

Grambling State University

Fall 2019 Seminar Series Co-Sponsored by

The Office of Sponsored Programs & The Department of Sociology/Psychology

**“An Ethnographic Research/Tour: A Revisit of the Neo-Plantation -
Tenant Farm Families/ Homes and Cemeteries”**



Guest Speaker: Mr. Jason Church, Materials Conservator
National Center for Preservation
Technology & Training
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

When: 11:00 am -Wednesday
September 25, 2019

Where: Grambling Hall Auditorium

Abstract of Presentation

After emancipation the South's slave based agricultural system had to adapt or perish. Enter the new system of Tenant farming. In the system of tenant farming the laborer lives on the property, borrows money from the land owner to advance seed, fertilizer, mule use, and household supplies. At the end of harvest season when the tenant's percent of crops are sold they must first pay back all borrowed money to the land owner. All profit left is theirs as income earned. Many times a debit was incurred. This indebts the worker and their family to the land owner until the debit is payed. This system of economic slavery lasted until the wide scale



introduction of mechanized farming. As mechanized farming became cheaper and more reliable in the 1960's tenant farmers were let go and forced to leave the farms that many families had occupied since slavery. Once they were left vacant the tenant farmer cabins were demolished by the machines that had replace their occupants. Farmers needed the land for crops that the rows and clusters of cabins occupied. Hundreds of cabins were wiped from the landscape in the 1970's. One source estimates there are upwards of 800 cabins along the Cane River alone. This does not consider the areas around Grand Ecore, Coulterville, and Campiti in Natchitoches Parish. This presentation will detail the efforts of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) to document the remaining few tenant cabins still standing along the Cane River region of Natchitoches Parish. These cabins were documented using photography and 3D laser scanning. This project hopes to not only document the vanishing structures but to draw awareness to their importance and fragile state.

For additional information please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at 318-274-6299 or Dr. Frances Staten at 318-274-7282/3619