

Painting of Pine Savannah

The painting is entitled "Competition in the Pine Savannah." This painting includes the early work tasks done in the pine acres in Summerville. Identified are Native Americans, frontiersman, Black cowboys and the production of naval stores. The cowboys (called "cattle hunters" in colonial times) were needed to "hunt" the cattle as there was no fencing. The roads around the early village of Summerville are mostly original cow paths.

People realized the pine was perfect for producing turpentine. Turpentine was useful in all sorts of ways, like making soap, skinning animals, and even lighting lamps. It was also believed to be a cure for most ailments. American physicians prescribed it regularly. Economically, products made from the sap were most important for the naval industry. Pine products were used to repair boats, waterproof the wood, and perform maintenance on ships. Resin was collected from longleaf pines by a destructive method known as boxing. Workers would cut a deep pocket into the bottom of the tree, and the wounded tree would send resin to the hole to seal it. Some of the resin would flow through the wound, and it would be collected in boxes at the base of the pine. Distillation transformed the resin into turpentine.

Making tar and pitch required smelting pine logs in a tar kiln or "tarkel." Longleaf Pines that became unproductive in making crude turpentine were sometimes used for tar production. Colonists burned the tar rich cores, or "lightwood" of these trees in their homes for light. To remove the tar from the lightwood, a tar kiln was needed. To make a tar kiln, a round dirt platform was made in the forest. A drain, often a hollowed log, was made from the center to the edge of the platform. A pit was dug and a barrel placed to catch the tar that would gather on the platform and flow down the drain. The platform was covered in clay and packed down. Lightwood was cut into three-foot lengths and stacked on the

platform like the spokes of a wheel. The lightwood was set on fire and covered with pine straw and earth. Heat released the "tar."

Pitch was needed to coat the hulls of ships to protect them in tropical waters. Boiling tar and a small amount of turpentine in a large iron pot made pitch. Boiling thickened the tar to a semi-solid.

These products: turpentine, pitch and tar are referred to as naval stores.

Naval stores were the first major export from Charles Town to England. Lumber was the first export from Charles Town to Barbados. The Carolinas were the primary source of naval stores to England until the Revolutionary War.