

## Wall Painting of Summerville 1831

The workers in the pinelands noticed that the woods offered a respite from the diseases of Malaria.

(Country Fever) and Yellow Fever (Stranger's Fever). As time passed, plantation families began living in temporary cabins and cottages in the area around modern St. Paul's Church. They referred to these warm weather extended stays as "marooning." Their randomly arranged dwellings would become the original village of Summerville by about 1820. The term "maroon" was a variation of the Spanish word "*cimarron*." In the early Spanish colonies of South America and the Caribbean, the word referred to people who were "getting away" from their usual routines of life, particularly of runaways from the system of slavery.

The early settlers would come to the settlement in early May and if they stayed until the first frost, they were virtually assured of avoiding Malaria and Yellow Fever for that year's "sickly season." Their belief was that the foul-smelling air (the miasma) of the marsh caused people to get sick. In Summerville they believed the pine trees with its odor of resin had a beneficial medicinal effect and the winds carrying the miasma simply rose above the pine. Sir Ronald Ross, a British army doctor in India, discovered in 1897 that Malaria was carried by the mosquito. In 1886 Cuban physician Carlos Finlay first described another kind of mosquito, the *Aedes aegypti*, as the carrier of Yellow Fever. This important discovery was not fully accepted until 20 years later.

The pine trees of Summerville were beautiful and had a pleasant odor – but they were not the reason the Malaria and Yellow Fever were absent in this area. Pine trees grow in well-drained, sandy soil and mosquitos can breed only where there is standing water. Flowing water was plentiful in the ravines of Summerville but mosquitoes were absent because of the flow. Without the mosquito vectors, there was no Malaria or Yellow Fever at Summerville.

By 1831 the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company was constructing the rail line between Charleston and the Edisto River. The track opened to Summerville in 1832. The entire line to Hamburg, SC (near Augusta, GA) was completed in 1833. The painting depicts two settlements at Summerville - the "Original Village" was separated from the railroad's "New Summerville" by a large amount of water where Azalea Park is today. It was difficult to travel from the old village to New Summerville via the single crude bridge. Periods of dry weather offered the best chance to cross.

The original railroad used the Longleaf Pine to build trestles, crossties, rails and for fuel. The original rails were actually made of wood with a metal strap nailed on the top. This method didn't last long as the straps would disconnect under the weight of the engine and "snake head" through the floors of the rail cars. Eventually, steel rails replaced the wooden rail. Most of the rail line was built on trestles because of sandy, muddy and unstable soils.

By 1832 the railroad decided to develop the land at "New Summerville" so they had streets laid out in a plan prepared by C.E. Detmold, a Civil Engineer located in Washington D. C. The plan

established 4- acre lots bordered by a North-South, East-West road system. Since the railroad owned the land, planned the streets and sold the lots, New Summerville is considered the first railroad town in America.

Other firsts:

Carried US mail

Longest continuous railroad line in the world in 1830's

The first steam locomotive in the US to establish regularly scheduled passenger service in addition to freight.