CHAPTER SIX
CHILDSBURY TOWNE
(38BK1750)

Historical Background

In 1707 James Child laid out and sold lots for the establishment of Childsbury Towne. Child’s skill as a surveyor served him in this endeavor (Moore and Simmons 1960). Childsbury Towne was the name given it by James Child, but it was commonly referred to as Strawberry (Rogers, et al., 1980:223). The town’s association with the ferry crossing serves to highlight its growing social, economic, and transportation function along South Carolina’s frontier (Barr 1995; Wesler 1985).

Childsbury Towne possibly played a role similar to that of Camden, established during the late 18th century, in the Carolina back country. Camden’s main purpose was to serve as a... “multi-functional center” (Ernst and Merrens 1973:565).

As an internal urban center, its development [would] reflect the increasing population density and commercialization of the interior, its trading role was intimately related to and increasing emphasis of [rice and indigo] growing and the development of overland transportation ties that gave back country access to coastal markets (Ernst and Merrens 1973:565).
Much like Childsbury, Camden's "economic viability was assured by its flourishing regional base, and the town served as an integral component in the economic structure of the region in which it was located" (Ernst and Merrens 1973:565).

Although not as large or extensive in regional influence as Camden, Childsbury may have played a similar role locally. There is little known of Childsbury Towne. A few historical references, Child's original plat, an 1811 map of Strawberry Plantation by John Diamond, the town chapel (Plate 9), and the two brick landings for the ferry crossing are a few of the remnants that serve as mute testimony to its existence (Deas 1978 [1909]; Merrens 1978; Moore and Simmons 1960:65-66; Smith 1913:198; 1914:107-112). Except for Strawberry Chapel and the northeastern landing of Strawberry Ferry, the relative size and number of key structures constructed within the town is undetermined (Smith 1914:107-112).

Plate 9. Strawberry Chapel
Childsbury Towne, according to James Child's will dated 1718 and his original plat map, covered approximately 100 acres and consisted of 185 numbered lots which included large town squares and a market area (See page 50, Fig. 7; See page 51, Fig. 8). Certain lots were designated for the construction of community buildings. Those specified were a chapel, free school, and college. There was a common pasture laid out for the benefit of the community. Letters, wills, deeds and other historical documents suggest that approximately one or two domestic residences were constructed in the southeastern quadrant of Childsbury Towne (Rogers et al., 1974:598-599; Appendix I).

There were a total of 182 lots for sale to the public, and over 50% of the lots surveyed by James Child within the town limits of Childsbury Towne can be traced to a specific owner (Appendix VII). The majority of lots owned were located in the northeastern and southeastern quadrant of the town. James Child's will, dated October 29, 1718, stipulates that "Hanna Dix [would receive] town lots No. 50-95" (Moore and Simmons 1960:65-66; Smith 1914:111). The will of James' son Isaac, dated November 5, 1734, stipulates that his oldest son William would receive town lots No. 1, 2, 17, and 24. Each of William's four, grown daughters were to receive individual lots in town, also. (Moore and Simmons 1960:203). Numerous other lots were sold to individuals who lived along the Cooper River and in Berkeley Parish. Over time the town is reported to have acquired some full-time residents (Deas 1972[1909]; Irving 1932[1842]:143; Moore 1964:248; Moore and Simmons 1960:66, 203; Rogers et al., 1974:599; Smith 1913:199; Terry 1981:110, 111, 128, 306; Appendix VIII). Archaeological data from the southwestern quadrant does not support this information.

Childsbury Towne was established and supported by the elite white land owners of the Cooper River as a gathering place for local residents and to take advantage of a growing export market in agricultural products. Trustees and subscribers were appointed for the town and for assistance in the construction of public buildings (Smith 1914:109-110). A majority of the eighteen subscribers were elite residents of the western branch of
the Cooper River. Among them were Francis Williams, Daniel Huger, Thomas Broughton, James Child, Nathaniel Broughton, The Rev. Thomas Hassell, Anthony Bonneau, John Harleston, Elias Ball, Andrew Broughton, and Francis Lejau. Of these 11, nine were related by marriage. A hefty fee of £100 was required to become a subscriber. Although unknown, I assume that as trustees and subscribers each owned lots in the town.

Although the elite was instrumental in the establishment and continued success of Childsbury Towne, historical documents show that some residents were not of the same social standing as its founders. Artisans, tradesmen, and professionals trained in law and medicine are historically documented as residents (Smith 1914: 107-112; Terry 1981: 110-111, 209). I suspect that there were a significant number of Native American and African slaves (See Chapter 2).

The Indian trade, revolving principally around deer skins and Indian slaves, was significant to the rise of Childsbury Towne. As seen in chapter two, Child and other elite members of the Cooper River community were heavily involved in the Indian trade. The Indian trade led to tensions between the Indians and colonists (Weir 1983: 84-85). Abuses in this trade led to the Yamasee war in 1715 (Weir 1983: 98). Concerns related to Indian affairs led Child to will “Lands by [the] Tan house and River Bay to build a citadel for [the] security of [the] town” (Moore and Simmons 1960: 66). The proposed location for the fort is shown on the plat map of Childsbury Towne on the bluff overlooking the Cooper River (See page 51, Fig. 8). This fort would be used for defense of the town’s inhabitants during either Indian attacks or slave insurrections; both of which were of major concern to those living upon the frontier.

The naval stores trade was also of major importance to Childsbury Towne in the early colonial period. As seen in chapter two, a number of possible colonial era tar kilns have been discovered north of Childsbury Towne (Allen and Epenshade 1990; Williams et al., 1992, 1993). Child leased some of his lands for the production of naval stores to

During the 1730s the naval stores industry and the deer skin trade began to decline whereas the production of rice began to substantially increase. The cypress swamps and marsh lands north of Childsbury Towne are known to be areas utilized for growing rice (Ferguson and Babson n.d.). Much like the production of naval stores, the results of rice production were probably moved by overland transportation to Childsbury Towne’s public landing for shipment to Charles Town.

Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne became significant entities within the transportation infrastructure of St. John’s parish during the early to mid-colonial period. Planters, overseers, farmers, travelers, merchants from Charles Town, and parish residents with religious and social obligations were drawn to Childsbury for various reasons. The general layout of the parish roads in St. John’s in the early 18th century would have funneled much of the overland traffic from the deer skin trade, naval stores production, and rice production toward the public landing at Childsbury Towne for shipment to Charles Town (See page 34, Fig. 3). The influx of back country farmers would have accented the need for storage facilities and assisted the growth of the Childsbury's local cottage industries. In 1718, James Child willed £5 to Maj. Andrew Foster, a Charles Town merchant, for the building of storehouses on land fronting Bay Street (Moore and Simmons 1960:66).

Childsbury Towne also provided a number of services for local residents along the Cooper River. A saw pit or saw house is suggested to have been in operation at Childsbury Towne in the early 1700s (Terry 1981:82). Prior to 1750, the town was occupied at various times by three carpenters, two tailors, two butchers, a tanner, and a shoemaker (Terry 1981:209). A tanning house is known to have been located in
Childsbury Towne during the 1720s (Moore and Simmons 1960:66). “The town also had the services of a doctor, and during the 1740s even had an attorney-at-law living in the neighborhood” (Teny 1981:209).

In an effort to improve and secure the early economic success experienced through the construction of the ferry at Childsbury Towne the men who lived along the banks of the western branch of the Cooper River successfully petitioned the assembly for permission to build a draw bridge across the Cooper River (McCord 1841:43-46). On February 20, 1718-19, the assembly passed Statute #391 for the construction of this bridge.

There is no evidence that the bridge was ever built. There are a number of factors to be considered as to why it was not. The Cooper River, in 1719 and today, is approximately 5 fathoms deep and over 200 feet wide. This is a considerable depth and span for colonial bridge construction. Freshets, that is exceedingly quick rises of water rapidly flowing down river, were quite common to most South Carolina rivers prior to the advent of dams. In colonial times these freshets often would destroy bridges. In 1801, Elias Ball stated that the tides in the Cooper River, at times, could exceed six or seven feet (Terry 1981:195). Henry Laurens, in 1772, bemoaned the fact that these freshets occasionally killed residents of Childsbury (Rogers et al., 1980:223).

The socio-economic significance of Childsbury Towne to the local community is reflected in petitions to the assembly for the construction of a chapel and school as set forth in James Child’s will. As confirmation of that significance, Strawberry Chapel was constructed in 1725 and the “free school” was constructed in 1733. Among those appointed as trustees of the “free school” were Lieutenant Governor Thomas Broughton, Col. George Chicken, Richard Beerresford, Esq., Percevall Pawley, Andrew Foster, merchant, Capt. John Harleston, and Lt. Anthony Bonneau (Moore and Simmons 1960:66; Cooper 1838:204-206, 252-253, 364-365). A college was proposed but, there is no archaeological evidence of its ever being constructed.
A bi-yearly fair was established in Childsbury Towne by law in 1723 because of a request from the local residents (Cooper 1838:204-206). Statute #478 also authorized weekly market days because the citizens of Childsbury Towne and Berkeley Parish were "very much incommoded, as [to] want of certain market days in each week" (Cooper 1838:204-206). Childsbury Towne seemed to be growing from the conceptual dream of James Child into a small settlement which supplied the local area with a number of its social, commercial, and economic needs. Along with this success came socio-economic ties to Charles Town and a vast worldwide market system.

A number of plantations along the western branch had extensive rice fields that bordered the river. Maps of Bluff Plantation, owned by Isaac Harleston in the late 1700s, and Strawberry Plantation show large rice fields along the rivers edge (See page 52, Fig. 9; See page 78, Fig. 20). Much as the production of naval stores assisted in the socio-economic development of Strawberry Ferry in the early 18th century rice would enhance Childsbury Towne’s position.

Along with the growth of rice as a staple crop came associated social and business connections with Charleston. Between 1736 and 1775 there was a slow, continual growth in the wealth of South Carolina’s elite. As the local planters along the western branch of the Cooper River became more prosperous, they began to invest in land throughout the colony and in barges and ships to transport their product to market (Rogers et al., 1974:429, 639-642; Rogers et al., 1976:33). Rice production increased the economic importance of the public landing at Childsbury Towne.

Childsbury Towne grew and prospered from this trade in South Carolina’s diverse economic resources. Very early the town began to exhibit non-residential key structures within its limits. These are represented by the ferry landing, tavern, church, and “free school” that were constructed there by 1733 (Barr 1994, 1995; Cooper 1838:204-206; Ernst and Merrens 1973:559-560).
As seen in chapter five, taverns and inns had social and economic functions within frontier societies. Many towns and colonial governments required that they be opened for the convenience and needs of travelers (Rockman and Rothschild 1984: 112-114). Taverns were usually the first or second key structure within a frontier community next to the construction of the local chapel. Taverns and inns were established at ferry crossings by individual operators and this is assumed to be the case within Childsbury Towne (Neuffer 1963:8-11, 1967:5-35).

I assume that the first key structure located within Childsbury Towne was the tavern and inn associated with Strawberry Ferry. The rapidly expanding network of interior roads within the colony led to the establishment of inns located along highways and at ferry crossings. Inns provided travelers with food, lodging, stores, and a place to conduct business. According to Terry (1981) “there was always at least one tavern situated at the ferry” (Terry 1981:220).

Horse racing became extremely important, socially and economically, to South Carolinians early in the colonial period. Generally these races were “organized by innkeepers and ferry operators, with taverns and ferry landings as markers for the race courses. Saddles and tankards were the prizes” (Longrigg 1972:110). Instead of a circular track, as found in the 20th century, races during the 18th century were generally run over a distance (Longrigg 1972:110). This was especially true in “South Carolina [where] racing was of a different, more ramshackle character in its early years” than that found in England or the northern colonies (Longrigg 1972:110). The first “Jockey Club” was organized in Charles Town in 1734 and the first English racing horse was imported into South Carolina as early as 1735 by Governor Nathaniel Johnson (Longrigg 1972:110).

There were many advertisements for races held at Childsbury Towne during the colonial period. These were social affairs, usually held in conjunction with the fairs held there. The socio-economic importance of fairs and market days within the local
community of Childsbury Towne is addressed in chapter five. The race track at Childsbury was supposedly located near the tavern at Strawberry Ferry near "the fair grounds, which accommodated the country fairs held there annually" (Terry 1981:209). Prizes offered at Childsbury Towne were saddles, worth up to £20, bridles, whips, boots, jockey caps, and even oxen (Cohen 1953:76, 77).

A number of advertisements within the South Carolina Gazette document these races. The first to appear was in April of 1737 when "a Ball and Race" were held there (Cohen 1953:76). Races were advertised to be held during the fairs in October of 1742 and May of 1750. Races were also held in February of 1766 (Cohen 1953:77, 82; Irving 1932:81-82). On January 25, 1768, a horse race was advertised to take place on "Tuesday the 19th instant," which was a market day for Childsbury Towne (Cohen 1953:88). Thus, fairs and market days held at Childsbury were important to the local community for a number of social and economic reasons.

According to John B. Irving, "the Strawberry Jockey Club used to hold its annual meetings" in Childsbury Towne where there was a well-established mile long track (Irving 1932[1842]:81). This club was "dissolved in 1822" (Irving 1932[1842]:81). Irving (1932[1842]) states that the course was plowed up and converted into a corn field, but there is no archaeological evidence of plowing in the southwestern quadrant of Childsbury Towne where this track is suggested to have been located.

Childsbury Towne may have been a center where commodities, processed and packed on local plantations, required nothing more than warehouse facilities for the shipment of these goods to Charles Town. It was possibly no more than a location that functioned as a shipping point for local freight (Weir 1983:171). Yet, there are other factors which explain Childsbury Towne's role within the local community.

Childsbury Towne's importance extended beyond the local social and economic landscape. There are regional and worldwide aspects related to the town's location. The town was constructed on a bluff at a point on the Cooper River that was considered the
farthest point that ocean going vessels were capable of sailing up the western branch (Terry 1981:209). As a deep, freshwater river port Childsbury was often the site where military vessels and merchant ships would anchor during the summer months (Sellers 1934:5). This fresh water was of value to ships escaping the ravages of shipworms (*Teredo novalis*), a salt water parasite that burrowed into the hulls of wooden ships (Terry 1981:20). In 1744 there were at least eight vessels, to be loaded with agricultural supplies, moored in the river bay (Terry 1981:21). The crews from these vessels would most likely avail themselves of the services provided by local taverns and merchants in Childsbury Towne, much as they did in Charles Town (Weir 1983:170-171). It is suspected that in the summer months that “Childsbury was probably a very busy area” (Terry 1981:20). Ships of lighter burthen frequently sailed up river to Mepkin Plantation and Stoney Landing (Rogers et al., 1974:33, 669; Terry 1981:203-205).

Archaeological investigations have uncovered the remains of a number of ships that range from 50 to 70 tons burthen in the western branch of the Cooper River. These include the Biggin Creek Vessel (38BK887), the Mepkin Abbey Wreck (38BK58), and Strawberry Wreck (38BK869) (Amer 1989; Wilbanks 1981). All of these vessels are similar in design and of shallow draft. Each of these would have been capable of carrying 28 to 40 barrels of rice.

Childsbury’s significance to the local community as a deep water river port is best appreciated when placed in context with the dispersed settlements that bordered the river. It was not unusual for individual plantations along major waterways to have their own landings and docks (Wesler 1985:390). This would compete with and possibly eliminate the need for a centralized shipping point. Any planters and farmers, away from the river, could ship their goods from the most convenient point along the river, and it would be logical for them to do so.

There were landings and dock structures constructed all along the banks of the Cooper River at various plantations. There was a deep water landing or dock at
Comingtee Plantation, down river from Childsbury Towne (Deas 1978[1909]). Mepkin Plantation, up river of Childsbury, had a landing as early as 1717 (Terry 1981:80). Archaeological investigations have discovered the remains of a colonial period dock structure there as well. Historical accounts speak of a dock at Wadboo Barony at least by 1763. I suspect that it existed prior to that date (Hamer 1972:520).

Although there were facilities at Mepkin Plantation and other plantations along the Cooper River for the export of agricultural commodities, Childsbury Towne retained its significance as a shipping and receiving point within the local economic landscape (Chesnutt et al., 1994:332, 335, 551; Terry 1981:80). Per the will of George Boyle in 1717, he left to Percival Pawley “all the Saw’d and Unsawed Cypress and Cedar Timber yt Ly at mepkin landing and Likewise the feather edge boards yt Ly at ye Yard in [Childsbury] Town” (Terry 1981:80).

In 1761 Robert Raper, in selling Mepkin Plantation, made no mention of the landing or dock at Mepkin but, extolled the virtues of the public landing at Childsbury Towne when he advertised in the January 17 edition of the Charles Town Gazette,

TO BE SOLD AN extraordinary good tract of land in St. John’s Parish, about 20 or 30 miles from Charles-town, commonly called MEPKIN, containing 3000 acres old measure, situated on the north side of Cooper-river, near to Strawberry whereon is a very high and pleasant bluff close to the river, and also a good landing place: Any vessel that comes here may go to said landing and load (Hamer et al., 1972:55).

As late as August 5, 1763, Laurens “engaged to load the 180 ton ship Albermarle at Strawberry (Childsbury Towne) on Account of a friend in London with Lumber for his
Estate at St. Kitts" (Hamer et al., 1972:520). In November of 1777 the overseer at Mepkin Plantation, Mr. Roddrick, picked up two flax hackles that were left at Childsberry Towne for use on the plantation (Chesnutt et al., 1990:87). The public landing at Childsberry Towne continued into the late 18th century to be significant to the local economic landscape.

An example of Childsberry Towne's continuing importance as a place for members of the community to conduct business is seen in Henry Laurens' letter of July 4, 1763, to John Coming Ball concerning flyers advertising sales. He wrote,

I sent Peter some time ago a parcel of negro advertisements for my neighbors Messrs. Brailsford and Chapman & they complain that those papers were not put up at any place not even Strawberry which troubles me a good deal (Hamer et al., 1972:481).

In 1765 Henry Laurens was involved in a land dispute with Peter Broughton concerning a "Swamp Near Strawberry" (Rogers et al., 1974:592-593, 598-599). Laurens set up a meeting on the twenty-third of April to discuss negotiations with Broughton. On the same day Laurens wrote to Benjamin Simons, Jr. to inform him that "Mr. Broughton has agreed to meet me at the House of Mr. Boyd at Strawberry on Tuesday the 23rd" (Rogers et al., 1974:598-599).

It has been determined that, during the colonial period Childsberry Towne, the public landing, the ferry crossing, tavern, chapel of ease, and "free school" were significant to the local and regional socio-economic landscape. Yet, it is obvious that something occurred that led to the demise of Childsberry Towne as a significant socio-economic entity. There probably was not just one thing that led to this demise but a combination of social, economic, and related transportation factors. The first indication
of this decline seems to be an advertisement published by the owner of Middleburg Plantation, Benjamin Simons, Jr., in the *South Carolina Gazette and County Journal* on February 11, 1766. This notified the community that,

To be Let. The Plantation and Ferry in St. John’s Parish commonly called and known by the name of the Strawberry, whereon is a good Dwelling-house and other Out-houses, a Garden and about 80 or 100 Acres of cleared land, fit for corn and Indigo; a Horse Boat, and two Negro Men to attend the Ferry: There is also on said Place, a Mile Course, and a large convenient Stable with proper Stalls for Horses any person inclinable to rent the same (which will be vacant by the fifth of March) may apply in St. Thomas Parish (Irving 1932[1842])

Outside forces, beyond the power and control of the elite residents along the Cooper River, began to adversely affect Childsbury Towne’s position along the Carolina frontier. Initially, the economic success of the low country “was based upon its specialization in the production of plantation staples with bound labor” (Coclanis 1989:130). From the 1720s on “the economy became increasingly dominated by rice production” (Terry 1981:244). Agronomic specialization for national and international markets, upon which South Carolina’s economic success was based, “was rendered dependent upon the vagaries of this wider economy” and these outside factors (Coclanis 1989:144).

The advent of King George’s War (1739-1748) in Europe was a major economic blow to the low country of South Carolina (Weir 1983:117) and the town of Childsbury. Although the wars in Europe brought about the rise of indigo production, it caused a
major drop in the price of rice (Terry 1981:244): “Between 1741 and 1746 the average price of rice in Charles Town fell by 70 percent” (Weir 1983:146). The fall in rice prices would have had a detrimental effect on South Carolina in general and Childsbury Towne in particular. Along with the drop in production values of rice, the war also caused a hiatus in shipping. Colonial exports stagnated and even declined in the 1740s and 1750s, causing the worst depression in the colony’s history (Coclanis 1989:72; Terry 1981:244). This was a period of “economic depression and hardship for most inhabitants in the colony” (Terry 1981:110).

Within St. John’s parish the elite, whose livelihood was based on the export of agricultural products, suffered greatly during this depression. To survive the depression and its detrimental effects, most planters altered their operations to become more self-sufficient (Terry 1981:244). These alterations were a logical response to the economic pressures placed on them by the fall in prices and export capabilities, and were designed to mitigate their reliance upon services and products from outside the plantation (Coclanis 1989:57; Terry 1981:244).

In an effort to divest themselves of their dependence on outside forces beyond their control, these planters “invested additional funds in diversifying the economic activities of their plantations” (Terry 1981:256). The expertise of African American slaves had long been used to build boats and operate them upon the rivers of South Carolina (Amer et al., 1995; Newell n.d.). In an effort, by the elite, to retain as much profit as possible, thus survive, plantation slaves were encouraged in other skills that allowed them to carry out the duties of carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, bricklayers, and tanners (Terry 1981:256). This allowed each plantation, in effect, to “become a self supporting village” (Terry 1981:244) much like that seen in Europe during the middle ages. “Small farmers and tradesmen were no longer needed to serve the plantation and local service centers disappeared” (Terry 1981:244).
"The alteration in the functions of plantations had a great impact upon the local economic structure" (Terry 1981:256). The self sufficient economic autonomy achieved by planters whose slaves became proficient in these trades had a disparate effect upon the local economy (Terry 1981:259). The training of plantation slaves in skills normally performed by local tradesmen caused a number of "free white craftsmen" to leave the parish (Terry 1981:256). This affected many of the local artisans within St. John's parish, especially those "who lived in Childsbury [Towne]" (Terry 1981:110-111).

Thus, the greatest problem for Childsbury Towne's future development seems to have been that which enabled it to grow initially; the power and wealth of the elite. Childsbury Towne, as stated by Irving in *A Day on the Cooper River* (1932[1842]), "shared [the] fate [of other communities] at the hands of the growing plantations" (Irving 1932[1842]:30) Terry seems to support Irving's (1932[1842]) assessment of the situation, as does Coclanis (1989:51). Terry (1981) suggests that,

One explanation for the movement from the parish of persons in the lower and middle levels of the economic order during the 1740s, was that these persons lacked either the foresight or resources to accumulate large tracts of land during the parish's initial period of settlement (Terry 1981:114).

The economic landscape of South Carolina's low country was increasingly dominated by large-scale plantation agriculture. These efforts by the elite to re-invent their society also caused a decline in white immigration to the low country (Coclanis 1989:67). "Except for a small number of wealthy families which established strong economic and kinship ties within St. John's few families became permanent residents of the parish" (Terry 1981:115).
Inherent within the notion of frontiers is movement. By the late 18th century the frontier had expanded throughout the interior of South Carolina and beyond into the unclaimed lands of Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and other western regions of the colonies (Coclanis 1989:67). "Between 1725 and 1750, large numbers of settlers in the low country parishes surrounding Charleston moved to other areas of South Carolina and to other colonies" (Terry 1981:105, 109). Over 400,000 acres "or 17% of [the] land in South Carolina was returned" to the colonial governors during this time (Weir 1983:146).

In demographic studies related to St. John's parish between 1705 and 1728 there was steady growth in the white population. This declined between 1728 and 1741 by 03%. Although the population in 1743 increased to its previous 1728 level and exceeded that total by 06% by 1746, there was a drop of 40% between 1746 and 1756. It would not be until 1790 that the white population within St. John's parish would exceed its highest total from 1743 (Terry 1981:116).

As evidence of the withdrawal of the elite from interacting socially within the local community the individual concentration of land holdings "increased a bit during the second half of the 18th century" (Coclanis 1989:69-70). Due to this consolidation of property the large estates owned by the elite along the Cooper River remained largely intact. Land consolidation was at its highest between 1763 and 1793. Owners of large tracts of land between those years decreased 11%, from 49% owning over 1000 acres to 38% (Coclanis 1989:69-70). Consolidation meant survival and survival was the hard lesson learned during the decade of the 1740s (Terry 1981:259).

Export capabilities and the price of rice improved shortly after the end of King George's War. Yet, long after the war was over, the economic depression of the 1740s affected the development of Childsbury Towne (Terry 1981:259). As seen, this was manifested in the outward migration of a large segment of St. John's white population. At the same time, the westward movement of the frontier established new transportation routes to access these areas. The evolutionary nature of frontier settlement, the failure of
the local community to construct a bridge across the Cooper River at Strawberry Ferry which, in turn, affected local transportation infrastructures, the growth of Monck’s Corner, and the consolidation of landed wealth among the elite dispersed land owners, all had a detrimental effect upon Childsbury Towne.

**Archaeological Investigations**

The archaeological record confirms the social and economic relationships seen historically within Childsbury Towne. Used in concert, the historical description (See page 122), the Diamond map, Child’s plan (Fig. 28), and the archaeological record show Childsbury Towne to be a significant part of the community along the western branch of the Cooper River. Archaeological investigation has helped define the status of the residents, class differences, the partial extent of settlement within the southwestern quadrant, the presence of identifiable non-residential key structures, and the function of those structures. Each of these factors is related to Childsbury’s socio-economic function and position in the local community.

The southwestern quadrant contained lots 96 through 139 of Child’s original plan, and included those areas designated for the college, church, the northeastern landing of Strawberry Ferry, as well as the presumed location of Strawberry tavern (See page 50, Fig. 7; Fig. 29). Positive evidence of colonial period habitation was found in 45% of the southwestern quadrant test excavations. The majority was found in section “A” along the bluff (See page 57, Fig. 11). No artifacts or features were recorded from lots 107, 109, 113-114, 116-117, 119-124, 126-135, and 137-139. Lots 114, 121, 133, and 139 were not tested because they were in low-lying marsh land. Lots 105 and 106 were not tested because they had been impacted by grading for an access road related to a late 20th century dock constructed there by the American Oil Company.
FIGURE 28. Overlay of southwestern quadrant, Child’s Plat, and Diamond survey.  
(James Child 1707, John Diamond 1811.)
FIGURE 29. Lot numbers and street names in southwestern quadrant, Childsbury Towne.
Lot 120 was not tested because it contains Strawberry Chapel and its associated graveyard. Expansion of the chapel grounds incorporated the southern portions of lots 127-129, the eastern portions of lot 111 and 119, the northeastern portion of lot 112, and the majority of lot 113. Lot 96, within section “B,” was reserved by Child for the construction of a college. There is no record of the college having been built, nor is there any archaeological data suggesting a building. All other lots contained positive test pits from which artifacts, ranging from the prehistoric to the modern eras, were recovered. Sections of lots 98 through 103 contained four surface features in the form of brick scatter in association with colonial artifacts.

Section “A,” in which a 25% random sample was collected, yielded the majority of plain or decorated unglazed, handbuilt earthen wares. Section “B,” “C,” and “D” yielded substantially fewer (See page 57, Fig. 11). This category represents 27% of all artifacts studied and includes both pre-historic pottery and Colono Ware.

The majority of plain unglazed earthenware and decorated unglazed earthenware from Childsbury is identified as Colono Ware. These wares were recovered within the context of colonial Childsbury. This context implies colonial influence in their manufacture (Ferguson 1992:20). As such they represent contact between indigenous North Americans, African-Americans, and Europeans. They are characterized as an example of the “process of colonial creolization” seen in colonial Carolina’s archeological record (Ferguson 1992:22).

The majority of the decorated unglazed earthenware in shovel tests came from the lower levels of the excavation, i.e., just before or at the yellow sand. Stanley South and Chester DePratter have determined, in excavations of a Spanish wall-base at Santa Elena, that the yellow sand level contained pre-contact unglazed earthenware (Stanley South and Chester DePratter 1995, pers. comm.). Much like Childsbury, similar materials and associated depositional characteristics have been found in other low country sites (Chester DePratter and Eric Poplin 1995 pers. comm.).
Many of the handbuilt earthenwares contain certain attributes that allow us to define whether they are of pre-historic manufacture or contact period ceramics. In a test of an existing regional research design for the coastal plain of South Carolina, David Anderson (1975) studied over 20,000 artifacts from 315 pre-historic to contact period sites (Anderson 1975). In this study he used the attributes of surface finish and temper as markers for testing the typological order of these ceramics (Anderson 1975:14). Within Childsbury, except for three well-defined Stallings pot sherds (Anderson 1975:13), the majority of plain and decorated unglazed earthenware is probably contemporaneous with the early colonial period for a number of reasons.

The bluff overlooking the river does not show widespread occupation by prehistoric peoples. Section “A,” contained 100% of the decorated unglazed earthenware found in shovel tests. The surface furnish on these artifacts, such as folded rims and carelessly applied shallow decorative motifs of simple and linear stamped design with wide lands, reflect a later period of manufacture (DePratter, et. al., 1973:54-55; Anderson 1975). Approximately 94% of the decorated unglazed earthenware is found in association with identified Colono Wares with plain surface treatment (Fig. 30, 31).

Of interest to this study is the northwestern corner of section “A” (See page 61, Fig. 13). Although not classified as a feature, this assemblage, located 60m from all other artifact concentrations, contains an array of artifacts. The northern end of lot 96 contains four different artifact types, three of which may represent a contact period structure (Fig. 30, 32, 33, 34). All artifacts were recovered from shovel tests. These are plain unglazed earthenware, 79% identified as Colono Ware, pearlware, a wrought nail, and assorted brick fragments (Appendix II, III). No structure is shown in this location on the Diamond (1811) survey, and I suspect that this area may be the location of one of the earlier structures within Childsbury. It contains an assemblage of colonial artifacts that corresponds with the contact and post-contact period.
FIGURE 30. Distribution of plain unglazed hand-built earthenware.
(From shovel tests.)
FIGURE 31. Distribution of decorated unglazed hand-built earthenware.

(From shovel test.)
FIGURE 32. Distribution of 19th century European glazed ceramics.

(From shovel tests.)
FIGURE 33. Distribution of wrought nails. (From shovel tests.)
FIGURE 34. Distribution of brick. (From shovel tests.)
Unlike the prehistoric data, the combined Diamond (1811) survey and Child's plan, gives a visual picture of Childsbury (Fig. 28). Diamond’s (1811) survey confirms that reality did not quite follow Child’s original plan. Archaeologically this settlement shows very little of his plan. Yet, archaeological investigations at Childsbury do confirm that social and class differences did exist within the settlement.

European glazed ceramics are used by archaeologists to determine status and for defining overall class relationships within British American colonial societies. Historically, probate inventories are used to arrive at similar conclusions. Research of probate inventories, which reflect the assets owned by an individual upon their death, from St. John’s parish (1720-1779), by Terry (1981), has provided a base for comparison to the ceramic assemblage recovered archaeologically at Childsbury. The use of these two sets of data has assisted in identifying class differences that existed within the town.

Delftware and creamware are considered representative of 18th century ceramics for this study. Pearlware, being transitional from the 18th to the 19th century, is defined as 19th century ceramics. Delftware and creamware are listed in the probate inventories studied by Terry (1981). The manufacture of pearlware post dated Terry’s (1981) study and was not included in them. My studies have determined that the individual assemblages of delftware and creamware from surface finds and shovel tests are substantially higher than that listed in the probate inventories researched by Terry (1981). Although the percentages of pearlware from probate inventories are unknown, I suspect they would also exceed their totals as listed in probate inventories from St. John’s which post date 1779.

No delftware is listed in the probate inventories in St. John’s prior to 1740 (Terry 1981:290). When it did appear it never exceeded its 1740-1749 level of 07% and hit an all time low of 03% between 1750 and 1759 (Terry 1981:289-291). Of thirty-five 18th century European ceramics recovered from shovel tests, four were delftware. This represents 11% of all 18th century ceramics found in shovel tests (Appendix III; Fig. 35).
FIGURE 35. Distribution of 18th century European ceramics. (From shovel tests.)
Creamware, according to the probate inventories, first appeared in St. John’s parish in the 1760s. This is the same decade of its initial manufacture in England (Noel-Hume 1970). At that time it was found in 11% of St. John’s inventories (Terry 1981:290-291). Approximately 66% of all 18th century European ceramics found in shovel tests were creamware (Appendix III; Fig. 35).

Pearlware first appeared in British colonial America in the 1780s and ranges to an end date of 1820 (Noel-Hume 1970:130-131). As such it represents a transition between the 18th and 19th century. Although Terry’s (1981) study does not present any data concerning the volume of pearlware from St. John’s probate inventories over half (53%) of the forty-four 19th century European ceramics recovered from Childsbury consisted of pearlware. Of this total 29% was recovered in shovel tests (Appendix III; Fig. 32).

European ceramics recovered from surface finds parallels the high percentages recovered from shovel tests within Childsbury. Delftware and creamware consisted of 19% and 65% of all 18th century European ceramics found on the surface (Appendix III; Fig. 36). Pearlware consisted of 71% of all 19th century ceramics recovered from surface finds (Appendix II; Fig. 37). Although Pearlware may encompasses a number of status levels, comparative percentages from Delftware and Creamware show that the residents of Childsbury owned a substantial amount of high status ceramics during the 18th and early 19th century. This data confirms that individuals of high status either lived in or frequented the town of Childsbury.

The distribution of high status artifacts, when combined with the distribution of handmade unglazed plain and decorated unglazed earthenware, assists in defining social divisions in the settlement of Childsbury. Used in conjunction with the placement of town roads, as shown on the Diamond (1811) map (See page 127, Fig. 28), socio-economic class divisions emerge. Childsbury had distinct class divisions, as well as racial divisions within the settlement. Although planned by Child, there is no extension of Mulberry Street west of Ferry Road on Diamond’s (1811) map. According to
FIGURE 36. Distribution of 18th Century European ceramics. (From surface finds.)
FIGURE 37. Distribution of 19th century European ceramics. (From surface finds.)
Diamond’s (1811) survey, the majority of buildings in the settlement were west of the north-south road. Using this road as a dividing line for the comparison of archaeological data, it is evident that the west side of Ferry road was occupied, by different people.

Approximately 81% of all decorated unglazed earthenware from shovel tests came from the western side (Appendix II; Fig. 31). Plain unglazed earthenware was found in 77% of all shovel tests and surface finds (Appendix III; Fig. 30, 38). Although 50% of all 18th and 19th century European glazed ceramics were found on either side of the road, individual divisions per ceramic type confirm a class division. One hundred percent of all delftware from shovel tests were found east of the road (Appendix III; Fig. 35). Fifty-seven percent of all creamware and pearlware recovered came from shovel tests east of Ferry Street (Appendix III; Fig. 32; 35).

Even with the assistance of probate inventories from personal estates it is difficult to ascertain, historically, whether there were residential or commercial structures in the southwestern quadrant of Childsbury. There may have been a number of residential structures in the southwestern quadrant of the town, and probate inventories may be biased as to what made up class divisions during the colonial period. Approximately 75% of the probate inventories from St. John’s parish contained some type of ceramics (Terry 1981:291).

Jill Halchin, in *Archaeological Views of the Upper Wager Block, A Domestic and Commercial Neighborhood in Harpers Ferry* (1994), studied artifact patterning in an area of combined residential and commercial use. According to Halchin’s (1994) study a distinct patterned emerged between the ceramic assemblage from the tavern owner’s personal residence and the hotel and tavern located next door. These studies indicate that the hotel and tavern operations on the Wager Block used high status wares as a service for their customers. Similar to Rodman (1992) this may reflect the operator’s notion of what represented the status of his clientele (Halchin 1994). At Childsbury, in the
FIGURE 38. Distribution of plain unglazed hand-built earthenware.

(From surface finds.)
northwestern area of section “A,” there are large concentrations of high status artifacts. The large percentage of high status ceramics may come from a key structure, Strawberry Tavern, known to have been operated in Childsbury. These artifacts may reflect the values of the owner or operator.

The tavern is most likely located in the area of Feature 1 (See page 63, Fig. 14). This feature covers the north side of lots 101 and 102, and corresponds to the large structure shown on the Diamond (1811) survey south-southwest of Ferry and Mulberry Streets approximately 5m west of Ferry Road (See page 127, Fig. 28). This may represent Strawberry Tavern, drawn with a small outbuilding to its north and a stable and holding pen across the street. The tavern would be considered the second key structure within the settlement of Childsbury because of the early date for the ferry crossing and the fact that taverns have an early association in their construction (see Chapter 5). The tavern is known to have been in operation throughout the 18th and early 19th century. Although it is difficult to ascertain from the Diamond (1811) survey just what the structure represents in this area, the archaeological record contains artifacts that span the 18th and early 19th century period.

Four classes of datable artifacts were found in Feature 1. These are earthenware, ceramics, and building materials in the form of mortar and nails (Appendix III). Plain unglazed earthenware made up 01% of the artifact assemblage and 06% of the decorated unglazed earthenware found in shovel tests (See page 131, Fig. 30; See page 132, Fig. 31). Nineteenth century European ceramics from shovel tests represented 33% of the artifact assemblage (Fig. 32) and 18th century ceramics made up 26% (Fig. 35). Approximately 50% of the wrought nails (Fig. 33) and 60% of the tabby mortar (Fig. 39) found in shovel tests came from this location. Cement based mortar made up 4% of the assemblage (Fig. 40), but 20% of the cut nails from shovel tests came from here (Fig. 41). A minimal number of surface finds were recorded from this area. They included five 18th century and three 19th century European glazed ceramic pieces (Appendix III).
FIGURE 39. Distribution of tabby based mortar. (From shovel tests.)
FIGURE 40. Distribution of cement based mortar. (From shovel tests.)
FIGURE 41. Distribution of cut nails. (From shovel tests.)
This data is representative of an evolving 18th-19th century structure. Numerous categories of artifacts span these two periods of time. The plain unglazed earthen ware, ceramics, tabby mortar and wrought nails are all from the 18th century. The high percentage of 19th century ceramics, along with the cement mortar and cut nails, indicate continual use of the site. The evidence points Feature 1 as the site of Strawberry Tavern.

Feature 2 (See page 63, Fig. 14) is a brick and artifact scatter south of the stable and east of Ferry Road in the southern end of lot 101, 102, and 103. According to Diamond (1811), this structure also had an attached holding pen of some sort (Fig. 28). Observations of recent bulldozing led me to suspect that the large amount of artifacts along the bluff edge in this location was pushed by the bulldozer from approximately 10 to 30 meters north of the bluff. The majority of the scatter is just over the edge of the bluff. According to the Diamond (1811) survey, this building would be positioned in that location on the edge of the present-day bluff. The archaeological record possibly reflects an assemblage from a structure that dates from the mid 18th to early 19th century.

Evidence points to this possibly being a residential structure within the southwestern quadrant of Childsbury Towne. The advertisement for the rental of Strawberry Plantation, mentions a “good dwelling house” (Irving 1832[1942]), and I suggest, this feature may represent that residential building. According to the Diamond (1811) survey, this structure is approximately 50m east of Ferry Road and hugs the southern boundary of lots 101 and 102 along the present-day bluff. Its position along the bluff and Bay Street may reflect the mental connection between location and colonial attitudes toward status. This would be similar to attitudes expressed by owners of bay front houses in Charles Town.

Although the shovel test assemblage from Feature 2 covers the 18th and 19th century, they are not as inclusive or substantial as those recovered from the suspected tavern’s location (Feature 1). Artifact types from shovel tests in this location include plain unglazed earthenware (11%), 18th century European ceramics (09%), and 18th
century pipe stems (29%) (See page 131, Fig. 30, Fig. 35, 42, 43). Building materials comprised 06% of the wrought nails, and 07% of the cement based mortar (Appendix III; See page 134, Fig. 33; Fig. 40). In a comparison of shovel tests, the materials from Feature 2 contained 10% fewer plain unglazed earthenware, 17% less 18th century ceramics, and 44% fewer wrought nails than Feature 1. Shovel tests from Feature 2 lack any evidence of decorated unglazed earthenware, tabby mortar, cut nails, or 19th century European ceramics.

Feature 3 (See page 63, Fig. 14) is located on the edge of the bluff at the southern end of lot 102 and contains depositional problems similar to those found in Feature 2 (Fig. 36, 37). Field observations determined that this area was also affected by late 20th century development. This feature is also eroding from the western edge of, what I suspect is, a 20th century bulldozer track that runs from the bluff to level with the marsh and ferry landing (Plate 10).
FIGURE 42. Distribution of 18th-century pipe stems. (From shovel tests.)
FIGURE 43. Distribution of 18th century pipe stems. (From surface finds.)
According to Diamond's (1811) survey a slough or wash out ran up proposed Ferry Street during the early 19th century (See page 127, Fig. 28). Only three buildings are associated with this slough. Of undetermined size, they were scattered 30m towards the northeast. Feature 3 is deposited in the lower southwestern corner of this slough. No shovel tests were located in this area because of the numerical sequence found in the random sample. Surface finds suggest the possibility that the area containing the three structures was used to fill part of the slough sometime after the colonial period. The scatter found in Feature 3 may be associated with some of these buildings.

All types of ceramics and building materials previously discussed were found on the surface of Feature 3 except for decorated unglazed earthenware. The overall distribution of surface finds runs northeast, away from Feature 3, toward the building scatter (Fig. 36, 37). The bulk of the artifacts span the 18th and early 19th century. Although they correspond with the temporal period found in Feature 1 and Feature 2, there are differences in their overall distribution (Appendix II, III).

The percentages of plain unglazed earthenware (20%), wrought nails (28%), 18th century European ceramics (26%), and tabby mortar (20%), point to an early to middle 18th century structure or structures (Appendix II, III; See page 131, Fig. 30; See page 134, Fig. 33; Fig. 35; Fig. 39). The inclusion of 19th century European ceramics (18%), cut nails (08%), and cement based mortar (48%) establishes continued use into the 19th century. The concentration of structures on the western side of Ferry Street in conjunction with a high percentage of Colono Ware and 19th century pearlware supports my earlier conclusions that this area was occupied, by different people (See page 131, Fig. 30, See page 133, Fig. 32). The artifact assemblage and spatial layout of these structures suggest that this area probably housed African-American slaves.

Feature 4 (See page 63, Fig. 14) is an extensive raised brick scatter running down the bluff slope from the base of lot 99 (Fig. 36, 37). No shovel tests were conducted in this feature and very few artifacts were recovered from surface finds because of tree falls
and heavy vegetation (Plate 11). This feature is approximately 15m wide, 15m long, and raised 30cm above the natural slope. This corresponds to a 12m wide, 26m long, and 15cm high area that extends toward Feature 4 from the northeastern landing of Strawberry Ferry (See page 63; Fig. 14). Feature 4 also corresponds with the Diamond (1811) survey location for Ferry Road and helps confirm that the map overlay is accurate as to road placement (See page 127, Fig. 28).

PLATE 11. Location of colonial road from Strawberry Ferry into Childsbury Towne

Conclusions

Archaeological evidence concerning Childsbury confirms Diamond’s (1811) survey of a multi-structure community centrally located near the settlement’s chapel. Ferry Road ran north from the northeastern landing of Strawberry Ferry, up the river bluff, and west of Strawberry Chapel. During the early colonial period, this was the main
road north toward the Santee. Mulberry Street ran east toward Childsbury’s public landing between Strawberry Chapel and the graveyard and the stable and pasture for Strawberry Tavern.

Other structures, possibly residential in nature, occupied the southwestern quadrant, too. Archaeological data, related to the historically indicated location of these structures, establishes their existence and that internal class relationships, based on socio-economic status and race, were factors in their location. Archaeologically and historically, Childsbury represents a multi-faceted communally based settlement.