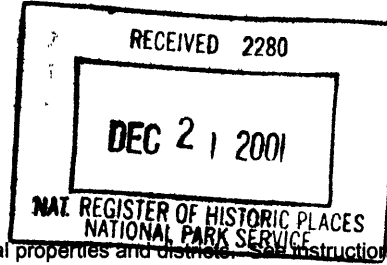


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 310 Price Road not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Mars Bluff x vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state South Carolina code SC county Florence code 041 zip code 29506

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally x statewide \_\_\_ locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 12/17/01  
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain):

Edson W. Beall 1-28-02  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
Name of Property

Florence County, South Carolina  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Domestic Subcategory: Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Vacant / Not in use Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
No style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation: Brick  
Walls: Weatherboard  
Roof: Tin  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
Name of Property

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage/Black  
Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1890 - 1945

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
South Caroliniana Library, U of SC

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
Name of Property

Florence County, South Carolina  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property:** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>17</u>	<u>624218</u>	<u>3785209</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>624124</u>	<u>3785091</u>
2	<u>17</u>	<u>624301</u>	<u>3785094</u>				

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Amelia Wallace Vernon (former owner of property)

organization \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 2350 Lucas Street, # 103, Florence, SC 29501

city or town Florence state SC

date August 28, 2001

telephone (843) 679 3283

zip code 29501

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple Owners (see continuation sheet)

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet for complete listing of names and addresses.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended(16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). **Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Section number 7 Page 5

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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The Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House is in Florence County, South Carolina, near the center of the rural community of Mars Bluff, at 310 Price Road. It is on a forested tract, but it sits in the middle of a cleared yard (.4 acre). The house has the distinguishing characteristic of a Mars Bluff vernacular tenant house, a gabled roof that slopes off at a shallow angle at the back, giving the house the typical shed-room profile. It also has the weathered siding, the narrow front porch with its three steps, and the crumbling brick chimney and foundation pillars. The front of the house is encircled by a branch from a magnificent post oak tree and two beautiful magnolias mark the edge of the woods to the north. Behind the house at the wood's edge is an Osage orange bush with long thorns, the kind of thorns that keep spirits away.

A man who specializes in Mars Bluff construction determined that the five rooms in the house were built at four different times. The original room (21' x 15') was built about 1890. A shed room (19' x 11') was added at the rear about 1910. In response to a tenant, Otis Waiters who needed more room for his family, a bedroom (12' x 15') was added beside the front room about 1920. The present front porch also dates from that time. In 1959, the original room was divided into two rooms, and finally in 1967 a 14' x 11' bedroom and a bath were added beside the kitchen. At that time a back porch was also added.

The house has historical integrity. It has never been moved from its original site and it conforms to the landowner's general practice of placing tenant houses at scattered locations. If the yard were clean-swept according to the African tradition, this house would look today very much as it did in the 1930s. Inside, small artifacts complete the picture of the tenant house. Layers of ragged linoleum tell of years when nothing was wasted, and sheets of newspapers folded into neat strips tell of the struggle to keep the wind out of the cracks. In the back yard is a noncontributing building, a small barn-like structure that houses the pump.

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Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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The Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House represents a broad cultural pattern that existed when most African Americans in the rural south lived in tenant houses from 1865 until World War II. The house also represents a particular aspect of the tenant house that was found in Mars Bluff where white landowners exercised control for a longer period through the use of a cartel that trapped African Americans in the tenant houses and in wage labor. The construction of the house is also significant because it preserves tangible evidence of the evolution of a typical Mars Bluff vernacular tenant house.

When J. Eli Gregg moved to Mars Bluff in 1836, he brought African-American slaves to plant and harvest cotton, but first they hewed timbers and built the houses in which they would live. After emancipation, African Americans wanted to buy small plots of land so that they could build their own homes. Owning their own homes and gardens would have made them free to offer themselves in a free labor market. But Gregg and other large land owners at Mars Bluff wanted to keep a supply of cheap labor, so they made secret agreements not to sell land to African Americans and not to allow them to move to another plantation without the consent of the previous landowner. Thus African Americans were kept dependent on the land owners for their houses, their food, and their jobs. The only concession that Gregg made was to add rooms to the old slave houses and to move some of the houses from the street to scattered locations on the farm.

About 1890, with tenants still working the farm, J. Eli Gregg's son Walter built the tenant house at 310 Price Road. Then in about 1920, when Walter Gregg's son-in-law, Wilds Wallace, was owner of the house, one of his best workers, Otis Waiters, had a rapidly growing family and wanted a larger house, so Wallace added a bedroom on the front of the house.

When mechanization reduced the need for farm labor and two world wars presented economic opportunities elsewhere, many African Americans left Mars Bluff and many tenant houses were abandoned. Still, for lack of other housing, people were obliged to continue living in tenant houses even when they were working in local service jobs or in industry. Ms. Mattie Smalls Gregg lived in the Price Road tenant house from 1959 until her death in 1989. Ten years later when her son moved from the house, he left behind a collection of tenant-house artifacts. Today, the artifacts are being preserved in the unoccupied house.

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Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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**Significance: Criterion C**

The Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House is a significant property under Criterion C because it is a typical Mars Bluff vernacular tenant house. That was a style that evolved from the one room slave house, first by the addition of a shed room at the rear and a front porch, then by the addition of a second room across the front of the house. The evolution from a slave house to tenant house was a pattern found throughout the south.

The house is also significant because in this one house can be seen the methods of construction used over seventy-seven years. Begun about 1890 as one large room, it was built of irregular dimension lumber, with large, hand-hewn sills. Some sills show that they had been used previously in another building. Similar irregular dimension lumber, such as floor boards ranging up to thirteen inches, was used ten years later when a shed-room kitchen was added at the rear. Many typical tenant houses were essentially completed when their occupants added shed-room kitchens, but oral history tells that the Gregg-Wallace tenant house evolved in response to the needs of the family occupying it. By 1920 Otis Walters needed a larger house for his growing family and added a room beside the front room, using dimension lumber and six inch sills.

This portion of the house shows an eccentric method of construction that was used by Mars Bluff carpenters. The braced beam construction has the corner bracing at the base of the posts, rather than at the top. In 1959 in preparation for Ms. Gregg's moving there, the original part of the house which had been one room (15' by 21') was divided into two rooms. In 1967, a third bedroom, a bathroom, and a back porch were added and an electric pump replaced the old hand pump in the back yard.

Though the house still wears some white paint, it has the weathered look so commonly seen in tenant houses and its brick foundation pillars are badly in need of repair. Still, it boasts a new tin roof and it stands erect and secure while most tenant houses have decayed into nothingness.

Because Mars Bluff has oral histories and photographs, it can document the evolution of one room slave houses into narrow tenant houses with the characteristic lean-to addition at the rear. This conversion occurred on many other plantations throughout the south, though most do not have the documentation that Mars Bluff has. Also at Mars Bluff, oral histories tell of further evolution where, in response to the needs of individual families as with the nominated house, narrow tenant houses evolved into tenant houses that were two rooms wide. (See Appendix A.)

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The Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House is located less than a mile from the 1836, African-American, hewn-timber houses on Francis Marion University campus. Together, the two sites will show the radical difference between the hewn-timber construction of 1836 and the siding construction of 1890.<sup>1</sup>

Significance: Criterion A

The Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House is a significant property under Criterion A because it preserves tangible evidence about a broad cultural pattern, i. e., life in a tenant house, the predominant form of housing for African Americans in the rural south for over a half-century after emancipation.<sup>2</sup> The study of this tenant house will have special significance because historians have generally seen tenant houses as merely a part of the plantation production system. This house, examined from the point of view of the people who lived there, will help to fill a data gap about African-American cultural patterns.

Also, evidence about the existence of a cartel in relation to Gregg-Wallace tenant houses makes the nominated house of utmost significance in stimulating investigation of twentieth century cartels that worked behind the scenes to effect broad patterns of history. African Americans who lived in the tenant houses could not buy land nor could they move to another farm without permission. The cartel and the oppressive Jim Crow laws combined to enforce a system of intimidation that guaranteed the planters cheap labor and set strict boundaries on the behavior of the people who lived in tenant houses.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the house itself, Ms. Gregg left artifacts that give evidence of how African Americans lived during the eighty years that she had been a tenant-house occupant. She left her lodge record books. In them, students can study an organization that had its roots in ancient

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<sup>1</sup> McDaniel writes of a similar transition from log to frame construction having occurred in southern Maryland. McDaniel, Hearth and Home, 136.

<sup>2</sup> Trinkley's finding of archeological evidence of twenty-five tenant houses on the Gibson land in northwest Mars Bluff and an equal number I recall on the Gregg-Wallace land indicate that simply by weight of the numbers, the tenant houses were an important pattern in Mars Bluff history.. Michael Trinkley and Natalie Adams, Archeological, Historical, and Architectural Survey of the Gibson Plantation Tract, Florence County, South Carolina (Columbia: Chicora Foundation, 1992), 43, 79.

<sup>3</sup> Archie Waiters supplied evidence about sharecropper Frank Fleming who lived on the Gregg-Wallace farm, the same farm as the tenant house at 310 Price Road. Fleming was not free to move to another plantation because of an agreement among the plantation owners not to offer housing or employment to African Americans from another man's plantation without consent from that plantation owner. For details see Appendix A or Amelia Wallace Vernon, African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 149.



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African secret societies. Ms. Gregg also left a reminder of the years of grinding poverty, a bed sheet made of sewed-together sacks. Then from the years when people who worked in industry were still trapped in the tenant houses, she left stacks of Ebony magazines and a gilt-framed photograph of Robert Kennedy. Ms. Gregg left letters from Norfolk, Baltimore, Richmond, Washington, and Philadelphia, New York—the story of the Great Migration. She left a photograph of her sister, Everlena, who used to live in the next tenant house down the road. In the picture, she is leaning in the doorway of a Philadelphia row house, a neat brick building with white steps.

In addition to tangible artifacts, oral histories have brought the nominated tenant house to life by telling of the people who lived there. There was Peter Frazier, a deaf man, who spent his life ditching to make South Carolina swamps into cotton fields. There was Otis Waiters, who hoboed to Mars Bluff on a train seeking his fortune and spent the rest of his life in Gregg-Wallace tenant houses as a wage laborer and sharecropper. There was Ruth Martin, who had the cleanest swept yard and the prettiest flowers in Mars Bluff.

The house is significant because it tells of life as it was lived by countless African Americans all over the south. Still, it may be that the house's most significant contribution will be to raise questions about cartels that have remained largely unacknowledged though they have exerted a profound impact on African American history.

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Section number 9 page 10

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Select Bibliography

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- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.
- Higgs, Robert. *Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy 1865-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Kovacik, Charles F., and John J. Winberry. *South Carolina: The Making of a Landscape*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.
- Mandle, Jay R. *The Root of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy after the Civil War*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1978.
- McDaniel, George W. *Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.
- Orser, Charles E., Jr. *The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation: Historical Archaeology in the South Carolina Piedmont*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988.
- Ransom, Roger L., and Richard Sutch. *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Simpson, Robert R., ed. History by James McBride Dabbs, Drawings by Ernest Little Helms III. *Pee Dee Panorama Revisited*. Greenville: South Carolina: A Press, 1984.
- Trinkley, Michael, and Natalie Adams. *Archeological, Historical, and Architectural Survey of the Gibson Plantation Tract, Florence County, South Carolina*. Columbia: Chicora Foundation, 1992.

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Section number 9 page 11

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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Vance, Rupert B. *How the Other Half is Housed: A Pictorial Record of Sub-Minimum Farm Housing in the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936.

Vernon, Amelia Wallace. *African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993.

Williamson, Joel. *After Slavery: The Negro In South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965.

Electronic Sources for Photographs

Wolcott, Marion Post. "Part of old plantation showing line of tenant houses along road leading to main house. Georgia." May 1939. *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*. Library of Congress. [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>].

-----, "Row of tenant houses near Montezuma, Georgia." May 1939. *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*. Library of Congress. [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>].

-----, "One of the tenant houses which has electricity on Marcella Plantation, Mileston, Mississippi Delta, Mississippi." October 1939. *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*. Library of Congress. [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>].

Personal Communications

McCool, Janet Hunt. Letter to author, February 2001.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Section number 9 Page 12

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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Public Documents

United States Census, 1860, Schedule 2. Slave Inhabitants in the County of Marion,  
State of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S. C.

Maps

United States Geological Survey Map, Florence Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Topographic.

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Section number 10 Page 13

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black line marked "Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House" on the accompanying Florence County Tax Map #475, Parcel 245, drawn at a scale of 1" = 100'.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is restricted to the historic tenant house and its immediate setting.

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Section: Photographs Page 14

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of property: Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
Location: 310 Price Road, Mars Bluff vicinity  
Florence County, South Carolina

Name of photographer: Amelia Wallace Vernon  
Date of photographs: October 2000  
Location of original negatives: S. C. Department of Archives & History,  
Columbia, South Carolina

1. Front of house (camera direction: east)
2. North side of house (camera direction: southeast)
3. Rear of house (camera direction: northwest)
4. South side of house (camera direction: northeast)
5. House as viewed from Price Road (camera direction: northeast)
6. Back door of house (camera direction: west)
7. Osage orange bush at edge of back yard (camera direction: east)

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Section: Owners' Addresses Page 15

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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There are three owners of the nominated property. Their addresses are as follows:

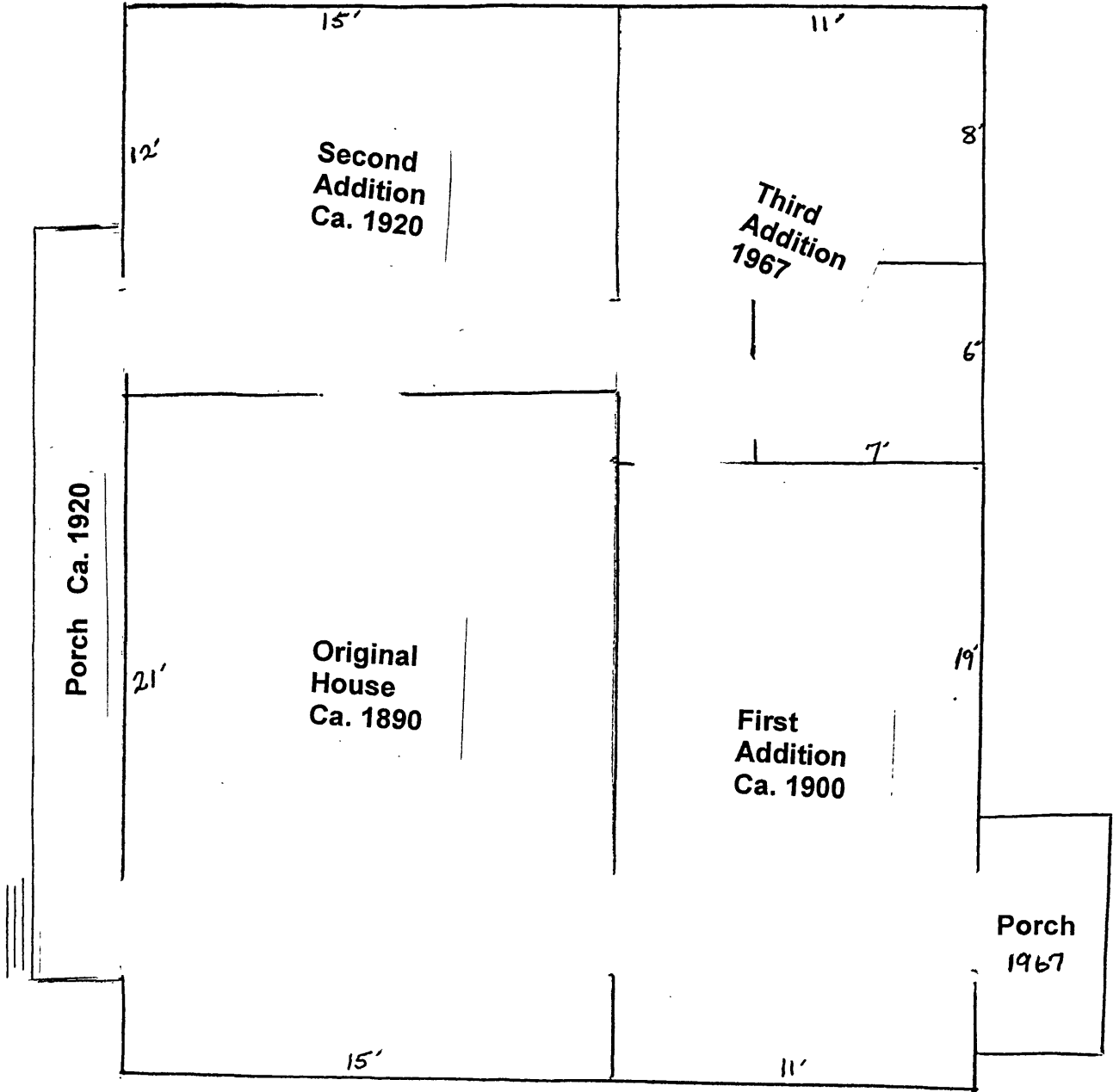
Ms. Jane Hamilton Vernon  
P. O. Box 886  
North Myrtle Beach, SC 29597

Mr. Robert Gordon Vernon  
P. O. Box 33  
Kaktovik, AK 99747

Dr. Walter Benson Vernon  
2201 S. Fillmore  
Denver, CO 80210

Diagram of house

Price Road



North



South



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Appendix A: Evolution of Tenant Houses Page 1

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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Appendix A  
Evolution of Tenant Houses

Many tenant houses throughout the South were remarkably similar to the Gregg-Wallace tenant house at 310 Price Road because they started out as one room houses and evolved in the same way that the 310 Price Road house evolved. Frequently a one room house was enlarged in the cheapest way possible, by adding a shed room at the rear.<sup>1</sup> This widespread practice has been unusually well documented on the Gregg-Wallace land through photographs and oral histories. The story is presented in this appendix because I have not found it presented elsewhere and it seems to make an important point: *Though most tenant houses in the south have vanished and we can not know definitively, probably the shed-room profile was the most common characteristic to be found in African- American tenant houses.*

Here is the story of the building of tenant houses as it probably occurred all over the south. Imagine the J. Eli Gregg plantation in the spring of 1865 on the day that the war ended. African Americans were living in fifteen slave houses.<sup>2</sup> Before the day ended they were freedmen, so the houses they were living in had become tenant houses. For that reason, the early tenant houses were not planned nor designed. They evolved.<sup>3</sup> Over the years, Gregg added to the one room houses, shed rooms on the rear and porches on the front.<sup>4</sup> (See Figures 1 – 5.) Similar additions are seen in tenant houses in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. (See Figures 6 – 9.)

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<sup>1</sup> Rupert Vance, in his book depicting various tenant houses, wrote that "lean-tos" or shed rooms were characteristic of poorer housing. Vance, Rupert B. How the Other Half is Housed: A Pictorial Record of Sub-Minimum Farm Housing in the South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> The 1860 census lists Gregg as owning 15 slaves houses. United States Census, 1860, Schedule 2. Slave Inhabitants in the County of Marion, state of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S. C.

<sup>3</sup> McDaniel wrote, "Structural investigation thus far of houses in southern Maryland has produced no evidence to differentiate a slave house of the 1850s from a tenant house of the 1870s. He quoted W. E. B. DuBois about housing for freeemen in the south near the turn of the century, "One and two-room cabins still prevail," and "at least one-third of the Negroes of the land live in one-room houses." McDaniel, Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Ransom wrote about housing conditions: "Evidence on housing conditions for black farmers in the cotton belt at the turn of the century suggests that although ex-slaves and their descendants had more space than their parents had been given on the antebellum plantation, the quality of housing was not much better." Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The economic consequences of emancipation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 11.

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Continuation Sheet**

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
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Appendix A: Evolution of Tenant Houses Page 2

Oral histories tell about the next stage in the evolution of some of the tenant houses. Archie Waiters said that, about 1920, Hillard and Fannie Ellison had a large family so Wilds Wallace made additions to one of the 1836 hewn-timber houses for them. He added a second large room beside the original room, a long porch, and three rooms in a shed-room addition. (See Figure 10.) The house at 310 Price Road, similar to the Jolly house in size and shape, was also enlarged for the same reason, Otis Waiters's large family needed more space. Although these houses were two rooms wide and had two front doors, they had exactly the same profile as the tenant houses that were one room wide. It is this shed-room, or lean-to, profile which seems to be the most common characteristic in African-American tenant houses.

Appendix A  
Evolution of Tenant Houses  
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**Fig. 1. 1836 hewn-timber house**

This is how Ms. Catherine's house looked after all additions were removed and it was returned to its original size. It probably looked very much like this when it was first built by African Americans when they moved to Mars Bluff with J. Eli Gregg in 1836. They were living in these houses when emancipation came, and a plat shows that eight houses were still on the street in 1870. Photo 1997.

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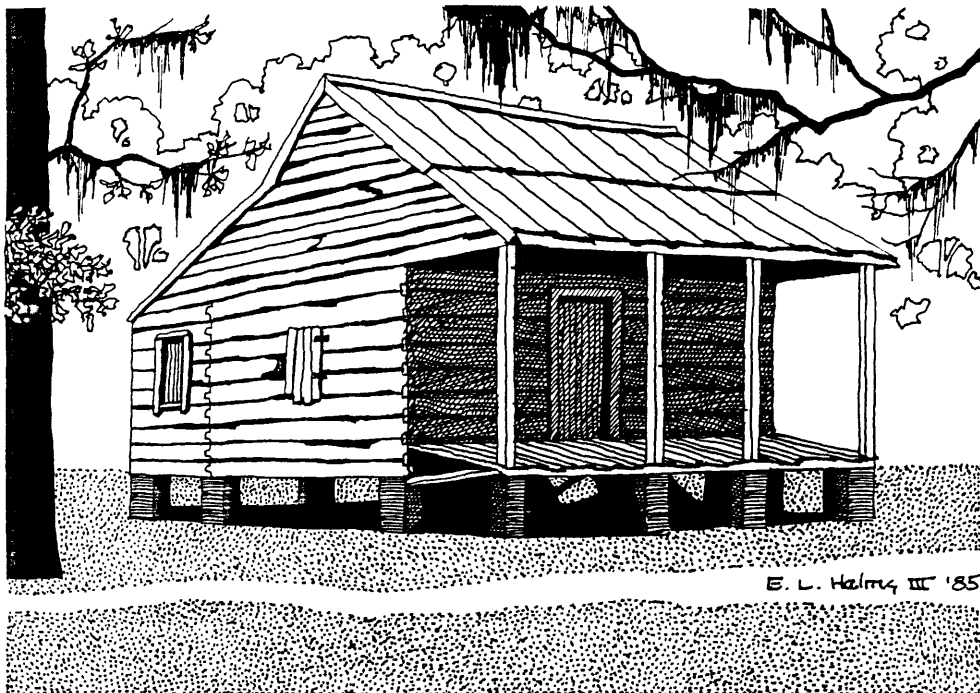


Fig. 2. Ms. Catherine's house, drawing

This drawing of Ms. Catherine's house shows how some of the 1836 hewn-timber houses were modified, probably sometime between 1870 and 1900. A shed room was added at the back of the house and a porch added on the front. Some of the houses were moved to scattered locations on the farm. This house was moved to a pretty spot at the edge of the woods. Today it is called Ms. Catherine's house because Catherine and Archie Waiters lived in it from the 1930s to the 1950s. Drawing by Ernest Little Helms, III, early 1980s. Robert R. Simpson, Editor, History by James McBride Dabbs, Drawings by Ernest Little Helms III, Pee Dee Panorama Revisited (Greenville, South Carolina: A Press, 1984), xxi.

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**Fig. 3. Ms. Catherine's house, rear view**

The shed room at the rear contained a kitchen and a small bedroom. Photo ca. 1974.

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**Fig. 4. Ms. Catherine's house, kitchen**

This part of the shed room was the kitchen. The stove sat in the left corner and the flue went out where the patch shows near ceiling height. There was no chimney. Photo 1976 by Hal Campbell.

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**Fig. 5. Ms. Catherine's house, shed bedroom**

Half of the shed room was a bedroom. There was a window in the far wall where the photo makes it look as if it was a door. Photo 1976 by Hal Campbell.



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Fig. 6. Georgia tenant houses

These houses are similar to Ms. Catherine's house in that they have the same gabled roof with the shed room addition at the rear. Photo: Marion Post Wolcott. "Part of old plantation showing line of tenant houses along road leading to main house. Georgia." May 1939. America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945. Library of Congress. [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>] (May 2001).

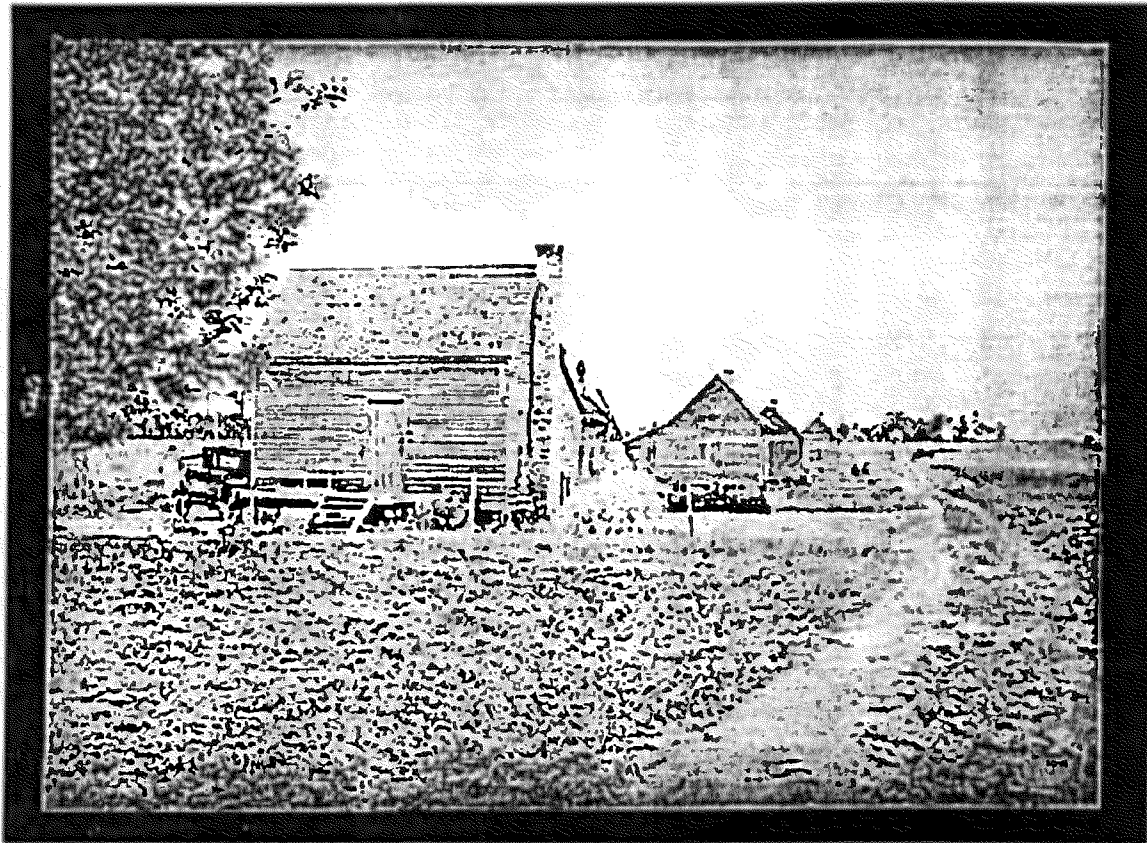


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**Fig. 7. Montezuma, Georgia tenant houses**

These clapboard tenant houses have the gabled roof with the shed room addition at the rear, similar to Ms. Catherine's house. The house in the foreground also has a very small front porch. Photo: Marion Post Wolcott. "Row of tenant houses near Montezuma, Georgia." May 1939. America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945. Library of Congress. [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>] (May 2001).

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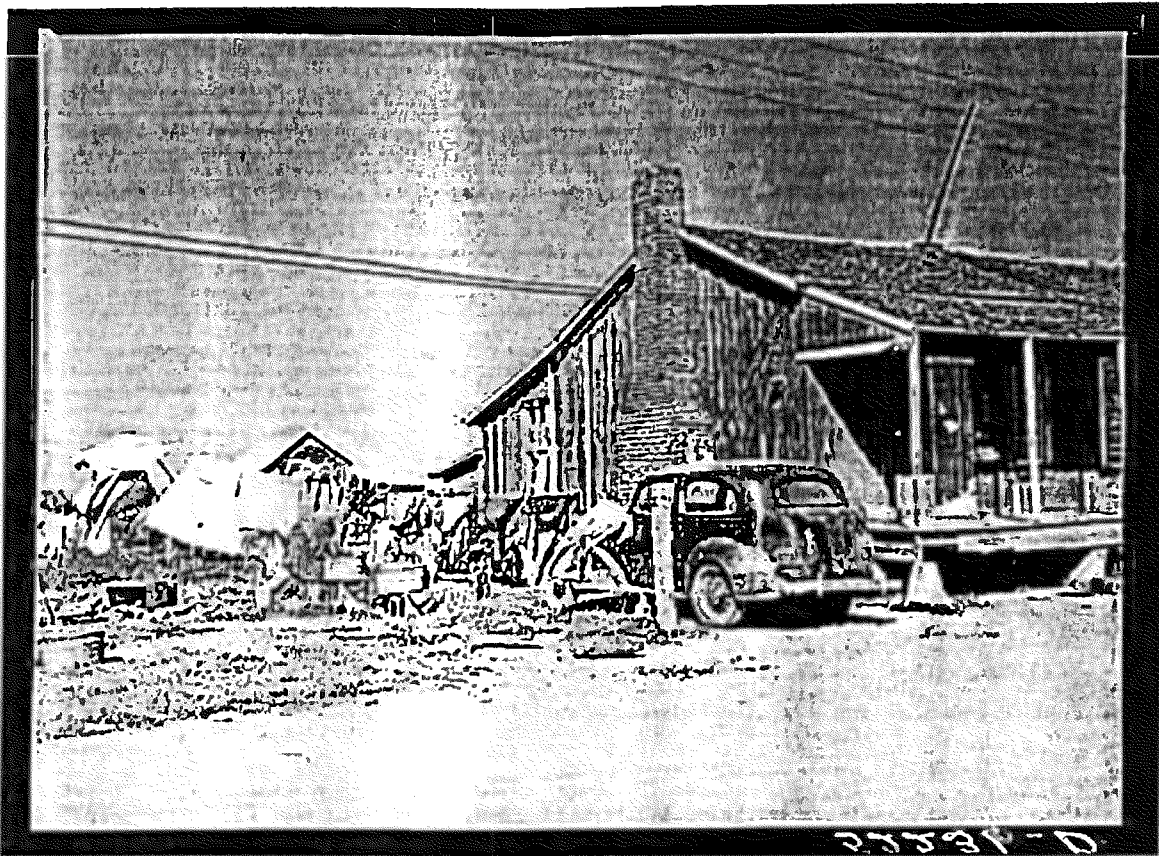


Fig. 9. Mississippi tenant house

This tenant house of board and batten construction has the profile of the gabled roof with the shed room addition at the rear and the narrow porch at the front. Photo: Marion Post Wolcott. "One of the tenant houses which has electricity on Marcella Plantation, Mileston, Mississippi Delta, Mississippi." October 1939. America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945. Library of Congress. [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>] (May 2001).

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**Fig. 8. Spartanburg tenant house**

This photo from Spartanburg County, South Carolina, shows a tenant house with a shed-room profile similar to those seen at Mars Bluff. Photo copied from Charles F. Kovacik and John J. Winberry, South Carolina: The making of a landscape (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 109.

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**Fig. 10. Larger houses evolved**

The tenant house seen in the background of this photo was one of the 1836 hewn-timber houses with additions that had more than doubled its size in response to the needs of the Ellison family. It still had the same profile as the tenant houses that were one room wide though it had two 20 x 18 rooms across the front, a long front porch with two front doors, and three rooms in the shed addition at the rear. Photo about 1962.

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**Fig. 11. 310 Price Road tenant house**

Though it is two rooms wide, the Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House at 310 Price Road, has the same profile as the tenant houses that were one room wide, i. e., a gabled roof that tapers off over a shed-room addition. Photo October 2000.

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Appendix B: Questions to be Explored Page 1

**Appendix B  
Questions to be Explored**

The Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House at 310 Price Road, Mars Bluff, South Carolina, is a rich resource for scholars because it reveals tangible evidence of our history and it is associated with a wealth of artifacts and oral history about African-American life on the Gregg-Wallace land. Most important, the house focuses on long neglected questions about the people who lived there. How did the tenant-house system control the occupant's lives? What were they thinking, dreaming, fearing?

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**Question 1. He went up the road?**

**What do the words “he went up the road” tell us about the people who lived in Mars Bluff tenant houses?**

At Mars Bluff, those words were spoken frequently. For example, if I went to Sallie Brown's home and asked to speak with her, I might be told, “She's gone up the road, she'll be right back.” I would know that she was nearby, perhaps at a neighbor's house, and that I should wait for her return. Probably a child would run to tell her that I was there, and within a few minutes I would see her coming down the road.

But there was another way that the phrase was used. I might ask an old man at Mars Bluff, “What ever became of Percy Brown?”

He would reply simply, “He went up the road.” That would be all the old man would say though he knew much more. He knew that when Brown had left Mars Bluff, he had gone to Philadelphia. He also knew that Brown had worked for the gas company for many years, was now retired, and was still living in Philadelphia. Why would people who were generally so helpful, have used a stock phrase to avoid saying where a person had gone?



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It made no sense unless you understood that, for over half a century after emancipation, African Americans were not free to move from the plantations on which they were living. If they tried to do such an audacious thing, they could be sure they would find no housing elsewhere in that community for the plantation owners had an unwritten agreement. They would not offer housing or employment to an African American from another man's plantation without consent from that plantation owner.

The people who lived in the tenant houses understood that if they left one plantation, their entire family would be in the road—with no shelter, no food, no money, no job, and no hope of obtaining any of those things. The tenants understood that unwritten law and feared that terrible fate.

Consequently, when a man had gone north, no one dared to say where he was. Though the plantation owner did not control housing in the north, he still controlled the tenant house in which the departed man's family lived, and that family could be turned out of their house with no hope of finding another place to live. It was a fearsome consequence and one that warranted the stock phrase "he went up the road" to avoid saying that a man had left the plantation on which he was supposed to be living.

**Question 2. What did they want?**

**During all the years when African Americans were living in the tenant houses, what did they want most of all?**

Land. That was the one desire of every freedman's heart. His roots went back to Africa where the earth was considered the place where the spirits of the ancestors and the earth god resided. Africans also believed that the present generation held the land in trust to be tended and preserved for the descendants. In addition to this deep emotional attachment to the land, African Americans came from an African tradition of subsistence agriculture. In Africa, every man had a right to a piece of land to raise his own food. In South

Carolina, each freedman wanted a tiny piece of land where he could build his own house and tend his little crops.

Land ownership would have made African Americans self-sufficient and free to offer themselves in a free labor market. But white landowners wanted control of cheap labor, so they did not want to see the establishment of a free labor market. That is why the Mars Bluff planters were so adamantly opposed to selling land to African Americans.

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Eric Foner specifically mentioned the Florence area in his discussion of efforts to keep African American laborers under the absolute control of the white land owners. Foner wrote, "Night riders in Florence, South Carolina, killed a freedman on one plantation 'because it is rented to colored men, and their desire is that such a thing ought not to be.'" <sup>1</sup> Here where renting land was considered sufficient reason to kill a man, the point was well made that African Americans should not own land.

The only historians writing at that time were European Americans. Did they tell the true story about what African Americans wanted?

Some recent historians have correctly read the African American longing. Joel Williamson wrote, "The great mass of Negroes in South Carolina at the end of the Civil War hoped and expected that each would soon be settled on his own plot of earth. Indeed, to the Negro agrarian freedom without land was incomprehensible."<sup>2</sup> But generally, that chapter of African American history is presented in the literature from the white perspective. Almost invariably the story is told that in 1865 the freedmen did not want to work for wages as gang laborers on the plantations--that was too much like their lives as slaves. What they wanted was to sharecrop.

That was not true. What they wanted was to own a piece of land. They looked upon sharecropping as superior to wage labor, but that was not what they wanted.

The African Americans' desire for land was misrepresented at Mars Bluff in the same way that it was misrepresented in the literature. Walter Gregg, a son of J. Eli Gregg, wrote to his wife on December 26, 1867. "I have not as yet gotten all the labor I wish for another year as I am trying to hire for wages; and a portion of the crop is the popular idea of the freemen; but as labor will be abundant I have no fears that I will be able to accomplish what I wish."<sup>3</sup>

So at Mars Bluff, as in the literature, the white people were saying that what the African Americans wanted was to sharecrop. There was no mention that what they wanted most desperately was to own a piece of land.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 429.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861 - 1877 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 54.

<sup>3</sup> Vernon, African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 145.



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To learn their true thoughts and dreams, listen to what the African Americans at Mars Bluff were saying to each other--and not just in the 1860s. This passion for a small plot of earth did not die. It was probably as recent as the 1930s that the following conversation took place between Archie Waiters and "Pa," his grandfather Alex Gregg. Keep in mind that Gregg was born in 1844. In 1865 he was a young man hoping for a plot of land. And here, over a half century later, he was still hoping.

Pa say when they come over here they tell them they cleaning up this land and they get everything settle down they give them a mule and forty acres of land. That what he tell me.

I say, "Pa, they don't have to—Man, where your land at?"

He say, "They ain't give it to me."

I say, "Well, you ain't get none then. You going to have to be—You ain't going to get none then."

He say, "That what they promised, a mule and forty acres of land."<sup>4</sup>

There was Gregg over a half century after emancipation, living in a tenant house and practicing his expert farming skills on someone else's land. What endless disappointment and frustration he must have felt through all those years. Still, he held on to his dream that he would be able to own a piece of land.

### Question 3. Cartels?

**How did cartels effect the lives of African Americans who lived in tenant houses?**

To understand the extent of the frustration under which the African Americans at Mars Bluff labored, there needs to be an exploration of cartels. Eric Foner and Jay Mandle suggest points at which to begin.

Eric Foner explained the overall problem that caused the southern plantation owners to turn to the cartel as a solution. Foner wrote, "A large landed estate specializing

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<sup>4</sup> Vernon, African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 150.

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in the production of a staple crop for the world market, the plantation has historically required a disciplined, dependent labor force, since planters have found it nearly impossible to attract free laborers, especially where either land or alternative employment opportunities are available. Like their counterparts in other societies, American planters believed that the South's prosperity and their own survival as a class depended, as a Georgia newspaper put it, upon 'one single condition'—*the ability of the planter to command labor.*"<sup>5</sup>

Jay Mandle wrote that in those areas of the south where the land was largely held by plantation owners, there existed what he called a "plantation economy." He defined it as distinct from feudal where the workers had a claim to the land and from capitalist where the workers were free to enter into and out of employer/employee contractual relationships. Plantation economies required a larger labor force than could be obtained profitably in a free labor market. Consequently they had to rely on some other mechanism to obtain sufficient labor. Slavery was the method used until 1865. After emancipation, mobilization of labor depended on the authority of the planter. "Where the authority of the planter ended so too did the plantation as a viable institution."<sup>6</sup>

Mandle explained how the planter's authority was maintained, "in the tenant Plantation South the legal control of labor-as-slaves gave way to planter control over land and the food supply as the customary means of stabilizing the labor of sharecroppers."<sup>7</sup> Stressing how all-encompassing was the planter's control, Mandle wrote, "Aside from the use of violence, *the ultimate sanction available to the planters was the denial of work and lodging to black workers and their families who overstepped the behavioral norms of the society.*"<sup>8</sup>

"The behavioral norms of the society." What did Mandle mean by that phrase? He saw that the norms of society were determined by two themes. The first was that African Americans were an inferior race. The second was that the planters dominated all institutions both private and state and that they used those institutions to maintain their control over African Americans.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Internal quotes and italics are Foner's. Foner, Reconstruction, 128-29.

<sup>6</sup> Jay R. Mandle, The Root of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy after the Civil War (Durham: Duke University Press, 1978), 10 -13.

<sup>7</sup> Mandle, The Roots of Black Poverty, xiv. Charles E. Orser, Jr., The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation: Historical Archaeology in the South Carolina Piedmont (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 19.

<sup>8</sup> Italics are mine. Mandle. The Roots of Black Poverty, 47.

<sup>9</sup> Mandle, The Roots of Black Poverty, viii.

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The entire fabric of the community was woven to support the authority of the planters and to hold the tenant house occupants as an inferior race. African Americans no longer wore shackles. They were now shackled by the norms of society, the countless invisible lines over which they dared not cross. To cross any one of those lines was to risk the loss of the tenant house in which they were living, and it was their only hope for survival.

That was the world in which the Mars Bluff African Americans lived. They must have felt surrounded on all sides by invisible walls. Surely it was a prison more frustrating than shackles. Only a people filled with faith and hope could have survived that imprisonment with such grace.

**Question 4. Cartels in the twentieth century?**

**What do the Gregg-Wallace tenant houses have to contribute to questions about the cartels?**

Cartels were spoken of openly in the late 1860s. DeBow's Review told of a planter who "reported how he and his 'club' blacklisted freedmen who broke their contracts or failed to conform to the club's behavioral ideals."<sup>10</sup> Historians writing about that period acknowledged the existence of landowner's cartels all across the south and specifically in some places close to Mars Bluff, for example in Sumter and Beaufort.<sup>11</sup> But the history books are generally silent about cartels in the early twentieth century. Had they ceased to exist or were they carried on secretly by long-standing tacit agreements?

In an interview about other subjects, Archie Waiters happened to give evidence that a half-century after emancipation there still existed a cartel that limited the freedom of Gregg-Wallace tenant houses occupants. Waiters told of an incident involving sharecropper Frank Fleming who lived in a Gregg-Wallace tenant house. At that time, J. Wilds Wallace, son-in-law of Walter Gregg, was owner of that part of the Gregg plantation. Wilds Wallace died in 1928, so this incident took place some time before 1928. Waiters said--

One time Frank Fleming and . . . [the landowner] had fall out about something. And he [Fleming] said, "I'll move."

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<sup>10</sup> Orser, The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro In South Carolina During Reconstruction, 99-100.

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[The landowner] say, "You ain't getting a house. Where you going? You about stay here with me."

. . . Told him he couldn't even find no house. . . . And he didn't get no house.

The landowner only had to say the word, and no one had allowed Fleming to have a place to live even though he was known as a man of exceptionally fine character. At Mars Bluff as recently as the early twentieth century, the European-American community was still united in its determination to keep African Americans under its economic control.<sup>12</sup>

This illustrates how, by means of a cartel, the owners of the tenant houses maintained control over African Americans, whether it was moving or not moving that the tenant wanted to do. On the one hand, a man as highly respected as Frank Fleming was not free to carry out his decision to move. On the other hand, a tenant who wanted to stay in the house he was occupying could be thrown out of that house and refused housing by every other plantation owner.

Charles Orser pointed out that the issues raised by Mandle are important ones that require further examination.<sup>13</sup> It is anticipated that the study of these issues will reveal that, contrary to the impression given by the long silence on this subject, cartels played a significant role which effected broad patterns of our history.

**Question 5. Did the roof leak?**

**Did the cartels play a role in the abysmal condition of the tenant houses?**

A leaking roof may sound like a minor detail not worthy of consideration, but to an occupant of a tenant house it was a source of regular distress and sleepless nights. Gilbert Fite describes the state of repair of the tenant houses. "Many of these houses had holes in the roof, walls, and floor. They leaked when it rained. . . . One tenant was asked if her house leaked when it rained. 'No it don't leak in here, it jest rains in here and leaks

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<sup>12</sup> Vernon, African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 149.

<sup>13</sup> Orser, The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation, 19.

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outdoors.” Another described the state of repair of her house as , “We jest living outdoors.”<sup>14</sup>

Ms. Mamie Egleton, a dear African-American woman who lived in one of the better Gregg-Wallace tenant house, reported one morning that she was worn out. They had been moving around all night trying to find places to sleep where the rain wasn't coming in.

Such abysmal upkeep of the tenant houses was no doubt caused in part by the shortage of money available for repairs. It was no doubt also caused by the existence of the cartel. If African Americans were not free to leave a house no matter how poor it was, there was no economic reason for the owner to maintain the houses in a good state of repair.

**Question 6. Were cartels rare?**

**Was the existence of a cartel something peculiar to Mars Bluff or did they exist throughout much of the south?**

Were effective cartels as rare as many historians say they were? Many historians have written about the balance of power that existed between the plantation owners and the African-American labor force, claiming that the balance of power enabled workers to enter into free contractual relations with employers. Some historians have stated that cartels could not succeed. Robert Higg's words are typical of such statements. “Intense competition for the scarce labor services of the blacks precluded successful organization by the planters. An official of the Freedman's Bureau reported from Lowndes County, Alabama: ‘Such was the demand for negro laborers . . . that any combination to abridge their freedom in seeking and changing homes, or to control the price of labor, failed utterly.’”<sup>15</sup>

If these historians were correct, how was it possible that a cartel could still be effective at Mars Bluff in the twentieth century? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that they were speaking of areas where the demand for African Americans laborers was greater than the supply. If that was the reason, it could be inferred that where there was an overabundance of African American laborers, cartels could be successful. Mars Bluff

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<sup>14</sup>Gilbert C. Fite, Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture 1865-1980 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1984), 121.

<sup>15</sup>Robert Higgs, Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy 1865 - 1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 48.

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seems to have had an abundance of African American laborers. That may be why Mars Bluff did not conform to the prediction that a cartel could not succeed.

Or there may be another explanation for why Mars Bluff seems at odds with the statements of so many historians? Maybe Mars Bluff does not conform to their statements because those statements were not as universally true as was implied. Historians would have had difficulty finding evidence of successful cartels because where planters maintained successful cartels, there was a taboo against mentioning them.

Such a taboo against speaking of the cartel at Mars Bluff existed well into the twentieth century. Only when farm laborers were no longer needed, would it have been permissible to mention the cartel. But by that time the cartel was shrouded in so much secrecy and forgetting that few people recalled it. Those who did recall it, had been habituated to never mention it. I suspect that cartels were more often successful than the scholarly literature would have us believe and that questions about the incidence of successful cartels are deserving of further study.

**Question 7. Equal opportunity?**

**Did whites and African-Americans face the same problems when they were living in tenant houses?**

Some economists say that, after the Civil War, African Americans tenants faced the same problem that white tenants faced, monopsony, i. e., the absence of competitive labor markets. Both whites and blacks were laborers and there was only one employer for their labor.<sup>16</sup>

This is obviously not true when one considers that there were no cartels to forbid selling land to white sharecroppers or to bind them to the plantation on which they currently resided. They were free to buy land and to move to another farm if that owner offered them a better arrangement. Furthermore, whites were not disadvantaged as African Americans were by the prejudice that they were an inferior race and deserved to be subject to the control of white landowners.

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<sup>16</sup> Janet Hunt McCool, letter to author, February 2001.

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**Question 8. Tenant houses and education?**

**Are we effected today by the tenant-house owner's attitude toward the education of African American children?**

Here is a story that best defines the attitude that people had about the education of African-American children who lived in the tenant-houses. It is one of the saddest stories told in my family, and the saddest part of it is that it was assumed to be a funny story.

Sometime before 1928, the teacher at Mars Bluff Colored School was a man who lived in Florence. He could catch a morning train in Florence and get to Mars Bluff in time for school. But one morning he came on a later train and he was hurrying past the store, late for school. On seeing Wilds Wallace, one of the school trustees, he called out his apologies for being late. As the teacher hurried on, Wallace said for the benefit of his white audience, "I don't care if you never get there."

It is a terrible story but it defines the situation. The trustee was the owner of many tenant houses, including the one at 310 Price Road. He believed that African-American children should get minimal education because he wanted them to be incapable of doing anything except farm work. His primary concern was having enough cheap labor for the plantation. His views were shared by most of the people in power in the South at that time, and they were successful in keeping African American children uneducated for generation after generation.<sup>17</sup>

An understanding of this situation gives rise to many questions. (1) How does this attitude effect the education of African-American children today? Do ways of thinking tend to become habitual? Does the white power structure today retain the idea that it is alright to keep African-American children uneducated? If not, why do they allow the abysmal achievement test scores to continue? Those are the primary questions. Secondary

<sup>17</sup> These numbers, from the South Carolina average annual expenditure for schools in 1913-14, tell what kind of education was offered to African-American children.

	<u>White</u>	<u>African American</u>
Average teacher salary	\$369	\$115
Per pupil expenditure	\$15	\$2
Pupil teacher ratio	37	71

Figures taken from a typed page the paper had received as background for Gov. Riley's education tax. The Morning News, Florence, S. C.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Appendix B: Questions to be Explored Page 11

Gregg-Wallace Farm Tenant House  
Name of Property  
Florence County, South Carolina  
County and State

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questions include the following: Is there a connection between the generations of African Americans who were kept uneducated and the number of African-American children who live in poverty today? Is there a connection between poverty and low achievement test scores? Would a much greater investment in the education of African-American children be a suitable form of reparations for the harm done by the tenant-house years?

**Question 9. Look back with love**

**How could African Americans recall the tenant houses with affection when the houses were used to maintain their economic enslavement?**

This is a special message to all the people who once lived in tenant houses and who recall those houses--and the earth on which they stood--with great affection. That such affirmative feelings exist is a tribute to the people who lived in the houses. Understanding that the tenant houses were used by the white power structure as an instrument for the control of African Americans should in no way detract from affirmative memories of the houses. In fact when one sees the injustices that the tenant houses were meant to perpetuate, one can look with even greater admiration at the people who were able to create loving families and communities under such conditions. It is a tribute to the African-American spirit-filled way of life that so many people can look back on the tenant-house period of their lives with so much affection.