

- The difference between a good land owner and a bad one was: When the crops were in and “laid by,” and the only remaining work to do was the harvest, a bad land owner would tell the sharecropper he had already used up in credit his part of the profit, so he had to take his family and go. This left the family destitute, with no place to live and no food, looking for paid labor jobs, which were said to be “hard to come by.”
- Sharecropper houses were sometimes former slave cabins. The cabins were generally on four corner stones and were sometimes moved if they were needed in another location on the farm. Many of these had one room. Some had two.
- Tenant farmer or sharecropper houses sometimes had two rooms. A room was added to accommodate a large family. The first room added was directly behind one of the front two rooms, making somewhat of an L-shape. Sometimes the fourth room was added. People who bought their own land, other than the affluent, built the same type houses. Even when rooms were added, the houses were not large by today’s standards. Except in the more prominent homes, there was no living room. Chairs were put in the bedroom for company and moved back to the kitchen at mealtime. Not everyone had a bed; in large families people slept on pallets on the floor. Some houses, down by the river, were on stilts. Almost all structures had tin roofs.
- The general trend is to think of landowners as being White and sharecroppers as being Black. In Pond Beat and Mullins Flat, many landowners were Black and had sharecroppers on their property. In one instance, a Black landowner had a White sharecropper on his property.
- In a literature review one finds mention of plantation stores, or commissaries as people called them. The Chaney plantation had one in the back of their house. The location of the one on the old Shreve plantation was identified. The plantation was gone, but a woman and her many children lived in a dilapidated structure that was known to have been the Shreve “headquarters” and commissary. It is probable that identifying plantation stores through oral history is not feasible because most of the old plantations were defunct in the early 1900’s, the land divided and sold.
- Pond Beat had a community store that was first known as Woodward’s store and then Turner’s store. The structure served solely as a store. Darphus Love had a store in Mullins Flat. Gibson’s store was said to be up on the Pike in the vicinity of the Chaney property; whether it also served as a residence for the owners was not ascertained. The Fannings had a store in the Hickory Grove community; they lived in a room in the back. Sometimes a store was mentioned that was a room in someone’s house. These homes that had a room where goods were sold were considered stores by the people of the community. Since archaeological studies generally endeavor to identify “commercial sites,” this seems to pose the necessity for creating a category for stores that are a room in a residence. It is