

Multiple Property Owner Tenant Farms. A multiple property owner tenant farm is defined through historic documentation proving a period of ownership by a multiple property owner and the occupation of the farm by a tenant during the same period. This evidence is most likely to be found in tax assessments or insurance policies. A multiple property owner tenant farm may have multiple periods of significance because it changes hands over time and its owners lease it out; it may also have one long period of significance associated with one landlord.

The statement of significance for the multiple property owner tenant farm should examine the role of the multiple property owner in the economy, daily life, and architectural-landscape of the community and the specific property under consideration. The characteristics of the owner in terms of race, gender, and taxable property should fall within limits detailed above. The statement of significance should also consider the identity and the tenant.

Tenant-Occupied Estates. Inclusion in the associative property type tenant-occupied estates is defined historically by documentation of an instance when the farm was part of an estate that was being administered following the death of its owner and the administration of the estate required the farm to be occupied by a tenant for a period of time. This connection is most likely to be documented through probate administration records, orphans court records, and chancery court records. These records include administration, guardianship, and the receipt of rents and repairs; the court records also contain description of buildings, crops, repairs, tenants, and acreage. In cases where a dower or division of the property occurred, there are also plots of the land showing buildings, fields, and natural landmarks. Any discussion of significance should establish the history of such administration as related to the tenancy of the farm, examine the relationship between the tenant and the landlord/administrator, and evaluate the impact of both parties on the buildings and landscape.

Associative Characteristics of Tenants

A tenant is defined as a person who occupies land that is not his own by means of a verbal or written agreement with the owner of the-land and in return for a specified rent, The extensive description of tenants included here is based largely on Little Creek in 1822 and 1860. Time did not permit this level of analysis in other years, but it should be a high priority for future activities related to the context.

The tenant population in Little Creek Hundred demonstrated a higher percentage of males and African-American than the general taxable population. As the century progressed, women represented an ever-shrinking percentage of farm tenants (7% in 1822, 4% in 1860, and 2% in 1896). African-American farm tenants enjoyed greatest numerical strength, in 1822, when 21% of all farms were leased by "blacks" or "mulattos." The percentage of

African-American tenant farmers decreased to 8% in 1860, then *rose* to 11 % in 1896.

As a group, tenants varied greatly in terms of their property and farm land. Of the 104 tenant farm in Little Creek Hundred in 1822, 92 tenants were positively identified on the tax assessment. The remainder were either partial names that could not be matched with a full on the list or were women who were not assessed for taxable property.

Tenants as a group were located at all wealth levels, but were concentrated in the middle deciles (5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th)--41 percent of the total population in those deciles were tenants, and 72% of the tenants were located in those deciles. At a minimum, 50% of 7th and 8th deciles were tenants as opposed to 32% of the 5th and 6th deciles. Approximately 8% of the tenants were located in the top 20% of the population, representing 9% of that group. Those tenants in the top fifth of the population probably fall into the class of farm managers or guardians to estate properties. The bottom two-fifths of the population only 20% of the tenants--about 12% of the group without any taxable property.

A look at the taxable property belonging to tenants in 1822 reveals significant information about the kinds of property that were likely to guarantee success for a tenant. Ownership of livestock was a significant characteristic of agricultural tenants in 1822. Of the 92 tenants that were positively identified in Little Creek Hundred, 74% owned livestock in form and 16% owned both land and livestock. This is not unexpected given that horses oxen were signs of the capitalization of agriculture. To effectively work a property over 10 acres, the farmer needed access to a plowing force. Perhaps a landlord was more likely to a tenant who could prove that he owned the means of production, thus guaranteeing fewer problems with production of requisite crop rents. Demonstrated ability to manage a in a profitable manner (through references *from* a previous landlord or the possession of C own productive land) may also have helped in acquiring a better farm *for* leasing.

While approximately half of the entire taxable population owned at least one animal, -of all tenant farmers owned livestock. Tenants were much more likely to own horses and oxen, the means of production *for* agricultural endeavors (85% of the tenants who owned. only owned a pair of either oxen or horses and most of them owned both). Pigs and cows, the most popular creatures owned by the general population, were also a high priority *for* tenants. In addition, livestock-owning tenants tended to own larger numbers of animals than those folks in the overall population who owned livestock (the median number of animals *for* tenants was 19, with 40% owning more than 10; among the general population, the median number of animals was 9, and 47% owned more than 10 creatures). Tenants were also more likely to own animals that were raised *for* market purposes (sheep and beef cattle).

Among those who owned both land and livestock (15°1\ of the tenant population), the ownership patterns again indicate that a priority was placed on possession of horses and oxen. While only 60% of those who owned livestock in the general population owned horses, all of

the landowning tenants owned horses and 60% owned oxen as well (compared to 42 % in the general population). In the general population pigs and cows were the most commonly owned types of stock-- approximately 90% of the landowning tenants possessed these animals, in larger numbers than the overall population.

African-American Tenancy

African-American formed a significant portion of the Upper Peninsula Zone population, representing anywhere from 20 to 40% of the total population in any hundred during the nineteenth century. Changes were occurring in the balance between the American and white populations throughout the state during the nineteenth century (Figures 32, 33, and 34). The free African-American and slave population represented a potential ~ farm laborers and tenants. Kent County contained the largest percentage of free African-Americans of any county in the nation during the mid-nineteenth century, rising from 22% in 1800 to a high of 29% in 1840 and the leveling off at about one-quarter of the population for the remainder of the century. The percentage of free African-Americans was even higher in Little Creek Hundred—they represented 29% of the population in 1800, 40% between 1810 and 1840, and dropped to 20% in 1880 before recovering to 35% in 1900. The percentage of free African-Americans in Murderkill was almost identical to that of Kent County; Appoquinimink Hundred's free African-American population was only 18% of the total population in 1800, rose to 27% by 1810, and ranged between 27% and 33% for the remainder of the century (Figures 35, 36, and 37).

While a population with a high percentage of African-Americans was not unusual for region in the nineteenth century, the high proportion of free African-Americans in all three hundreds was unusual. In Murderkill Hundred, slaves represented less than 10% of the African-American population from 1810 on; Little Creek Hundred's slaves were less than 8% of the African-American population from 1820 through 1860. Appoquinimink Hundred relied on slaves in greater proportions for a much longer period--slaves did not drop below 8% of the total population until 1840. In Kent County, slaves were a minority group from 1800 on, representing less than one-quarter of the African- American population. The African-American population in neighboring Sussex County was 69% slave in 1800; the balance did not shift to favor free African-Americans until 1810, some 20 years after the same change had occurred in Kent County.

Figure 32: Population Distribution in Kent County, 1800-1900

Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census, 1800-1900

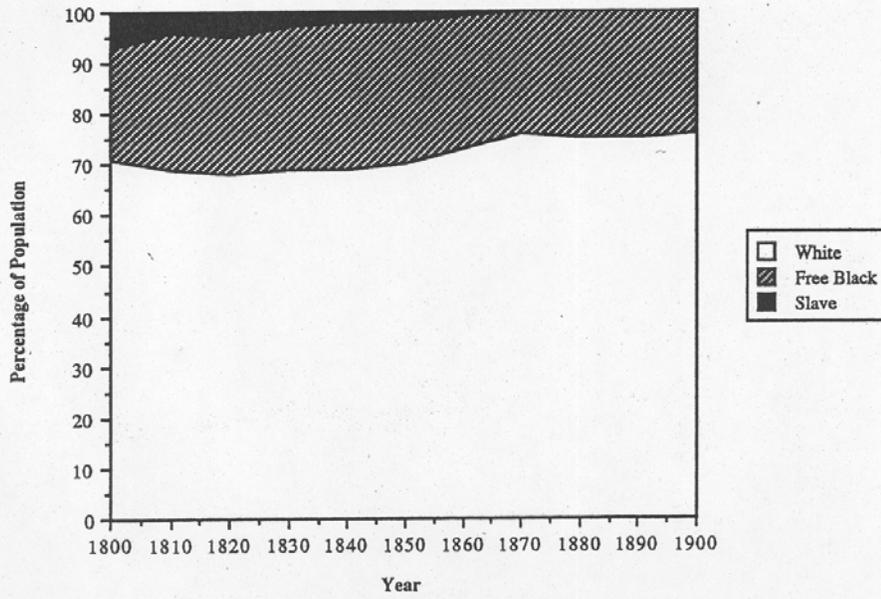
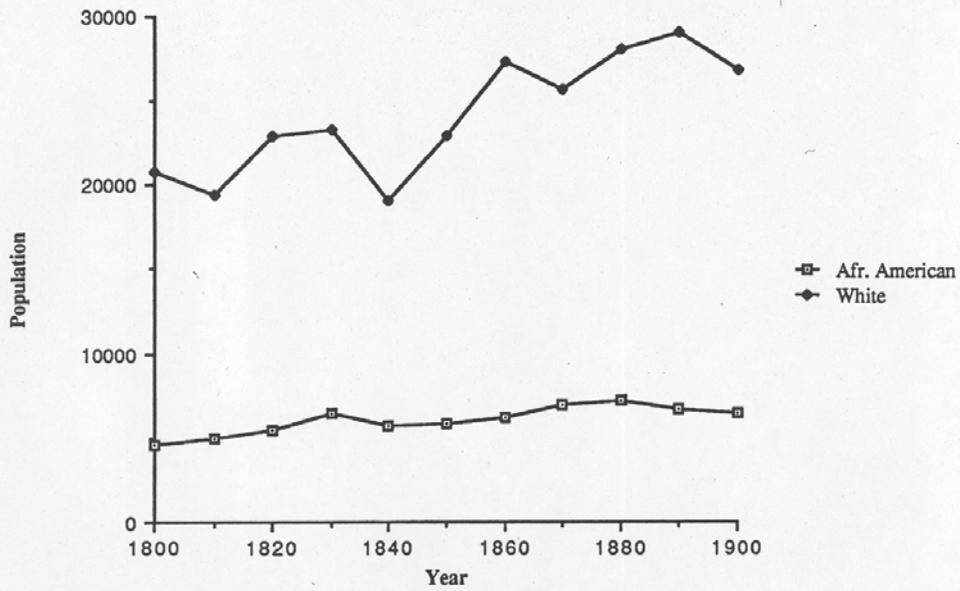


Figure 33: Changes in the African-American* and White Populations of Rural New Castle County



Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census

*"African-American" includes slaves and free blacks 1800-1860.

Figure 34: Population Distribution in Delaware, 1800-1900

Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census, 1800-1900

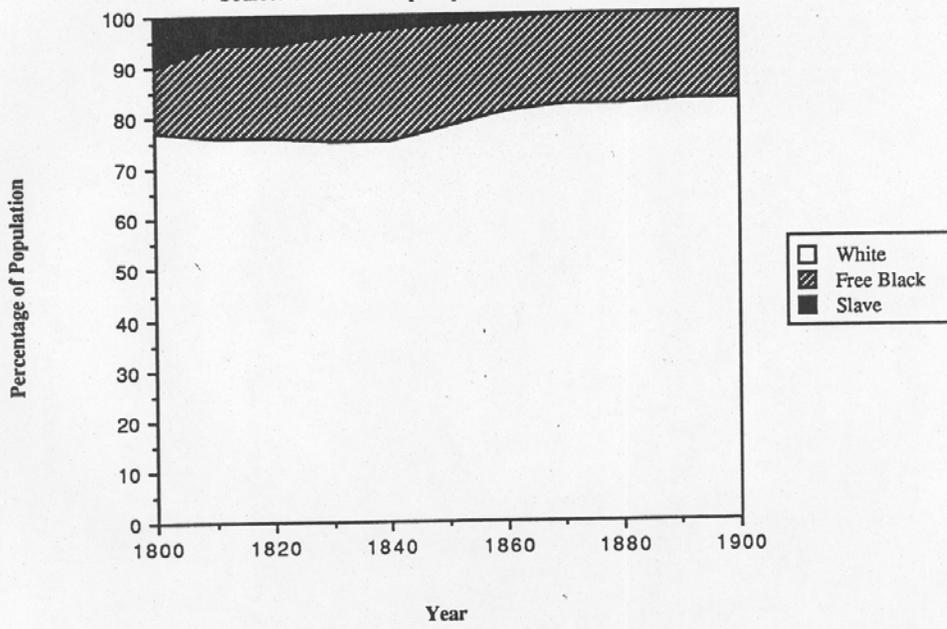
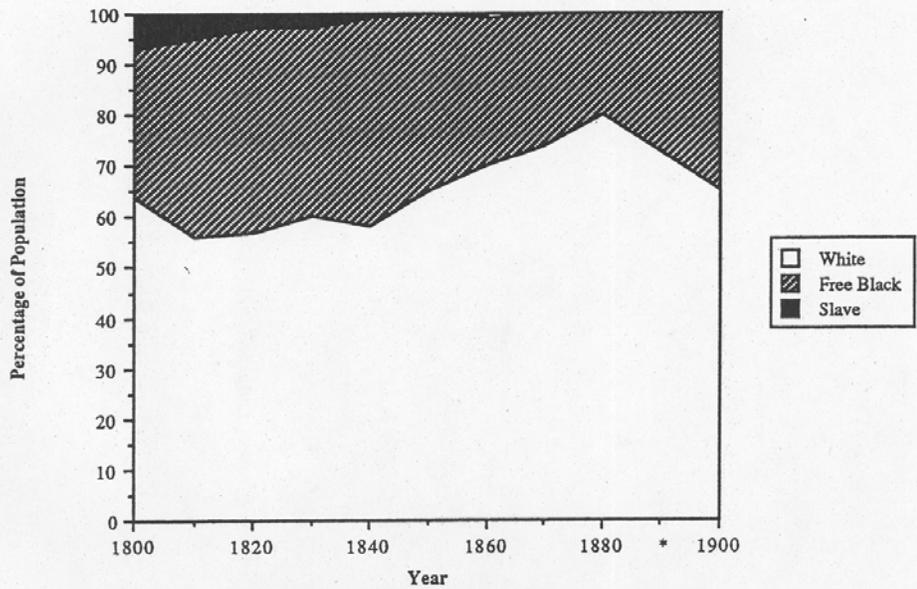
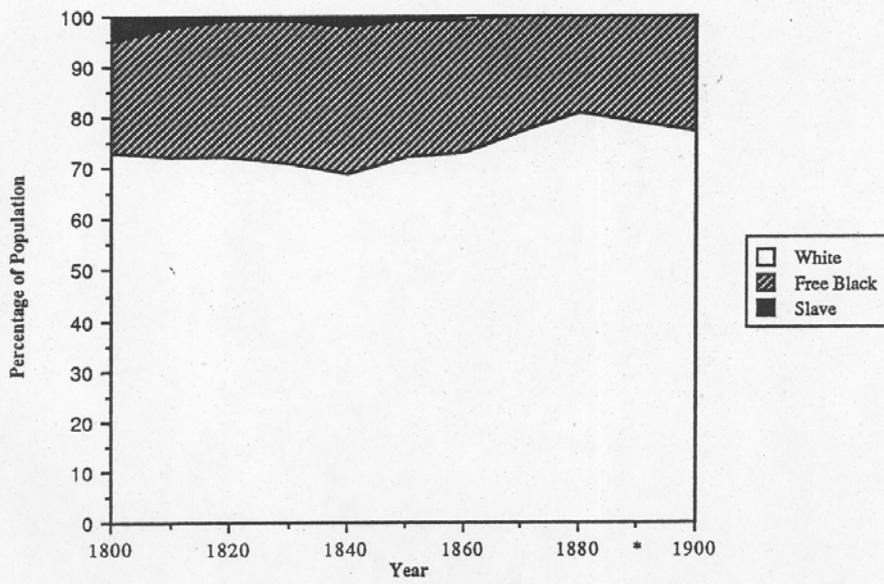


Figure 35: Population Distribution in Little Creek Hundred, 1800-1900



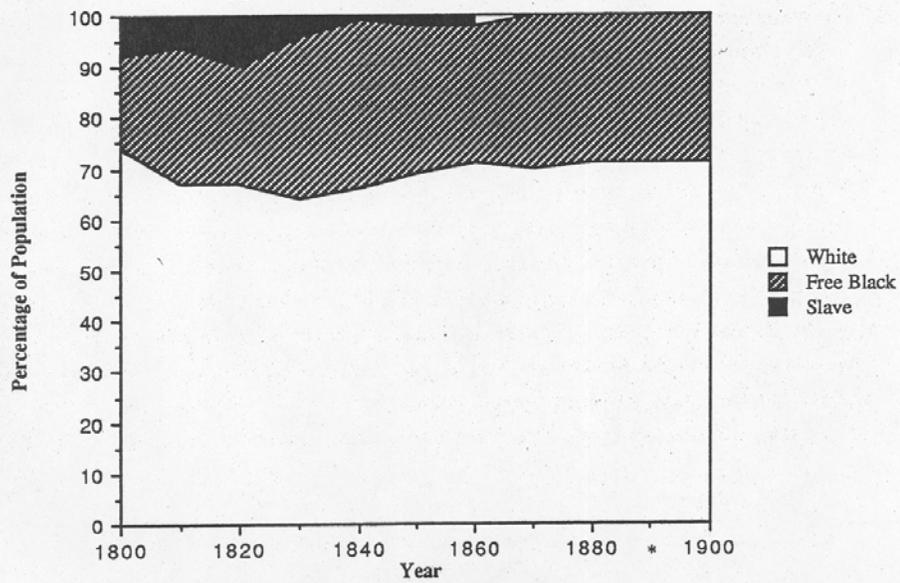
Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census
* Data unavailable.

Figure 36: Population Distribution in Murderkill Hundred, 1800-1900



Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census
* Data unavailable.

Figure 37: Population Distribution in Appoquinimink Hundred, 1800-1900



Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census
* Data unavailable.

The tax assessments reflect a very different picture of the economic status of African-Americans in the Upper Peninsula Zone. Consistently, a smaller proportion of the taxable population was represented by African-Americans than was visible in the closest census year (Table 4). Compared to the free African-American population, a higher proportion of the white population was considered eligible to be accorded at least a poll tax. In Murderkill Hundred, the difference between the two figures lessened considerably over the century: in 1822, free African-Americans represented 14% of the taxable population as compared to 27% of the census population in 1820; by 1896, they accounted for 18% of the tax assessment population but only 23% of the census population in 1900. In Little Creek Hundred, however, the gap between the two groups widened over the same time period: in 1822 only 30% of the taxable population were free African-Americans, as opposed to 40% in the census for 1820; by 1896, although the percentage recorded by the census had dropped to 35%, the percentage of the taxable population had plummeted to 17%. The appearance of free African-Americans on the tax assessment rolls reveals a great deal about their actual status: poll taxes for African-Americans were consistently lower than for whites. This may indicate a perception on the part of the white population that African-Americans would be unable to generate a labor-based income equivalent to that of a white male of the same age and same amount (or lack of) taxable property. Information on wage rates for African-American and whites engaged in similar tasks could provide the data necessary to explore this issue.

Table 4:
Distribution of Free African-Americans in the Population
Census and Tax Assessments

	Percent of the Total Population as Free African-Americans					
	1820	1816/1822	1860	1860/1861	1896	1900
Appoquinimink	23%	18%	27%	17%	N/A	29%
Little Creek	40%	30%	30%	20%	17%	35%
Murderkill	27%	14%	26%	18%	18%	23%

Source: Tax Assessments (1816, 1822, 1860, 1861, 1896) and Population Census (1820, 1860, 1900)

Certain differences exist in the condition of African-American tenants as opposed to the overall tenant population. First, while the size of more than half of the African-American tenant farms was above the median tenant-occupied farm size (11 of 19 African-American tenants occupied farms of more than 150 acres), the per acre value of the improved

land was generally very low. The value of improved farm land in the hundred ranged from about \$4 to \$50 per acre, but the value for land held by African-American tenants was generally only \$6 to \$8, indicating that the farm lands these folks were being permitted to access was marginal for agricultural use (possibly the parcels whose fertility had been seriously depleted in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.) The major exception to this rule was Benjamin Fransisco, the richest African-American in the hundred in 1822. Fransisco owned more than 100 animals, including 2 yokes of oxen and 3 teams of horses. His \$693 investment in livestock was the second largest among the group of tenants who owned livestock and slaves. Fransisco was renting 2 properties: the first was 400 acres (68% improved) on which was erected a brick dwelling house and several outbuildings in good condition; the second property contained 67 acres (100% improved). For both properties, the per acre value of the improved land was \$40 per acre, one of the highest values for agricultural land in the hundred. Caleb Hill was the second wealthiest African-American in the hundred and owned a similar number of livestock, including 4 yokes of oxen and 6 horses. His 200-acre farm was 100% improved and the value per acre was \$15, considerably less than Fransisco's. These two men both owned taxable property that was more valuable than that of the three African-American tenants who owned land of their own.

Distribution of Wealth. In terms of the representation of African-Americans in the wealth structure, there were almost none to be found in the wealthiest 20% of the population. A few were located in the 8th decile and the rest were distributed over the bottom 70% of the population, heavily concentrated in the poorest 40%. In 1822, the distribution of wealth among the African-American population was uneven, Although a few of the wealthiest African-Americans could still be considered wealthy within the overall population, at least half of the African-American population lived at subsistence-level. Half the population owned to real or personal property and were assessed solely for a poll tax. Among the other half, most owned nothing more than a single cow or a few pigs to supplement the household's diet. More than half of all the taxable wealth owned by the African-American population was owned by the tenants and landowners who represented only 20% of their population.

African-American tenants followed a slightly different distribution pattern from the one established by African-Americans in general--17 of the 22 African-American tenants in Little Creek Hundred in 1822 were located in the 6th, 7th, and 8th deciles, while very few were among that portion of the overall population that owned no taxable property. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that 65% of the African-American taxables were among that propertyless 40%. African-American tenants were much more likely to come from the small segment of their population that owned some type of taxable property. For example, William Williams owned parcels of 4 and 5 acres and tenanted a farm 115 acres, 87% of which was improved and valued at \$30 per acre. He also owned 46 stock animals;

including sheep, cattle, horses, and oxen. His total value for taxable property placed him in the 9th decile. Financially he was certainly in a position to exercise every competitive advantage against his white neighbor farmers.

When the personal assessed wealth of the African-American tenant population and landowning population are compared in 1822, the richest segment of the population is found as tenants. The two wealthiest members of the African-American population in Little Creek Hundred were Benjamin Fransisco and Caleb Hill. Both Fransisco and Hill were non-landowning tenants who appeared to be completely self-sufficient farmers. Despite their apparent wealth, Fransisco and Hill were only in the 7th or 8th decile of the total population. In contrast, by 1860 African-American landowners possessed taxable property of nearly equal value to that of African-American tenants.

The landlords who rented to African-Americans in Little Creek Hundred were mostly absentee (non-resident) landowners, administrators or guardians of estates, or multiple landowners who represented the wealthiest group in the entire population.

In 1822, there were 21 identifiable African-American tenants in Little Creek Hundred, of whom 17 managed farms of 10 acres or more. The average farm size was 164 acres; half of the farms were between 160 and 280 acres. Most were at least 60% improved, and their improved acreage had an average per acre value of \$12. While the range of value per improved acre ran from \$4 to \$40, more than half of the farms fell below \$8 per acre. The valuation per improved acre for white tenant farms, by comparison, was \$59 per acre. This low valuation may have been related to actual soil conditions as well as economic and social pressure to permit African-Americans access only to land that was already exhausted. It may also be due to a much more deep-seated tendency for assessors to perceive lands occupied and worked by African-Americans as automatically having a lesser value regardless of the true condition of the soil. This kind of prejudice is very hard to document, but some evidence is available. Based on case studies in Little Creek Hundred, the following patterns have been observed. Generally, African-Americans sold their land only to other African-Americans and the selling prices reflected the lower value per acre exhibited in the assessments. However, when a court ordered the sale of real estate owned by African-Americans, such as in the settlement of an estate, white farmers were the highest bidders and they usually paid a price above the assessed value.

Most of the African-American agricultural tenants in 1822 owned some livestock--14 of the 17 possessed at least one pair of horses or oxen. Although horses were more expensive to purchase and maintain, African-American tenants seemed to opt for horses over oxen (while 13 of 17 owned horses, only 8 owned oxen). Jeffrey Cotten, a tenant on 280 acres (only 50 were improved), owned 2 horses and some cows, pigs, and sheep. Prince Laws tenanted 100-acres, 90 of which were improved. He owned 1 horse, a team of oxen, some

cattle, pigs, and cows.

By 1860, the landscape of Little Creek Hundred had changed dramatically with regard to the African-American population. The tenant population had decreased by half, while the land population more than doubled. There were no women represented in either group. The 11 African-American agricultural tenants occupied farms of at least 30 acres. Farms ranged in size from 30 to 223 acres, but averaged 124 acres. The average value per improved acre was \$20, with five of the eleven farms having a value between \$16 and \$20 per improved acre. Only one farm, a 70-acre property tenanted by Trusten McCawley, was entirely improved. Most of the farms were about three-quarters improved. All of the African-American tenants owned their own means of production--all owned horses and half owned both horses and oxen.

There were only 7 African-American tenants in 1896, none of whom were women. Six of the tenants occupied farms of 10 acres or more, ranging in size from 25 to 300 acres. Of the 6 farms, 4 contained less than 90 improved acres. Half of the African-American tenants owned livestock and none owned more than 7 animals. This is a stark contrast to the 46 animals owned by Williams in 1860 and the 115 owned by Hill in 1822. Only 3 of the tenants owned their own means of production, 2 having horses and 1, Napoleon Morgan, having a yoke of oxen. All 3 had the same landlord, John H. Bishop, a wealthy multiple property owner. The ownership of the horses and oxen may reflect his demands of his tenants.

Conclusion. In the early part of the nineteenth century, tenancy was the best course of action for an African-American who wanted to farm for market purposes. Throughout the century, the ability to purchase land was restricted primarily to small parcels or pieces of land with little value for agricultural purposes. Successful African-American tenants invested their capital in livestock, particularly horses and oxen, possibly in order to demonstrate their capability as efficient, reliable farmers.

Evaluation Criteria for Tenant Farms and Tenants

Once again, the most obvious criteria of evaluation is that any tenant farm must be owned by a landlord and occupied by a tenant at some point in time – the significance of the resource in relationship to the historic context for agricultural tenancy must be tied to both of these elements. The only physical criteria for evaluation are those outlined in Chapter II as applicable to all potential tenant farms.

Consideration of tenants in general should determine the type of tenant--did he or she own livestock, particularly horses or oxen? Did the tenant own land somewhere else that he leased out to another tenant, possibly a relative? The characteristics of the particular tenant should be discussed in terms of the subjects described above--his or her location in the economy, race and gender, ownership of land and/or livestock, the size of the tenant farm,

the quality of the land, and the extent to which it was improved. The statement of significance should also consider the specific relationship between the tenant and the landlord, establishing if possible how the tenant was able to acquire the farm and what sort of conditions were included in his lease. A final topic that should be addressed is how the period of tenancy fit into the life of the tenant overall--was it part of his economic strategy for acquiring land of his own or was he a lifetime tenant?

African-American Tenant Farms. This property type is defined by the historically documented occupation of a tenant farm by an African-American tenant. All of the topics appropriate to tenants in general should be considered here, but special attention should be given to the economic position of the tenant as well as his familial, economic, or social connection to the landlord.