SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

What History Tells Us

At the most general level, we have a broad collection of statistics, oral histories, sociology, and social science looking at tenancy from the 1920s and 1930s. Some more recent researchers have been able to weave these data together to provide compelling social or economic histories. In Richland County, however, we do not have agricultural liens, plantation day books or accounts, or oral histories. The agricultural schedules for the period in question are no longer available and the enumeration tract data are ambiguous.

We are able to identify the owner of the parcels on which the three sites are located. In the case of 38RD1249 the property, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, was owned by the Rabon family, most likely L.A. Rabon. It was later transferred to J.T. Rabon and then to Simon Rabon. We do not, however, know the family connections of these individuals, if any exists. In 1943 Simon Rabon sold the parcel containing the site to Billie B. Barber. Barber held the property into the 1970s. The early Rabons appear, based on very scanty information, to have been farmers of modest means and owning a relatively small amount of property. By the 1930s, it seems that J.T. Rabon was wealthy and likely an absentee owner. Nothing is known about Barber.

The parcel containing both 38RD1260 and 38RD1262 was acquired by Frank G. Tompkins in 1912 and Tompkins held the property until 1935, when it was sold to Rosemary Farms, which may have been a holding company since the property was deeded back to Tompkins in 1942. Tompkins, a Columbia attorney and investor, was clearly an absentee owner and nothing is known concerning his activities on the property, although it seems unlikely that he was a farmer or particularly familiar with farming activities.

Although there are no plats of either parcel, sites 38RD1260 and 38RD1262 are shown on the 1935 Killian 15' topographic map. They are not, however, found on any other period maps of the area.

When we examine the enumeration district data for the vicinity of 38RD1260 and 38RD1262 we discover that most of the residents were farmers (73.9% in 1930) – either owners or tenants. Since we can rule out owners, it is likely that 38RD1260 and 38RD1262 represent residences of tenants. Similar information is available for the enumeration district that contains 38RD1249. These data, however, are unable to suggest whether these tenants were more likely African Americans or whites – and this matters since there were significant differences in the income levels of black and white tenants (perhaps leading to other culturally identifiable differences). Moreover, as the artifacts from 38RD1260 are examined, we find a collection that does not appear consistent with the common perception of tenancy.

As a result, historical documents provide very little information concerning those who lived and labored on these tracts. In fact, there is almost no information concerning tenancy in Richland County – and no information that would allow comparisons and contrasts to be drawn between the tenants on the sandy, infertile soils of upper Richland and those on the richer alluvial soils of lower Richland. The tenants in Richland County, in spite of detailed historical and architectural surveys of both upper and lower Richland, remain invisible people. Histories that are available for Richland County have almost without exception focused on the development

of Columbia to the exclusion of activities elsewhere.

Frankly, it seems unlikely that historical studies will be able to provide much information concerning tenancy in Richland County – the documentary sources are simply not present. Without archaeological study, then, Richland's tenants will remain invisible to history.

Research Questions

Based primarily on previous archaeological research on tenancy, a broad number of research topics were considered. These included such issues as exploring settlement patterns on the plantation landscape, investigating market profiles as observed in the artifactual remains, comparing the artifact assemblages of owners and tenants, and examining refuse disposal practices.

In spite of the research potential so amply demonstrated by such researchers as Bill Adams (1980) and Charles Orser (1988), or the more recent work of Melanie Cabak and Marie Inkrot (1997), the archaeology of tenancy has not been a primary research goal in South Carolina. In fact, the record – at best – is spotty. For example, at even the most fundamental level, there is little comparative data and archaeologists have not sought to examine patterns that might be associated with tenancy.

As a result, our goal at these three sites was limited to the examination of the artifacts and an effort to reconstruct the lifeways of the sites' occupants. As previously discussed, our work was limited to the excavation of the three features, therefore limiting our ability to comment on architectural remains or details on refuse disposal. We have attempted to follow Orser's advice that research should focus on what the artifacts meant to the occupants.

In this process, however, we have also attempted to compare and contrast the sites, perhaps helping in a modest way to build data useful for developing a tenancy pattern suitable to the Black Belt. While obviously more oral or documentary history would have been useful, not only was it not present, but we must also recognize that tenants did move with some regularity. As a result, any effort to develop patterns or examine ethnic or status differences will need to accept that most sites can provide only approximations.

Our study does provide a detailed account of cotton farming for the period, as well as a context for tenancy – topics that have not been adequately dealt with by previous researchers. These provide not only background, but also help to illustrate particular data gaps.

The Features Themselves

Our studies revealed that the three features represented two privies (at 38RD1249 and 38RD1262) and one well (at 38RD1260). Although a small sample, we believe these may be the first such features identified for the area and therefore they provide significant comparative data.

The 38RD1249 feature, originally just over 3 feet in depth and about 13 feet in diameter, was found to represent a wood-lined privy about 10 feet in depth. Although difficult to determine with certainty since the sides had partially collapsed, it appears that the original privy pit was about 4-feet square. At the base the pit was only 2-feet square. The fill of the pit took place quickly and this feature produced relatively few artifacts.

The 38RD1262 feature was only about a foot in depth and about 9 feet in diameter – appreciably smaller than that at either of the other two sites (accounting for the initial interpretation of a trash pit). Excavation, however, revealed that it was 11 feet in depth and 4.6 feet at the base. Most of the artifacts were found in the upper portion of the feature, representing trash disposal, while the lower

levels all represent gradual deposition consistent with deposition to cover waste.

These two features are more similar than different – the depths (10-11 feet) are consistent, as are the internal dimensions (4 and 4.6 feet). These similarities suggest some consistency in privy design. They are, however, distinct from the standardized privy construction recommended by the Public Health Service (3.5 feet square and 4.5 feet in depth) and likely used by the WPA. Their size (over three times that recommended by the Public Health Service) suggests an investment in labor that would have allowed them to be used for longer periods of time, minimizing the need to excavate out waste or dig a new privy.

What they provided in longevity, however, they may have lacked in sanitation. The 38RD1249 privy was only 25-50 feet away from the house and no more than 50 feet from the 38RD1262 house. The proximity of the privy to the house – and presumably a water supply – suggests that convenience trumped sanitation. On the other hand, these structures clearly fall into the two-thirds of the structures possessing an "unimproved" outdoor privy.

At 38RD1260 the feature was initially about 3 feet below grade and about 12 feet in diameter, with a large tree growing out of one edge. Excavation revealed a well 12 feet in depth and nominally 2.5 feet in diameter. The well was apparently hand dug with a stepped appearance in the upper levels. Water was apparently encountered by at least 11 feet (perhaps higher considering the possibility that the water table has dropped in recent years). There was no clear evidence of casing, although it seems likely that in the loose, sandy soils some side supports would have been necessary.

When the well is compared to historic accounts, the depth is very shallow – suggesting only short-term use. Otherwise, the diameter is reasonable, although it would have been lined with either planks or barrels. Open wells such as this example were among the least sanitary, yet they were very common among tenants.

38RD1249

This privy produced only 193 artifacts, with foodways representing the most abundant category (59.1%). The artifacts appear to have been deposited in the first quarter of the twentieth century, perhaps ca. 1920. Unfortunately, the collection was so sparse that the feature is not capable of addressing many of our proposed research questions (although it does address a variety of privy-related functional issues).

38RD1262

This privy produced 3,332 artifacts – a sufficiently large sample that we should have considerable confidence in the resulting conclusions. The collection suggests a date range from about 1895 to perhaps 1930. Representing a range of about 35 years, we must accept that we could be looking at an assemblage produced by three or four different families – but this is the situation with any tenant site.

In our discussions of a "tenant pattern," we observe that there is considerable temporal and spatial diversity among the samples, combined with significant differences in how the samples were collected. All of these differences may reasonably affect the samples and how representative they may be considered. Regardless, at least two patterns are present. The one from 38RD1262 is characterized by moderate foodway and household/structural remains. The closest similar pattern is that derived from the Finch Farm in Spartanburg County – an area of the Upper Piedmont.

When the artifacts themselves are examined, we see clear evidence that tenants focused their limited purchasing power on food-related items. Even clothing (ranked as the second most common purchase by Woofter 1936:Table 102) was poorly represented,

accounting for only 5.2% of the total collection. Clothing is generally poorly represented at tenant sites, although the Aiken assemblage of Cabak and Inkrot (1997) appears to be an exception (see Table 18).

The assemblage is clearly dominated by inexpensive ceramics, such as undecorated whitewares or mass produced decalcomania wares. The collection also consists primarily of flatwares, accounting for 55.9% of the collection, with hollowwares accounting for an additional third of the vessels. The closest similar assemblage was that from Waverly.

In spite of the understandable assemblage of poverty, the collection produced several artifacts that seem to stand out. For example, the privy produced evidence of a food chopper or processor, as well as roller shades and porcelain casters for furniture. Also present were a very large number of wagon parts, suggesting the tenant at least had access to, if not actually owning, one or more wagons.

The function of only two-fifths of the bottles from the site can be determined; nevertheless, most (80%) of those whose function can be ascertained were alcohol containers – generally pint or smaller bottles of hard alcohol (as opposed to beer or wine). Although canning jars are sparse, the collection did yield a large assemblage of tin cans, indicating that processed foods were a component of the diet.

The clothing artifacts reveal an assemblage dominated by work clothes – shirts with white porcelain buttons and overalls with suspender buckles. There were, however, a few specimens suggestive of special clothes – for example the two collar buttons indicative of a man's dress shirt and the hose supporter indicative of hose use by a woman. The shoe remains are generally inconclusive, but certainly characteristic of work shoes (as opposed to dress wear). Personal decorative items are similarly rare – represented in the collection by only a few jewelry fragments and a single glass bead.

When the household furnishings are examined, we gain some idea of the occupants' household. There was a wood cook stove – there was no evidence of either coal or gas cooking – and an open fireplace, probably for heating. The home would have been lit with kerosene – there is little compelling evidence for electrical service.

Even more intimate aspects of the occupants' lives become apparent when we examine the recovered medicinal items (cosmetic items are nearly absent from the assemblage). Patent or over-the-counter medicines are present for what were possibly malaria, constipation, colds, and various liver complaints. Also recovered was evidence of various salves, including Vaseline. Although present, prescription medicine was far less common.

One of the more revealing items, however, was a hard rubber "pipe" or syringe, used primarily by women for douche. While douches are today often associated with cleanliness and hygiene, they were originally strongly associated with birth control. Wilkie (2003:148, 164), for example, briefly discusses the use of prophylactic douche, as well as other easily acquired herbal medicines, including even the various Castoria products. By the twentieth century family medical texts discussed douche as a means promoting cleanliness (Gunn 1901:467; Swartout 1943:393-394), perhaps as suggested by Wilkie, part of the legal campaign against abortion begun in the nineteenth century.

Recreational items were limited to tobacco, harmonicas, marbles – all likely used by adults – and doll fragments – suggestive of at least one female child.

There were also a number of agricultural items – plow parts, bucket

fragments, pulley fragments, tools, chains, and horse-related items. These are the artifacts that identify the occupant as a tenant – artifacts that bound the family to the land. In the case of 38RD1262 they comprised around 8% of the total assemblage – more than either the clothing or personal items.

38RD1260

This third site, representing a well rather than a privy, produced 6,370 specimens – nearly twice as many as found at the 38RD1262 privy. The collection dates from about 1935 to around 1955, temporally distinct from 38RD1262. Consistent with this the well produced automobile rather than wagon parts and evidence of the growing importance of electricity rather than a reliance on wood and kerosene. Even the architectural items are distinct, with two-thirds of the nails from the privy being machine cut and 90%of the nails from the well being wire.

Not only is the temporal span different, but the pattern represented by the remains is also distinct. As mentioned in the discussion of the 38RD1262 collection, there appear to be two distinct patterns (at least based on the limited evidence). The well collection appears to belong to the second of these patterns – one that is dominated by foodways with a relatively low to moderate incidence of household/structural remains. In this collection the purchasing power of the tenant was even more focused on foodways than at 38RD1262. There are a number of tenant sites with a similar pattern, including the Millwood tenant site, 38BK397, and 38HR131. The closest parallel, however, is found in the Sumter data.

Given the size of the collection it is perhaps not surprising that the foodways collection contains such a wide variety. The collection includes a tea kettle, several different types of coffee pots, tinware tableware, pots and pot lids, a preserving kettle, an iron frying pan and griddle, and a muffin tin. None of these items, in spite of their diversity, are particularly expensive. In fact, many are of very inexpensive, light weight materials. Similarly, inexpensive wares -- such as undecorated, decalcomania, tinted, and stamped whiteware – dominate the collection. The distribution of flatwares and hollowwares is nearly identical (55.2% and 43.1% respectively) compared to 38RD1262.

One of the more interesting foodways items is the glass container designed specifically for an electric butter churn. This item is identified in catalogs as costing nearly $50, or the equivalent of over $300 in today's money. The container or jar alone cost nearly $9 ($60.00 in 2002$). Not only does this item indicate the house had electricity, but it also suggests considerable disposable income – far and above what we would expect of a tenant. In addition, the electric churn would allow the production of far more butter than a normal family might use, perhaps suggesting either a cottage industry with the family selling excess or perhaps indicative of a communal purchase, similar to the sharing of pressure cookers during the depression.

The presence of children in the household is clearly indicated not only by toys in the collection, but also by the recovery of at least one Evenflo infant bottle, first marketed in 1935. Tenancy evokes the memory of the migrant worker mother nursing her infant at her breast – not using a glass bottle to provide formula. This is another item that seems out of place at a tenant site. The bottle may be associated with both the fresh milk (evidenced by the glass milk bottles) and the canned milk (found as small number of hole-in-top condensed milk cans).

Similarly out of place are the several plated (and one sterling) utensils found in the well – items that while perhaps heirlooms, were still expensive and far beyond anything seen in the FSA photographs of tenants' tables. Other features, however, seem entirely appropriate, such as the very large number of plain glass

tumblers – ubiquitous items seen in almost every period photograph.

Another interesting feature is the broad range of containers at the well. While three-quarters of the containers at the privy held alcohol, only about a fifth of the well assemblage held alcohol. The most common container at the well held food, with the proportion swelling when canning jars, milk bottles, and extract containers are added. Only soda bottles comprised about the same proportion of the assemblage at both sites. Canning jars (and their various accoutrements) are quite common at the well, with the jars comprising a fifth of the glass container assemblage. Many of the jars, however, appear rather dated – seemingly older than the site itself. One explanation is that the jars, with rather significant lifespans, were being gradually discarded, replaced by the convenience of ready-prepared and canned foods. When the variety is examined, we see a broad range of foods – from coffee to spices to condiments to canned and potted meats and fish. The diet at 38RD1260 appears to be far more diverse than indicated at 38RD1262.

Turning our attention from food and the kitchen to clothing, the collection at the well is diverse. We are certainly seeing a large collection of overalls and other utilitarian clothing, combined with relatively inexpensive work boots. But we also find evidence of nylon hose and some of the buttons are fancy (although not especially expensive). Shoes include a variety of seemingly "middle class" examples, such as the child's "neat stitchdowns" or oxfords, the woman's high and Cuban heels, the shoes specifically designed for the Boy Scouts, and men's two-eyelet styles. Even examples of sneakers are present in the assemblage.

Household items include a range of kerosene lamps and lanterns – representing a range of portable, wall mounted, and work lights. Other furnishings include such remains as mirror fragments, parts of a bed, and evidence of an iron stove. Also recovered were a number of items indicating that the household – at least toward the end of its history – had acquired electricity. Identified were such items as light bulbs – including a rather expensive blue lamp designed to imitate natural daylight – plug fuses for a breaker box, the previously discussed electric churn, and a porcelain light fixture. One of the more interesting items is part of an oil burner assembly – indicating that this dwelling had migrated from a wood or coal stove to a kerosene or oil stove, a small but significant "modern" improvement.

The architectural remains are dominated by wire nails and window glass. The nail sizes suggest a rather simple structure – making the recovery of French door latches seem very out of place. Otherwise, the rim locks and door knob fragments are all within our expectations for a tenant house of the period.

The collection of personal items – just over 6% of the assemblage – is among the most revealing.

Recreational items consist of the expected marbles, pocket knife, tobacco cans, and jewelry fragments. The children's toys, however, exhibit a diversity that seems out of place for a tenant. They are, for example, doll tea set pieces, a toy gun, and even an ice skate. The latter is clearly an oddity, not only given Richland County's warm winters, but also because the skate would have cost at least $3 to $4 – the equivalent of $30 to $50 in 2002$.

The personal items, especially those relating to medicinal and cosmetic functions, provide considerable insight concerning the 38RD1260 occupants. There are 64 recognizable medicine-related containers. The most common are those associated with first aid, accounting for 24.6% of the total and including seven salve or ointments, five petroleum jelly products (Vaseline and Moroline) containers, two Listerine containers, and two antiseptic containers.

The next most common group consists of those that are classified as unidentifiable (21.5%). These include what appear to be over the counter or patent medicines (six containers), six unidentifiable bottles, and two J.R. Watkins bottles.

Third in prevalence are antacids and laxatives, accounting for 18.5% of the assemblage and including two Phillips' Milk of Magnesia, one unbranded milk of magnesia, one Pepto Bismol, five cod liver or mineral oil bottles, one combination Viosterol and oil, and two Castoria bottles.

Prescription drugs comprise the fourth group, accounting for 10 containers and 15.4% of the collection.

Family planning items account for 7.7% of the collection and include a douche syringe, a vaginal pipe, douche tubing, Lydia E. Pickham's Medicine, and Cardui. Some, such as Wilkie (2003:164-165) would include a variety of other products. For example, Vaseline could be used as a contraceptive barrier as well as to affix diaphragms and sponges. There is some evidence that medicines such as Grove's and the castorias could be used as abortifacients.

The last two categories, each accounting for 6.1% of the total, are analgesics, and cough and cold medicines. In the former are four containers – one Anacin bottle and three aspirin containers. In the latter are two Vicks Vaporub containers, one Vicks Va-Tro-Nol, and one Grove's Tasteless Chill Tonic.

Unfortunately, other tenant studies have not provided the level of detail to allow comparisons, but (excluding unidentifiable containers), the prevalence of family planning items is of special interest. Whites have had sustained birth rate declines since about 1800, blacks since about 1850, although both groups experienced fertility fluctuations. For example both saw an increase in birth rates after WWII (the "Baby Boom" that did not decline until the 1960s). Conventional explanations have included the rising cost of children, the decline in agricultural employment, rising female employment, and declining child mortality. There were likewise changing attitudes concerning large families and contraception. The birthrate decline in the nineteenth century has been attributed to women exercising greater control over their lives. Finally, there are more complex theories focusing on such issues as the interaction of the size of generations with their income prospects and preferences for children versus material goods (Haines and Steckel 2001). While the archaeological evidence doesn't direct attention toward a specific explanation, we do see some indications that the occupants at 38RD1260 may have sought to exercise control over unwanted pregnancy. This provides an example of where archaeology is able to provide insights not immediately available from the documentary record alone.

Turning to the cosmetics, we find 56 containers in eight categories. The most common items were face creams, accounting for 24 vessels (42.8%), including 20 generic containers, three Pond's and one Nadinola.

The next most common were hand care products, accounting for 12 containers (21.4%), including eight lotions, three creams, and one identified as Jergens.

Next were hair care products, comprising 16.1% of the collection and including three shampoos, three oils, one Breck, and two Fitch's.

Scents accounted for four containers (7.1%), make-up for three (5.4%), deodorants for two (3.6%) and tooth care for one (1.8%). The last item is talcum, which may be a scent, infant care, or body care.

The abundance of face creams is interesting, especially given the product's association with bleaching or lightening the skin of both whites and blacks, as well as the power

the cosmetics industry had over turn of the century females (Peiss 1998). Nevertheless, we are again limited by our ability to find comparative collections – other researchers have not provided the level of detail necessary to discern patterns at other early twentieth century domestic sites.

When we look at the final category of labor, we see a dramatically reduced number of items associated with agriculture. There are only four horse or mule items and only four plow or agricultural tool items. There are, however, 27 automobile parts. Thus, while the site location is still clearly rural, the strong agricultural association seen at 38RD1262 is not present.

The collection from the 38RD1260 well is not so clearly tenant related as is 38RD1262 – there is limited evidence of agricultural activity, there is electricity, there are expensive items such as the ice skate, and there is an abundance of cosmetic items that would likely not be found in a tenant household. In spite of this, we are not certain if the occupants were something other than tenants or if we may be seeing improving economic conditions as a result of New Deal programs.

Directions for Future Work

One reviewer has questioned the ability of pattern studies – described as "little more than a comparison of empirically derived data sets with little to no interpretative value" – to address meaningful questions. Curiously, this same reviewer has strongly questioned the comparability of the patterns presented in Table 18, suggesting that site dating, sample sizes, or site formation processes may be affecting the patterns.

Although these positions – pattern analyses are of no value, yet we have inadequate pattern studies – seem to be in opposition to one another, we tend to agree, at least in part. There are meaningful questions concerning the usefulness of pattern studies – but is their seeming failure to yield tidy conclusions the result of basic flaws in the approach, the result of inadequate data, or perhaps even the result of multiple tenancy patterns that have yet to be discovered?

Our very brief overview suggests that the patterns that have been offered in the past may form two groups or clusters. At the present time we don't believe there are sufficient data to determine whether these clusters are valid and meaningful or simply random occurrences resulting from skewed data sets.

We are inclined to believe that there may be multiple tenant patterns. Just as the discipline has determined that slavery produces two patterns related to chronology and construction, is it not possible that we will observe similar chronological modifications of tenant patterns – assuming that we identify and adequately investigate temporally discrete settlements?

As a result, we believe that more data are needed, as long as those data are well defined, precisely collected, and fully analyzed. We believe that the current work clearly indicates the value of detailed excavation and analysis.

As an aside, we remain uncertain that Orser's artifact groupings are inherently better than those proposed by South – they seem to represent different roads to the same destination. What seems far more important than the precise method used, is the strategy used by the archaeologist in the field. Unfortunately few tenant sites are explored in sufficient detail to allow samples comparable to those at Longtown to be collected. Very few of the tenant studies we examined have any discussion of either privy or well features. It may help if archaeologists began to explore a broader range of tenant features and ensured collections where a very large assemblage was present.

The overview of historic documents and even census data shows clearly that only through archaeology are we likely to understand the lives of tenant farms or the transition out of tenancy.

Orser has suggested the need to study what the artifacts meant to the occupants, without really providing much guidance in that direction. This study suggests that very detailed analysis may be able to begin the process since it is only by understanding the artifact that we can understand its meaning.

For the last decade of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century we are fortunate to have a broad range of catalogs capable of providing a wealth of artifact-related data. Curiously, these resources have not been commonly used by archaeologists to provide that additional level of meaning urged by Orser. As a result, we believe that archaeological studies would benefit from a more common use of period catalogs.

The current study has also suggested several topics that may be worthy of future research. One is the study of privy standardization and the variation from published standards. Privies, when investigated by archaeologists, are generally seen only as repositories of artifacts – it may be useful to also examine their structure and function within rural agricultural society.

Other topics of considerable interest include rural health and sanitation, especially women's health and the control that women exercised over their own bodies and pregnancy. These are issues that have seen very limited documentary research and we believe that archaeological studies have the potential to make significant contributions.

Our reviewer has also suggested that while we have touched on issues of economic status, the research could go much further – calculating the total costs of various artifact categories and/or the entire assemblage, allowing the collection to be placed in a local or regional economic framework.

This would be an ambitious undertaking fraught with difficulties. It would require tremendous effort – and careful chronological control – to obtain averages of canned food prices, shoe costs, and cosmetic expenses. Since most catalogs are of national firms, it might also distort our understanding since studies such as that by Faville et al. (1942) suggest relatively few purchased directly from catalogs (this seems to be at least obliquely implied by Emmet and Jeuck [1950] as well). Such an endeavor would also require considerable funding – difficult to identify today. But most fundamentally, such an approach would require multiple data sets, each sampled in a very similar manner – so we return full circle to needing more careful excavations that explore a full range of the data sets and features present at tenant sites.