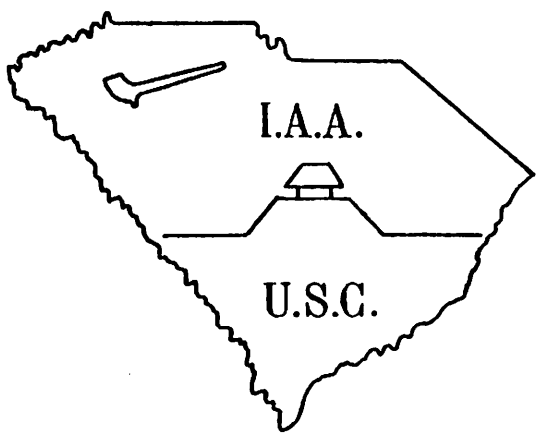


RESEARCH MANUSCRIPT SERIES



**INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CONGAREE SWAMP:
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF A
BOTTOMLAND ENVIRONMENT IN CENTRAL SOUTH CAROLINA

by

James L. Michie
Research Manuscript Series 163


Prepared by the
INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
July, 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS.	
LIST OF FIGURES.	
LIST OF TABLES	
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.	
CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT	
PREFACE.	
THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING OF CONGAREE SWAMP.	1
Introduction.	1
Location and Soils.	1
Hydrology	8
The Effects of Flooding in the Congaree River Valley.	9
Naturally Induced Changes in the Congaree River Channel	13
Consideration of a Paleoenvironment	17
Recent Physical Environmental Alterations	29
Vegetational Communities and Forage Productivity.	30
Fauna	34
Herpetofauna of the bottomland and adjacent areas.	36
Consideration of Ichthyic communities.	36
CONGAREE SWAMP AS A RESOURCE BASE FOR PREHISTORIC HUMAN UTILIZATION.	44
White-tailed Deer and Mast as Primary Resources	44
Foods, Habitats, and Feeding Habits of White-tailed deer.	45
Seasonal Movements of White-tailed Deer	48
Considerations of a Seasonal Extraction of White-tailed Deer.	49
AN ARCHEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SOUTH CAROLINA WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE CONGAREE RIVER VALLEY	51
An Archeological Overview of the Project Area	51
Paleo-Indian Period	53
Archaic Period.	55
Woodland Period	56
Mississippian Period.	57
Prehistoric Settlement Pattern within the Congaree River Valley.	57
Historic Period in South Carolina	59
The Historic Period within the Congaree River Valley.	64
Subsistence and economy.	67
Roads, ferries and bridges	69

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	Page
THEORETICAL BASE AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	71
Research Objectives	71
Hypotheses Considerations	72
Basic observations and hypotheses.	72
INTENSIVE SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ZONES	75
Developmental Zone I.	75
Effective environment.	75
Methods of survey.	78
Results of survey.	79
38RD198	79
38RD199	79
38RD197	80
Developmental Zone II	82
Effective environment.	82
Method of survey	85
Results of survey.	85
Developmental Zone III.	85
Effective environment.	85
Method of survey	88
Results of survey.	88
RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY OF CONGAREEE SWAMP	89
Western Portion	89
Introduction	89
Method of survey	89
Results of survey.	95
Prehistoric sites	99
Historic sites.	102
Eastern Portion	112
Method of survey	112
Results of the transect survey	114
EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CULTURAL RESOURCES.	119
The Effect of Change on the Prehistoric Data Base	119
Probability of pseudo-sites.	119
Question of stratigraphy	119
Relict levees and associated archeological sites	120
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE CULTURAL MATERIALS	124
Introduction.	124
Shattered quartz cobbles.	124
Flakes of biface reduction.	128
Bifaces	128
Historic Utilization.	131
Significance of the Cultural Resources.	136
Introduction	136



 Fisher -

 This is the only

 part of the study

 that I have.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Pseudo-sites.</i>	138
<i>Considerations of the significance of prehistoric sites.</i>	139
<i>Considerations of the significance of historic sites . . .</i>	144
<i>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</i>	147
<i>REFERENCE</i>	149

were subjected to intensive testing, there is little likelihood of learning more than is already known about them. On the other hand, the other sites, 38RD188 and 38RD179, have a better potential to contribute to the knowledge of bottomland occupations. With these sites, we can begin to develop some understanding about swamp utilization and the activities that were conducted within floodplain environment. By looking at the internal components of the sites, some preliminary statements can be made regarding site function, settlement and subsistence systems, and other facets of past human behavior. This program of inquiry will lend itself to solving substantive and scientific problems while it develops hypotheses for other bottomland environments.

Considerations for the Significance of Historic Sites

The historic sites that exist within the boundaries of the proposed National Park are all representative of historic environmental adaption, and some of them are considered significant in the understanding and recognition of events and processes, and in establishing facts and generalizations about the past. However, other sites are not considered significant and these will be discussed first.

The whiskey still sites, 38RD198 and 38RD199, are 20th century occupational sites that are hardly ten years old. Both of the sites are badly destroyed. The first site, 38RD198, is represented by nothing more than several shattered Mason jars, a rusted bucket and pail, a small section of pipe, and several badly rusted tin cans. The other site, while containing more evidence for moonshine operations, has been badly destroyed by dynamite. Additionally, several main components of the distillery are absent. The heating system, the pumping equipment for freshwater, the condensing coils and cooling apparatus, are no longer present. Because these sites are relatively recent and void of integrity, they fail to qualify for significance.

The bridge abutments discovered in the northeast portion of the property represent an attempt at crossing the swamp. Based on the eroded condition of the abutments, and with the moderately large vegetation that grows from their soils, there can be little question about antiquity. However, the other components of the bridge are no longer present, and this reduces the integrity of the site. Unfortunately, all that exists are eroded earthen structures that lie adjacent to the swales in a linear pattern suggesting they were once connected by a roadway. That the embankments rise from the swamp floor and ramp upwards towards the water's edge to an elevation of about four feet would certainly argue for a structure designed to traverse the swales. Without some additional evidence, such as wooden pilings, bridge timbers, or roads, the abutments exist with little degree of significance. Until additional evidence is discovered which would link the apparent bridge with past events and processes, the abutments are not considered significant.

The remaining sites, the cattle mounts and the dikes, appear to have greater significance than those briefly discussed above. In the criteria set forth by the National Register, these sites are not "associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history," and they are not "associated with the lives of persons significant to our past." The other criteria represented under 36CFR PART 60.6 are also difficult to apply to the sites. Because these sites are simply piles of soil with no material culture, they would not likely yield any "information important in history," nor can these sites be associated with "the work of a master," nor "high artistic values." These sites, therefore, have no association with the building criteria for historic structures.

These sites do, however, conform with criteria set forth by Moratto and Kelly (1978: 4) in regard to historical significance. Although it is difficult to assign the sites to "specific individual events," they are associated with "specific aspects of history" and they qualify on grounds of providing "information about cultural patterns during the historic eras." The documentation of these previously unrecognized sites and their relationship to the cattle raising industry and the cultivation of cash crops provides an insight into the utilization of bottomland environments. This complements a specific subsistence pattern during the Historic period, while it also provides a specific aspect of history in regard to local historical developments. These patterns are unique to the central portion of South Carolina, and especially the lower Congaree River Valley floodplain.

A second level of significance is found in public significance (Moratto and Kelly 1978: 17). As the authors have pointed out, "Archeology provides an engrossing educational medium at several levels; it affords economic benefits to the community from tourism, formal educational programs, and the funding of local research projects; and it enriches the community through the acquisition and interpretation of sites and materials for public edification and enjoyment." Furthermore, "Archeological resources, as part of the total environment, also have aesthetic qualities that may contribute to the wilderness 'experience' without being developed or otherwise interpreted."

The importance and significance of these sites are summarized as follows:

Cattle Mounts -

- They are associated with specific aspects of state and local history, and they provide information relevant to cultural patterns during the Historic period.

- They are a phenomenon, confined in South Carolina to the lower Congaree River Valley, and they represent a previously unrecognized form of environmental adaptation within swampy bottomlands.

- They represent a portion, or a fragment, of local and state history formerly unrecorded in public literature and apparently unknown to historians. By this fact, the occurrence of the cattle mounts provides a grasp of historical events and processes in the absence of any written documentation.

- Furthermore, these earthen structures represent a cultural resource with a potential to educate the public about past lifeways and thereby bring about an awareness and realization of historic events that occurred more than a century ago. Additionally, these large and impressive structures enrich and enhance the heritage of South Carolina, and by these virtues, they have considerable public significance.

Dikes -

- They appear to be a phenomenon unique in the upper coastal plain and certainly represent the most inland known occurrence of dike systems in South Carolina.

- They are also associated with specific aspects of local and state history, while providing information relative to cultural patterns during the Historic period.

- They also represent a portion, or a fragment, of local and state history formerly unrecorded in literature available to the public, and apparently unknown to historians. By this fact, their occurrence provides a grasp of historical events and processes in the absence of written documentation.

- Finally, these dikes represent a cultural resource with a potential to educate the public about past lifeways and thereby bring about an awareness and realization of historic events that occurred more than a century ago. These large and impressive earthen structures, which document an attempt at coping with bottomland cultivation, enrich and enhance the cultural heritage of South Carolina, and by these virtues, the sites have considerable public significance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Congaree Swamp is a rich and extensive bottomland environment composed of silty clay soils, various drainages in the form of swales, sloughs, creeks, and remnants of old river meanderings which constitute oxbow lakes. The area within the swmap is virtually flat and it supports a hydric community of flora and fauna that thrives on its richness. The area is given easily to flooding which prevents any long term human occupation, and as a result exploitation and utilization have always been oriented towards short term habitation and limited activities.

The valley of the Congaree River has been steadily occupied for the past 12,000 years, and based on present settlement knowledge, the southwest portion of the valley has received the greatest amount of aboriginal occupation. During the Historic period people moved from the coastal areas and from North Carolina and Virginia into what is now Lexington County and founded the small community of Saxe-Gotha. Only after the construction of ferries did people begin to move into the area of Richland County. From the earliest times onward people selected the ridge tops overlooking the Congaree River and they traveled the old trading paths that led up the southwest side of the valley.

On the northwest edge of the valley, and in the vicinity of Congaree Swamp, the prehistoric occupations appear comparatively smaller. Only one large base camp is known to exist in the area, and while extraction camps occur frequently along the peripheral zones and within the floodplain, occupations are, nevertheless, notably more infrequent. During the mid-1700s people began crossing the Congaree for home sites and lands suitable for cultivation. Early settlements occurred along the edges of the valley, and activities were apparently associated with stock raising and the cultivation of row crops and specific grains, such as wheat. By the turn of the century several farmers had evidently experienced some difficulty with the poorly permeable soil and sought higher production on the nutrient rich soils of the floodplain. With this endeavor the farmer had to construct dike systems to contend with adverse effects of periodical flooding. However, the failure to complete one of the dikes may evidence complications inherent in bottomland cultivation. Perhaps the expense involved in such a project was greater than crop return. During the same period of time people began taking advantage of the rich browse and mast that occurred on vacant and unowned portions of the swamp through livestock raising. In order to utilize this environment, earthen embankments were built for the protection of cattle and other domesticated animals. Such utilization assured a minimum of labor and high returns at the stock market.

Although other activities probably occurred within the swamp, such as the construction of a road and associated bridges, it was not until the late 1800s that activities began to accelerate again. With the purchase of the property by the Beidler family, new exploitations emerged in the form of timber harvest. For several years these large

trees were felled during flood conditions, and the trees were floated down river to a sawmill. Following the removal of select timber, the land was then leased to, and has continued to remain under the general control of, the Cedar Creek Hunt Club.

Throughout the centuries of human occupation, the high predictability of flooding and the swampy bottomlands with their swales, creeks, and oxbow lakes afforded a precarious existence for human populations and sustained residence was impractical. These environmental conditions demand specific behavior in terms of exploitation and utilization, as evidenced by cattle mounts and dikes, and the elevated axe marks which still exist on dead or dying cypress. The occurrence of illegal whiskey stills exemplifies clandestine activities and demonstrates another form of human behavior, suitably performed in an area void of human residence. Although social and cultural values have changed significantly through the millennia, and even though the economic system has seen dramatic changes, the bottomland environment of Congaree Swamp continues to allow only specific and limited activity. The swamp offers a model for settlement and subsistence within the region of the Congaree River Valley that may be applied to other drainage systems of comparable characteristics.