CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

The significance of Strawberry Ferry and the associated settlement of Childsbury Towne to the socio-economic landscape of colonial South Carolina may be best understood through a combined use of archaeological data and historical information. A populations particular use of space in time and their mental concepts of place is better defined through the use of a multi-disciplinary approach. Commonly referred to as historical archaeology, this approach affords a greater understanding of the evolutionary cultural process found in low country frontier settlement.

Historical archaeology, defined by the work of Ivor Noel-Hume (1969, 1970), James Deetz (1967, 1977, 1988), Mark P. Leone (1988), Ken Lewis (1984, 1985), Stanley South (1977), and many others (South 1995), has developed a methodology in which the historical and archaeological record is used to support one another to acquire a holistic understanding of cultural processes. The combination of these disciplines has led, not to a de-constructionist view of colonial history, but to a re-assessment of the historical record as it is used in combination and support of anthropological and archaeological data (Cornell 1993; Dymond 1974). Applied to the study of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne, historical archaeology helps determine the affect of social, economic, and transportation systems on why and where settlements are established.

South Carolina’s colonial period dates from initial settlement, in 1670, to the end of the American Revolutionary War, in 1783. Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne, located on the western branch of the Cooper River, were features of colonial South
Carolina. Temporally and spatially Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne occupied a time and place that co-incided with the expansion of South Carolina's emerging frontier during the initial settlement of British colonial America.

**Settlement Theories**

The study of settlement within British colonial America has been addressed by numerous scholars (Ernst and Merrens 1973; Kovacik and Winberry 1989; Lewis 1984, 1985; Rodman 1992; Rubertone 1989). A number of models and hypotheses delineating the process of colonial settlement have been devised that utilize anthropological, historical, and geographical data. Many of these studies have concentrated on the settlement of South Carolina's back country (Coclanis 1989; Ernst and Merrens 1973; Kovacik and Winberry 1989; Lewis 1984, 1985; Terry 1981; Weir 1983). Generally based on market oriented economic systems, they occasionally include data related to the role of transportation networks within those systems (Coclanis 1989; Ernst and Merrens 1973; Lewis 1984). Very few settlement studies, other than those related to the development of plantations, have been conducted within South Carolina's lower coastal plain. The establishment of a slave-based plantation agricultural system, introduced by elite English immigrants from the island of Barbados during initial colonization, is suggested to have been the cause for a lack of concentrated settlements within the low country (Coclanis 1989:146-147).

Peter Coclanis, in *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country 1670-1920*, makes the argument for a lack of low country settlement based on economic factors. He states that the "the economic imperatives of staple production with slave labor for national and international markets" hindered the development of low country interior towns (Coclanis 1989:147). The establishment of a plantation based agronomic system inhibited the "elaboration and integration of local markets" (Coclanis 1989:147). It is Coclanis' belief that economically "lowcountry
interior market towns were not necessary” (Coclanis 1989:146). He suggests that “as in other parts of the Plantation South, the institution of slavery worked in a circuitous manner to obviate the need for them” (Coclanis 1989:146).

Coclanis uses size and economics to determine a settlements significance prior to the turn of the 18th and 19th century yet, his use of size as a marker for what constitutes a settlement may have biased his conclusions. The low country did have a few locations, referred to by local planters as towns, where small settlements grew up (Barr 1995; Moore 1994; Smith 1913). The most prominent of these towns, within a thirty mile radius of Charles Town, were Ashley Ferry Town, Dorchester, Childsbury Towne, and Monck’s Corner. All but Monck’s Corner was established between 1670 and 1710. All survived the colonial period as viable entities in one form or another. Thus, the question arises that if the introduction of a slave based plantation economy eliminated the need for settlements, why were these towns established?

In “Camden’s Turrets Pierce the Skies!” The Urban Process in the Southern Colonies during the Eighteenth Century (1973) Joseph Ernst and H. Roy Merrens study the process of urban development within the back country of mid-18th century South Carolina. They suggest that this development was tied to the economic landscape of a particular place and time (Ernst and Merrens 1973:557). As settlements they should be defined “in relation to the structure and function” of the economic landscape in which they emerged (Ernst and Merrens 1973:565). A major aspect of this economic function is the export of locally produced commodities in exchange for finished goods imported into the community from regional or worldwide centers of production. They suggest that petitioners from these towns considered their “settlement in the context of the commercial development of the colony as a whole and were identifying the role they could play in larger trade patterns and linkages” (Ernst and Merrens 1973:561).

They feel that small towns are significant to South Carolina’s development because of their functional aspects as opposed to their size, structure, or form (Ernst and
Merrens 1973:557). This is because “urban form and urban function often diverged” (Ernst and Merrens 1973:555, 559-560). A review of available historical literature, such as personal journals by traveling Englishmen and presiding elders from regional religious congregations, would lead to the assumption that little or no urban development existed within the Carolina hinterlands during the colonial period (Coclanis 1989:146; Ernst and Merrens 1973:554; Jones 1990:248, 250; Merrens 1978:110-121). Although there were many economically viable settlements along the early frontiers of South Carolina these accounts very rarely mention towns passed through because of a bias that only cities resembling those of Europe, similar to London, Paris, or Madrid, would constitute urban development (Ernst and Merrens 1973:556). To European visitors the aspect of size “remained the primary concern” (Ernst and Merrens 1973:554).

To further explain settlement Ernst and Merrens (1973) developed a hypothesis that denotes certain non-residential buildings within the community as “key structures.” Key structures are “buildings that symbolize the role played by the settlement in serving an area much more extensive than the town itself” (Ernst and Merrens 1973:560). Examples of these structures would be churches, inns, schools, taverns, and mills. I suggest that ferry crossings should also fall into this category. In Childsbury Towne there are two extant key structures; Strawberry Chapel and the northeastern landing of Strawberry Ferry. Two other key structures, which historically existed within the town limits of Childsbury, were Strawberry Tavern and the “free school.” The function of each of these key structures denotes community, both socially and economically. Because neither the tavern or other key structures, such as the “free school,” are standing today, they must be located through archaeological investigation.

The development of frontier communities is also addressed by Ken Lewis in The American Frontier: An Archaeological Study of Settlement Pattern and Process (1984). This study “draws heavily on economic geography to construct a model of frontier adaptation” (Lewis 1984:xix). The central location of Charles Town within the colony
required South Carolina to expand, demographically, to the northeast and southwest of Charles Town during the early history of the colony (Coclanis 1989:48-49; Merrens 1978:110-121).

Two models of frontier settlement, developed by Lewis (1984, 1985), are of concern to the study of Strawberry Ferry and Childs bury Towne. One is the cosmopolitan model; the second is the insular model. The cosmopolitan model (Lewis 1984:250), exhibits "specialized activities tied to the national economy of the homeland" (Lewis 1984:250). These activities include "fur trapping, mining, ... establishing a military presence, and certain types of exploitative plantation agriculture" (Lewis 1984:250). Examples of this type of settlement are seen in the mining activities of Spain in Peru, the exploitation of the fur trade by Russia in Alaska, France and England in Canada, as well as staple crop production of sugar by England in Barbados and other Caribbean plantations. Each of these activities supplied European nations with a product they did not have the capability to produce at home. They each reflect exploitation of indigenous people and resources coupled with direct shipment of those products to the homeland.

The insular model is more representative of overall colonial settlement in South Carolina. Aspects of this model are staple agricultural production, in the form of small farms and plantations, and a reduction in the reliance of colonial settlements on core centers for their survival (Lewis 1985:251-274). South Carolina, unlike the middle colonies of tidewater Maryland and Virginia that flourished through direct trade with the homeland, developed a regional core center, the port of Charles Town (Ernst and Merrens 1973:550; Lewis 1984:278; Porter 1975:329-349). Charles Town's importance to the exportation of colonial goods derived from frontier settlement is the subject of many studies (Clowse 1971; Ernst and Merrens 1973; Lewis 1984; McCusker and Menard 1976; Terry 1981; Weir 1983). The insular model considers Charles Town a center for
the shipment of commodities from the interior regions of the Carolina colony to regional, home, or world markets.

Of primary interest to my study of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne are the three types of settlements defined by Lewis within his insular model. They are referred to as "frontier towns," "nucleated settlements," and "dispersed settlements." Unlike Ernst and Merrens (1973) Lewis considers size to be significant to the function of these settlements (Lewis 1984:182).

Frontier towns are the largest of the three and "serve as centers of specialized economic, political, and social activity" (Lewis 1984:187). Lewis (1984) used archaeological data, related to the presence or absence of certain artifact types, to determine this type of settlement. These data contain information about the extent of specialized production, employment opportunities, and marketing influence. Elements of community function, related to political and social interaction, may be "added to the role of the frontier town" (Lewis 1984:181). Colonial Charles Town, George Town, Beaufort, and Camden, South Carolina are considered examples of a frontier town (Lewis 1984:180-200).

According to Lewis (1984), nucleated settlements are "functionally less complex and their range of influence is more restricted" than frontier towns (Lewis 1984:201). He believes that the size and form of these settlements also reflect their function (Lewis 1984:202-206). Even though there are certain non-agricultural specialized activities within nucleated settlements, the range and variety of these will not be as extensive as they are in the larger frontier town. Nucleated settlements serve as "integrating institutions in areas of dispersed agricultural production" (Lewis 1984:201). Such settlements within South Carolina were Cheraw, Ninety-Six, Long Bluff, and Pickneyville (Lewis 1984:201-210).

Dispersed settlements are the smallest form within the insular model. They "consist of individual farms and plantations where settlers live and where the production
of agricultural commodities are carried out” (Lewis 1984:210). Archaeologically, they are identified by their spatial patterning and functionally related artifacts and features. The data recovered from these sites must be capable of “revealing critical aspects of settlement content and layout” because of a paucity of information pertaining to associated outbuildings and modifications within the landscape (Lewis 1984:215-216). The Kershaw and Price homes in Camden (Lewis 1984:216-223, 226-243) and Middleton Place and Limerick Plantation along the Cooper River are representative of dispersed settlements.

The models, presented by Ernst and Merrens (1973) and Lewis (1984), utilize various aspects of the economic landscape to explain why settlement occurred. Independently, both models contain compelling arguments for this process. Unfortunately, the primary use of economics as a base for these studies has led to a misinterpretation of low country settlement and its significance. Although economics are an important issue in settlement, equal weight should be given to the study of inter-related social and transportation factors. The reasons for low country settlement are varied and multi-faceted. Why these towns developed cannot simply be explained by one factor such as economics.

My investigations of Strawberry Ferry and Childsberry Towne have resulted in a re-assessment of what constitutes a settlement within low country South Carolina. Although specific notions found in the settlement models of Ernst and Merrens (1973) and Lewis (1984) are incorporated into this new definition, I have included social and transportation factors. No matter what the purpose, social integration takes place wherever people reside or gather. This integration may or may not be the direct result of local economic factors but, is facilitated by an established transportation network of roads, rivers, or both.

The exclusion of size (Lewis 1984), allows the incorporation of important social factors. I have exclude size because communal interaction needs few, if any, structures
for a location to be socially significant. Some socially significant places may not contain any structures at all. Examples of locations where socially important meetings took place with a minimal amount of structures may be found in the use of grange halls and fur rendezvous as social and economic meeting places. Both were common during the settlement of the mid-19th century American west. I suggest the motivation behind the establishment of low country communities was probably a response to either personal or communal social and economic needs.

The inclusion of theories concerning key structures helps define, archaeologically, the significance of a settlement to the local community (Ernst and Merrens 1973). The use of inter-related social, economic, and transportation factors incorporate a more holistic view of what determines a communally significant settlement. Key structures help define, archaeologically, the significance of a settlement to the local community (Ernst and Merrens 1973).

Ernst and Merrens (1973) present data related to the importance of transportation networks. Lewis (1984) presents a detailed study at these networks during colonial expansion. In both models their existence is explained as part of an over-riding economic system. The inclusion of ferry crossings as a key structure significantly increases the social and economic importance of these transportation networks to overall settlement patterns.

The general incorporation of these two models (Ernst and Merrens 1973; Lewis 1984) with data recovered during this study have helped define low country settlement. In this thesis, a settlement is defined as a centrally located area where communally important key structures are found. Individuals may reside there but, it is primarily a location where people gather for social events and/or the purpose of conducting business. Some form of an established transportation network will be evident for the movement of people and products to and from this location. Through the use of this definition a larger
picture of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne’s significance to the local community emerges.

Also of importance to the study of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne are environmental and mental aspects contained in the concept of landscape. Landscape theories offer variations concerned with social, economic, and transportation landscape relationships, not offered by Ernst and Merrens (1973) and Lewis (1984), which help define a settlements existence.

Landscape Theories

Landscape theory, created by geographer Carl Sauer in 1925, explains temporal and cultural change in conjunction with the natural environment (Kovacik and Winberry 1989:1). This formulation presents the concept that as time passes cultures interact with the natural landscape, changing the environment to satisfy cultural and social needs. These changes eventually become a cultural landscape. Sauer saw the environment as pristine and sub-ordinate within this scheme (Kovacik and Winberry 1989:2).

Since Sauer’s initial proposal, landscape theory has been modified by archaeologists, historians, and geographers who see landscape as having a greater contextual meaning where land use patterns and overall settlement are concerned. Notions concerning landscape theory and its significance to the study of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne may be found in a number of books and articles (Coclanis 1989; Deetz 1977, 1988; Easton 1989; Easton and Moore 1992; Hasslof 1963; Leone 1988; Merrens 1978; Rodman 1992; Rubertone 1989; South and Hartley 1980; Taylor 1993; Weir 1983).

Landscape is not static within a local or regional context and may represent changing ideological notions of particular societies and domination by the ruling class (Leone 1988; Little 1988; Taylor 1993). These views are represented, archaeologically, by the cultural assemblage found on site and through the existence of social markers in
the form of structures, ceramics, or grave stones (Deetz 1977; Hodder 1982; Little 1988; McGuire 1988; Taylor 1993). Many of the physical manifestations, which reflect ideological notions, are classified as belonging to a concept known as the Georgian worldview (Deetz 1977; Leone 1988). The theoretical concepts of the Georgian worldview and Georgian order seek to find "patterns of thought" through archaeological study of the cultural landscape (Leone and Potter 1988:212).

The concept of Georgian worldview and its mental template allow delineation of the underlying structure associated with material remains found in the archaeological record (Deetz 1988:219-233; Leone and Potter 1988:214). Changes within the landscape are suggested to have been decisions made by the colonists of British North America. These changes were physical representations of themselves to each other and to their peers within their respective homelands (Leone 1988).

Mark Leone, in *The Georgian Order as the Order of Merchant Capitalism in Annapolis, Maryland* (1988), studies the rise of merchant capitalism in Annapolis, Maryland. He views the control of landscape as a way of legitimizing personal and economic power. This was done by the elite through the ideological notions of naturalizing and marking.

The confirmation of power through manipulation of landscape by the elite is found in the work of Neils Taylor (1993), *The Landscape of Alienation in Nineteenth Century Salem, North Carolina* (1993). Through control of the social and economic landscape the white Moravian elite of colonial Salem established dominance over their African-American slaves. This domination was confirmed by the construction of an African-Moravian church, Saint Philips, in a location outside of colonial Salem’s town limits (Taylor 1993).

A person’s concept of place may be explained from their own personal view of landscape. Studies, conducted by Margaret Rodman in *Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality* (1992), allow consideration not only the role of the elite in defining
place but, that of other groups of people that make up the demographic landscape. According to Rodman, a culture’s definition of place is “culturally relative, historically specific, [and contain] local and multiple constructions” (Rodman 1992:641). The adoption of that landscape is directly related to a culture’s ability to physically control their place within that particular environment (Rodman 1992:642; Rubertone 1989:50; South and Hartley 1980:1-35; Weir 1983:35).

Each culture, as well as different people within each culture, has a particularistic view of the local landscape. Within Childsbury that view came from a number of various ethnic groups. Although the European, elite, white settlers controlled the formation of an economic base and related transportation systems in St. John’s, the landscape would also represent, socially, Childsbury’s Native American, African American, and lower white residents. Each held individually specific notions of what the community represented to them.

Often overlooked, landscape also includes water and the interface between land and water (Easton 1989; Easton and Moore 1992; Hasslof 1963). The landscape of my study of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne includes underwater and terrestrial areas. Olaf Hasslof (1963) suggested the combined study of these two areas during ethnographic and archaeological investigations of shipbuilding techniques used in contemporary European shipyards. These studies included data from “boats and slips, harbours, shipyards, [and] tools” (Hasslof 1963:130). Hasslof suggests the greatest value in the use of same site terrestrial and underwater data is that aspects of shipbuilding could “be studied in their natural settings and functions” (Hasslof 1963:130).

Archaeological investigations along the shoreline of Galiano Island in British Columbia, Canada by Norman A. Easton (1989, 1992) and Charles D. Moore (1992) confirm the importance of using same site terrestrial and underwater archaeological data. Same site data were used in these studies to determine a time-frame for pre-historic coastal migration routes from Asia into North America. The temporal occupation by pre-
historic peoples along the coast of western British Columbia contains a gap between 3,000 BP and 7,000 BP. Archaeological evidence from these studies was used to close that temporal gap.

The establishment of small settlements along the Carolina frontier is well documented in local histories and through archaeological investigations (Ernst and Merrens 1973; Lewis 1984, Smith 1914). Social, economic, and transportation factors played a significant role in the location of these towns. Socially, they provided a place for communal communication and interaction. Personal safety, from hostile elements along the frontier, was enhanced by having a centralized location where people could gather in large numbers. Areas with established, dispersed settlements and high production values played a pivotal role as to where these towns were located. Quite often their establishment was initiated by elite elements of society for economic reasons (Amer et al., 1995; Barr 1995; Wesler 1985:384; Weir 1983:154). The high ground along rivers and other central locations within developing transportation networks were important considerations, too (Amer et al, 1995; Barr 1995; South and Hartley 1980). As centers of social and economic importance within the local area, they defined the mental concepts of place, temporally and spatially, of local populations (Rodman 1992). The significance of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Town is primarily based upon the local communities notion of place and related to its unique geographical position along the expanding Carolina frontier.

The importance of these two entities to the local community is reflected in each of the above examples. They represent how archaeological, historical, and geographical data can be used to assist one another in the interpretation of frontier settlement within the context of landscape. Historically, it is established that Strawberry Ferry was located in an area controlled by the elite. This position, within economic production areas and related transportation infrastructure, is significant to the development of Childsbury
Towne. This position also allows the definition of Strawberry Ferry as a key structure as defined by Ernst and Merrens (1973).

The associated settlement of Childsbury Towne encompasses many aspects of the insular model of frontier development (Lewis 1984; Greene 1987; Terry 1981), as well as the notions related to key structures as defined by Ernst and Merrens (1973). Settlements grow, falter, and decline due to the subsumed competitive nature of colonization. Quite often this decline is based upon a dynamic transportation infrastructure and changes within the local economic base related to changing conditions within regional or world markets (Coclanis 1989:146-147; Lewis 1984:113).

The physical position of these two entities along the Carolina frontier placed them in a position to take advantage of newly emerging economic opportunities such as the deer skin trade, naval stores production, and the exportation of cattle (McCusker and Menard 1985; Terry 1981). Individual and social concepts of place are a factor in the construction of Strawberry Ferry, the establishment of Childsbury Towne, and their significance to the local community. The landed and economic status of the initial subscribers to Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne may have induced and enhanced these activities. Through their social status local residents may have been privy to information that might have brought them personal financial gain. Their ability to survive dynamic changes within regional and world economic systems may have produced detrimental affects upon that development.

By viewing the theories related to landscape and settlement as a dialogue or dialectic with one another, a holistic explanation of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne within local social, economic, and transportation systems are attained. The application of such an inclusive approach enhances understanding of the development of transportation systems and the socio-economic impetus behind the establishment of ferry crossings and associated settlements along the colonial frontier. They also reflect how archaeological and historical data can complement one another in the development of
conclusions concerning the interpretation of colonial frontier settlement. The significance of Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne is defined through the application of these theories, their hypotheses, and subsequent models.