

Golden Age of Inns

Beginning in the early 1890s, the proliferation of inns in Summerville followed a pronouncement at the first International Tuberculosis Congress in Paris regarding Summerville, SC, and Thomasville, Ga. The two communities, the medical professionals declared, were the two healthiest places on earth. The reason, according to these professionals, was pine vapors. Those vapors were sure to cure consumption, heart problems, nervousness and insomnia. Responding to anticipated visitors, local entrepreneurs built hotels and renovated homes into inns (comparable to today's bed-and-breakfast operations).

Resulting businesses included the Pine Forest Inn, Halcyon Inn, Wisteria Inn, Holly Inn, The Postern, Squirrel Inn and Pine View Inn. Visitors could relax in The Rocking Chair Room – one hundred seats available – at the Pine Forest Inn. They could visit the Pinehurst tea farm. They could go hunting. Or, they might play golf at the location of today's Corey Woods.

Many of the inns continued to operate into the mid-1900s. In the mid 1930's the Pine Forest Inn diminished in popularity and closed. It was reopened by T.W. Salisbury in 1939. During World War II the Inn housed officers and defense workers and after the war the Inn was transformed into the Adventure School that had only one graduating class. It was torn down in the 1960's for fear someone may set it on fire.

Following World War II, the convenience of motor traffic led to motels instead of hotels. The quaint and elegant inns disappeared. Today, some of the smaller inns or outbuildings of the larger inns, have become private homes. The largest remaining inn is the Squirrel Inn condominiums, across from Azalea Park.

The display case contains items from several inns.