ceramic artifact group. It has been suggested that the ceramic artifact class can be seen as status related only when it is carefully analyzed for the various attributes within that class (Lewis 1985:138).

Because the goal is to distinguish the connections between ceramic archaeological data and socioeconomic status, only the sociotechnic attributes of artifacts that can be expected to relate to status should be analyzed

(Spencer-Wood 1987:15). Sociotechnic artifacts are artifacts which function primarily within the social subsystem of culture. A variety of strategies has been used to study the sociotechnic attributes of ceramics. These include the examination of ceramic type, decoration, form, function, and cost.

The results of ceramic analysis from various sites can be compared and contrasted in order to elucidate possible patterns of content. These patterns of content usually are observed by "calculating frequencies and percentages of ceramic taxa, whether these are based on ware, decoration, function or value" (Majewksi and O'Brien 1987:174). If sites of known similar socioeconomic status have similar ceramic patterns of content, then hypotheses can be proposed about the consumer behavior of the former sites' inhabitants. The role that consumer behavior plays in the deposition of ceramics with certain attributes has been studied often by archaeologists. For example, Miller (1974) and Geismar (1982) have suggested that piecemeal accumulation of ceramic items may reflect the buying habits of economically marginal people, based on the recovery of ceramic assemblages with mismatched vessels.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF TENANCY

This chapter presents a review of the documentary sources relating to the socioeconomic status of tenants. A model of tenant lifestyle is developed in order to provide a cultural context for interpreting material culture. It is expected that the model of tenant lifestyle will specify the nature of the artifact assemblages which are expected at tenant sites.

The use of historical or ethnographic data to build a cultural framework for a particular group is a common practice in historical archaeology. Lewis Binford has suggested that lifeways be reconstructed by using archaeological patterns to test hypotheses of expectations generated from ethnographically derived cultural constructs. Binford (1968:13-14) has advocated this scientific methodology to connect archaeological patterns with behavioral correlates. However, ethnographic data is not always available for analysis. In such cases, Mark Leone (1987) has suggested that historical archaeologists

use documentary data as Binford used ethnographic data to construct an organizational framework of cultural behavior. This chapter follows the directions suggested by Binford and Leone and seeks to integrate information about tenant lifestyle from all types of sources which are available.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND THE TENANT PLANTATION

Because it is the objective of this work to explore tenant lifestyle on postbellum plantations, it is necessary to explain the definition of tenant and the organization of the society which gave rise to tenancy. The word tenant refers to any person who farms and labors on land owned by another and pays rent in cash or a share of the crops (Adams 1980:338). It can be surmised from this definition that a tenant on a postbellum plantation was, at least in some part, socially separated from and economically dependent on the landowner. That disadvantaged relationship between tenant and landowner is one of the effects caused by the social stratification of the postbellum plantation in the southern United States.

The term tenant is an occupational ranking that refers to the group of people which performed a particular function in postbellum plantation society. However, the term tenant has more connotations beyond mere occupation.

"Occupational categories can be viewed as signposts to economic strata within a specific culture. Occupations often have status implications, as well, because jobs tend to have certain associated privileges" (Stine 1990:38). This was certainly true on postbellum plantations.

In the late 19th through the early 20th centuries, postbellum plantation society was based on a strict hierarchical order of social stratification. The main factor involved in ranking was plantation occupation. The result was a 'social ladder' that had rungs from low status to high status positions. The rankings on the social ladder had material ramifications. Surveys conducted among twentieth-century plantation tenants reflect the material hierarchy of the agricultural ladder (e.g., Boeger and Goldenweiser 1916:1; Woofter et al. 1936:86-87).

The 'social ladder' and the management characteristics of a postbellum plantation were essentially those maintained from the antebellum period. Although the exact nature of the hierarchical structure varied, it played a persistent role in shaping, organizing, and maintaining power-management relationships in the face of change (Prunty 1955:490-491). At the top of that 'social ladder' were the landlords, many of who were the same men who had been slaveholders before the Civil War. The landlord was

the individual who was the owner of the plantation. The landlords had managers to supervise and tenants to work their land. These landlords had the largest income and therefore it is assumed that they could accumulate a greater amount and diversity of material possessions which were beyond basic necessities.

The managers which landlords employed filled an occupational position in between that of the owner himself and the tenants. Therefore, they probably had a comparable position in the social hierarchy. However, it is not known what level of economic status or material wealth the postbellum plantation overseer attained (Orser et al. 1987:682). Even so, it can be said that the overseer probably had better housing and a higher quality of material goods than the tenants at the same plantation. This is because the overseer would have had more economically valued skills and would have received larger wages for his work than tenants.

In postbellum plantation society, tenants fulfilled the same function as laborers on plantations that slaves had earlier. Therefore, tenants were at the bottom rungs of the stratified plantation society. The tenant was any individual who leased a tract of land on a plantation and paid for its use with a share of the crops, or a fixed

amount of money, or cotton, or of other products (Coulter 1913:879). The two basic categories of tenants were the sharecropper and the tenant renter. Each kind of tenancy was determined on the basis of the arrangement the tenant made with the landlord. "Each arrangement was based.. on economics, ... where the landlord is paid in money or labor, for the use of his land, buildings, implements, and so forth" (Orser 1987:128). Basically, sharecroppers had to pay the landlord part of the crop they produced; tenant renters had to pay a fixed rent in either crops or cash. The labor arrangements on a single plantation varied. Tenants with all different kinds of tenure could live on a single plantation at the same time because each made his arrangement with the landlord individually.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE REGARDING TENANT LIFESTYLE

It is difficult to portray the lives of tenants and sharecroppers because they are not very visible in the documentary record. This is true of all types of documentary evidence. Although little documentation is available which describes detailed characteristics of farm tenant's material conditions, "this kind of information is essential to the archaeologist's correct identification and functional interpretation of the artifacts recovered" (Holland 1990:67).

Several studies were conducted concerning tenant farmers in the 1930's, and 1940's (e.g., Thomas 1934; Woofter et al. 1936; Schuyler 1938; Hagwood 1939; Agee and Evans 1941; Raper 1941). These studies were devoted to socioeconomic evaluations of tenant farming. Most portrayed the tenant farmer as "an exploited, impoverished being who lived hand to mouth and was oppressed by the landowner" (Adams 1980:355).

The best record of tenant life comes from James Agee and Walker Evans. Their book, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1941), presented a description of the daily life of tenant farmers. The two men gathered a tremendous amount of information and provided insight about tenant life, homes, and possessions. Agee and Evans provided almost 100 pages of detailed, descriptive observations of tenancy. Although their descriptions reflected a restricted sample of three families, and therefore contain an inherent bias, "these descriptions are still intensely valuable to understanding the archaeological record" (Trinkley 1983:32). The information has little statistical utility, but is still useful because of its extensive detail.

The material aspect of tenant life most often written about is housing. An early account of tenant housing was detailed by W.O. Atwater and Charles D. Woods. The two

investigated the housing of tenants in Alabama in 1895 and 1896. They noted that the houses were small simple buildings with shingle or board roofs, built on posts, with floorboards widely spaced apart. The houses had glassless windows covered with shutters, one fireplace, and a storeroom connected on one side (Atwater and Woods 1897:16-17).

In 1936, the Works Progress Administration published a monograph entitled Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation. Regarding the housing conditions of tenants, this monograph revealed that:

"The houses furnished are among the poorest in the Nation. Unpainted four room shacks predominate. Screening is the exception ... and sanitation is primitive" (Woofter et al. 1936:xxvii-xxviii).

The simplicity of tenant housing was conveyed by Ed Brown, a black former tenant farmer in Georgia. He described his home as "just a shell of a house, not sealed in any way ... had a chimney goin up from a fireplace openin on to two rooms." The house had "shutters of upright boards" instead of glass windows (Maguire 1975:37-38).

Agee and Evans (1941) provided a detailed description of three tenant homes. Their account showed that none of the houses inhabited by the three families were adequate

and that the homes of all three families were similar. They concluded that all tenant houses have:

"pretty strongly in common these characteristics: wood unpainted and weathered or once whitewashed and weathered; raised off the ground so that earth and daylight are clear under the whole of them; one of two or three of the simplest conceivable designs; the outbuildings small and low beyond proportion to a 'farm'; the house very clearly an enlarged crate or box, scarcely modified to human use; in the whole establishment the look of the utmost possible extreme of flimsiness and nudity" (Agee and Evans 1941:205-206).

The unsubstantial nature of tenant housing has been repeated and confirmed by many scholars. It can be safely concluded that "the homes of tenant farmers, of whatever tenure class, were simple structures" (Orser 1988:94). The assessment by George Brown Tindall is a good overall depiction of tenant housing:

"home [for the tenant] was a dilapidated, unpainted, weatherbeaten frame cabin ... on rock or brick pilings - unceiled, unscreened, covered with a leaky roof" (Tindall 1967:114).

The information which is known about tenant house interiors and furnishings mirrors the descriptions of the meager house structures. Atwater and Woods (1897:17) described the interior of a tenants's home. They noted that

there was a bedstead, a corn shuck mattress, a wooden cupboard, a wooden chest, a simple pine table, and a few homemade chairs. The Bureau of Home Economics survey of farm housing of 1934 also provides information about housing interiors (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1934:11-17). Its figures support the descriptions given by others about the general lack of home furnishings and conveniences in tenant farmhouses.

When sociologist Margaret Hagwood examined the houses of tenant farm houses in the 1930's, she found that the inside of the homes could be characterized by a lack of color and drabness and that the furnishings could be easily listed. Hagwood wrote that she usually found a table, a food safe, one or two beds, a dresser, a few chairs, and perhaps a closet or cabinet for dishes (Hagwood 1939:96-97).

E.A. Schuyler conducted a study of tenant housing facilities during the 1930's. In his 1938 study, Schuyler questioned tenant housewives about the home conveniences they had. Very few families had such luxuries as indoor toilets, running water, washing machines, or refrigeration facilities. His figures revealed that the ownership of large amounts of home furnishings or conveniences was not a reality for southern tenant families.

Again, Agee and Evans provide the most detailed descriptions of the interior of tenant housing. They list the furnishing in one home as including: a small trunk, a broken hickory-bottom chair, two beds, an old mirror, two pine tables, and a small wood stove. All of the furniture observed in tenants homes was described as plain, wooden and in poor condition (Agee and Evans 1941:191-192,159-160).

All of the evidence which was reviewed indicates that the furnishings of southern tenants' homes were neither extensive nor expensive. Most tenant homes were modestly and sparsely furnished. "Given the poor quality of the houses themselves, the quality of the furnishings is not surprising. Furniture was an expensive luxury that most plantation inhabitants could not afford" (Orser 1988:128). Modern conveniences were also luxuries which tenants also could not obtain because of their expense.

Personal possessions- the common, mundane items used in daily living- were used frequently and were lost or discarded more often than large home furnishing items. Therefore, these items are a major source of information for historical archaeologists. Unfortunately, personal items are rarely described in documentary sources. A few

scattered references do appear in the works of scholars of the 1930's, and 1940's.

Again, Agee and Evans's study of tenant families is one notable exception. Their observations provide an important detailed guide to the personal possessions of tenant families. The following descriptions were drawn from the listings of one tenant home. In one bedroom the contents of a trunk are described:

"In this trunk: an old slightly soiled cotton slip; a little boy's stiff cheap gray cap; a baby's dress; a gray-white knit shoe for a baby; a pair of ten-cent hard thin... blue socks, worn through at the heels...[and]... the eyes of a doll" (Agee and Evans 1941:160).

The contents of bureau drawers are also listed. This included schoolbooks, pieces of used wrapping paper, pieces of string, matches, and nails. The contents of a table drawer were six baby dresses, a handmade cloth cat, a hat, an empty talcum powder box, a child's glove, a piece of newspaper, a broken button, a hook and eye, and a needle (Agee and Evans 1941:161-169).

On the bedroom mantle, Agee and Evans found a cardboard box of face powder, a jar of menthol salve, a spool of thread, a cracked and broken shaving mug (containing a brush, a few rusty nails, a button, three

matches, and a piece of soap), a comb missing teeth, some rhinestones, a nailfile and a small mirror (Agee and Evans 1941:172). Several items were found inside of a shallow closet. This included dresses, overalls, and children's clothing hung on nails, a pile of dirty laundry on the floor, ragged and dirty patchwork quilts on a shelf, folded pallets for children, and several worn pairs of shoes (Agee and Evans 1941:173-174).

Lastly, Agee and Evans described the items present in the lean-to kitchen. This includes a rusting iron stove, a woodbox, a dishpan, a coffeepot and kettle, a few pots hung on nails, a skillet, a churn and dasher, assorted cheap utensils with bent tines and raw edges, and a broom. The condition of the broom is further described in detail:

"The broom is of the cheap thirty-to-forty cent kind and is nearly new, but do not be misled: the old one, still held in limbo because nothing is thrown away, was well used" (Agee and Evans 1941:180).

The evidence from Agee and Evans indicates that like the structure, the possessions of tenant farmers were sparse and in poor condition. Although a few other sources provide some information, the descriptions of Agee and Evans were presented here because of the detailed nature of their comments.

Because ceramic artifacts are the focus of this thesis, the documentary evidence concerning the use of ceramic materials is important. As with other material possessions, very few descriptions of ceramics are available in the documentary record. Once more, Agee and Evans provide a rare account of a tenant's ceramic collection:

"Almost no two of the plates, or cups, or glasses, or saucers are of the same size or pattern.... One of the cups is thin, blue, Woolworth's imitation of willow plate: the handle is gone; two others are thick and white, of the sort used in lunchwagons, but of lower quality, flinty, and a little like sandstone at their brims; one of these is chipped; the fourth is a taller cup of the same sort, with a thready split running its full height. Two of the plates are full dinner size, ... another is translucent white of the size between saucer and dinnerplate; another, ... [is] netted with brown cracklings...The food will be served ... in part out of two shallow soup plates and a small thick white platter" (Agee and Evans 1941:181-182).

Another important source of information about tenant ceramic use comes from interviews with former tenants. In her study of tenant acquisition of ceramics at May Plantation in Louisiana, Claudia Holland (1990) learned from interviews that the dishes bought by tenants were:

"the cheapest kind of plates, cups, saucers,...Plain, white ceramic dishes were the prevalent type...Decorated dishes were used when company visited and for special occasions... Dishes were bought as needed... People did not buy dishes to match, necessarily, so various styles were mixed together" (Holland 1990:67).

The descriptions offered by Agee and Evans and Holland suggest that tenants purchased or acquired their ceramics as individual pieces and not as sets. This resulted in a mixed collection of various styles, with undecorated items being the most common. The majority of ceramics was of a cheap quality and was used as long as possible, regardless of damage.

Overall, the documentary evidence concerning all aspects of tenant lifestyle supports the conclusion that tenant farmers were an impoverished cultural group. This contention has been repeated by both historians and archaeologists. For example, archaeologists David Anderson and Joe Joseph (1988:494) stated that "tenancy and poverty were equivalent for the majority of tenant farmers."

Concerning tenants, Agee and Evans noted that "they seldom buy anything new"... and... "they live in a steady shame and insult of discomforts, insecurities, and inferiorities, piecing these together into whatever semblance of comfortable living they can, and the whole of

it is a stark nakedness of makeshifts and the lack of means" (Agee and Evans 1941:133,210). They summarized the poverty of the tenant farmer, stating:

"The housing, furniture ... and the eating implements are all at or very near the bottom of their scale: broken, insecure, uncomfortable" (Agee and Evans 1969:210).

As landless farmers, tenants were economically and socially disadvantaged and constituted the lowest class of postbellum plantation society. The standard of living of tenants was low; "materially they were on the fringe and their participation in the market economy was low. Systems of credit entered into by the tenant with planters and merchants perpetuated their poverty" (Orser et al. 1987:682).

Tenants had to purchase the necessities of life with the cash they had after settling with the owners. In most cases, the amount of cash tenants had left was quite small. In general, tenant farmers did not have the net income necessary to acquire or accumulate material possessions beyond what was absolutely required. Most likely, tenant farmers were not inclined to buy new goods because the merchants and landowners had a monopoly of credit, which enabled them to control the economic life of the tenants

(Ransom and Sutch 1977:1). The control landlords had over their tenants varied; the personal wealth, attitudes, and benevolence of the landlord could seriously affect tenants either for good or ill.

While scholars agree that tenants were impoverished, it must also be remembered that tenants were "human beings with a distinct culture" (Adams 1980:355). All tenants shared a common identity based upon the fact that none of them owned their main means of production- the land. Evidence has also shown that tenants had: (1) a dependant relationship with the landlord, (2) a lack of social prestige, (3) inadequate housing, (4) few personal possessions, and (5) a low economic worth.

It is recognized that there were variations in race and labor arrangements within the tenant class. However, it is believed that these factors were secondary considerations in relation to the occupational category to which all tenants belonged. This supposition has been supported by several scholars who have examined postbellum tenant culture.

In 1941, Arthur Raper studied the housing of tenants in Greene and Macon counties, Georgia. He reported the important fact that housing was more similar within the tenant class than according to race. Raper (1941:20) wrote

"plantation owners do not have tenant houses for whites and tenant houses for Negroes - they have tenant houses".

Archaeologists have also supported this position. Orser et al. (1987:682) wrote that "race does not appear to be a determining factor of social class differences between tenants"... and..."white tenants apparently did not enjoy any meaningful economic advantage over blacks". Therefore, regardless of their race, tenants rarely realized profits at the end of the year (Flynt 1979:46).

The general economic conditions with which tenants lived are expected to have crosscut racial and tenure lines of tenant farmers, resulting in a "universal pattern of poverty" or a "culture of poverty" (Lewis 1966; Kelly and Kelly 1980:140; Trinkley 1983:31). Because economic factors are considered as paramount, it is necessary to combine "the various types and groups of tenants into a broad tenant class" (Holland 1990:69).

In conclusion, members of the tenant class were socially and economically disadvantaged. This position was reflected in their simple housing and meager material possessions. The impoverished tenant material culture was evidence of the small amount of capital available to them. This impoverished culture should have archaeological correlates because it will directly affect the tenants's

ability to purchase consumer goods. Therefore, an impoverished artifact assemblage is expected at tenant sites.

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this chapter is to present the environmental and historical background of Old Town Plantation. The information included in this section will allow the plantation to be placed in its proper geographical and historical context. This data will provide the framework necessary for the proper understanding of the tenant period occupation of Old Town Plantation and the archaeological deposits which it produced.

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

Old Town Plantation is located in the east-central portion of Georgia, along the eastern banks of the Ogeechee river in Jefferson County. The county has a land area of 339,936 acres and is in the Southern Coastal Plain major land resource area (Paulk 1994:1). The city of Augusta is located approximately sixty miles Northeast of the plantation and the small town of Louisville is nine miles to the North.

The climate of Jefferson County is mild. It receives an average rainfall of 44.48 inches, with an average mean winter temperature of 49 degrees and an average mean summer temperature of 80 degrees (Paulk 1994:2-3). The warm climate facilitates agricultural production, with an average frost free season of about eight months.

Old Town Plantation, as a physical entity, is bounded on the west by the Ogeechee river. The eastern boundary is roughly formed by Georgia State Highway 17. The northern limits are formed by a dirt road and the southern limits are formed by other agricultural property. The land comprising the approximately 3,714 acres of the plantation contains a wide variety of physiographic features. These include swamps and wetlands, cultivated fields, pastures, and large planted pine stands. Two creeks run across the property and give rise to tributaries and natural springs. Elevations range from a low of 200 feet MSL along the Ogeechee to a high of 300 feet MSL at the top of small upland ridges. Because it contains a wide variety of potential habitats, Old Town supports abundant and diverse wildlife communities. The wildlife includes many species which can be used as game, including deer, fish, waterfowl, and other birds.

There are a wide variety of soils on the plantation acreage, as expected with its diverse physiography. However, the soil types which relate to the present study belong to the Faceville series. These are well drained soils located on gentle slopes of ridgetops or hillsides in the Southern Coastal Plain which have a sandy or loamy surface layer, a sandy subsurface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil (Paulk 1994:81). The sandy loam areas are high in natural fertility and organic matter content. Therefore, these areas are suited to agricultural production. In fact, those soils are by definition, prime farmland acreage (Paulk 1994:109). The long growing season, the availability of numerous native food sources and productive agricultural soils have undoubtedly made the area attractive for settlement throughout the past.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Old Town's two centuries of existence reflect in microcosm the story of much of the rural South. The many variations of occupation types through time are representative of a widespread pattern exhibited throughout the region. From backcountry expansion to major cash crop production, slow decline and finally recent stability, the story of Old Town has a familiar structure to scholars who study the South.

COLONIAL ERA

In the early eighteenth century, the area around the Ogeechee river was still inhabited by Native Americans. The white settlement of the area proceeded slowly as settlers moved north from coastal towns. Many Native Americans were pushed westward with the advance of the coming Europeans. Still, in the eighteenth century, the region was a volatile place, embroiled with frequent conflict.

George Galphin was an Irish trader on the southern frontier during this treacherous period. He had left Ireland in 1737 for America in order to make his fortune. He first settled in Charleston and then moved into the backcountry in order to begin trade with groups of Native Americans. By 1741 he was already in business, trading with the Creeks (Georgia Historical Society Collections, Item ten, p.123-124).

Galphin made substantial profits and began accumulating property in 1747 along the Savannah River at Silver Bluff near the site of a former Yuchi Indian town (Journal of the South Carolina Council 1747:49). Along many of the major rivers in Georgia, Native Americans had settled on the bluffs above the waterways. A number of those old sites were known by early European settlers as

old towns or old fields. Former Native American settlements were often chosen as locations for new towns and settlements because of their desirable elevation and close proximity to the rivers which were lifelines to coastal ports.

In 1765 Galphin obtained a warrant for 1400 acres "lying at Great Ogeechee to include Spring Creek... at the Old Settlement" (Colonial Records of the State of Georgia IX, p.420-421). Galphin applied to the council for a final grant and Governor James Wright signed it on March 3, 1767. This area was then known as Ogeechee Old Town. The Yuchi trail, a Creek trading path, connected Silver Bluff to Old Town. The site of Old Town on the East side of the Ogeechee river was, like Silver Bluff, a deserted Yuchi village (Georgia Historical Society Collections III, pp.61-63).

Galphin settled at Old Town and established a trading store, a mill, and a large cowpens operation. Galphin's store and mill served the Ogeechee river area and proved extremely profitable (Sheftall 1980:24). Galphin's cowpens included herds of black cattle that grazed on both sides of the Ogeechee for miles around the settlement (Woodward 1859:105). He kept slaves at the cowpens to tend the pens and round up the cattle.

One good description of Galphin's cowpens exists. John Bartram, a renowned botanist, toured Georgia in 1765 and visited the operation as a guest. He found the settlement:

"located near a fine large spring of good water...little...surrounded with piney poorish ground, which affords, by its extent of 6 miles around, more or less tolerable pasture both winter & summer" (Bartram 1958[1791]:26).

Galphin recruited settlers in a nearby township and became a prominent trader on the frontier. As a result, he later became a negotiator with the local Creeks (Colonial Records of Georgia IX, p.114-115 and XII, p.148-54). Galphin used his early advantage and knowledge of the area and parlayed it into social and political clout. As the Revolutionary War threatened his region, Galphin became more influential in political matters of the backcountry area as a rebel supporter.

In May of 1780, Tory soldiers recaptured the city of Augusta and troops moved on to Old Town. There, Galphin was taken prisoner (Colonial Records of Georgia XV, p.590-591). Although he was soon paroled, Galphin's health began to fail. On December 1, 1780, George Galphin died at his home at Silver Bluff (Thomas Galphin Family Bible, Galphin Genealogical File).

When his fate had become more uncertain because of illness, Galphin had made final decisions about his estate. In February 1775, Galphin divided his property between his children (Charleston County Deed Books GGGGG:504-506; HHHHH:11; ZZZZZ:133). George Galphin's son John inherited Old Town, along with slaves, horses, and cattle.

ANTEBELLUM ERA

John Galphin kept Old Town until 1786. It was then that Robert Forsyth of Augusta bought the tract as an investment. He owned the property for eight years, but did little to maintain the place. Forsyth was murdered in 1794, and the land was inherited by his son John. John Forsyth and his wife moved to Old Town in 1804, to be close to the nearby town of Louisville, which was then the capital of Georgia.

John Forsyth's settlement at Old Town began its antebellum plantation occupance form. The distinctive plantation settlement pattern consisted of the owner's house, with a clustering of service buildings and slave quarters nearby (Prunty 1955:463-466). There is detailed record of John Forsyth's settlement plans at Old Town. On November 14, 1803, he entered into an agreement with a builder to construct a plantation layout, the first at Old Town. The contract was for the following:

"One framed House twenty eight feet long and eighteen broad, with covered piazzas on each side, eight feet wide to be rough lined for papering & finished in a workmanlike manner, ... One stable, carriage house and barn under one roof, covered with board thirty-six feet long and sixteen wide, of hewed down logs; one kitchen twenty-four feet long and fourteen wide, made of hewed down logs, and covered with boards, two small houses twelve feet by fourteen each, for a smoke house and dairy, the latter floored, and both covered with shingles..." (Jefferson County Superior Court Records 1803-1809:332-335).

In 1807, Forsyth advertised Old Town for sale in the local paper, the Louisville Gazette and Republican Trumpeter (May 15, 1807). However, there was a dispute with the heirs of George Galphin over the rightful ownership of the land. The case was tried in Jefferson county superior court and the judge ruled against Forsyth (Augusta Chronicle and Gazette of the State July 15, 1807). The land was not in the hands of the Galphin family for long. It was sold again in 1809 in order to pay off debts (Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser September 25, 1809).

Christopher Fitzsimmons of Charleston, South Carolina purchased Old Town in 1809. The Fitzsimmons family was wealthy, having made a fortune in the shipping business. They dealt primarily with the shipping of goods across the

Atlantic, especially rum and cotton (passim, Christopher Fitzsimmons Letterbooks).

When Christopher Fitzsimmons bought Old Town, he immediately set out to exploit its natural resources. He hired an overseer and used slaves and mules to turn the land into an extensive cotton plantation. He not only developed the land as a cotton plantation, but also milled timber and began to quarry fossiliferous chert called buhrstone (Ibid). He took some of the quarried buhrstones and accented his grounds with walls and terraces. The Fitzsimmons residence was built on the south side of Spring creek and the land beside the house sloped down to a spring, which was also ringed with buhrstones (Sheftall 1980:112). Christopher's family used Old Town as a vacation residence only, beginning in 1811. In their absence, the plantation was managed by the overseer.

Christopher Fitzsimmons died on July 28, 1825 and was buried in a family cemetery near Augusta. Paul, his eldest son, inherited Old Town (Christopher Fitzsimmons Loose Estate Papers). Paul served as the head of the family for only fifteen years. On September 28, 1840, he died at Windsor Springs, another of his plantations which was located near Augusta (Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel September 29, 1840).

Because his children were minors, the estate remained undivided for eight years. Then in December of 1849, the eldest son Owen inherited Old Town. Soon thereafter, Owen moved to the plantation with his new wife. They settled near the old spring which his grandfather Christopher had lined with buhrstones (South Carolina Magazine X:179).

During the era in which Owen was at Old Town, the economy of the South matured. Cotton was the most important agricultural crop and slavery was the accepted economic system. Although the returns from Old Town were great, Owen feared soil depletion and began searching for a new plantation to buy (Letter in Hampton Papers). In August of 1857, Owen advertised to sell Old Town:

"For Sale: Old Town, that valuable plantation situated in Jefferson county... contains 4192 acres... The place is well watered being intercepted by Dry and Spring creeks, the latter affording an abundant supply of water for ginning, grinding, and sawing. The improvements are substantial and well built and consist of a comfortable dwelling with eight rooms and all necessary outbuildings, an overseer's house, sixteen double framed negro houses with brick chimneys, commodious stables and barns, gin house,... grist and saw mills. This is one of the best improved and most desirable plantations in Middle Georgia, both on account of the convenient location and quality of land..." (Savannah Morning News August 1, 1857).

The Fitzsimmons family owned Old Town for three generations, spanning the entire antebellum period of the South. During the family's ownership, Old Town prospered within the antebellum plantation occupance form (Prunty 1955). When Christopher Fitzsimmons bought the tract as an investment, cotton had never been planted within its confines. When his grandson sold it fifty years later, it was one of the most productive cotton plantations in all of Georgia (Sheftall 1980:102).

On April 26, 1862, Owen Fitzsimmons signed the deed transferring his lands to business partners Linton Stephens and William Simpson. Linton Stephens was a lawyer and the brother of Alexander Stephens, the future Vice-President of the Confederacy. William Simpson was a planter and owned a mercantile business. Whatever plans these men had for Old Town were not to come into fruition. The Civil War soon interrupted the economic security of the area.

Stephens and Simpson were occupied with the activities of the Confederacy and only a maintenance labor force was kept at the Jefferson County plantation (passim, Jefferson County Tax Digests). After 1864, this effort was undermined. During General Sherman's march to the sea through Georgia, land and property was laid waste. Although there is no information about Union troops coming to Old

Town, it is known that some forces did pass near the town of Louisville. Whatever the case, financial destruction was the result.

POSTBELLUM ERA

In 1866, Simpson and Stephens tried to recoup some of their losses. A Jefferson County resident was allowed to buy the land on bond and try his hand at sharecropping. Unfortunately, the four year venture failed. In 1870, the land reverted back to Stephens and Simpson (passim, Jefferson County Tax Digests, 1866-1870). "Although records during the early 1870's are incomplete, the two men appear to have rented portions of the property and allowed most of Old Town to lie fallow" (Sheftall 1980:134). Linton Stephens died in 1872, and the future for Simpson was not promising (Northen 1910:43).

Fortunately, Simpson had a friend who was interested in taking Old Town off of his hands. In 1876, William D. Grant of Atlanta began renting the plantation for use in a convict labor endeavor (Jefferson County Tax Digests, 1876). Grant had been involved in the domain of convict labor since 1869 and was interested in expanding his holdings. After the Civil War, Grant had founded a construction company whose majority of capital went to the railroad construction business (Knight 1922:2981). Grant

further expanded his interests in brickmaking, agriculture, and other industries. The convicts which Grant used proved to be the crux of his success.

THE CONVICT LEASE SYSTEM

With the rental of Old Town, Grant brought the plantation into the convict lease system of Georgia. Georgia's penal system had been completely disrupted when General Tecumseh Sherman invaded Georgia in the Summer of 1864. The buildings of the penitentiary were burned to ruins and the convicts either fled or were discharged (Confederate Records of the State of Georgia IV:831). After civil government was restored in Georgia, the provisional legislatures faced the task of rebuilding the prison system (Carter 1964:35).

In December, 1866, the Georgia legislature passed an act "to regulate the manner in which the penitentiary shall be managed and to provide for the farming out of the same" (Georgia Laws 1866:153). This act authorized the governor to advertise for proposals for a contract which would relieve the state of the penitentiary and the convicts. The act legalized the practice of convict leasing in Georgia, although the practice was not unique to Georgia during that time.

Over the next decade, various acts were passed to make leases for a longer period of time. The act of 1876 provided that "convicts be leased for not less than 20 years to one or more companies" (Zimmerman 1947:65). The act of 1876 also allowed the Governor to turn over the convicts to the highest bidder. The convicts were to be worked on the railroads, canals, quarries, mines and farms which belonged to the leasing companies (Georgia Laws 1876:41-42). In accordance with this law, the convicts were divided into three shares and were leased out by the Governor to Georgia Penitentiary Companies Number One, Two, and Three. Company Number Three was made up of Thomas Alexander, William D. Grant, William W. Simpson, John D. Murphy, and William H. Howell (Georgia Senate Journal 1881:365-366).

It was with the formation of this partnership that Grant first began to rent Old Town from William Simpson. After two years, the venture must have proved a financial success. In 1878, Grant bought the plantation and soon brought over 200 prisoners to begin reestablishing the cotton plantation (Jefferson County Deed Book D:136-139). Although the labor force had changed, the settlement pattern and management structure remained much the same. The structures were still clustered around the main house

and the laborers were housed in quarters. After operations began in 1878, a committee appointed by the Jefferson County Grand Jury made an initial inspection of Grant's camp. It was reported that the place was neatly kept, and that there were barracks for the 206 prisoners, the guards and the overseers (Report of the Principal Keeper of the Georgia Penitentiary [RPKGP], 1878-1880).

Grant was a businessman with extensive holdings. Therefore, he needed someone to oversee the management of Old Town operations for him. For that job he hired Thomas Jefferson James. A native of Jones county, Georgia, James had served as a Captain in the Confederate army during the Civil War. In 1873, he began to work for Grant at a brick plant on the Chatahoochee river near Atlanta (Northen 1910:335). James quickly worked his way up through the ranks at Grant's operation. He went from an unskilled worker to a manager in approximately five years.

James used the convict labor force under his control to the fullest advantage and for the largest profit. In the summer of 1879, James took a fourth of his men to the local town of Louisville to begin work on the Louisville Branch railroad (News and Farmer October 2, 1879). Later that year, a reporter from the Louisville paper wrote about the

operations at Old Town. The newspaper published a good description of his findings:

"A great deal of grain has been made on the place and a great deal of stock raised. Captain James has what might be termed a dairy farm, although he may not however honor it with the title it possibly deserves. About 60 gallons of milk is taken each day. He has from 50 to 80 pounds of butter each week to sell, the most of it being disposed of in the surrounding country, being delivered at his quarters. He has a splendid spring house in which to keep milk and butter. Most of the milk is consumed by the laborers"

The reporter then discussed other activities:

"He tans his own leather - makes up all the clothing and shoes on the place... He has already gathered about 600 bales of cotton with the confident prospect of about 200 more... Capt. James' stock are in good condition and his wagons are made at home as well as plows. He has a good grist and flouring mill, with saw mill and orchard on the place. Altogether, Old Town is a model farm" (News and Farmer October 30, 1879).

The operations at Old Town were rather extensive. The 1880 census shows that in addition to James, there was an assistant, a physician, a bookkeeper, two overseers, three night guards, 19 day guards, plus six wives and 18 children. Also, there were 217 prisoners, of whom eight

were black females and eleven were white males. The remainder were black males (United States Census Population Schedule, 1880). The agricultural census also provided proof of a large operation. W.D. Grant and Co. was listed as having 2700 acres of improved land and a total value of all farm production as \$45,875 (United States Census Agricultural Schedule, 1880).

On June 30, 1881, James was married to a local woman. After their marriage, the couple set up housekeeping at Old Town (News and Farmer July 21, 1881). In August of 1881, James bought one-third interest in Old Town from Grant (Jefferson County Deed Book E:339). After that, James began to give more attention into the development of the lands of the plantation. Under his supervision, a new house and various outbuildings were constructed, and orchards were developed. James also had a dairyhouse built by the spring which Christopher Fitzsimmons had ringed with stones years before (News and Farmer July 1, 1880).

By 1886, the Penitentiary Company Number Three was divided into four parts. Thomas Jefferson James controlled one part; his convicts worked on the Georgia Midland Railroad and farming at Old Town (RPKGP 1884-1886:67). By that time, James was using convicts at several other camps for railroad construction. Only 45 prisoners were still at

the plantation. The Principal Keeper reported that the individuals which were "not stout or healthy, from any cause, and who are not considered able for public works, such as railroading, etc., are sent to this, the home camp, and are engaged in farm labor"(Ibid).

In May of 1888, James bought the rest of the interest in the property (Jefferson County Deed Book AA:163). By that time, he owned another plantation in Emanuel county. James had purchased it in 1884, and he had moved some of the convicts there to work with the construction of a railroad and farming (News and Farmer July 1, 1976). After that point, James began diverting his finances away from Old Town. By 1888, for example, he maintained only one-eighth interest in Penitentiary Company Number Three , having sold the rest of his share. In that year, the camp at Old Town was reported as having only fifteen or twenty women and feeble male convicts (RPKGP 1886-1888). However, until 1890, James kept some convicts at Old Town to maintain farming operations (RPKGP 1888-1890). After he left Jefferson County, James continued using convict labor for farming and sawmilling near his new home at Adrian, in Emanuel county (RPKGP 1893-1894:4-5).

TENANT FARMING

James L. Dickey, an Atlanta businessman, offered to buy Old Town in 1891. Thomas James consented and the plantation was sold on July 1st of that year (Jefferson County Deed Book BB:80). Dickey replaced the convict labor with tenant farmers, but failed to make significant profits. Therefore, after four years of ownership, Dickey decided to look for a buyer for the Jefferson County land. His connections with the railroad industry brought him in contact with Hugh Moss Comer, the president of the Central of Georgia Railroad.

In 1896, Comer bought Old Town from Dickey, and subsequently became the next owner of the plantation (Jefferson County Deed Book EE:423-427). Comer was wealthy and prominent; he had made his money from both cotton and railroads. Comer turned the daily control of Old Town over to his son, Hugh Jr. Within the next few years, a new center for plantation management was built next to a new road connecting Louisville to Savannah. "Every owner since George Galphin had used a sloping plateau just south of Spring creek as the nucleus of plantations operations. John Forsyth built the first house on this spot in 1803, and Captain James still used the same area for his home many decades later" (Sheftall 1980:154). Therefore, the junior

Comer had broken new ground by relocating his settlement base. Several new buildings were constructed, including a main residence, an overseer's house, smokehouse, barns, sheds, and almost sixty tenant houses- each for two families.

The Comer ownership began the period during which Old Town was settled with a postbellum fragmented occupance form (Prunty 1955:466). This form appeared in the South at the close of the Reconstruction period and became widespread thereafter. Certain spatial attributes of this form were distinct from those of the antebellum plantation. The settlement was dispersed throughout the plantation acreage, with cropland divided into subunits. Two subtypes of this form were the cropper and tenant-renter. In the cropper subtype, the barns and service buildings were clustered near the landlord's or manager's house. The nucleus of support buildings were not present in the tenant-renter form. Instead, each tenant had his own service buildings and tools (Prunty 1955:466-475). The two types of fragmented occupance forms occurred both separately and together at the same time on postbellum plantations. It is uncertain what the exact occupance form was at Old Town during the postbellum period. However, it is probable that at least part of the tenants occupied the

plantation land following the sharecropper form. This conclusion is supported because several barns, tool sheds, and other service buildings were clustered near the main residence, the tenant houses were occupied by two families each, and because Comer family letters of correspondence often refer to the plantation's tools, work animals, animal feed, seed, and fertilizer as being supplied to the tenants (passim, Braxton Bragg Comer Papers).

Hugh Comer sold Old Town to his son in 1899, just a few months before the father's death (Jefferson county deed book EE:672). Hugh Jr. was married in 1901 and spent several years traveling before returning to Georgia to settle in September of 1904 (News and Farmer September 29, 1904). Much work had been conducted while Hugh was away. Under the overseer's supervision, cotton and corn was harvested and a herd of cattle was raised. The main residence and outbuildings were completed and work was underway on a three-room library (Sheftall:1978).

Although many improvements had been made to Old Town, problems soon arose. Hugh knew little about farm operations and depended on his managerial staff to advise him. His first overseer remained with him until 1905. Unfortunately, a less reliable overseer was then hired and he continued to

affect Old Town operations until the last year of the Comer ownership (News and Farmer March 30, 1905).

In 1908, a group of Statesboro, Georgia businessmen expressed interest in the possibility of routing a new railroad across Old Town lands. Hugh agreed to the plan for a deed giving a 100-foot wide right-of-way to the railway. The proposed railroad bed was cut, but the project ran out of capital before any tracks were laid (News and Farmer July 1, 1906).

In that same year, Hugh's younger brother John and his cousin Fletcher showed interest in purchasing the plantation. On September 20, 1908 Old Town was passed to John D. Comer of Savannah and Fletcher Comer of Alabama for \$80,000. The deed included the 4,386 acres of land, and:

"all the equipment on said Old Town plantation, consisting of mules, horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, poultry, farming implements of every kind and character, including buggies, carriages, and carts, rents and profits and all contracts and all notes appertaining to the place, all furniture, both household and kitchen, book cases, and everything upon said place..." (Jefferson County Deed Book GG:330).

The new Comers bought Old Town as partners. John was the youngest child of Hugh Comer Sr. and had no experience

in agriculture. Fletcher Comer, on the other hand, had managed a family plantation for his father Braxton Bragg Comer who was the Governor of Alabama (Lathrop n.d.:110). The terms of the agreement included the stipulation that Fletcher would live at Old Town to manage the property and John would visit periodically while living in Savannah (Lathrop n.d.:165).

When Fletcher Comer and his family came to live at Old Town, they brought with them some black tenant families from Alabama to replace those that had left the plantation (F.C. to B.B.C., December 15, 1909, B.B.C. Governorship Papers). Fletcher gave the workers the option to sharecrop or rent. In addition, he also employed wage laborers.

On October 18, 1909, John Comer married a local woman and they also moved to Old Town to set up housekeeping (Augusta Chronicle October 18, 1909). Within a short time, a second house was built for the newlyweds. However, John was not a long time resident at the plantation. In 1911, he moved to Macon, Georgia to work for his father at the Bibb Manufacturing Company. When John left, Fletcher bought out his cousin's half of the plantation.

Fletcher tried for almost five more years to make Old Town solvent, but he accumulated large debts. In order to save his son from financial ruin, Governor Braxton Bragg

Comer bought Old Town and paid off all his debts in 1915. Fletcher remained on the plantation and served as manager for his father. Governor Comer owned Old Town for three years, until 1918 (B.B.C. to F.C. November 18, 1918:B.B.C. papers).

During that time, he wrote to his son frequently and communicated his wishes concerning crops, business, and family affairs. It is in those letters that the problems with the plantation were revealed. Governor Comer was in complete financial control of his son and made most of the decisions for the plantation. The contents of the following letter is an excellent example of the information contained in the majority of the correspondence. The letters tell of a son who was heavily directed by his father and who relied greatly on those who worked for him.

"I am enclosing your check for \$664.00 plus \$125.00 to meet the pay roll as stated plus your salary.... Do not grind up more than thirty days feed at a time of your velvet beans, and you will have to mix very thoroughly with your corn and use some salt to make your mules eat it. Affectionately, Dad" (B.B.C. to F.C., January 27, 1917).

In 1918, Governor Comer decided to sell Old Town because of increasing debts and mismanagement by Fletcher.

The plantation was sold to a cotton warehouse company and the land passed out of the hands of the Comer family (Sheftall:1977). This decision, as most others concerning the plantation was made by Fletcher's father. The following letter excerpts reveal the circumstances of the sale.

"Gentlemen,...I am selling the place and he [Fletcher] will move from Old Town" (B.B.C. to Armour Fertilizer Co., November 18, 1818)

"My dear Fletcher,...Old Town is one of the prettiest places in the state and a damn fine plantation. I am sure you are somewhat sorry to leave and have it pass to other hands..." (B.B.C. to F.C., December 30, 1918)

The boll weevil reached Georgia soon after Governor Comer had sold Old Town. As a result of the destruction of the cotton crops, there was agricultural failure and the purchaser defaulted on his payments after just one year (Sheftall 1980:183). The lands were eventually leased to the Carolina Land and Tobacco Company which harvested tobacco for a few years. It was a widespread practice to lease plantation lands to large companies in the South during this period. "By the late 1920's ... landowners were leasing land to ... companies" (Brooks 1991:80). Timber and tobacco harvesting became a viable alternative to other cash crops.

After B.B. Comer died in 1927, Old Town was sold to Lewis W. Dye of Burke County, Georgia (News and Farmer July 1, 1976). Dye managed to keep from defaulting on his payments, but he scaled down the plantation operations. During the 1930's, in addition to the approximately 50 tenant families, there were also an overseer and a miller at Old Town. The land was straight farmed with mules. Besides subsistence food crops, only cotton and corn were grown. Lewis Dye continued to be an absentee landlord. However, his son Wayne served as the overseer during 1936 and 1937. A commissary was set up in the old library which Hugh Comer Jr. had built; it was used by both the tenant families and some surrounding neighbors (Sheftall:1977).

Over the next two decades, Dye's operations at Old Town continued to be reduced. More tenants left the plantation every year. Many factors contributed to the decline in the number of tenants. The availability of modern machinery after World War II eliminated the need for large quantities of workers. Also, many black families moved North or to nearby cities to find employment at mills or factories. In the late 1940's, the few employees that remained at the plantation became skilled enough at using machinery and received wages in order to purchase homes of their own (Sheftall 1980:185).

Finally, George E. Crouch Sr. and his son George Jr. purchased the plantation in 1953. At that time, most of the buildings at the plantation were abandoned and in disrepair. The Crouches partially restored many of those buildings in the decades following. After the death of his father, George Crouch Jr. moved to Old Town and made the plantation his permanent home. After Crouch Jr. died, his wife Martha and their son remained at the plantation. In the years since, Martha has remarried and continued the preservation efforts.

CHAPTER 5

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research which was conducted at GSUJF1A, a tenant housesite located at Old Town Plantation. This chapter is divided into discussions of site location and history, excavation methods, and ceramic analysis.

SITE LOCATION AND HISTORY

The location of the tenant house remains was a cluster of tress on a small hilltop, near a flowing spring. Its boundaries were the remnant of the 1908 railroad cut on the west, an agricultural field on the south, and dirt access roads on the north and east sides.

The general location of the site was used as the center of plantation operations by several owners of Old Town. However, the exact location was not built upon until 1881, when Thomas James had a house constructed for himself at Old Town while it was used as a convict labor farm. The house was built along with a dairyhouse near a spring ringed with stones (News and Farmer July 21, 1881; Sheftall

1980:154). James and his wife only lived in the house intermittently for a few years. Although he acquired all interest in Old Town in 1888, he moved permanently to another plantation in Emanuel County that same year (RPKGP 1888-1890). He had owned that plantation since 1884 and had lived there when not at Old Town (News and Farmer July 1, 1976). James finally sold Old Town in 1891 (Jefferson County Deed Book BB:80). Therefore, the site which was excavated was impacted by the James occupation for no more than ten years.

There is no specific documentary record for the site after James sold Old Town. When the Comer family bought the plantation in 1896, a new center for operations was constructed in another location, near a new road which connected Louisville and Savannah. The Comers then used the plantation for tenant farming. The locations of the owner's, overseer's and miller's houses were in distinctly different areas of the plantation land than the excavated site. It can therefore be assumed that other domestic structures on the acreage, including the remains of those excavated, were used for tenant housing.

Two interviews were conducted during 1977 and 1978 by John Sheftall as part of historical research regarding Old

Town. Transcripts of those interviews provide a few clues regarding the possible occupants of the former James house. On July 23, 1978, Mr. Sloan McKay was interviewed. His father, Asbury McKay, worked at Old Town during 1903 and 1904. In addition to his farming, the elder McKay served as livestock tender. Sloan McKay related in his 1978 interview that his family "lived near the springhead, at the ... old James settlement". This description seems to indicate that the McKay family lived at the former James house.

Mr. Charles Shelton was interviewed on July 12, 1977. Shelton was the last miller at Old Town; he lived and worked there from 1933 to 1937. From the statements made in his interview, it can be surmised that the house was probably abandoned by the time he was employed. Shelton sketched a map that referred to the structure as the "old James house". Also, on the map, the only residences he included were the main house, the overseer's house, his own house, and the old James house. The abandoned convict barracks were included in the map as well. No tenant houses were referred to.

It is possible that the house was abandoned as a tenant residence around 1927. This is the year in which Lewis Dye bought Old Town from the Comers. It is known that he decreased the size of plantation operations and had

fewer tenants than the Comer family. Also, by 1927, the structure was forty-six years old. Many other, newer tenant houses were available for occupation. Therefore, it is quite possible that the former James house was no longer used. The house is not visible on 1941 air photos of Jefferson County (United States Department of Agriculture. Soil Conservation Service:1941). This evidence indicates a clear end date of occupation for the house.

From the information contained in the interviews, it can be speculated that the house which existed at the site was most probably occupied between 1881 and 1927, and perhaps as late as 1941. The impact caused by the occupation by James is thought to be relatively light because of the fact that he was only a part-time resident of the plantation for less than a decade. After 1891, residents with various tenure positions within the tenant class probably lived at the site. The house was likely occupied on the basis of its availability and the conditions of the plantation at the time, not specific tenure status or racial affiliation. The fact that tenant farmers in general moved often would also have affected the past of the site (Ely and Galpin 1919; Brannen 1924; Raper 1936; Woofter et al. 1936; Schuyler 1938). These facts, along with the dearth of documentary records, makes it

impossible to determine the exact tenants who lived at the site or the period of their residence. However, from the evidence which is known, it can be concluded that the site was a tenant residence for the majority of its existence.

EXCAVATION

The primary goal of the archaeological fieldwork was to gather material data pertaining to socioeconomic status. The need to obtain this data required the recovery of ceramic artifacts which could be used for socioeconomic analysis and for intersite comparison. Ceramic artifacts can provide information about several aspects of society and economy in the postbellum South.

These aspects can include such things as economic status, social standing, ethnicity, consumer choice, and purchasing power. The subsequent fieldwork was guided with procedures which would allow ceramics to be obtained in order to address the research problems. This included directing excavations in areas which were deemed likely to yield a sufficient sample of ceramic artifacts in both number and scope.

When these remains of site GSUJF1A were discovered, a chimney fall, pier stones, barbed wire, osage orange bushes, and iris beds were present. In order to explore the greatest extent of the structural remains, one meter wide

trenches were excavated bisecting the site. This was achieved by the layout of contiguous one by two meter units. Also, additional one by one, one by two, and two by two meter units were placed at judgmentally selected areas. Particular attention was given to areas which were believed to be possible entrance or exit areas around the former house. Those locations are areas where ceramic artifacts may have been used, lost, broken, or discarded (South 1977:48). Other areas explored included possible privy, trash pit, outbuilding, and backyard activity locations. It was hoped that those areas would contain ceramic artifacts which could reveal information regarding ceramic use.

Units were laid out on a modified mercator grid system and were placed in relation to a permanent site datum which was established with a transit. A total of forty three square meters were excavated at the site. This included units placed both inside and outside of the house remains and units in the yard areas of the house.

All units were excavated by hand in arbitrary 10 cm levels to the top of the sterile clay hardpan. This procedure was consistently practiced unless natural strata or features were apparent. During excavation, it was discovered that the soil consisted of an undifferentiated matrix. Therefore, it was concluded that all levels should

be treated as one unless other conditions indicated a need to do otherwise. The soil had apparently been vertically mixed, although the method of this mixing is unknown. Historic and prehistoric artifacts were discovered throughout all depths of the deposits above the sterile subsoil. The age of an artifact did not necessarily determine the vertical depth of its location.

Vertical control was established by the use of a laser level and measurements were taken from all corners and the center of each unit. All recovered soils were manually sifted through 1/4" mesh screens attached to tripods. Soil descriptions conformed to the Munsell Soil Color Charts. Whenever needed, features, soil stains, artifact clusters, brick falls, and surface scatters were recorded with plan and profile maps, and with photographs.

During excavation, all artifacts found were placed in plastic bags or vials as needed. These bags were labeled as to provenience and were numbered sequentially. The artifacts were then cleaned and placed in new, identically marked bags. Finally, all artifacts were catalogued and marked for future analysis.

Five features were recorded during excavation of the site. Each was numbered, described, mapped, photographed and excavated separately from the general soil matrix.

Unfortunately, only one of the features found could be positively identified regarding function. This was a post hole containing one nail, found in the backyard area of the housesite. It is hypothesized that this was the remains of some type of outbuilding, but nothing diagnostic was found to make a firm conclusion.

The excavated trenches exposed the probable extent of the house and several clues about its structure and demise. For example, some units revealed the possible location of windows while others were important for the lack of artifacts and soil compaction, showing the extent of the house supports. Units at the end of one of the trenches showed a large variety and density of artifacts and produced a possible drip line. This, along with other clues, gave the best indication for the location of the back entrance area of the house. Evidence was also discovered which indicated that the house had experienced a fire. Many artifacts which were found had been burned or melted, and charred wood was present.

METHODS OF CERAMIC ANALYSIS

Several kinds of ceramic analysis were conducted using the Old Town data. These kinds of analysis were used to address the research hypotheses, through the examination of

ceramic attributes. A description of these kinds of analysis is discussed below.

MEAN CERAMIC DATE

The most common method which uses historic ceramics for dating purposes was originated by Stanley South (1972, 1977). South demonstrated how the known manufacturing dates of ceramics could be used to derive a mean date for the total ceramic collection by computing the median dates of the ceramic types present. It is useful to know the mean ceramic date of an assemblage because the date can help to identify the mean date and date range during which a site was most likely occupied.

The computation of the mean ceramic date of a collection involves the multiplication of the ceramic type frequency (f) by the median manufacture date of the ceramics (x). The mean ceramic date is derived by dividing the product of $f(x)$ by the sum of f (South 1977:217-218).

The mean ceramic date formula has been used successfully by historical archaeologists since its introduction. It was decided to use the formula in this ceramic analysis in order to discover a possible mean ceramic date. In all, fourteen different types of ceramics were used as the raw data for the computation of the mean ceramic date (Table 1). Not all of the ceramics listed in

Table 1- Mean Ceramic Date for GSUJF1A

CERAMIC	MEDIAN DATE	TOTAL SHERDS	DATEABLE SHERDS	PRODUCT
COARSE EARTHENWARE				
Unglazed		6		
PORCELAIN				
Undecorated		12		
Blue Painted		3		
Decal Decorated	1921.5	1	1	1921.5
Gold Banded	1920.5	12	12	23046.0
STONEWARE				
Albany		27		
Alkaline		118		
Blue Glazed		1		
Bristol		8		
Brown		15		
Modern		3		
Salt-Glazed		73		
Unidentified		32		
WHITEWARE				
Undecorated	1892.5	465	465	880012.5
Annular	1855.0	6	6	11130.0
Decal	1921.5	17	17	32665.5
Edge Molded	1892.5	14	14	26495.0
Flow Blue	1852.5	1	1	1852.5
Gold Banded	1920.5	9	9	17284.5
Hand Painted	1885.5	1	1	1885.5
Shell Edged	1845.0	3	3	5535.0
Transfer Printed	1887.5	19	19	35929.0
YELLOWWARE				
Annular	1881.0	1	1	1881.0
TOTAL SHERDS		841		
TOTAL DATEABLE			549	
MEAN CERAMIC DATE				1893.7

the table were used in the final mean date computation because no reliable data is available regarding manufacturing dates for some types of ceramics. Also, four types of ceramics were not used in the calculation because it was believed that those types had been deposited as general "smear of early material" deriving from a much earlier previous occupation near the house site (Trinkley et al. 1993:176). These types included nine sherds of undecorated pearlware; and one sherd each of blue hand painted pearlware, blue shell edged pearlware, Jackfield redware, and black basalt stoneware. Five sherds which were deemed burned and unidentifiable were also left out of the analysis.

The mean ceramic date derived using this formula was 1893.69. This date appears to be early for the site. This may be clarified by a few explanations. William Adams (1980:534) has written that there is a "time lag" regarding the deposition of ceramics into the archaeological record of tenant occupations. He has suggested that ceramics will tend to "date 20... years earlier than the archaeological context in which they are found (particularly in rural areas among poor farmers)". This adjustment to compensate for time lag has been used by other historical archaeologists including Orser (1988). If

20 years are added to the mean ceramic date derived from the formula, the result is 1913.69. This would closely correspond to the mean occupation date of 1911 which is derived using historic sources (the median date of 1881 and 1941).

Another problem would impact the mean ceramic date derived for the Old Town site. The main type of datable ceramic (82.74%), undecorated whiteware/ironstone, has a very long period of manufacture (at least 121 years). Therefore, the date is not likely as accurate as it could be, "given the long period of whiteware use and the difficulty in establishing appropriate mean date for many of the ceramics present" (Trinkley et al. 1993:174). For example, the dates of 1820 to 1881 are used although it is known the site was not occupied before 1881. The median date used is 1892.5, even though it is also known that the majority of the site's occupation was after this date.

For the Old Town site, the terminal date used in the date range for whiteware/ironstone was 1941. This date was based on the latest possible known date of the site occupation. The 1941 air photos show that the structure was gone, and therefore no one was living at the site. Because this type of ceramic is still currently manufactured, there

is simply a lack of a better end date (Orser et al. 1987:526).

CERAMIC TYPE ANALYSIS

The relative frequencies of ceramics types have been of interest to historical archaeologists for many years. The examination of the presence and relative frequencies of ceramic types present in an assemblage is conducted in order to understand the distribution of ceramics at a site. It has been assumed that the relative occurrence of various ceramic types offer insight into the economic position of the inhabitants of the sites (Garrow et al. 1983:89; Orser et al. 1987:716).

All refined earthenwares can be divided into major types based on certain defining physical characteristics, which are linked to behavioral criteria. The four major types are: (1) fine earthenware, (2) coarse earthenware, (3) porcelain, and (4) stoneware. The definition of each of these categories is discussed below (See Adams 1980:Appendix 7; Orser et al. 1987:709-710).

1. Fine earthenware

This type of ceramics includes those which have clear glazes and either undecorated or decorated surfaces. Usually, fine earthenwares are used as tablewares.

2.Coarse earthenware

This group of ceramics is soft and porous and is variously glazed. The bodies are usually not white, and often are unglazed. Coarse earthenwares are generally used for utilitarian purposes.

3.Porcelain

This variety of ceramics is hard, vitreous, usually thin bodied, and fired at a high temperature. Porcelains can be undecorated or decorated in a variety of methods.

4.Stoneware

This type of ceramics also has a high firing temperature and usually is thick bodied. Stonewares are produced in a variety of glazes and decorations and are used for utilitarian purposes.

The frequencies in which these four types of ceramics occur are important. High percentages of coarse earthenwares and stonewares can be regarded as indicators of the domestic production and/or storage of food. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of low status, because of its link to the inability to purchase many ready-made foods or the need to store homemade goods (Trinkley and Caballero 1983b:62). Conversely, high percentages of porcelains can sometimes be regarded as indications of high status. This is because porcelains were more expensive than other types

of ceramics and were usually used for special items such as teacups, saucers and teapots (Henry and Garrow 1982:120-135).

CERAMIC FUNCTION ANALYSIS

Fine earthenwares and porcelains are generally considered to be tablewares; items which are used for food presentation or consumption. Coarse earthenwares and stonewares are considered to be utilitarian items; used for the storage, processing or preparation of food (Adams and Boling 1991:64). The analysis of ceramic function can reveal much the same information as ceramic types analysis. The two categories, tablewares and utilitarian wares, are defined by the purpose for which the ceramic items were meant to be used and by what types of activities were taking place at the site at which the ceramics were found. Tablewares indicate that activities relating to food service and consumption were taking place, while utilitarian items indicate that either food storage, processing or preparation had occurred. This relates to status because it is believed that low status individuals would have been involved in activities which required utilitarian ceramics more often than high status individuals (Worthy 1982:355; Trinkley and Caballero 1983b:62; Adams and Boling 1991:64-66). Therefore, the

relative frequency of tablewares to utilitarian wares can be an indicator of socioeconomic standing (Orser et al. 1987:722).

CERAMIC DECORATION ANALYSIS

Ceramic decoration has often been used to analyze status in the archaeological record. Cost distinctions can be made on the basis of the type of decoration applied to a ceramic. The materials and amount of labor are determining factors in the cost of the finished ceramic product. Generally, the simpler the decoration, the cheaper the ceramic (Taylor 1950:35; Worthy 1982:340; Trinkley and Caballero 1983b:76; Brooks 1987:177). The analysis of ceramic decoration is relevant to the study of postbellum period ceramics because "decorative types... were the major classification used during the 19th century [and that] classification will reflect economic classes" (Miller 1991:51).

In his detailed analysis of ceramic price during the first half of the nineteenth century, George Miller (1980:3-4) found that there was a general price hierarchy based on the type of decoration applied to a vessel. According to Miller, the examination of the frequency of ceramics with specific types of decoration present in an assemblage can be used in order to derive an idea of the

access to ceramics which former inhabitants had. Miller devised a scale which utilized ceramic price guides of the nineteenth century to produce an index of the relative value of different ceramics. Then, he defined categories of ceramics which were based on price of decoration.

Miller's scheme was modified by Orser et al.

(1987:729) in order to make it useful for sites which were occupied after 1850. Their scheme used the following three decorative categories, in increasing order of price:

- (1) undecorated: plain and molded
- (2) minimal decoration: shell edged, sponge decorated, banded, mocha, finger painted and all hand painted designs
- (3) extensive decoration: transfer-printed and decaled

CERAMIC FORM AND MNI ANALYSIS

The analysis of ceramic forms present in a site's assemblage is important for several reasons. The most important aspect of ceramic form analysis which is useful to reveal data regarding status is the categorization of ceramic forms by their possible function. Some ceramic forms were common and universal. Others, such as certain serving forms, were specialized and therefore more rare. The presence of large percentages or variety of specialized forms could indicate that the owner of the ceramics was

capable of purchasing items which were luxuries rather than necessities (Garrow et al. 1983:94; Trinkley and Caballero 1983a:76-77).

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to present information regarding site history, archaeological excavations, and ceramic analysis. Through the examination of historical data, it was determined that the Old Town site was the remains of a domestic structure which was occupied from 1881 to at least 1927, and perhaps as late as 1941. For the majority of its existence, the structure was occupied by plantation tenants with various tenure positions within the tenant class.

The archaeological excavations were directed toward the primary goal to recover ceramic material which could be used for socioeconomic analysis and for intersite comparison. A total of forty three square meters was excavated. This yielded 865 ceramic sherds which comprised 7.09% of the entire artifact assemblage.

Several types of ceramic analysis are appropriate to use in the addressing of the research hypotheses. These analyses deal with ceramic type, function, decoration, and form. The results of the ceramic analysis conducted using the Old Town data will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH INTERPRETATION

This chapter will address the hypotheses presented in chapter 2. The research conducted in this thesis was designed to test the two hypotheses which were devised to serve as guiding questions for the research. The findings of the archaeological analysis will be used in order to address the validity of the proposed hypotheses.

HYPOTHESIS 1

Hypothesis 1: Tenant farmers were an impoverished socioeconomic group. The artifact assemblage from the tenant site at Old Town Plantation will reflect this impoverished nature of tenant culture.

The purpose of this hypothesis is to explore the correlation between material culture and social standing as it is suggested by the archaeological data recovered from Old Town Plantation. Ceramic artifacts were isolated and examined in order to address this hypothesis. Ceramics artifacts are appropriate for this purpose because ceramic items used by past cultures were an especially sensitive or

reliable indicator of social standing (Orser et al. 1987:704).

According to the historical data known about the relationship between ceramics and tenant economic status in postbellum times, several expected characteristics of the ceramic assemblages from tenant sites can be proposed. These characteristics are presented as predictions regarding the attributes of the ceramic assemblage from former tenant settlements. It is proposed that the ceramic assemblage should:

- (1) contain a large percentage of stoneware, and a relatively small percentage of porcelain.
- (2) contain a large percentage of utilitarian wares.
- (3) contain a rather large percentage undecorated tablewares and a wide diversity of other decorative types, each comprising a small percentage of the remainder of the assemblage.
- (4) contain limited number of vessel forms, with few specialty forms. The majority of forms present should be necessities, with flexible functions.

The ceramic artifacts were analyzed in order to reveal evidence which might reflect aspects of the impoverished nature of tenancy. Ceramics were analyzed by ware, function, decoration and form. These types of attribute analysis were appropriate to the hypothesis because all

have the potential to reveal information regarding socioeconomic status.

CERAMIC TYPE ANALYSIS

The frequencies and percentages of the four major types of ceramics present in the Old Town tenant site assemblage are shown below in Table 2. The calculations were conducted using both sherd and vessel counts. Using sherd counts, the fine earthenwares occur most often (63.49%) and stonewares are the second most common (32.33%). Porcelains (3.26%) and coarse earthenwares (0.93%) are much less common. Although the exact percentages were somewhat different using vessel numbers, the rank for each ceramic type was the same.

Table 2 - Distribution of Ceramic Types

	Fine Earthenware		Stoneware		Porcelain		Coarse Earthenware	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sherds	546	63.49	279	32.44	28	3.26	7	0.81
Vessels	70	67.96	25	24.27	5	4.85	3	2.91

The percentages of the four types of ceramics demonstrated that stonewares were the second most common type, comprising between 24.27% (by vessel) and 32.44% (by sherds) of the collection. Also, porcelains were a very

small part of the collection, only between 4.85% (by vessel) and 3.26% (by sherds). These two lines of evidence would seem to indicate that (1) the ceramic assemblage was produced by a household which was involved in a significant amount of food production and storage and (2) very little priority was placed upon the acquisition of ceramics made of porcelain or the household was unable to purchase porcelain items in a significant number. The rarity of porcelain supports the hypothesis because porcelain cost more than stoneware during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

CERAMIC FUNCTION ANALYSIS

The ceramic function analysis was also conducted using both sherd count and vessel counts. The number and percent of ceramics present in each kind of function category is listed below in Table 3. Although the percentages are different using sherd and vessel counts, the numbers are similar. This type of analysis revealed much the same information as ceramic type analysis. Utilitarian wares were a very important part of the entire ceramic assemblage, between 27.18% (by vessel) and 33.26% (by sherds). Again, this data suggests that the ceramic assemblage was produced by a low status household which was involved in a significant amount of food production and

storage relative to food consumption activities (See Orser et al. 1987:722).

Table 3 - Distribution of Ceramic Function Types

	Tablewares		Utilitarian Wares	
	#	%	#	%
Sherds	574	66.74	286	33.26
Vessel	75	72.82	28	27.18

CERAMIC DECORATION ANALYSIS

In order to conduct ceramic decoration analysis, the fine earthenware and porcelain ceramic artifacts were separated into groups based on decorative technique. There were eight different kinds of decorative techniques found in the ceramic assemblage. The decoration categories were examined using both sherd count and vessel count. The count and frequencies of the decoration techniques are presented in Table 4. Although the percentages are different depending on the basis of the count (sherd versus vessel), the ranking of the decorative techniques remains almost the same. In both cases, the undecorated ceramic category is predominant; 84.64% using sherd count and 50.67% using vessel count.

Table 4 - Distribution of Ceramic Decorative Techniques

	SHERDS		VESSELS	
	#	%	#	%
Undecorated	485	84.64	38	50.67
Edge Molded	14	2.44	6	8.00
Gold Banded	21	3.67	8	10.67
Annular	6	1.05	4	5.33
Handpainted	5	0.87	3	4.00
Shell Edged	4	0.70	3	4.00
Decal	18	3.14	5	6.66
Transfer Printed	20	3.49	8	10.67
TOTAL	573	100.00%	75	100.00%

The eight groups were then placed into three categories which were based on price of decorative technique (Orser et al. 1987:729). This scheme was used to examine the relative proportions of the three categories within the assemblage in order to discover information regarding economic status. The minimal decoration and extensive decoration categories comprised similar percentages of the remainder of the ceramic assemblage. The distribution of ceramics within those three categories are presented in Table 5. The results indicate that the majority of ceramics was undecorated, the most inexpensive decoration style available.

Table 5 - Distribution of Decoration Categories

	SHERDS		VESSELS	
	#	%	#	%
Undecorated	499	87.09	44	58.67
Minimal decoration	36	6.28	18	24.00
Extensive decoration	38	6.63	13	17.33
TOTAL	573	100.00%	75	100.00%

An examination of the results of the ceramic decoration analysis reveals that the ceramic assemblage was comprised of a large proportion of undecorated ceramics, whether the basis of analysis was ceramic sherds or ceramic vessels. This information is important because of the significance placed on the presence and amount of undecorated ceramics within a collection dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Several archaeologists have proposed that the presence of a large percentage of undecorated ceramics is associated with low status and the inability to purchase more decorated, expensive ceramics (e.g., Trinkley and Caballero 1983a:76; Orser et al 1987:729; Miller 1991:39). This proposition is supported by an examination of both the 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog (Montgomery Ward and Company 1969[1895]) and the 1908 Sears catalog (Schroeder 1969) which indicate that plain earthenwares were from 19 to 28% less expensive in

1895 and from 25 to 50% less expensive in 1908 than decorated wares (Trinkley and Caballero 1983a:76). A survey of other period advertisements reveals considerable price ranges, from undecorated to extensively decorated ceramics (Sears Roebuck and Company 1968[1897], 1993[1902]).

CERAMIC FORM AND MNI ANALYSIS

The analysis of ceramic forms present in the Old Town collection was conducted in order to discover the variety and distribution of forms present within the assemblage. Much of the ceramic assemblage was so highly fragmented that very little mending or reconstruction was possible. Therefore the determination of vessel forms was primarily made through the examination of the ceramic sherds which were rims and bases. The type, decoration and shape were all important characteristics which were used. Any unique ceramic sherds were also used in determining the number of vessels.

In order to produce a total ceramic inventory, a minimum vessel count was determined. This allowed the percentages of each type of vessel to be calculated. It is important to stress that the minimum number of individual vessels (MNI) figure which was derived is simply the minimum number of vessels which were present in the ceramic assemblage. More vessels could have been present in the

assemblage. The MNI derived from the ceramic assemblage was 103. The MNI listing and description is presented below.

The ceramic assemblage was divided into several identifiable forms for analysis. These included tableware forms, storage forms, and specialty forms. The earthenwares were divided into the forms of plate, saucer, cup, bowl, large bowl, and miscellaneous. The stonewares included categories of jug, crock, jug/crock, and churn lid. In those instances where the exact form was not certain, the categories of unidentified flatware, unidentified holloware, and unidentified were used. The vessel forms which were specified are listed in Table 6. As stated above, the ceramic assemblage found was very fragmented and did not allow the exact identification of many vessel forms. Therefore, a very high percentage (43.69%) of vessels fit into one of the unidentified categories. The distribution of identifiable vessel forms are listed in Table 7.

Within the group of vessels whose forms were identifiable, the category of jug/crock comprised 37.93% of all forms. This again supports the idea that utilitarian items were predominant in the ceramic material culture of the site's former inhabitants. The plates and bowls made up the majority of tableware forms; they were 24.14% and

13.79% of the entire group of identifiable vessel forms.

Those three forms - the jug/crock, plate, and bowl-
comprise 75.86% of the entire identifiable vessels.

Table 6 - Ceramic Vessel Forms

	#	%
Plate	14	13.59
Saucer	2	1.94
Cup	4	3.88
Bowl	8	7.77
Large Bowl	3	2.91
Miscellaneous	4	3.88
Jug	6	5.83
Crock	1	0.97
Jug/Crock	15	14.57
Churn Lid	1	0.97
UID Flatware	13	12.62
UID Hollowware	18	17.48
Unidentified	14	13.59
TOTAL	103	100.00%

Table 7 - Identified Ceramic Vessel Forms

	#	%
Plate	14	24.14
Saucer	2	3.45
Cup	4	6.90
Bowl	8	13.79
Large Bowl	3	5.17
Lid	2	3.45
Chamber Pot	2	3.45
Jug/Crock	22	37.93
Churn Lid	1	1.72
TOTAL	58	100.00%

The information gained from the ceramic form analysis
is important. The low diversity of forms supports the

contention that few specialty ceramic vessels were a part of the ceramic material culture of the plantation tenants. The majority of the ceramic forms present in the assemblage - the jugs/crocks, plates and bowls - were forms which had necessary and flexible functions within the ceramic collection of a tenant household.

If the information from the analysis of ceramic decoration and form are combined, it is possible to examine the possibility of the presence of the existence of ceramic sets. In the Old Town ceramic collection, there were no vessels which appeared to be part of a set. Within the ceramic collection, there was considerable diversity of decorative motifs and a lack of similar styles. The absence of sets in this context is important because "the presence of table sets ... appears to have ... value in describing socioeconomic status, as they seem absent in assemblages from households occupied by persons of low socioeconomic status" (Garrow 1985:221).

SUMMARY

The combination of several methods of ceramic analysis produced data which seemed to display evidence of low status or economic poverty within the ceramic assemblage from the Old Town Plantation tenant site. The data includes the presence of a high percentage of utilitarian wares and

undecorated ceramics, a limited variety of vessel forms with a lack of specialty forms, and the absence of matching ceramics vessels or sets.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Hypothesis 2: Tenant farmers were a cohesive group, united into a single impoverished culture which regulated consumer behaviors. The artifact assemblage from the tenant site at Old Town will be similar to artifact assemblages from other tenant sites.

This hypothesis is based upon the assumption that tenant farmers belonged to an occupation-based group, the members of which shared a similar culture that regulated consumer behavior and therefore material culture. It is predicted that the attributes of the ceramic artifact assemblage from the Old Town site will be similar to the attributes of the ceramic assemblages from the other tenant sites examined. All of the sites should share the four predicted ceramic characteristics listed previously under the discussion of hypothesis one.

In order to address this hypothesis and discover if the attributes of the artifact assemblage from Old Town share characteristics with other tenant sites, the ceramic data from Old Town were compared to data from two other tenant sites. The three sites were compared by ceramic

attribute analysis. This comparison provided variations in race, geographical location, tenure arrangement, and landlord treatment of tenants. This comparison is useful because it can help to determine if the shared attributes of the ceramic assemblages are a function of the occupation-based status group or a function of other variables. The focus is on the characteristics that might have been shared by tenants as a labor group (Orser 1988:234).

The tenant sites whose ceramic data were compared to data from Old Town were located on Millwood Plantation in South Carolina (Orser et al. 1987) and Waverly Plantation in Mississippi (Adams 1980). Both sites were locations of former tenant farmer settlements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

CERAMIC TYPE ANALYSIS

The three sites were first compared based upon ceramic type analysis. Table 8 presents the relative frequencies of ceramic types present in the sherd count of the assemblage of each site. Sherd counts were used because vessels counts were not available for comparison.

Table 8 -
Compared Distribution of Ceramic Types, by Sherd Count

	Fine Earthenware %	Stoneware %	Porcelain %	Coarse Earthenware %
Old Town	63.49	32.45	3.25	0.81
Millwood ^a	60.46	36.12	3.04	0.38
Waverly ^b	62.75	27.84	7.67	1.74

^a from Orser et al. 1987:712

^b from Adams 1980:521

The percentages of the ceramic types from the three plantation sites are quite similar; the largest margin of variation in any ceramic type category is 8.28%, in the Stoneware category. Although the percentages of each ceramic type at the sites are different, the rank of each type is the same at all of the sites. These figures seem to give support to the data from Old Town. At all sites, the ceramic assemblage was dominated by fine earthenwares (over 60%), stonewares were significant (near 30%), porcelains were uncommon (less than 8%), and coarse earthenwares were rare (less than 2%). According to these percentages, the stoneware of ceramics were a significant portion of the ceramic materials owned by tenants, while the porcelain category of ceramics were not.

CERAMIC FUNCTION ANALYSIS

The three tenant sites were also compared using ceramic function analysis. The distribution of ceramic function at the three sites is presented in Table 9. These figures further support the proposal that utilitarian items were important possessions for tenants and that they were involved in considerable amounts of food production and storage activities. Those are types of activities which were linked to low socioeconomic standing or status during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Worthy 1982:355; Trinkley and Caballero 1983b:62; Orser et al. 1987:722; Adams and Boling 1991:64-66).

In order to further measure the similarities between the samples, a similarity matrix was produced using Robinson's Index of Agreement (Robinson 1951). This statistic compares pairs of percentages of occurrence in order to determine if they are similar or dissimilar, and produces a numerical value that can be used to gauge those factors. The index is large when samples are similar (the index is 200 when a sample is compared against itself). The similarity matrix for ceramic artifact function is presented in Table 10. The generated matrix indicates that the samples are indeed very similar regarding ceramic function.

Table 9 - Compared Distribution of Ceramic Function Types

	Tablewares %	Utilitarian Wares %
Old Town	66.74	33.26
Millwood ^a	63.50	36.50
Waverly ^b	70.42	29.58

^a calculated from Orser et al. 1987:712

^b calculated from Adams 1980:521

Table 10 - Similarity Matrix for Ceramic Artifact Function

	Old Town	Millwood	Waverly
Old Town	200.00		
Millwood	193.52	200.00	
Waverly	192.64	186.16	200.00

CERAMIC DECORATION ANALYSIS

The ceramic decoration comparison between the three sites was conducted using the three decorative categories as defined by Orser et al. (1987:729). The frequencies of the decorative categories by sherd count are presented in Table 11. The sherd counts for Waverly were not available. The frequencies of the decorative categories by vessel count are presented in Table 12. This includes the data from Waverly.

Table 11 - Distribution of Decoration Catagories, by Sherd

	Old Town %	Millwood ^a %	Waverly ^b %
Undecorated	87.09	88.05	NA
Minimally decorated	6.28	5.66	NA
Extensively decorated	6.63	6.29	NA

^a from Orser et al. 1987:730

^b not available

Table 12 - Distribution of Decoration Catagories, by Vessel

	Old Town %	Millwood ^a %	Waverly ^b %
Undecorated	58.67	NA	55.60
Minimally decorated	24.00	NA	27.60
Extensively decorated	17.33	NA	16.80

^a not available

^b from Adams 1980:530

Both comparison by sherds count and vessel count produce similar percentages for ceramic decoration techniques at the tenant sites. The index of agreement between the Old Town sample and the Millwood sample, using sherds counts, is 198.09. The index of agreement between the Old Town sample and the Waverly sample, using vessel counts, is 192.8. Both of these indices indicate that the samples are similar regarding the frequencies of ceramic decorative categories. This data seems to suggest that the percentages and distribution of ceramic decorative categories are similar at sites of former tenant

settlements. The ceramic assemblages are similar in regard to the amount of undecorated ceramics, which were significantly less expensive than decorated ceramics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This could relate to the low economic status of tenants and their ability to purchase ceramic items (Trinkley and Caballero 1983a:76; Orser et al. 1987:729; Miller 1991:39).

CERAMIC FORM AND MNI ANALYSIS

The last type of ceramic attribute which was compared among the sites was ceramic form. The percentages of each type of identified ceramic form from the three plantations is presented in Table 13. The comparison of vessel forms indicates that the majority of the ceramic collections the tenant sites were comprised of only six forms. Plates were the dominant tableware form in all three ceramic assemblages; they averaged 27.07% of the total number of forms. These results have been found at other tenant sites (e.g., Adams 1980:275; Trinkley and Caballero 1983a:77; Trinkley and Caballero 1983b:62). It has been proposed that the diet of tenant farmers suggested that plates might have been more in demand than any other tableware form (Trinkley and Caballero 1983b:62).

The distribution of ceramic forms also illustrates the importance of stoneware vessels; listed as the jug/crock

form. In the Old Town and Millwood ceramic collections, the largest form category was comprised of stoneware vessels. In the Waverly figures, the stoneware vessel form category ranked third in percentage of the entire ceramic assemblage. Specialty forms were included in the miscellaneous form category for all three sites. The percentage of these specialty forms were very low in all three ceramic assemblages, ranging from 0.00% to 8.62%. This could indicate that few specialty ceramic vessel forms were purchased by tenants because those items were unessential and uneconomical. Tenants could have served food from the cooking stove, which would have eliminated the need for some serving vessels (Trinkley and Caballero 1983a:76). The percentage of other vessel forms seemed to exhibit no particular pattern which was easily discernable.

In order to further examine the possible importance of ceramic vessel forms, a similarity matrix was produced. The matrix is presented in Table 14. The indices range from 140.40 to 151.73, and these figures indicate that the three samples are not especially similar to each other regarding ceramic form percentages. This result could have been affected by the wide selection and availability of ceramic vessel forms as open-stock merchandise in stores and mail-order catalogues during the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries (Worthy 1982:348; Orser 1987:727).

Tenant families could have purchased only the functional forms which were appropriate for their particular needs which would have varied. For example, all families would have needed plates, essential tableware items. However, the percentage of cups and saucers needed could have depended on the gender and age composition of the family. The number of bowls could have depended on diet preferences.

Table 13 - Distribution of Ceramic Vessel Forms

	Old Town %	Millwood ^a %	Waverly ^b %
Plate	24.14	27.59	30.00
Saucer	3.45	3.45	10.71
Cup	6.90	24.14	18.57
Bowl	13.79	3.45	9.29
Large Bowl	5.17	0.00	7.14
Miscellaneous	8.62	0.00	7.14
Jug/Crock	37.93	41.38	17.15
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

^a adapted from Orser et al. 1987:720-721

^b adapted from Adams 1980:517,520

Table 14 - Similarity Matrix for Ceramic Vessel Form

	Old Town	Millwood	Waverly
Old Town	200.00		
Millwood	151.73	200.00	
Waverly	146.48	140.40	200.00

CERAMICS AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Archaeologists can use patterned characteristics in archaeological data to investigate reasons for household selection of particular archaeologically deposited goods from the variety available in the market (Spencer-Wood 1987:323). In order to explain the behaviors which would have produced the ceramic assemblage characteristics proposed above, the consumer behavior of tenant farmers must be addressed. It is important to discuss consumer behavior because characteristics of material remains should be examined in terms of the behavioral processes which produced them rather than simply as status markers. It is believed that the ceramic artifact assemblages present at former tenant settlements are a function of occupation-based status group consumer behaviors. These consumer behaviors determined the ceramics which were purchased by tenants, and which later became part of the archaeological record.

Based upon the historical and archaeological data, characteristics of tenant consumer behavior regarding ceramic acquisition can be proposed. The decision to acquire particular ceramics was conditioned by a number of interrelated variables within the tenant cultural system, including the economic ability to afford those goods and

the functional utility of the goods. The suggested traits which can be linked to tenant consumer behavior are:

- (1) tenants purchased a large amount of utilitarian vessels because those types of vessels served food production and storage functions and were widely available at a low cost.
- (2) tenants primarily purchased undecorated tablewares because undecorated vessels were low priced, widely available, and easily replaced.
- (3) tenants often purchased tablewares as individual pieces from local sources or catalogues as replacement items rather than as sets.
- (4) tenants purchased only the ceramic forms which were functionally useful for their needs. Forms which had flexible functions were purchased more often than specialty forms.

SUMMARY

Two hypotheses were developed which were designed to serve as guidelines for archaeological research. It was proposed that the ceramic assemblage from Old Town would be similar to the ceramic assemblages from other tenant sites. In order to address the hypotheses, several methods of ceramic analyses were used to examine similarities in the ceramic assemblages from three sites associated with former tenant dwellings. Ceramic attributes which might reveal similarities among the ceramics from the sites were analyzed. These attributes included ceramic type, function, decoration and form.

The results of the combination of analyses produced data which seemed to display evidence of low status or economic poverty within the ceramic assemblages from all of the sites. The examination of ceramic attributes demonstrated that there was a similarity among the three ceramic assemblages according to ceramic type, function, and decoration. However, the relationship between the tenant sites based on ceramic form was not particularly similar.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the research conducted in this thesis, assesses the applicability of its proposals, and suggests recommendations for future inquiry.

The goal of this thesis has been to demonstrate that because tenants were an impoverished occupation-based group, united in a socioeconomic stratum which had distinct consumer behaviors regarding ceramics, their behavior may be examined through the context of ceramic acquisition and use. The intention has been to show that there is a link between the nature of tenancy and ceramic acquisition and that link can be demonstrated archaeologically.

In order to achieve that goal, two major objectives had to be accomplished. First, the possible ceramic attributes which can be associated with the impoverished nature of postbellum plantation tenancy had to be identified. This objective was guided by the assumption that attributes of ceramic artifacts are sensitive indicators of economic status. The second objective was to

propose status related consumer behavior characteristics which could have been responsible for the ceramic artifact assemblages found at tenant sites. This objective was based on the assumption that there are significant connections between patterns in attributes of archaeological data and status related consumer behaviors (See Spencer-Wood 1987:16).

In order to fulfill the research goals, two hypotheses were formulated for testing. It was hoped that the examination of the hypotheses would contribute knowledge concerning the relationship between the nature of tenancy, consumer behavior and ceramic acquisition.

The ceramic assemblage from a tenant site at Old Town Plantation was analyzed based on ceramic type, function, decoration, and form attributes. The combined methods of ceramic attribute analysis produced data which seemed to display evidence of low status or economic poverty. The data from Old Town was compared to attributes of ceramic assemblages from tenant sites located on Millwood Plantation in South Carolina and Waverly Plantation in Mississippi. The comparison indicated that there were substantial similarities among the three ceramic assemblages according to ceramic attributes. Data from that

comparison was used to define several characteristics of ceramic assemblages which might be expected at tenant sites. The delineation of those characteristics is important because it suggests that ceramic attributes can be indicators of status. The consumer behavior of tenants which would have produced the ceramic assemblages was also examined. Traits of tenant consumer behavior regarding ceramic acquisition were also proposed. The proposal of those traits was significant because it linked patterns of attributes in the archaeological record with consumer behavior.

Although the research conducted in this thesis seems to have successfully addressed the developed hypotheses, potential problems must be considered. For example, archaeology is only beginning to document tenant culture and such limited analysis has been done that very little is known of the potential range of variability (Trinkley et al. 1985:41). Because of the limited database available, archaeologists face difficulty in postulating that general patterns relate to all tenant sites. Both of the proposals concerning ceramic attributes and consumer behavior in this thesis were based upon data from only three tenant sites. Even though the similar characteristics of ceramic assemblages from the sites were significant, the

extrapolation of those characteristics to all tenant sites is uncertain.

The variability involved in tenancy was not assessed in this study because it was assumed that the occupational role of tenants would have been the paramount factor in determining consumer behavior. However, variables such as race, geography, labor arrangement, and/or family composition could have significantly affected consumer behavior. The role such variables played in the determination of tenant consumer behavior is currently unknown. Whether the patterns of consumer behavior and ceramic acquisition proposed in this thesis applied to all tenants is not established. Consequently, the proposals presented must remain speculative until further results are obtained from future research.

It is therefore recommended that further research be conducted concerning the applicability of the research findings in this thesis. More tenant sites need to be investigated in order to establish a larger ceramic database. The comparison of data from many diverse tenant ceramic assemblages would allow the measurement of how variables involved in tenancy would have affected ceramic acquisition and therefore ceramic attribute patterns. These variables include factors such as tenant race, tenure

arrangement, geographical location, family structure and landlord disposition. Comparison is also needed between tenant households and other non-tenant poor households. This comparison would help to determine if other types of poverty affected consumer behavior and ceramic acquisition in the same ways as tenancy.

Currently, archaeologists are still in a data acquisition phase which is essential prior to any conclusive theoretical breakthroughs being claimed. The search for understanding patterning in the archaeological record and regulation of consumer behavior must continue.

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