South Carolina’s rural landscape has undergone several transitions since the antebellum period.

• Antebellum Plantation.............................1860

• Fragmented Plantation………………………….1870s – 1950s
  Sharecropper
  Tenant Renter

• Neoplantation..............................................1950s - Present

• Fragmented Neoplantation.......................1960s - Present

• Rural Residential Ribbons......................1970s - Present
Antebellum Plantation

• Most cropland devoted to one or two commercial crops
• Intensive manual labor
• Village-like settlement form
• Large fields
Cool Springs Plantation, Kershaw County
Slave Street
Fragmented Plantation
Sharecropper and Tenant Renter Types

• Most cropland devoted to one or two commercial crops

• Intensive manual labor

• Village settlement form disappears and houses are dispersed through the fields

• Labor lived on the land they worked

• Large fields
Fragmented Plantation
1870s – 1950s

Sharecropper Type
- Landowner provided land, house, fuel, tools, mules, feed, seed, and fertilizer
- Tenant provided all the labor
- At the end of season, the tenant received one-third to one-half of the crop

Tenant Renter Type
- Landowner provided land, house, and fuel
- Tenant provided all the labor, mules, feed, tools, seed, and fertilizer
- Mule barn and pasture
- At the end of the season, the landowner claimed a cash payment or percentage of the crop

Both sharecroppers and tenant renters had the right to use some land to raise vegetables and livestock
THE SOUTHERN PLANTATION
FRAGMENTED CROPPER TYPE
(Diagrammatic)

CROPPER HOUSE
VACANT HOUSE
MULE BARN
STORAGE SHED

TOTAL ACREAGE: 907
PASTURE - 162
WOODLAND - 214
CROPLAND - 402
IDLE LAND - 83
WASTE LAND, HOUSE SITES & BARNLOTS - 66
ROADS & LANES - 4.25 MILES, TOTAL

EACH CROPPER SUB-UNIT REPRESENTED
BY DASHED LINES AT DISTINCTIVE ANGLE

SCALE 10 YARDS

Modified from Wooster, et. al.
M.C.P.
THE SOUTHERN PLANTATION
FRAGMENTED TENANT-RENTER TYPE
(Diagrammatic)

OWNER
TENANT HOUSE
MULE BARN
STORAGE SHED

TOTAL ACREAGE: 907
PASTURE-55  IDLE LAND-36  WOODLAND-214
WASTE LAND-77  HOUSESITES & BARNLOTS-36
ALL CROPLAND INCLUDING ROTATION-489
ROADS & LANES-5.0 MILES, TOTAL
ROW CROP FIELDS REPRESENTED BY DASHED
LINES AT DISTINCTIVE ANGLES

EACH TENANT UNIT ENCLOSED
BY SOLID LINE. SAMPLE TENANT
UNIT WITHIN HEAVY DASHED LINE
CONTAINS 65.5 ACRES

M.C.P.
Tenant farming was widespread throughout South Carolina. About three-fourths of the farms in the Lower Piedmont and Inner Coastal Plain were operated by tenants. This included both whites and non-whites.
Chopping Cotton
The hoe was the universal tool.
Mules and humans provided the power.
Picking the crop demanded the most labor. Schools often were closed during the harvest season to meet the labor demand.
Tenant farmers also worked tobacco fields. It has been said that an individual tobacco leaf was touched seventeen different times by human hands before it was sold.
Tenant house on a sharecropper type fragmented plantation.

Sumter County
Mule barn on a sharecropper type fragmented plantation.

Near Lydia, South Carolina
Tenant house and mule barn on tenant renter type fragmented plantation.

Calhoun County
Commissaries often were operated by the landowner. The commissary was stocked with everyday essentials for the tenants and helped eliminate frequent trips to town. Goods were purchased on credit and accounts were settled after the crop was sold.
It was common for tenants to move from farm to farm seeking better arrangements for their labor.
Because the picked cotton was a bulky commodity and could not economically be transported very far, small cotton gins were common landscape features of the post bellum period.
The ginned cotton was taken to the nearest railroad town to be transported to a mill or to a port city for export.
As transportation improved, larger cotton gins were constructed.

Calhoun County
The ginned cotton seeds were pressed into cottonseed oil at mills such as this at Bishopville, South Carolina.
Guano was used as fertilizer during the post bellum period.

C-W-S Guano Company
(Building no longer exists)
Clinton, South Carolina
Neoplantation
1950s to Present

• Most cropland devoted to one or two commercial crops
• Large fields
• Beginnings of mechanized plantation
• Manual labor demands reduced
• Diminished labor demands encourages outmigration
• Rural depopulation and fewer people on the land
THE SOUTHERN PLANTATION
NEOPLANTATION TYPE
(Diagrammatic)

TOTAL ACREAGE: 907

PERMANENT PASTURE - 174
ROTATION PASTURE - 72
WINTER GRAINS AND LESPEDEZA - 100
PONDS - 7
DLE LAND - 15

CORN AND/OR SOYBEANS - 117
COTTON - 160
ALL WOODLAND - 214
WASTE LAND, HOUSESITES
AND BARNLOTS - 46
ROADS & Lanes, TOTAL MILES - 2.8

SCALE IN YARDS
Changes in agriculture encouraged rural outmigration. Rural whites often moved to towns and cities within the state while rural blacks left South Carolina.
Early tractor
Pole barns were common landscape features and were used to house machinery.
Evidence of a more populated rural landscape.

Near Lone Star, South Carolina
Fragmented Neoplantation
1960s to Present

• Most cropland devoted to one or two commercial crops
• Large fields
• Increasing sophistication and cost of agricultural machinery made encouraged operating on more land
• Part owners
• Leasing of farmland
• Farmers on the road
Larger tractors
Mechanical cotton pickers
Larger cotton gins
Cotton Modules
Module Presses

Module Transportation
Gin facilities for modules

Bishopville, South Carolina
Cotton and other row crops have diminished in significance since the post bellum period. Cotton has made important gains in the 1990s as with increased demand from the textile industry.
Rural Residential Ribbons

- Most people who live in rural areas are not farmers
- Large rural non-farm population
- Work in nearby towns and cities
- Prefer rural way of life
- May engage in small-scale agriculture
- Live along the highway and commute
- Sense of place
Rural Residential Ribbons