The ultimate goal of contemporary archeology is to utilize the extant by-products of past human cultural systems to their fullest potential in developing an understanding of paleo-human behavior, especially in terms of the broader aspects of those systems. Through such an orientation the archeologist attempts to develop and set forth patterns and models applicable not only to immediate areas, but also within larger geographic areas. In this sense the archeologist proceeds beyond the descriptive/historical traditions of recent years and searches for answers regarding social and economic behavior, such as settlement and subsistence patterns.

As recent as the 1950's and 1960's, archeological research was practically oriented towards a philosophy and ideology of culture history which concerned itself with constructing descriptive typologies of pottery sherds, projectile points, and other items of material culture. By utilizing principles of stratigraphy and seriation, and by comparing the results with other geographic areas, the archeologist was able to assemble a chain of cultural sequences reflective of time and space. This theoretical framework was intended to emphasize culture through the extant representatives of paleo-societies: the artifact record. These artifacts were viewed as culture's shared ideas, or as norms expressed in the specific form and decoration of material culture. The archeologist became almost totally consumed with lengthy descriptions of projectile points and other items of flaked stone, and considerable attention was directed at pottery sherds and decorative motifs. The theme of descriptive/historic archeology dealt primarily with form, while questions regarding function seldom entered into the picture. Culture history, although more complex than the example given, also sought answers to movements and migrations of people by developing models of diffusion, while it spoke of the rise and decline of prehistoric cultures. Indeed, the theoretical climate spoke more in terms of history than in terms of the processes that bring about cultural change. The normative framework of the past, although still beneficial to archeology, has recently declined as a total research direction.

Culture process is currently a theoretical direction for the contemporary archeologist, and while it may embrace artifact chronologies and other traits of the culture history school, it moves far beyond the classification and description of normative behavior and it searches for nomothetic principles and laws which set forth explanations of human behavior (Binford 1962, 1964, 1965; Flannery 1967; Martin 1971).

These new goals in archeology may be obtained by setting forth hypothesis, regarding forms of human behavior, that can be used to test and predict those patterns. In the absence of existing hypotheses, new hypotheses may be generated from excavated data, environmental information regarding the past and present, and ethnographic data. Although a complete explanation of the archeological record may be a model for
which to strive, the utilization of hypotheses basic to the initial understanding of human behavior serves as a foundation. As South (1977) has pointed out, "the key to understanding culture process lies in pattern recognition. Once pattern is recognized, the archeologist can then ask why the pattern exists, why it is often so predictive it can be expressed as laws. In doing so, he can begin to build a theory for explaining the demonstrated pattern" (South 1977: 31).

In understanding ancient cultural systems we look towards questions regarding subsistence, environmental utilization, settlement patterns, technologies, social structure, and other components of the cultural system. In doing so, we never consider a singular site, or treat that site as an end within itself. Indeed, a single site is a part of a much broader cultural system, and we should always strive to associate that site, or sites, with the larger cultural system through pattern recognition. Frequently, there is an unfortunate inherent bias introduced into every archeological site that prevents an easy understanding of site function and other goals in archeology. The very fact that many technologies relied on perishable items, such as wood and fibers, introduce an overwhelming bias after their decay, and subsequently, the archeologist must study the remnants of technologies represented by shattered stone and fragments of pottery sherds. Although much can be learned from these technological fragments, and the patterning of material culture in the archeological record, there is, nevertheless, an inherent bias. The artifact record within Congaree Swamp is no different. However, these by-products of human behavior, the material culture, can contribute significantly to the understanding of settlement pattern, environmental utilization, site function, and patterns of subsistence.

Hypotheses Considerations

Basic Observations and Hypotheses

With the appearance of the indigenous Americans some 12,000 years ago, the Congaree Valley has continued to attract numerous groups that existed by hunting and gathering. Throughout the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian periods, habitation sites were widespread and apparently diverse in size and function. Major occupations, in the form of base camps, were situated on moderately well drained soils and on sharply defined ecotones on the southern edge of the valley in Lexington and Calhoun Counties. Attending relative locations are smaller sites located along the peripheral edge that may have served as extraction camps. The north side of the river, in contrast, presents evidence for a less intensive occupation, yielding only one known base camp. Smaller camps do occur along the peripheral zones, but they appear less abundant.

The evidence for the Mississippian period occurs sporadically, and except for one large site on the southern edge of the valley, the period is poorly represented in comparison to the lithic sites of earlier time periods. The natural sand ridges within the swamp, Green Hill Mound and Mullers Barn Ridge, have both demonstrated Mississippian occupations in
the form of intrusive urn burials and apparent utilization as a habitation site.

During the historic period, settlement is oriented towards the southern edge of the swamp. The establishment of Fort Congaree in 1718; the 1740's development of Saxe-Gotha and its later expansion to include Granby; and the British fortifications of 1780 all demonstrate southern peripheral occupations in the early development of the historic period. The majority of roads, bridges, and ferries involved the polarities of the Congaree River, and for the most part, the bottomlands of Congaree Swamp were virtually unclaimed and unused for extended periods of time. Utilization increased during the 19th century, but it was apparently restricted to limited utilization in the form of cultivation and the erection of earthen dikes and cattle mounts, and for browsing cattle.

Occupation, therefore, has greatly involved the southern peripheral areas of the Congaree Valley, while the northern edge has never known a great deal of prehistoric or historic activity. The historic settlements involved, no doubt, the relocation of the Congaree Indians in 1708, an economic system fostered in part by the erection of Fort Congaree which involved the deerskin trade, and the location of the Cherokee trading path which offered accessibility to the interior. Saxe-Gotha, Granby, and other frontier settlements were tied into the trading path and the convenience of the Congaree River by which large stores of goods could be transported to Charles Town. Exemplified by the location of ferries at the narrows below the Fall Line, the wide expanse of the swamp must have imposed logistical problems concerning transportation.

Congaree Swamp is basically a hydric environment consisting of moderate to poorly drained silty clay soils with varying degrees of slow permeability. Composed of a mosaic of filled and partially filled oxbow lakes, the bottomland is further dissected by swales and sloughs, and actively flowing creeks. During periods of annual flooding the bottomland is given easily to submergence, and with floods of greater magnitude the loss of livestock, the destruction of crops and homes, the loss of other material possessions, and the occasional loss of human lives is not uncommon. During normal discharge, and with encouragement from floods, the river continuously meanders across the floodplain creating oxbow lakes, cut-offs, and new channels that redistribute the silty clays through constant erosion and deposition. The relatively flat bottomland with high water tables and little elevational differences, tends to support hydric floral species which provide a rich environment for vertebrate species. These floral and faunal communities offer considerable resources for human exploitation, especially being a preferred habitat for white-tailed deer and for producing highly predictable yields of mast. The diversity of avifaunal, herpetofaunal, and ichthyic communities adds richness to a resource base available for human exploitation through species extraction, while yields of forage and mast provide diverse browse for domestic cattle. However, the predictable instability of Congaree Swamp, exemplified by flooding, offers a precarious existence to either indigenous Americans or white Europeans, but in terms of resource potential, the bottomland is given easily to short term occupation.
with species extraction and limited historic utilization through cultivation and cattle raising. However, in order to implement historic utilization certain strategies are required in order to protect valuable crops and cattle, and such strategies were implemented with the construction of earthen dikes and cattle mounts. Within this environment, then, prehistoric base camps and examples of long term occupation would not be expected, but rather occupations would tend to be associated with short term behavioral activities involving some form of extractions.

The upland areas adjacent to the swamp do not possess soils that are ideal for extended human occupations or highly successful land utilization. The soils range from moderately well drained to poorly drained, and even though surface soils are sandy loams, the shallow subsurface clays retard penetration of water which frequently results in prolonged saturation of the sandy loams. Such conditions are not favorable to cultivation and it produces only a medium potential for row crops, while it affects the seasonal planting dates. The upland areas in the vicinity of the project do not exhibit sharp breaks in the environment through clearly defined ecotones, but rather the uplands emerge slowly from the adjoining swamps and make slow transitions from one environment to the other. One exception to this, however, involves the third development zone located on a small bluff elevated about ten feet above the swamp floor and Cedar Creek.

In contrast, the southern edge of the river valley produces well defined ecotones, higher elevations, and an immediate change from the bottomland to the uplands. On the southern edge, sites are more numerous, both in terms of base camps and smaller sites probably oriented towards extraction. Based on these data, and the knowledge of only one recognized base camp on the northern edge of the Congaree valley, the potential of discovering sites that represent long term occupation in the form of base camps, either within the swamp or the adjoining uplands, is relatively low. The potential of discovering short term occupational sites, however, is much greater.

These basic observations elicit certain hypotheses relating to settlement and subsistence within the area of the proposed Congaree Swamp National Monument. The validity of the observations and hypotheses will be tested against the data obtained through intensive testing of the proposed upland development areas and the reconnaissance survey of the bottomland swamp.