Chapter 7

Life and Labor on the Southern Sporting Plantation

African American Tenants at Tall Timbers Plantation, 1920–1944

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In the decades following the Civil War, sharecropping and tenancy quickly replaced slave labor on plantations across the South. Sharecropping and tenancy mediated the conditions of the immediate postwar era by satisfying landowners' desire to restart production, freedpeople's desire for autonomy, and the difficulty of paying regular wages in a cash-poor society. By the early 1880s, both systems had taken root across large portions of the former Confederacy. In the years that followed, they became widespread. By shaping the lives of millions of southerners, white and black, sharecropping and tenancy became central to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the post-emancipation South.[1]

Historians long portrayed sharecropping and tenancy as debilitating institutions that trapped landless farmers in debt peonage with little chance of escape. In his history of postwar southern agriculture, Gilbert Fite characterized their rise as a "descent into poverty." Contemporary observers such as Frank Tannenbaum credited both institutions with "pauperizing" the South. Throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, policymakers, social scientists, and politicians saw sharecropping and tenancy as grievous problems, fundamental to the social and economic ills that plagued the southern states.[2] These judgments, however, rest entirely on plantations operated as agricultural enterprises. How did conditions differ on plantations devoted to sport and leisure? Did tenants experience better relations with landowners, or did the difference in land use make a negligible difference in their lives?

Tall Timbers Plantation affords an exceptional opportunity to examine these questions. Established at the end of the nineteenth century by Edward Beadel, heir to a New York real estate fortune, Tall Timbers lies in northern

Leon County, Florida, on the edge of Lake Iamonia. Like most sporting plantations in the Red Hills region, its lands had previously grown cotton and other crops. Tenant farming became well established in Leon County after the Civil War. Beadel modified the conditions of tenancy at Tall Timbers but did not alter them radically. Continuity more than change characterized the transition from agriculture to sporting use.

The story of the African American tenancy at Tall Timbers might have remained unexplored had it not been for the restoration and public interpretation of a surviving tenant homestead. An unusually rich array of sources offers insight into the lives of tenants at Tall Timbers. Archaeological investigations, extant buildings, plantation ledgers, and oral histories supply valuable information. Together, these sources yield a portrait of tenancy with an accommodating landowner and modestly better material conditions than commonly found on agricultural plantations. Although manifold inequalities existed, the case of Tall Timbers suggests the potential for studies of sporting plantations to revise the traditional portrait of tenancy in the early twentieth-century South. The priorities of sportsmen and sportswomen and their labor needs led to arrangements that offered tenants somewhat greater autonomy, security, and stability. Their lives remained difficult and bereft of opportunity. Still, compared to other people near the bottom rung of rural southern society in the era between the world wars, tenants at Tall Timbers fared better than many.

TALL TIMBERS: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Tall Timbers Research Station is an ecological research center on the northern outskirts of the Tallahassee metropolitan area, immediately south of the Georgia-Florida border. Founded in 1958, Tall Timbers embodies the legacy of Henry Beadel's love of hunting and the Red Hills landscape. Beadel purchased Tall Timbers from his uncle, Edward Beadel, in 1919. He subsequently became deeply involved in land and wildlife conservation. In the early 1920s, Red Hills landowners became alarmed by a rapid decline in the quail population. They responded by sponsoring a scientific investigation of the problem in collaboration with the U.S. Biological Survey. Herbert L. Stoddard, a naturalist and ornithologist, conducted the investigation. He quickly determined that the form of forest conservation advocated by federal authorities, which emphasized natural regeneration and saw fire as destructive, had caused the loss of quail habitat. Stoddard recognized that man-made patterns of land use created a patchwork landscape with ample nesting and feeding areas. Farming, forestry, and controlled burning all proved beneficial. Stoddard published his findings in 1931 as *The Bobwhite Quail: Its Habits,*

Preservation, and Increase. The book established him as a leading authority of wildlife management. The success of Stoddard's investigations led Red Hills landowners to found the Cooperative Quail Study Association, an organization dedicated to establishing proper game-management practices on sporting retreats across the South. Stoddard served as its initial director.[3]

Henry Beadel enthusiastically supported Stoddard's work. A naturalist in the idiom of Teddy Roosevelt and other gentleman hunters of the Gilded Age, Beadel visited Leon County every winter from 1894 until purchasing Tall Timbers.[4] He honed his interest in wild animals, birds especially, at the Cedars, his family's 36-acre estate on Staten Island. After 1919, Beadel became a Florida resident. An architect by training, Beadel practiced until the mid-1940s, when he turned his attention to studying wildlife and hunting. He became renowned for his photographs and film footage of birds at Tall Timbers, which today form one of the finest collections of ornithological images and films in the Southeast.

Beadel made provisions in his will for Tall Timbers to become an ecological research center upon his death. It has operated in this manner since the early 1960s. Quail is no longer hunted at Tall Timbers but, rather, tagged for study by trained biologists and conservation specialists. Tall Timbers also continues to investigate the use of fire as a land-management tool and has become a clearinghouse of information about game birds, forest ecology, and wildlife management. In addition, Tall Timbers advocates conservation stewardship of property in the Red Hills region and neighboring areas. Its efforts have protected more than 160,000 acres through conservation easements.[5]

The land encompassed by Tall Timbers first entered agricultural use by whites in the 1820s, as settlers poured into the Florida Territory and short-staple cotton cultivation spread westward into untapped territory. In the mid-1830s, Griffin Holland, a doctor from Virginia, established Woodlawn Plantation. By 1840 he had fifty-three slaves working his lands. By 1860 his labor force numbered 105 men, women, and children ranging in age from a few months to more than 100. Most worked as field laborers. Holland housed his slaves in twenty cabins at Woodlawn. He owned more than 2,500 acres, of which 1,200 were improved. In 1860, Woodlawn produced 225 bales of cotton and 7,000 bushels of corn.[6]

Woodlawn's output illustrates the growth of plantation agriculture in Leon County, which ranked as Florida's wealthiest county during the late antebellum era. More than fifty planters owned more than fifty slaves each. Yeoman farmers also prospered. Slaves made up more than three-quarters of the county's 12,343 inhabitants by 1860. In that year, planters produced 16,686 bales of ginned cotton, the largest harvest recorded in Florida.[7]

The Civil War and emancipation triggered sweeping upheavals in Leon County agriculture. "The plantations are mostly waste," observed the

Semi-Weekly Floridian in 1867. Planters increasingly concentrated on cotton but faced declining prices and difficulty obtaining labor. Although planters sought to return to the gang-labor system used before the war, freedpeople refused. Sharecropping and tenancy developed rapidly as a compromise to sharply differing interests. By the early 1870s, these arrangements and wage labor sustained agricultural production in Leon County.[8]

Holland's fortunes plummeted during the Civil War era. He lost nearly half of his personal wealth in the 1860s and returned to Virginia. In 1871, he sold Woodlawn to Alexander Moseley, a Leon County native and Confederate veteran.[9] Mosely, then thirty-one, operated Woodlawn for a decade before becoming sheriff of Leon County. In 1880 he sold the plantation to Eugene H. Smith, a merchant from Thomasville, Georgia, for $4,000. Smith renamed his new property Hickory Hill and took up planting with vigor.[10] Tenant farming flourished under his tenure. Members of the Nix, Wyche, and Stratton families lived on his lands. Some may have been born as slaves on Holland's plantation; others had arrived in 1865–1867, when homesteading opportunities and strong demand for plantation laborers brought nearly 5,000 African Americans to Leon County.[11]

In 1895, Edward Beadel purchased Hickory Hill for $8,000. An avid quail hunter, Beadel did not intend to operate an agricultural enterprise. He renamed the plantation Tall Timbers and immediately began turning it into a hunting estate. His activities fit within a growing trend. The Red Hills region, which occupies portions of Thomas County, Georgia, and Leon County, became a prized destination for quail hunters during the late nineteenth century. Many hunters came from northern cities. Depressed land prices facilitated acquisition of large tracts. By 1900, wealthy northerners had purchased at least 10,000 acres in Leon County. Across the border in southern Georgia, other sportsmen also purchased land.[12]

Beadel left the tenant farming system in place. Small-scale farming, as Stoddard later demonstrated, created favorable conditions for quail and other wildlife. Quail especially thrive in the brushy edges that typically border small farms; Edward Beadel recognized the ecological value of small-scale farming and saw no reason to change existing practices. An enthusiastic hunter, Beadel had previously spent winters near Thomasville and hunted extensively in the Red Hills. He operated his plantation in a manner consistent with other sporting estates.[13]

When Henry Beadel purchased Tall Timbers from his uncle in 1919, he instituted a number of changes. He continued to use Tall Timbers as a sporting plantation but renovated and enlarged the main house and made improvements to several outbuildings. The main house is a two-story frame building set on brick piers. Built circa 1895, it offered comfortable but unremarkable accommodations. Beadel carried out extensive repairs, added a t-shaped wing

containing a master bedroom, and modified the main porch. These changes gave the building a more handsome appearance and greater interior space. The house occupies a gentle slope overlooking Lake Iamonia, giving it a panoramic view of the lake and surrounding countryside. Nearby stand several buildings erected by Edward Beadel circa 1895, including a cook's house, a pump house, and a hay barn. Henry Beadel added a dairy barn and corncrib sometime during the 1920s.[14]

Henry Beadel employed a combination of share and cash tenant contracts at Tall Timbers. He recorded all of his contracts as cash transactions but modified them as needed, usually when farmers suffered from poor crop yields or encountered other difficulties. Thus, he accommodated tenants' circumstances to some degree. Beadel provided houses for his tenants, in customary fashion for large landowners. Tenants provided their own tools and livestock.[15]

The landscape of tenancy at Tall Timbers assumed the pattern characteristic of plantations across southern Georgia and north Florida. Croplands and tenant homesteads lay interspersed with woodlands in a mixed pattern that afforded tenants privacy and supported Beadel's recreational activities. Beadel maintained a series of irregularly shaped hunting courses that added further complexity and variation.[16]

Beadel's rents varied depending on the size of the farm and market conditions. In 1920 Henry Beadel recorded nine tenant farm contracts on Tall Timbers, three for two-mule farms (fifty-five to sixty acres of land), five for one-mule farms (thirty to forty acres of land), and one for half of a farm (twenty acres).[17] The two-mule farms each rented for $200.00. Three families, the Fishers, the Joneses, and the Gays, farmed them, and each family had between six and eleven members.[18] Smaller families and couples rented and farmed the five one-mule farms at the rate of $100.00 annually. A single man, Cooper Robinson, held the half-farm contract, for which he paid Beadel $50.00.[19]

Beadel's rates remained unchanged until 1926, when the average price per pound of cotton fell from twenty-one cents to twelve cents and the price of corn dropped from ninety-three cents to eighty-four cents a bushel.[20] Tenants shifted production to cotton, corn, sugarcane, peanuts, and sweet potatoes.[21] The boll weevil bore principal responsibility for the drop in prices.[22] The damage it caused, coupled with erosion and soil exhaustion, placed Southeastern farmers in desperate circumstances. The agricultural depression that affected most of the South during the 1920s hit Florida and Georgia farmers especially hard. Tenant farming in Leon County declined dramatically. The 1900 census listed 1,775 tenant farmers, 1,664 of them African American. By 1920, the number of African American tenant farmers had dropped to 1,045.[23] At Tall Timbers, the number of tenant contracts fell from nine in 1920 to

seven in 1929. The drop in rental prices that Beadel undertook in 1926 likely stopped others from leaving. The new price structure set the cost of a contract for a one-mule farm at $75.00 and a two-mule farm contract at $112.50. Beadel maintained these prices throughout the 1930s.[24]

Even with the new rental prices, the overall population of tenants continued to decline. In the 1920s, eighty-five people belonging to fourteen different families lived at Tall Timbers.[25] In the 1930s, the population declined to forty-nine members (seven families).[26] Further declines occurred in the following decade, when the overall population dropped to forty-three.[27] Even with the loss of population, the size of tenant farming families at Tall Timbers remained large. In the 1920s and 1930s, family units had an average of six members. During the 1940s the number dropped to five. By comparison, Charles S. Johnson's study of Macon County, Alabama, found average family sizes of five during the 1930s.[28]

Tenant farm families of Tall Timbers mainly consisted of two-parent households. Single men and some single women also contracted with Beadel. Of the thirty-six contracts Beadel recorded from 1920 to 1949, men held twenty-seven, women held six, and men and women held the remaining three jointly. Of the last group, two were husband and wife, while one was a woman and her son (Table 7.1).[29]

Tenants at Tall Timbers maintained somewhat greater stability than proved common elsewhere. Sporting plantations generally supported consistency among tenants because of less coercive landlord-tenant relations. Sociologist Charles S. Johnson found that Macon County, Alabama, tenants moved frequently. Of 612 families, Johnson determined that over half had moved over the course of five years, and a significant number had moved multiple times.[30] A study undertaken by economist E. A. Goldenweiser and demographer Leon E. Truesdell in the 1920s reported similar findings. As they explained, "the most undesirable feature of tenancy in the United States lies in the fact that tenants do not stay long enough on their farms." In 1920s, of 501,748 tenants in the South Atlantic region (including Florida), roughly 44 percent had remained on farms less than two years.[31] By contrast, tenants at Tall Timbers had an average residency length of almost five years.[32] Other studies indicate that tenant farmers on Leon County sporting plantations moved less often because of reasonable rental costs, the availability of game, and favorable farming conditions.[33] The following table enumerates tenant farmers who lived on Tall Timbers between the 1920s and the 1940s and their length of stay.

It is important to note that not all tenants stayed at Tall Timbers for long. The relatively high average length of residence is in part due to the exceptionally long stays of William Gay and Walter Harvin. When these two tenants are excluded, the average period of residence falls to 3.6 years.

Table 7.1 Tenancy Length

Tenant Name	*Year(s) in Beadel Ledger*	*Farming Seasons*
Alonzo Bivens	1925–1932	8
Adam Bryant	1920–1923	4
Jim Bob Fisher	1920–1925	4
Johnnie Fisher	1921	0
Julee Fisher	1923	1
Rebecca Fisher	1921–1924	4
Dora Franklin	1944–1948	5
Emmitt Gay	1941–1942	1
Dan Gay	1931–1934	4
William Gay	1920–1949	30
Angeline Green	1922–1924, 1930–1934	3
Angeline and Henry Green	1925–1929	5
Charley Green and Rebecca Fisher	1920–1921	1
William Green	1920–1921	2
Josh Harvin	1941–1948	8
Tom Harvin	1943–1944	2
Walter Harvin	1922–1943	22
Kate and Tom Harris	1921–1923	2
John Hayes	1925–1934	10
Bill Jones	1920–1929	10
Maggie Jones	1930, 1935	2
Lige Jones	1941–1949	9
Lonza Jones	1942–1948	7
Mose Jones	1941–1944	4
Richard Jones	1941	1
Sam Jones	1920–1923	4
Cooper Robinson	1920	1
Mamie Green Smith	1933–1936, 1943–1944, 1946	4
Robert Scott	1931–1933	0
Hattie Strattin	1948	1
Henry Vickers	1924–1925, 1927–1936	12
Richard Vickers	1941–1942	2
John Williams	1937	1
Tom Wilson	1923–1924	1
Ike Witherspoon	1920	1
Mary Wyche	1920	1

Closer analysis of Beadel's records reveals two distinct groups: those who stayed for several years and those who did not. Of the thirty-six tenants listed, seventeen (47 percent) remained for two seasons or less. Nearly as many—sixteen—stayed between three and twelve seasons.

By the 1940s, nine African American families farmed as tenants at Tall Timbers. Two of these families had roots in the first generation of tenants that worked the land; the others had arrived more recently. The majority of the latter group had lived in the surrounding area for some time.[34] Although tenant

farming employed the largest percentage of African Americans on plantations, others worked as wage laborers for the owner. Sportsmen employed blacks as support staff in running the main house and in hunting expeditions.

In a significant number of cases, members of the same families rented land from Beadel and worked for him as wage laborers. Henry Vickers, for example, rented a land from Beadel throughout the 1920s and 1930s before becoming a wage laborer in the 1940s, when he earned $25.00 a month. While Vickers worked for Beadel, his son, Richard, tried his hand at farming for at least two seasons in the early 1940s. He rented land from Beadel. Another family, the Joneses, maintained similar relationships with Beadel. Alonzo and Mamie Jones farmed on rented land while their son, Richard, worked intermittently as a day laborer.[35]

World War II brought sweeping changes to Tall Timbers. For the first half of the 1940s, Beadel rented land to seven to eight tenants—a significant number, given that the overall number of black tenants in Leon County fell by 56 percent during the decade.[36] In an attempt to keep farmers on his land, Beadel decreased his rental prices in 1941, with rates ranging from $25.00 for a half of a farm to $80.00 for a two-mule farm. Still, farmers continued to leave.[37] New job and educational opportunities in nearby cities such Tallahassee and Thomasville drew some, and military service took others out of the Red Hills. By 1945, the number of contracts had fallen and at the end of the decade Beadel recorded only two in his ledger. He subsequently razed some of the small tenant houses and began employing wage laborers to maintain patch-style agriculture.[38] With the decline of tenancy, day labor became the norm on Leon County shooting plantations.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Artifacts associated with African American tenants at Tall Timbers offer insight into the lives of people who left few historical records of their own and appear most frequently as names in ledgers and public documents. Surviving artifacts include the remains of houses and outbuildings formerly used by tenants and materials such as housewares, tools, bottles and jars, and shoes. Taken together, artifacts suggest that Tall Timbers tenant families enjoyed modestly better conditions than their counterparts on agricultural plantations.

Between 2000 and 2005, Morrell and Associates, a private consulting firm, conducted archaeological investigations at Tall Timbers Plantation with the assistance of several volunteers and funding from Tall Timbers and the Archibald Fund. Limited investigations took place between 2000 and 2004. A grant from the Florida Department of State funded intensive excavations

that took place between August 2004 and April 2005. Morrell and Associates conducted a general surface survey and excavated a sweet potato cellar, a syrup processing area, and a possible refuse pit. These excavations recovered a total of 4,829 artifacts (Table 7.2).

Morrell and Associates' investigations began with examination of extant structures. Beadel razed a large number of buildings in the late 1940s as tenants left Tall Timbers. In the late 1990s, two tenant houses and two corncribs survived.[39] One of these houses and its corresponding corncrib formed the core of a complex that became known as the Jones Tenant House (archaeological site 8Le3536) (Figure 7.1). Researchers focused on this site, which takes its name from its last occupants, Alonzo and Mamie Jones, because the house stood in reasonably good physical condition. Tall Timbers has since rehabilitated it and turned it into an interpretative center. Visitors learn about the lives of African American tenants from five interpretive panels and audio recordings of oral histories with former tenants.[40]

The Jones Family originally occupied a small single-pen structure with an exterior chimney (Figure 7.2). By 1919 it had become a two-room dwelling through construction of an addition. The inhabitant at the time, Josh Forest, lived in the house until his death.[41] Thereafter, Bill and Maggie Jones moved in with their nine children.[42] According to oral histories, no outbuildings stood near the house. The Joneses kept all of their livestock on another farm.[43]

Bill Jones died in 1929. His wife continued farming at Tall Timbers for another year before moving off the plantation. Surviving records offer no clues about the use of the house for the remainder of the decade. By 1942, another family named Jones, unrelated, occupied the structure. From 1942 to 1948 Alonzo and Mamie Lawyer Jones and their ten children made it their home.[44]

Table 7.2 Artifact Concentration Totals

Location	*Number of Artifacts*
Feature 1—Refuse Pit	3,880
Feature 2—Syrup Processing Area	12
Feature 5	2
Feature 8—Sweet Potato House	369
Feature 9	1
NE Corncrib Stall	139
SW Corncrib Stall	142
Under Crib Floor	172
General Surface Collection	36
Surface Collection—Below the House	49
Above the Back Door in House	4
Smokehouse Test	22
68N47E—Test pit	1

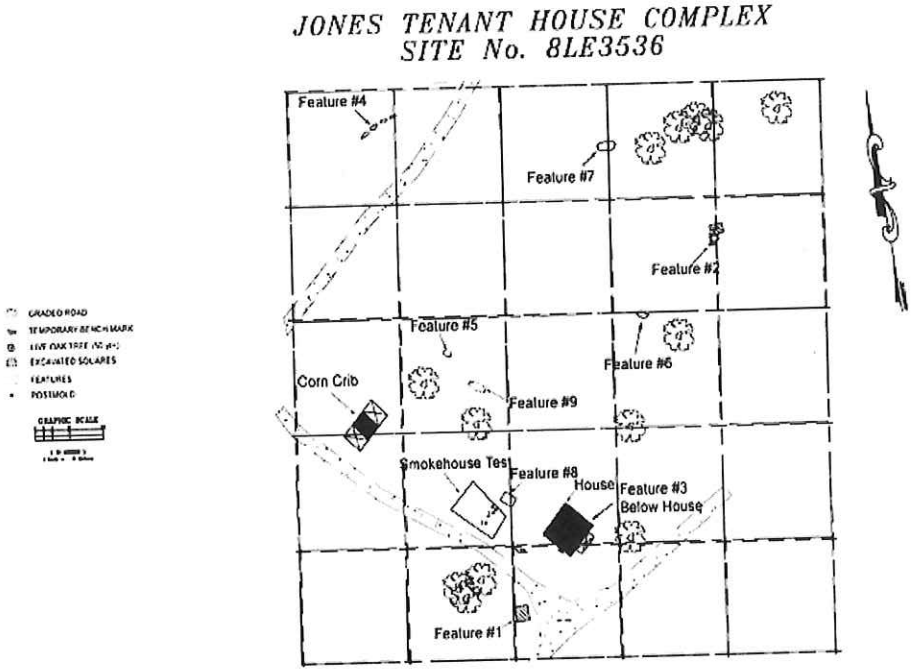

Figure 7.1 Jones Tenant House Site Map. *Source*: Courtesy of author.

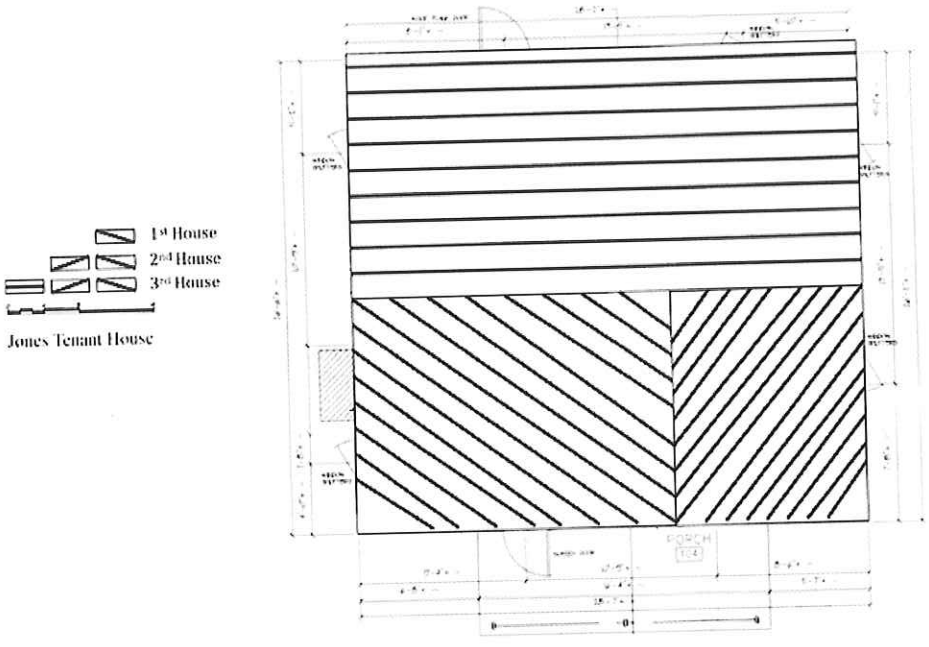

Figure 7.2 Jones Tenant House Plan. *Source*: Courtesy of author.

The Joneses added two rooms to the rear of the house, an interior kitchen and a bedroom.[45] This addition allowed the family to use the new bedroom for their male children, another interior room for female children, and the remaining room—that of the original single-pen structure—as a combination living room and parent's bedroom.[46] The Joneses papered interior walls with newspaper for decoration and as a means of blocking drafts in the manner characteristic of sharecroppers and tenants.[47] Remnants of the Joneses' papering remain visible today.

The porch that spans the façade of the house played an important role in the Joneses' lives by providing exterior living space and opportunities for socializing with neighbors.[48] Most former tenants at Tall Timbers speak of time spent socializing on the porch, especially in the summer months when oppressive heat made interior rooms virtually unbearable.[49] In some cases, tenant families also held weddings on porches.[50] The porch became another room of the house and in many cases the center of the tenant farmer's social life.

The overall form and features of the Jones Tenant House are typical of rural housing of the era. Few tenant houses had modern conveniences such as running water and indoor bathrooms. Interior and exterior finishes lacked the refinement and upkeep typical of in-town dwellings.[51] Tenant houses at Tall Timbers did feature well-built chimneys, however. Most tenant houses of the era had stick and mud chimneys, a simple and inexpensive variety.[52] The Jones House has two brick chimneys: one for the kitchen, the other for an interior fireplace. Beadel viewed brick chimneys as a worthwhile investment since they lessened the potential for fire to damage his property.[53]

Tenant farms at Tall Timbers typically had small groups of outbuildings set near the farmhouse. The number, use, and quality of the outbuildings varied depending on the size of the farm. Oral histories and archaeological surveys have identified buildings that are no longer extant. During its period of use, the outbuildings at the Jones farm included a smokehouse, a sweet potato cellar, and a syrup processing area. Most tenant farms also had a corncrib, which farmers used for storing implements and feed crops. The Jones Tenant House had a corncrib at one time but recollections vary about its dates of use.[54]

Artifacts recovered during fieldwork carried out in 2004 and 2005 came from locations across the Jones Tenant Farm. Classification began with consideration of number of artifacts recovered. The largest concentrations of artifacts came from the refuse pit (Feature 1) and the sweet potato cellar (Feature 8). That these locations yielded large numbers of artifacts is not surprising. Refuse pits and their cousins, privies, are typically artifact rich. It should be noted that materials found in such features might be misleading because they are items that residents no longer wanted. Still, refuse pits and privies contain detritus of everyday life. The artifacts they yield are therefore valuable.[55]

As a site of agricultural labor and storage, the corncrib produced a large number of artifacts. Other portions of the site produced artifact counts below one hundred (Table 7.2). The small number of artifacts found around and below the house likely reflects the practice of "sweeping the yard." Former residents of Tall Timbers recall sweeping the yard around the house with corn shuck broom, a practice common among tenants and sharecroppers in the rural South.[56] Sweeping moved artifacts away from the site of deposition. Although provenience is a central tenet of archaeological research, studies have shown that it does not destroyed sites but merely changes them.[57]

The artifacts recovered from the site reveal a great deal about the tenant farming families. Material groups included glass, metal, ceramics, leather and rubber, plastic, chert, faunal, and other (Table 7.3).

Glass proved most common and came from multiple sources. Artifact colors included blue, green, white, pink, and purple. Many were containers that historically held medicine or foodstuffs. Of the identifiable containers recovered, the majority were fruit jars, with brands such as Mason, Atlas, and Kerr represented.[58] Lids for Atlas-brand jars included wire bail or "wire side" glass lids. Examples of the Kerr brand possessed "Wide Mouth" and self-sealing lids. The most frequent lid recovered was the zinc screw lid with white glass "Boyd's Pat. Liner" (Figure 7.3).[59] Various extract bottles were also identified. Soda bottles, bearing names such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Orange Crush, and Nu-Grape were also recovered. The Orange Crush bottle had an embossed patent date of 1920.

Excavations also recovered a small amount of pink Depression glass. Several pieces, including a plate, goblet, drinking glass, and platter, are of a pattern known as Sharon Cabbage Rose (Figure 7.4). Manufactured by the Federal Glass Company from 1935 to 1939, Sharon Cabbage Rose is considered one of the most durable forms of Depression glass. It proved exceedingly popular and was sold by retailers across the country.[60] Circumstantial evidence suggests that the Joneses purchased the Cabbage Rose glass for themselves rather than acquiring it from the Beadel family. Members of the

Table 7.3 Artifact Materials

Material	*Number of Artifacts*
Glass	3,579
Metal	850
Ceramics	325
Leather and Rubber Composite	51
Plastic	9
Chert	8
Other	5
Faunal	2

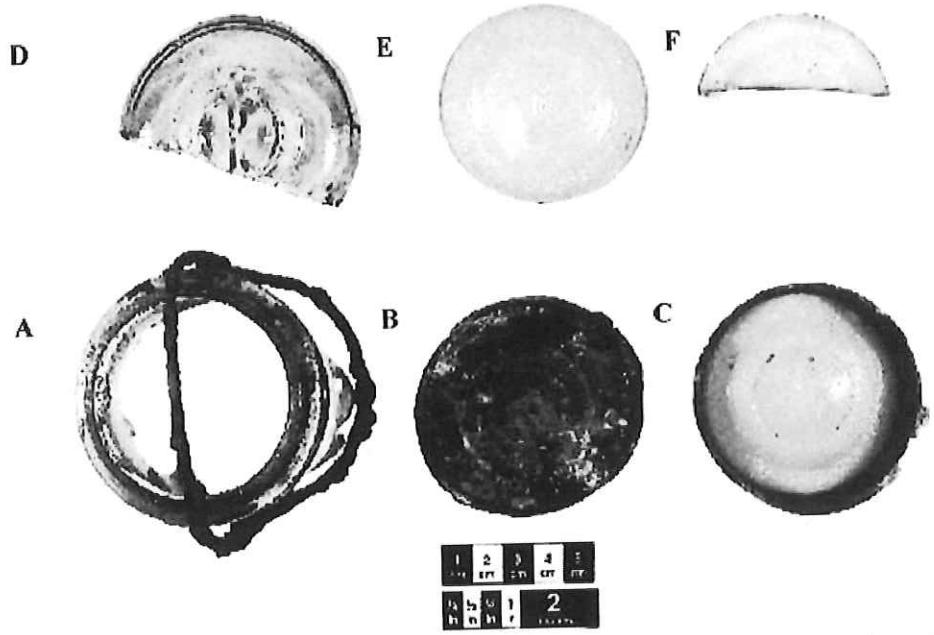

Figure 7.3 Fruit Jar Lids and Liners. A and D, Wire bail style top and glass lid; B, Zinc cap; C, Zinc cap with unidentified glass liner; E, "Genuine Boyd's" cap liner; F, Boyd's variant "Genuine Porcelain" cap liner. *Source*: Courtesy of author.

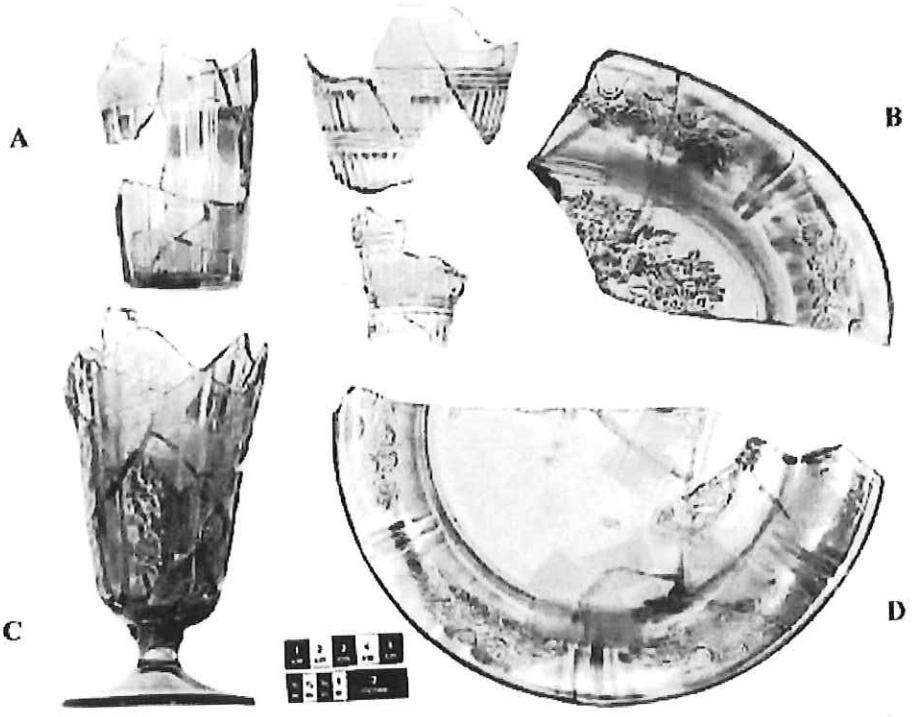

Figure 7.4 Depression glass. A, Tumblers; B, Sharon Cabbage Rose platter; C, Sharon Cabbage Rose goblet; D, Sharon Cabbage Rose plate. *Source*: Courtesy of author.

Jones family recall their mother owning it from the time they were small children. Moreover, the date of manufacture predates the Jones family's move to Tall Timbers.

Moroline bottles are among the most prevalent types of medicinal glass found at the site. Moroline was a fat-based ointment marketed as a hair tonic. African Americans also used it as a first aid ointment and skin moisturizer.[61] Excavations also recovered medicinal bottles embossed with names such as "Sloane's Liniment," "Rawleigh's," and "Fletcher Castoria." All figured among the most common varieties of patent medicines used by rural people during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Figure 7.5).

Agricultural tools constitute the majority of metal artifacts recovered. These tools vary from shallow plow pieces to remnants of mule harnesses to barbed wire fragments. A 1940s-era Florida truck license plate and an electric automobile horn part were also found at Feature 1. No surviving members of the Jones family recall owning an automobile of any kind, but other tenants did.[62]

Figure 7.5 Glass containers. A and B, Moroline; C, Lander; D, Sloan's Liniment; E, Rawliegh; F and G, Fletcher Castoria. *Source*: Courtesy of author.

Research also uncovered a large number of shoes and shoe parts, some adult-sized, others for children. Shoe pieces included leather uppers and rubber soles and were primarily found under the house. The protection afforded by the house and the durability of the materials likely accounts for the survival of these items.

Small numbers of other artifacts were found across the site, including eight artifacts made of plastic. Six were buttons found in Feature 8, the corncrib, and during surface collection. A plastic ladies hair comb made of celluloid, a semi-synthetic plastic used since the late 1860s, was found below the house. A few ceramic pieces were also recovered from the site, most of them whiteware, an inexpensive variety common during the period that the Joneses lived at Tall Timbers.[63]

MAKING SENSE OF MATERIAL CULTURE AT TALL TIMBERS

Interpreting the lives of the people who once lived and farmed Tall Timbers is no easy task. The limitations of the historical record preclude development of a detailed portrait of life and labor. Still, records associated with Tall Timbers tenants offer considerable insight into their existence, and oral histories and the artifacts recovered from the Jones Tenant House allow for more fulsome analysis. Taken together, these sources provide the basis for important conclusions about tenancy on Henry Beadel's shooting plantation.

Archaeologist Charles Orser's study of the Millwood Plantation in Abbeville County, South Carolina, employs a typology based on function rather than material or concentration.[64] This typology assumes that tenant families used materials in ways that would be recognizable to contemporary eyes. Orser uses the example of a small, round, flat object with two holes, also called a button, to illustrate this notion. Just as tenant farmers used buttons as clothing fasteners, so do present-day people. This typology is not perfect—a button could be used as a game marker, for example—but, in general, the parallels are illuminating.[65]

The highest count of artifacts recovered from the Jones Tenant House site, based on the functional typology, are in the categories of foodways and unknown (Table 7.4). Two considerations merit attention. First, many of the artifacts in this category are fragments, which effectively increases the number of items represented. Second, many of the glass artifacts recovered are clear, unmarked fragments, which makes identification of the original containers difficult. Clear glass bottles commonly held medicine, foodstuffs, and a host of other items during the early twentieth century. Yet even when allowances are made for fragmentation and the difficulty of container

Table 7.4 Jones Tenant House Typology Totals

Typology	*Number of Artifacts*
Foodways	2,191
Unknown	1,635
Labor	578
Household	194
Personal	170
Clothing	61

identification, artifacts used in procuring, preparing, serving, and storing food are most prevalent.

The dominance of the foodways category prompted closer examination of constituent artifacts. Although some are metal—iron stove fragments and cutlery, for example—the single largest group is made up of fruit jar fragments. This is consistent with a large volume of foodstuffs produced on-site. Tenant families used fruit jars mainly for long-term food storage. Use as drinking vessels and for storing non-edible items also occurred but was less common.

The prevalence of artifacts associated with food storage at Jones Tenant House suggests that families on sporting plantations enjoyed somewhat better diets than many of their counterparts. Studies of tenant farmers emphasize dietary monotony and general poor living conditions.[66] Families at Tall Timbers sought self-sufficiency to the best of their ability. They lived off crops and livestock they raised as much as possible. Production of foodstuffs for domestic consumption figures prominently in the recollections of many former residents. Women, for example, recall helping their mothers to preserve fruits and vegetables grown on their farms.[67]

Brand name products such as Sloan's Liniment, Coca-Cola, and the Sharon Cabbage Rose Depression glass demonstrate the reach of consumer goods into the lives of tenants at Tall Timbers. These afford striking evidence of growth of the mass market and its role in the lives of people near the bottom of southern society.[68] Oral histories provide recollections of tenant farm families traveling to nearby cities such as Tallahassee and Thomasville to purchase food, clothing, and other goods. The material record corroborates such recollections. The presence of common consumer goods at Tall Timbers indicates that tenants had sufficient cash to purchase these items on at least some occasions.[69]

Tenants also benefited from events that Beadel sponsored. Each March, Beadel held a rabbit hunt for owners of neighboring plantations, his manager, and his tenants. Former residents recalled these hunts fondly because of the game they yielded and because Beadel gave tobacco to participants.[70] Beadel also sponsored an annual May 20 celebration in commemoration of Emancipation Day in the Red Hills, a notable gesture during an era when

white southerners willfully resisted celebrations of African American history. Beadel allowed workers to take the day off and threw a party for his workers and tenants and African Americans from neighboring areas.[71] Owners of other sporting plantations held similar events from time to time. The owners of Pebble Hill Plantation near Thomasville, for example, celebrated Easter and other holidays in comparable fashion.[72] Landowner-sponsored celebrations are virtually unheard of on agricultural plantations.[73] Tenants generally showed limited respect toward landowners on agricultural plantations, while residents of sporting plantations such as Tall Timbers and Pebble Hill recall a general sense of pride in their place of employment.[74]

CONCLUSION

The case of tenancy at Tall Timbers begs questions about other sporting plantations. Did other tenants have similar experiences? What conditions existed on other sporting estates? Although Tall Timbers offers an instructive example, its representativeness is unclear. Circumstances suggest that other landowners had reason to treat their tenants in a similar fashion. Owners of sporting estates, after all, possessed substantial wealth. Whereas owners of agricultural plantations sought profits and had strong incentives to limit costs, owners of sporting estates had reasons to approach tenancy differently. Many likely viewed the rents paid by tenants as useful for offsetting operating costs, and having a pool of potential laborers close at hand also proved valuable. Moreover, the ecological benefits of tenancy became clear over time. Even before Stoddard's research, some landowners recognized that quail coveys tended to favor areas near tenant farms and drew inferences about the relationship between environmental conditions and the birds' behavior. As Stoddard's research explained why quail populations had plummeted in the early 1920s, the value of patch-style farming became clear. Owners of sporting plantations thus had reason to at least limit the coercion that characterized landlord-tenant relations elsewhere, and some may have become more favorably deposed to tenants' presence as knowledge of land-management practices grew.

Tenants on shooting plantations lived difficult lives. Although oral histories tend to recall close-knit communities and a strong sense of pride, it is impossible to overlook the meager circumstances tenants endured, the long hours they worked, the minimal returns they earned, and their place in an economy and social order that marginalized them and offered little hope of advancement. Although some tenants appear to have found tolerable circumstances at Tall Timbers, others did not. The rate of turnover provides a powerful counterpart to the longer periods of residence that some tenants

maintained. Contemporary commentators equated turnover with shiftlessness and indolence, but historians have demonstrated the power of movement as a form of resistance to oppression. That roughly half of all tenants who rented land from Beadel stayed two years or less demonstrates the limits of his accommodating stance. Although some tenants preferred Tall Timbers to other plantations, just as many did not.[75]

Still, tenants who stayed at Tall Timbers for several years or more apparently found conditions that allowed for reasonable sustenance and acceptable social relations. The celebrations that Beadel hosted and his modification of contracts and rents are evidence of efforts to treat tenants with dignity and respect, two qualities not commonly associated with black-white relations in the rural South. Beadel's efforts to accommodate tenants' circumstances and market conditions suggests a degree of humanity that other landowners lacked. In an era when many whites viewed African Americans as less than human and thought nothing of cheating them out of payments or using physical violence to achieve their aims, Beadel's actions are significant. They show a disposition to tenants that many of his counterparts lacked.

African Americans left Tall Timbers for the same reasons that tenants and sharecroppers left other plantations—for better opportunities. Beadel's accommodations did not dramatically change the lives of people who earned and had little. His shift to wage labor and mechanized farming is telling evidence of his inability to sustain tenancy at Tall Timbers. As tenants left, Beadel found other measures necessary to maintain the patch-style farming conducive to quail hunting, which resulted in greater outlays of money and effort.[76] Jones family members recall their departure as inspired by the promise of better jobs and educational opportunities in nearby cities.[77] In seeking both, they followed a common path.

Tall Timbers' interpretation of the Jones Tenant House has brought needed attention to an underappreciated dimension of Red Hills history. The exhibit at the house opened in May 2008 and has since become popular with visitors. In February of each year, Tall Timbers hosts a reunion of former tenant families and their descendants. The sight of families gathered and sharing stories of life at Tall Timbers is moving and inspiring, and provides an extraordinary reminder of the historical presence of tenant farming on the southern landscape. From the 1870s to the 1960s, tenant farms were common features across much of the South. Few remain today. Stories passed down through the generations, artifacts, and surviving edifices offer reminders of tenants' experiences and the nation's failure to address debilitating social and economic problems. For all the memories that former residents and descendants share during the February gatherings, it is impossible to overlook the material realities of tenants' lives and their place in a society that emancipated 4.5 million men, women, and children but then turned away from

their plight. The failure to aid freedpeople in securing social, economic, and political resources in the aftermath of the Civil War stands among the greatest tragedies in American history.

Ultimately, the example of Tall Timbers shows the need for further research on tenant farming on sporting plantations. Scholars such as Robert Tracy McKenzie and Nancy Virts have argued forcefully for the need to account for temporal and spatial variations in tenancy and sharecropping and the limitations of viewing the as static, homogeneous arrangements. The history of tenancy at Tall Timbers underscores this point. Although historians generally equate tenancy with plantations operated as sites of commercial agriculture, other varieties existed. Excluding sporting plantations from the picture obscures vital histories and results in an impoverished understanding of tenancy, how it changed over time, and why important changes occurred.[78]

NOTES

1. Gilbert Fite, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865–1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), chap. 1; Charles S. Aiken, *The Cotton Plantation South Since the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), chaps. 1 and 2; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), chaps. 4 and 5; Lee J. Alston and Kyle D. Kauffman, "Agricultural Chutes and Ladders: New Estimates of Sharecroppers and 'True Tenants' in the South, 1900–1930," *Journal of Economic History* 57, no. 2 (June 1997): pp. 464–475.

2. Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, pp. 38, 161–162; Frank Tannenbaum, *Darker Phases of the South* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), p. 133; Natalie J. Ring, *The Problem South: Region, Empire, and the New Liberal State, 1880–1930* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), chap. 3.

3. Tall Timbers Plantation (Leon County, Fla.), National Register of Historic Places nomination, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Fla.; Herbert L Stoddard, *The Bobwhite Quail: Its Habits, Preservation, and Increase* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1931); Albert G. Way, *Conserving Southern Longleaf: Herbert Stoddard and the Rise of Ecological Land Management* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); "Welcome to Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy," http://talltimbers.org/welcome-to-tall-timbers/.

4. Leon County Land Records, 1919, Deed Book 1, pp. 225–228, Leon County Courthouse, Tallahassee, Fla. (hereafter LCC).

5. Tall Timbers Plantation, National Register of Historic Places nomination; "Welcome to Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy," http://talltimbers.org/welcome-to-tall-timbers/.

6. Certificate of the Land Office no. 538, 1826, LCC; Leon County, Fla., *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840* (Microfilm M704), U.S. Bureau of the Census,

Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NARA); Clifton Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail: An Agricultural Chronicle of Leon County, Florida, 1860–1967* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1968), p. 127.

7. Clay Ouzts, "Landlords and Tenants: Sharecropping and the Cotton Culture in Leon County Florida, 1865–1885," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (summer 1996), p. 2.

8. Ouzts, "Landlords and Tenants," pp. 1–23; *Semi-Weekly Floridian* (Tallahassee, Fla.), Jan. 4, 1867, quoted in Ouzts, "Landlords and Tenants," p. 3; Susan Hamburger, "On the Land for Life: Black Tenant Farmers on Tall Timbers Plantation," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (Oct. 1987): pp. 152–159; Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail*, pp. 22–29; Alston and Kauffman, "Agricultural Chutes and Ladders," pp. 465–466.

9. Deed of sale, Griffin Holland to Alexander Moseley, 1871, Deed Book P, pp. 612–613, LCC.

10. Deed of sale, Alexander Moseley to Eugene H. Smith, 1880, Deed Book W, pp. 143–144, LCC.

11. Leon County, Fla., *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870* (Microfilm M593), Bureau of the Census, NARA.

12. Deed of sale, Elizabeth Smith to Edward Beadel, 1895, Deed Book FF, pp. 142–143, LCC; Tall Timbers Plantation, National Register of Historic Places nomination.

13. Tall Timbers Plantation, National Register of Historic Places nomination.

14. Ibid.

15. Henry Beadel Business Ledger, 1920–1952 (hereafter Beadel Ledger); Annie Bell Sloan, interview by Juanita Whiddon, May 11, 2005, tape recording; both at Tall Timbers Research Station Archives, Tallahassee, Fla. (hereafter TTRS).

16. Tall Timbers Plantation, National Register of Historic Places nomination.

17. Beadel did not record the size of the farms rented, only the rental costs. Acreages can be surmised from oral interviews and notes found in his personal ledger. See, for example, Beadel Ledger; Annie Bell Sloan interview.

18. Enumeration District 99, Meridian, Leon, Fla., *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920* (Microfilm T625), U.S. Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, NARA.

19. Beadel Ledger.

20. Florida Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, *Florida Agricultural Statistics, Field Crop Data 1919–1967* (Orlando: n.p., 1967), pp. 3, 7.

21. Alex and Hattie Sloan, interview by Juanita Whiddon, July 27, 2005, tape recording, TTRS.

22. Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail*, p. 38.

23. Harry F. Brubaker, "Land Classification, Ownership, and Use in Leon County, Florida" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1956), p. 102.

24. Beadel Ledger.

25. Enumeration District 99, Meridian, Leon County, Fla., *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920* (Microfilm T625), U.S. Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, NARA.

26. Enumeration District 0001, Meridian, Leon County, Fla., *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930* (Microfilm T626), U.S. Bureau of the Census, NARA.

27. Precinct Number 8, Leon County, Fla., Eleventh Census of the State of Florida, 1945 (Microfilm S1371), Record Group 001021, State Library and Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, Fla.

28. Charles S. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 32.

29. Beadel Ledger.

30. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation*, p. 117.

31. E. A. Goldenweiser and Leon E. Truesdell, *Farm Tenancy in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1924), pp. 135–136. The South Atlantic region included Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

32. Beadel Ledger.

33. Lonnie A. Marshall, "The Present Function of Vocational Agriculture, Schools and Other Agencies in the Rural Improvement of Negroes in Leon County, Florida" (M.A. thesis, Iowa State College, 1930), pp. 105, 108, 120, quoted in Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail*, p. 104.

34. Beadel Ledger.

35. Ibid.

36. Brubaker, *Land Classification*, p. 102.

37. Beadel Ledger.

38. Tall Timbers Plantation, National Register of Historic Places nomination.

39. Ibid.

40. On the preservation and interpretation of the Jones House, see "The Jones Family Tenant Farm," Tall Timbers Plantation, http://talltimbers.org/the-jones-family-tenant-farm/.

41. Annie Bell Sloan interview.

42. Enumeration District 99, Meridian, Leon County, Fla., *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920* (Microfilm T625), U.S. Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, NARA.

43. Annie Bell Sloan interview.

44. Beadel Ledger.

45. Minnie Jones Leonard, interview by Juanita Whiddon, Sept. 8, 2004, tape recording, TTRS.

46. Rosalie Jones Brim, interview by Juanita Whiddon, June 26, 2004, tape recording, TTRS.

47. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation*, p. 92.

48. Aiken, *The Cotton Plantation South*, pp. 135–137.

49. Leonard interview.

50. Annie Bell Sloan interview.

51. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation*, p. 92.

52. Charles E. Orser, Jr., *The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 94.

53. Juanita Whiddon, conversation with author, Sept. 2004.

54. Annie Bell Sloan interview.

55. Charles E. Orser, Jr., and Brian M. Fagan, *Historical Archaeology* (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1995), p. 61.

56. Annie Bell Sloan interview.

57. Orser, *Material Basis*, p. 100.

58. Dave Hinson, "A Primer on Fruit Jars," accessed on June 28, 2014, http://home.qnet.com/~glassman/newsletter/primer.pdf.

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62. Alex and Hattie Sloan interview.

63. "Evolution of English Household Tableware: Period VI: 1820s-1900," Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M, accessed July 15, 2014, http://nautarch.tamu.edu/class/313/ceramics/period-6.htm.

64. David H. Chance, review of *Method and Theory in Historical Archeology*, by Stanley South, *Historical Archaeology* 11 (1977), pp. 126–128.

65. Orser, *Material Basis*, p. 234.

66. For example, Arthur Raper noted that wage workers in Greene and Macon County, Georgia, spent half of their earned income on food, while sharecroppers and renters spent on average ten dollars more than half. Such expenditures suggest that food was obtained through purchase, not through stored goods used over time. Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936). See also Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, p. 34.

67. Leonard interview.

68. Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, p. 34.

69. Alex and Hattie Sloan interview.

70. Emmit and Celia Gay, interview by Juanita Whiddon, Feb. 12, 2004, tape recording, TTRS.

71. Brim interview.

72. Princetta Hadley Green, interview by Jack Hadley, in Titus Brown and James "Jack" Hadley, *African American Life on the Southern Hunting Plantation* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Press, 2000), pp. 103–105.

73. Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South 1920–1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 142.

74. Sam Green, interviewed by Jack Hadley, in *African American Life*, p. 46.

75. On movement as a form of resistance, see Jacqueline Jones, *The Dispossessed: America's Underclasses from the Civil War to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), chap. 4.

76. Tall Timbers Plantation, National Register of Historic Places nomination.

77. Brim interview.

78. Robert Tracy McKenzie, "Freedman and the Soil in the Upper South: The Reorganization of Tennessee Agriculture, 1865–1880," *Journal of Southern History* 59, no. 1 (Feb. 1993): pp. 63–84; Robert Tracy McKenzie, *One South or Many?: Plantation Belt and Upcountry in Civil War-Era Tennessee* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Nancy Virts, "Change in the Plantation System: American South, 1910–1945," *Explorations in Economic History* 43, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): pp. 153–176.