

Historical Documentation
St. Matthews Railroad Cut
38CL67

Calhoun County, South Carolina

F. A. P. No. BNH-LSCB(006)
PIN 21697



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Report submitted to:

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ABSTRACT

The town of St. Matthews in central South Carolina is bisected by a railroad cut. This cut through a small hill in the middle of St. Matthews has both helped to shape the growth of the town while linking it inexorably with its past. According to local history, the cut was excavated using contracted slave labor from the adjacent plantations. Tradition maintains it was dug by hand and the dirt was carried away in handmade wooden baskets. The railroad cut today looks much as it did when the first locomotive came down the tracks in 1841. The hillsides have been kept natural and are densely vegetated with indigenous plants. The only modern intrusions occur above the cut in the form of roadway bridges and utilities lines.

As part of road improvements to US 601, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is planning to alter the appearance of the railroad cut by facing the eastern wall with concrete and structural block. During the Section 106 process for the road improvement project, the St. Matthews railroad cut was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and D because of its potential to yield important information in the areas of history, enslaved African-Americans, engineering techniques and the role of slavery in industry in the South. Through consultation with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer and the elected officials for the town of St. Matthews, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed in November of 2003, which included mitigative measures to ameliorate the adverse effects of the road improvement project. This report was one of the elements of the mitigation outlined in the MOA.

Large-format photography of the railroad cut was conducted on January 26 and 27 of 2004. These archival photographs are included in Appendix A. Historic documentation of the railroad was undertaken and the results are contained in the following pages. Also included, as per the MOA, is a context for the role of slavery in the construction of railroads throughout the South. Efforts to identify and contact any living descendents of the enslaved African-Americans who worked on the railroad were also undertaken.

The results of the research and documentation shows that the contractual use of local slave labor was a usual practice for railroad construction and maintenance in the Antebellum South. The land acquired by the railroad in the area of the cut was purchased from local landowners, who had considerable slave labor available. The actual contract for the labor was not discovered, but supplemental information supports the local history that enslaved African-Americans from present day St. Matthews dug the cut by hand using simple tools and handmade baskets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several individuals assisted with the research for this project. Most notably is Ms. Debbie Roland of the Calhoun County Museum. Ms. Roland not only gave generously of her time but also allowed Historian Karen Serio unlimited access to the substantial collections of the museum. The archives at the Calhoun County Museum were invaluable to the completion of this project in that they contained original manuscripts, family papers and previously collected oral histories that were all relevant to the project. The local historians on-hand at the museum assisted in identifying additional sources of information. The archivists at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History were also very helpful in pointing out potential sources of information and tracking down historic documentation. Wayne Roberts, Project Manager at the SCDOT, coordinated project efforts, provided the names of contacts, and identified the causeway over Antley Creek as the likely final resting place of the earth removed from the St. Matthew's cut. His review and assistance are greatly appreciated.

The Principal Investigator for this project was Mary Beth Reed. Natalie Adams drafted a historic overview for Calhoun County. Richard T. Bryant photographed the railroad cut during the ice storm in January and still managed to take excellent pictures. Karen Serio conducted the archival research for this project and attempted to make oral history contacts in the St. Matthews area. Natalie Wheaton and Tracey Fedor prepared the figures and graphics for this document. J. W. Joseph, Ph.D, RPA edited this report and Catherine Hartley assisted in its production.

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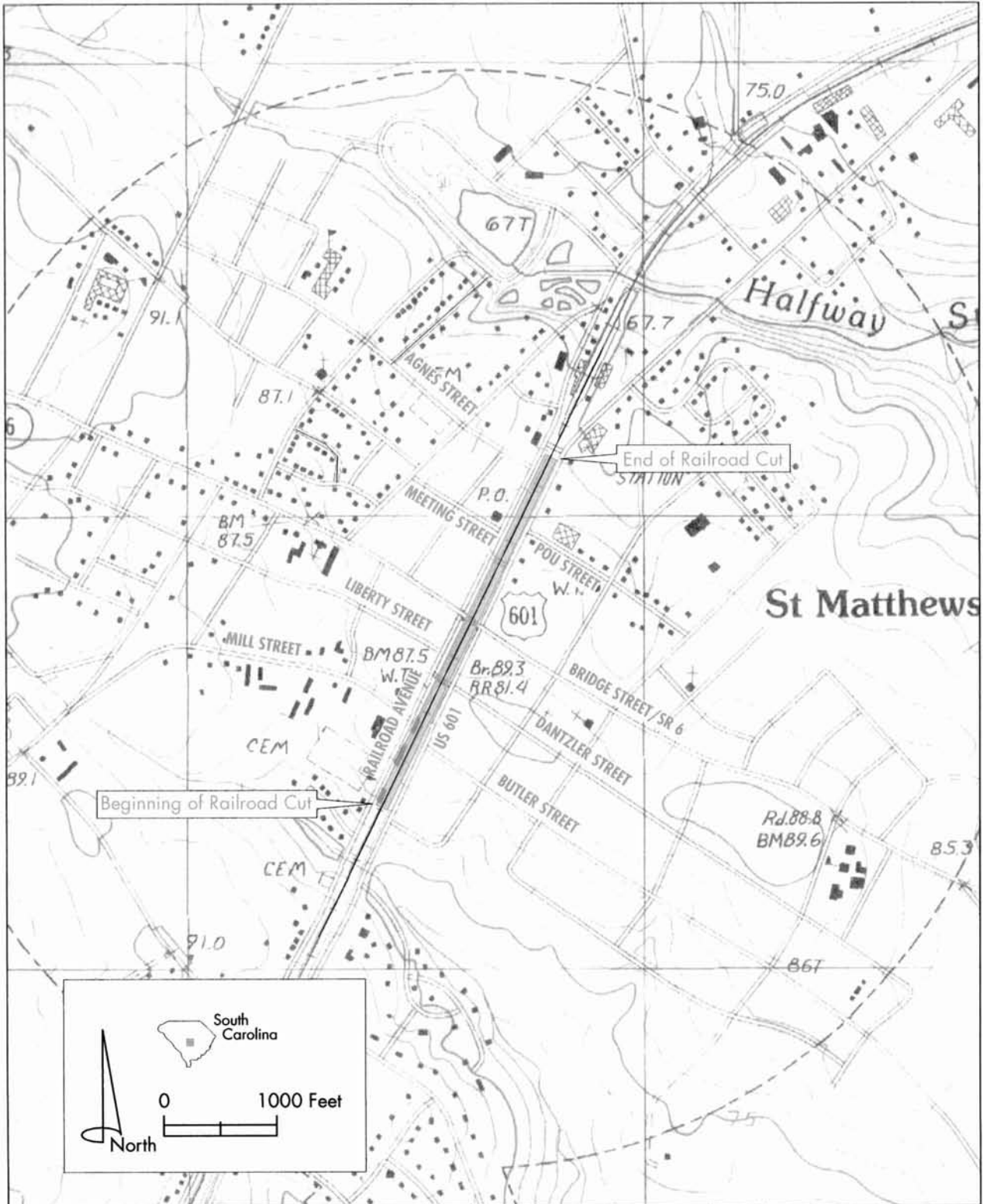
I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

The historic railroad cut in the town of St. Matthews is its most prominent feature. The cut was excavated c. 1840 as part of the first branch line of the South Carolina Railroad Company. It is approximately 2,700 feet long and 100 feet wide, runs on a roughly north-south axis through St. Matthews, and is paralleled by US 601 to the east and Railroad Avenue/Huff Road to the west. The purpose of the cut was to maintain a level track for the early locomotives. Instead of following the natural hilly topography, the railroad engineers deemed it necessary to keep an even grade in order to maximize the speed and efficiency of the steam-powered trains. The cut was created by digging a trench through the middle of the hill where St. Matthews is located. The cut itself presently consists of a straight rail bed of raised gravel, wooden ties, and gauged steel tracks at the bottom of the cut. The sides of the cut are covered in dense vegetation comprised of indigenous plants. Three bridges traverse the cut: the Dantzler Street Bridge to the south, the Bridge Street/SC 6 Bridge in the middle, and an unnamed bridge to the north (Figures 1 and 2). At its deepest point, the cut is approximately 40 feet deep.

A proposed SCDOT project in the area of the cut consists of the widening of the US 601 from US 176 to SC 6 in the town of St. Matthews. During the survey phase of this project, it was determined by SCDOT, in consultation with the SHPO, that the railroad cut was a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible archaeological site (38CL67) because of its potential to yield further information about the role of enslaved African-Americans in railroad construction (Criteria A and D). In conjunction with the proposed widening, 1,200 feet of the eastern wall of the railroad cut would be excavated. The soils would then be stabilized, the angle of the slopes changed, and grass will cover the lower portion. The upper portion of the embankment will be reconstructed at a steeper angle and then reinforced with a concrete block facing. Therefore, the project would require that the railroad cut be disturbed and reworked to accommodate the widening of US 601, thereby creating an adverse effect to the eligible resource. In order to mitigate the effects of the undertaking, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was created and included the following stipulations to be undertaken by SCDOT to mitigate the project effects on the St. Matthews Railroad Cut:

1. Photographic documentation with a large format camera.
2. A narrative report will be produced including historical research, historic photographs, and the large-scale photographs.
3. Copies of the report with the original large format photographs are to be housed at the SCDAH (two copies) and the Calhoun County Museum (one copy).
4. The remaining 30 copies of the report may include scanned and/or printed copies of the photographs and will be housed at local school libraries and public libraries.
5. Archival research is required for the site to determine its history and discover historic photographs of the site.
6. A topographic map will be generated by the Department's survey party to document the present railroad cut.

Figure 1
Project Location Map



7. A historical marker will be placed along the railroad in downtown St. Matthews.
8. A worldwide website will be developed with historical information and new and historic photographs.

The MOA was signed by the representatives of SCDOT, the SHPO and the Federal Highway Administration. Large format photography of the railroad cut and this report have been prepared in response to stipulations 1 through 5, while a world wide web site will be developed following the review and finalization of this study. Figure 3 is the topographical map of the existing cut that was prepared by SCDOT in compliance with the MOA.



Figure 2 - Present View of St. Matthews Railroad Cut

The railroad was one of the earliest lines in South Carolina. In fact, the railroad that runs through St. Matthews was the first branch line of the first railroad in the state, the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company (South Carolina Railroad). However, much of the Antebellum documentation relating to this area was destroyed by General Sherman during his march through South Carolina in 1865. The remaining documentation consists of oral history, salvaged family papers, and documentation on file with the state prior to the Civil War. Substantiating the local history of St. Matthews regarding the railroad cut via standard documentation and usual research repositories proved to be a difficult, but not impossible, task.

It is part of the collective folklore of St. Matthews that the railroad was constructed using slave labor contracted from local plantations. It is also commonly believed that the cut was dug by hand and the dirt was carried away in hand-made baskets. Unfortunately, there is almost no existing documentation of the railroad cut and those who created it.

Research began at the Calhoun County Museum, where their collection of published information was perused for a general sense of what documentation was available. Their historic photo collection was also examined. The Superior Court deed rooms at the Calhoun and Orangeburg county courthouses were checked to see if any information from the relevant time period was still in existence. The Calhoun County library system was evaluated for additional local information. The archives at the Calhoun County Museum were then examined for manuscripts and personal letters relevant to the project. Several days were spent at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History researching census information, legislative documents, journal collections, and publications. The South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina was an invaluable source for primary railroad and South Carolina slavery information as well as newspapers from the relevant period. Research at the Thomas Cooper library at the University of South Carolina consisted of historic maps, aerial photography, and historic journals. The archives at the Norfolk Southern Railroad were also contacted in an effort to obtain copies of the deeds and any transactions that may still be on file. The Whitaker Library Archives at the South Carolina State University in Orangeburg were also contacted to determine if any additional information was on file, especially pertaining to family papers and local history.

An effort to contact descendants of the enslaved African-Americans who excavated the railroad cut consisted of contacting local members of the African-American community. This primarily focused on ministers of historic African-American churches around the town of St. Matthews. Also, the vertical files at the Calhoun County Museum were examined for oral histories conducted in the post-bellum era. Informed, knowledgeable local inhabitants who were contacted in conjunction with the research of this project consisted of a local historian, and the present and the former directors of the Calhoun County Museum. However, no records or names of the individuals who excavated the cut were ever identified.

The following section contains a historic context for the use of enslaved African-Americans by the railroads in the Antebellum South. Section III focuses on the history of St. Matthews and the railroad cut itself, which includes the results of the local history research. Specific data relating to the South Carolina Railroad Company is included in this section. The Appendix contains the photograph key and the large format photography, taken on January 26 and 27 of 2004, of the St. Matthews Railroad Cut.

II. SLAVERY AND THE RAILROAD

The advent of the railroad in the 1820's opened up a whole new world of possibilities for farmers and manufacturers throughout America. It would soon change the way that America did business as well as the spatial relationship of cities and towns. The construction of the railroad through the Antebellum South created a new application for the use of slave labor. As industry in the South expanded, so did the contributions of enslaved African-Americans to the development of the southern economy.

SOUTHERN INDUSTRY AND SLAVERY

The role that enslaved African-Americans played in the development of the agricultural South is well known and well documented. What is not as well known is that slave labor was also utilized for industrial purposes in the southern states. The vast majority of enslaved African-Americans were dedicated to agricultural labor on plantations, but as the traditional role of the South expanded beyond agronomy, so did the employment of enslaved African-Americans in non-agricultural areas. In the decade prior to the Civil War, there were 4 million total enslaved African-Americans in America and approximately 5%, or 200,000, were employed in industry (Starobin 1970:11). This relatively low percentage is due in part to the fact that the South industrialized at a much slower rate than the northern states. The long growing seasons and cheap labor of the slave states made agriculture the most economically feasible pursuit. Additionally, the South resisted urbanization and industrialization because it considered such pursuits to be ungentlemanly and characteristic of the less civilized North. By the advent of the Civil War, the southern states only accounted for 15% of the nation's industrial capacity (Starobin 1970:11).

In 1970, Robert S. Starobin published an in-depth study of the commercial use of enslaved African-Americans in his *Industrial Slavery in the Old South*. Originally researched as part of his doctoral dissertation, Starobin studied the role of slavery in the emerging industries of the Antebellum South. Much of the data that he gathered is included in this discussion of the use of enslaved African-Americans in capacities other than agricultural.

Most of the early industry in the Antebellum South was located in rural areas, as opposed to large cities, because it consisted primarily of the processing of agricultural crops. Cotton ginning, rice milling, indigo production and sugar milling all existed within the plantation economy. Even the manufacturing of iron products was originally tied to area plantations. The textile industry was one of the first industries to establish itself in the South as a relatively independent industry in that it was not necessarily associated with specific plantations. In the upper southern states, hemp and tobacco processing became the leading industries for the area. However, in all of these types of industries, slave labor was utilized.

Sometimes slave labor was used exclusively and sometimes it was integrated with white labor, but its use was pervasive throughout the industrial South. The use of slave labor in stoneware potteries in the state of South Carolina has been studied by Cinda K. Baldwin, and she concluded that enslaved African-Americans were employed alongside white labor at various levels in the potteries, including the highly skilled task of "turning" or throwing pottery. According to the 1850 Census, Edgefield stoneware manufacturer Lewis Miles owned 14 slaves, B. F. Landrum 12, and Collin Rhodes 35, the largest number of slaves held by any of the stoneware factories at that time (Baldwin 1993). A study of lime kilns and their related industries in

Berkeley County, South Carolina, stated that "Slave artisans who moulded or manufactured brick or other materials were legion" (Wheaton et al. 1987:49).

There were frequent debates regarding whether to use white contract employees, contracted enslaved African-Americans or purchased enslaved African-Americans in industry. Starobin writes that "about four-fifths of all industrial enslaved African-Americans were directly owned by industrial entrepreneurs; the rest (one-fifth) were rented by employers from their masters by the month or year" (Starobin 1970:12). In 1828, Alabama Governor John Murphy presented the following evaluation of the purchase of enslaved African-Americans versus the contracting of labor for the construction of a canal at Muscle Shoals:

...The first [plan, contractors] would be liable to loss from the imperfection of estimates, as no prudent man ...would be inclined to make a closed contract where many uncertainties prevailed...and it is scarcely possible in such cases to be so vigilant to defeat the multiform subterfuges and expedients will devise...The second method [hired slaves] would indeed be favorable to the proper accomplishment of the work, but unfavorable in point of expense and of time. There would always be uncertainty in procuring hands, and those who had hands to hire, might take occasion from the public necessity, to hold back and combine so as to enhance the price...In our peculiar situation the third method [purchasing slaves] seems to combine the three essential advantages. Hands it is presumed may readily be purchased at a reasonable price, and from time to time, to the full extent of our disposable means, and sufficient to accomplish the work within the time prescribed in the donation. In this way the work would only cost the interest on the money invested; the loss sustained on the property by death or casualty, the subsistence of the hands, and the charges of superintendence. (Starobin 1970:200)

The more physically demanding the job, the more likely enslaved African-Americans were employed. Governor John Owen of North Carolina promoted the state having its own purchased enslaved African-Americans because "slaves constitute the only effective force, to employ white labourers to drain our swamps cannot succeed...they have not the physical ability" (Starobin 1970:201). Public improvements such as the construction of canals and roads especially utilized slave labor throughout the South because of the harsh conditions and physically demanding tasks involved with such construction, as well as the lack of other labor sources.

Plantation owners were in favor of the contracting of their superfluous slave labor during off seasons. Occasionally, contracted slave labor came from "relatives of deceased slave owners, who were settling the estate; from authorities who were sorting out a bankruptcy; from mobile planters who were setting up new plantations and needed time to get ready for a full work force; and from settled planters who had bought a large group of slaves and could not absorb it immediately" (Genovese 1972: 391). Not only did it keep the enslaved African-Americans working, it generated additional income for the owner for relatively little expense. Most states required that a slave be registered and badged if they were to leave the plantation proper for purposes of other employment. This amount varied in each jurisdiction, but generally was a minute fraction of what the slave was worth. In the Joseph I. Waring Account Book, on file in the manuscript room at the South Caroliniana Library, there is an entry for October of 1854 listing an expense of \$8.50 for "badges for negroes hired out in 1854." Joseph Waring was a planter in Lexington County, South Carolina. In 1855, however, he lists a profit of \$490.00 for the hiring out of his carpenter and house enslaved African-Americans for contract labor. From 1808, when Congress banned the further importation of enslaved African-Americans, to the advent of the Civil War in 1861, the cost-effectiveness of

purchasing-versus-contracting slave labor fluctuated based on the economy and its effect on the price of purchase of a slave.

While enslaved African-Americans had very little control over the course of their own lives, there were certain advantages to being hired out for labor. Richard C. Wade in *Slavery in the Cities* (1964:48) writes the following:

The hiring-out system gave slavery the flexibility it required in the urban milieu, but it also bred problems that many Southerners thought struck at the very heart of the institution. Once the bond between master and slave was loosened by the addition of an employer, a further extension quickly developed. Soon owners found it easier and usually more profitable to permit their bondsmen to find their own employment...Under this arrangement, masters told their Negroes to locate a job, make their own agreement on wages, and simply bring back a certain sum every week or month. The slave, moreover, could pocket any profit he made.

On a few occasions, some enslaved African-Americans earned enough to buy their freedom. It was technically illegal for slaves to hire themselves out, but it was uniformly practiced throughout the South.

Private industry was not the only area outside of agriculture that utilized slave labor. Most of the canals, roads, turnpikes and other transportation facilities in the South were constructed using slave labor in some aspect. In the North, labor for public improvements was traditionally contracted on a project basis. In the southern states, slave labor replaced white labor, especially on the more physically demanding jobs. The construction of the railroad across South Carolina proved to be one of the most demanding enterprises of them all.

THE ROLE OF SLAVERY IN SOUTHERN RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION

The railroad as an industry was not established in the South until 1827 when the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company was chartered by the state of South Carolina. By 1860, there were approximately 11,000 miles of railroad tracks in the South, compared to 20,000 miles of tracks in the non-slave states (Starobin 1970:28). During the construction of the southern rail lines, workers had to contend with oppressive heat, miles of swamp crossings, and disease-carrying insects. The construction was labor intensive and required great physical strength and stamina. Enslaved African-Americans had already proven their hardiness in the harsh summer climates so they were a natural choice by the railroad for the hard labor associated with excavation and construction of the tracks.

Slave labor proved to be integral to the expansion of the railroad in the South. According to the September 19, 1859 edition of the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* in an article describing the construction of an Alabama railroad, the use of enslaved African-Americans was "the way to build railroads...these eighty eight negroes will probably do more work, and for one-fourth the cost, than double the number of hired laborers" (Wade 1964:37). The Alabama railroad was not the only one to use slave labor for construction as can be seen in the following excerpt:

In almost every city railroads could be found among the largest slaveholders. In New Orleans the Pontchartrain R. R. Company, whose line connected the city with the lake, had over 30 blacks. The South Carolina Railway owned 103 in Charleston in 1860, and in

the Virginia capital the Richmond and Fredericksburg, the Richmond and Petersburg, the Danville, and the Virginia Central paid taxes on 597 bondsmen in the same year. (Wade 1964:37)

Furthermore, Robert S. Starobin makes the following statements regarding the use of enslaved African-Americans on the construction of Southern railroads:

Southern internal improvement enterprises were so dependent upon slave labor that virtually all southern railroads except for a few border-state lines, were built either by slave-employing contractors or by company-owned or hired bondsmen. The Mississippi Railroad, owning sixty-two Negroes, the Montgomery and West Point, with sixty-seven, the South Carolina with ninety, and New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern, owning 106 blacks, were typical slave-owning railroads. Investing heavily, the Georgia Railroad spent \$48,925 for Negroes, and the Baton Rouge, Opelousas and Gross Tete line spent \$115,000. Other railroads which shifted from slave hiring to direct slave ownership were represented by the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, which appropriated \$125,000 in 1861 to purchase blacks. Altogether, southern railroads probably employed more than 20,000 slaves. (Starobin 1970:28)

In the state of South Carolina, legislation regarding the taxation of the use of enslaved African-Americans for hire on roads and railroads can be documented to as early as 1841. According to the Report on the Committee on Roads, Bridges and Ferries, it was resolved to "ensure into the expediency of reporting a clause in the road bill requiring a road tax to be imposed upon persons owning slaves who are in the habit of hiring out such slaves as Road hands and Rail Road Hands" (Legislative Papers on file at South Carolina Department of Archives and History). This would imply that the employment of enslaved African-Americans on a contractual basis was becoming a repetitive occurrence throughout the state.

Enslaved African-Americans were employed by the railroad in other capacities as well, but the primary purpose seems to be as road hands. However, upon occasion, the use of enslaved African-Americans by the railroad caused concerns among local citizens. According to a Presentment of the Grand Jury of Kershaw District in 1855, the regulations relating to the employment of enslaved African-Americans on the railroad were not strict enough for the comfort of county's residents:

We present that experience has proved that much inconvenience and no inconsiderable losses are felt by the planting interest of this District in that portion through which the Rail Road passes by the depreciations committed by negroes employed to work on the road. The Grand Jury therefore would respectfully recommend the passage of a law requiring the Rail Road companies to employ white men to supervise all negroes engaged in such work. In other words that it shall be unlawful to employ any negro in such work except under the supervision of some white man. (Legislative Papers on file at South Carolina Department of Archives and History)

Apparently this was not the popular sentiment, however, because the House of Representatives responded as follows:

The Committee on Colored Population to whom was referred so much of the Presentiments of the Grand Jury of Kershaw District as relates to negroes employed on the Rail Road beg

leave to Report that they are of the opinion that the present Patrol laws are quite adequate if properly executed to prevent the evils complained of – they cannot therefore recommend further legislation thereon. (Legislative Papers on file at South Carolina Department of Archives and History)

It can be inferred from the above statements that the railroad did not employ enslaved African-Americans for any task unless they were supervised by a white employee. As can be seen in the following section, the South Carolina Railroad Company, however, did utilize slave labor for a variety of tasks.

USE OF ENSLAVED AFRICAN-AMERICANS BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA RAILROAD

The South Carolina Railroad Company was created in the early 1840s by the merger of the fledgling Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad with the established South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company. The Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad existed primarily on paper by the time of the merger, but it had obtained the rights to extending the branch line into Columbia (Derrick 1930:181-185). Therefore, a portion of the construction of the railroad through St. Matthews was organized by the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad while the majority of the line was built by the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company. For the purposes of this study, the railroad will primarily be identified as the South Carolina Railroad Company, which will refer to the construction undertaken by both railroads prior to, during and after the merger in the early 1840s.

When the Charleston to Hamburg line of the South Carolina Railroad Company was constructed in the 1830s, the engineers and designers used English railroads as models. And while this had worked regarding the construction of short rail lines in the Northeast, it was not as applicable in the southern states due to the climate and labor force. According to Derrick, "the major difficulties were due almost wholly to the inability to secure contractors and laborers experienced in railroad building, and the unfavorableness of the climate of the area through which the road passed" (Derrick 1930:59). The railroad had divided the line into sections and then had individually contracted out each section so that there would be several labor groups working concurrently. However, once the reality of excavating the hard clay and digging in hot, swampy conditions began to take its toll, experienced Northern labor became scarce. Local white labor was also difficult to keep because most of the work force would not work through the hot, summer months due to the risk of disease in the numerous swampy areas. Therefore, a few years later, the railroad turned to contracting slave labor for the construction of its first branch line.

The first branch line of the South Carolina Railroad Company, as per their charter, was to run from some point on the main line to the state capital of Columbia. Branchville, located approximately 60 miles northwest of Charleston, was chosen as the location from which the branch line would begin. It would run in a northeasterly direction to Columbia, with stops in Orangeburg, Lewisville (St. Matthews), and Fort Motte, among others. Included in this alignment would be the crossing of numerous swamps and the Congaree River.

When the first call for contract labor came and went with little response, the railroad was forced to offer the contracts at a price higher than originally estimated in order to attract the local planters. In the fall of 1838 during the annual stockholders meeting, it was reported that "the directors had succeeded in inducing the Planters to enter into contracts for the graduation of the Road through their respective plantations, thus bringing into operation the Slave labor of the country for Rail Road purposes" (Derrick 1930:184). After word spread regarding the lucrative terms the railroad was offering, there was much competition for the

contracts, which helped to drive the price down again. In the July 21, 1838 edition of the *Columbia Telescope*, the following was recorded under the heading of 'Railroad Contracts':

We understand that on the recent visit to this place of the President and Chief Engineer of the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Rail Road Company, they succeeded in making contracts for the construction of the remaining portions of the Road from Columbia to Charleston, extending from McCord's Ferry on the Congaree to Branchville, a distance of about 40 miles – at rates at, or below the estimates of the Engineers. When the first contracts were offered on this road, there was very little competition and few bidders. But with the progress of the work, has sprung up a spirit which promises to carry it through with a becoming zeal and energy. Our planters are coming forward and taking contracts on the most satisfactory terms. It has been demonstrated that our slaves are well calculated for this description of work – furnishing a species of labor which can be advantageously employed at all seasons of the year, and to any amounts the company may require. (Page 2, Column 5)

Figure 4 is a transcribed copy of an actual contract on file in the manuscript collection of the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina. The printed contract was to be filled out by an agent of the railroad and signed by the individual to whom the slave belonged. According to the contract, the owner would be paid for twenty-six working days a month for each slave, with deductions made on a daily basis for missed work. The contract also specifies the nature of the work as well as gives the officer of the railroad the ability to determine where the contracted slave will work and how he will get there.

Due to funding issues and cost overruns, the only section of the new line that had been completed by August of 1840 was the segment between Branchville and Orangeburg. It was not until June 20, 1842, that the first Charleston train reached Columbia. The design for both the main line and the branch line proved to be problematic over time. Much of the main line was constructed on a superstructure of wooden pilings that frequently had to be replaced due to the advanced rate of decay in the humid South. Also, a series of rainy seasons managed to wash out many of the embankments along the branch line. Therefore, the maintenance of the railroad required a considerable amount of labor as well. It is not known if these types of repairs and maintenance were done by contract labor or permanent staff.

The South Carolina Rail Road Company started out contracting the majority of their slave labor. It wasn't until the middle of the 1840s that they began in earnest to purchase enslaved African-Americans. Based on the reported expenditures of the company, a portion of their costs included the upkeep for contracted labor. According to the 1844 financial statements for the newly formed South Carolina Railroad Company, \$296.63 was spent on 'Negro Clothing' for the year. However, as per the *Statement of Slaves Belonging to the South Carolina Rail Road Company, December 31, 1859*, the company only owned one enslaved African-American between April of 1836 to February of 1845 (Table 1). Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the \$296.63 was not spent clothing only one enslaved African-American. Also, no new construction was being undertaken at this time so it appears that enslaved African-Americans were being contracted for routine labor. In 1845, the year that construction began on the Camden branch line, the South Carolina Railroad Company reported that \$6,358.52 was spent on "Provisions for Negroes" and \$334.00 on 'Negro Clothing.' It was also in 1845 that three additional enslaved African-Americans were acquired by the company. By 1846, the Statement of Receipts and Expenditures includes an entry for the Road Department, with an expense of \$7,225.40 for 'Provisions for Negroes' and \$489.43 for 'Negro Clothing.'

Figure 4
Transcribed Copy of a South Carolina Railroad Company Contract
for Use of Slave Labor

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO BETWEEN

_____ Agent of the South-Carolina Rail-Road Company, of the one part, and _____ of the other part – Witnesseth, that the said _____ of the latter part, agrees to hire, and doth hereby hire to the said party of the first part, for the use of the said Company, the following negro slaves, that is to say

_____ for and during the period of the present year, the time to commence and be computed from _____.

And the said party of the first part doth hereby agree to pay quarterly therefore, at the office of the Company in Charleston, the sum of _____ for said slaves.

Provided, That if the said slave, or any of them, shall absent him or themselves from the service of the said Company, without permission in writing from the overseer or person having charge of such slave or slaves on behalf of the Company-*and also provided*, that if any of said slaves shall from sickness or other cause, be incapable of performing the work assigned to him, then and in either case, a deduction shall be made from the aforesaid monthly amount of _____ for every day so lost, thus for this purpose calculating each month at twenty six working days.

And it is agreed to by both parties, that none of the said slaves shall be employed upon the Locomotives upon the line of Railroad, but be employed otherwise upon the line of Road, and at such places as the interest of the Company may require; the said Company by its officers being at liberty, however, to transport at all times on the cars, said slaves from any one point to another upon the Railroad, where their services may be required, and in case of accident requiring instant aid and attention, may transport them upon the Locomotives and tenders, and more particularly, such slaves may be employed on cars used in the Road Department.

In witness whereof, the said parties have hereunto set their hands this _____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and _____.

EXECUTED IN DUPLICATE

Agent's Signature

Owner's Signature

Original on file at the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Table 1 - Enslaved African-Americans Belonging to the South Carolina Rail Road Company, 1836 -1859

No.	Dates of Purchase	From Whom Purchased	Names of Slaves	Cost
1	Apr., 1836	James Vidal	Anthony	825.00
2	Feb., 1845	Estate McMillan	Jack	400.00
3	"	"	Frank	400.00
4	"	"	Andrew	686.00
5	Aug., 1848	S. J. Young	Essex	750.00
6	Nov., 1850	N.C. Trowbridge	Richard	900.00
7	"	"	John	900.00
8	"	"	Nelson	900.00
9	"	"	Richardson	900.00
10	"	"	Jeff	900.00
11	"	"	Nelson	900.00
12	"	"	Harrison	900.00
13	"	"	Cyrus	900.00
14	"	"	Jim (black)	900.00
15	Jan., 1851	Esther S. McNeil	William	800.00
16	Mar., 1852	James and Rob't Adger	Pompey	451.00
17	Apr., 1852	W. A. Harriss	Jerry	820.00
18	"	J. C. Sproull & Co.	William Stovall	748.25
19	"	"	Hardtimes Gadsden	907.12
20	"	"	George Bailey	896.87
21	"	"	Henry Mosely	927.62
22	"	"	Jerry Tendill	922.50
23	"	"	Moses Walker	922.50
24	"	"	Jerry Morton	821.86
25	"	"	Moses Tucker	922.50
26	"	"	Alfred Sproull	821.86
27	"	"	Shadrack Stovall	876.37
28	"	"	Alfred Cothran	825.12
29	"	"	James Simpson	845.62
30	"	"	Perry Barnes	932.75
31	"	"	John Wesner	998.83
32	"	"	Henry Blythe	922.50
33	"	"	Peter McRae	789.25
34	"	"	Samuel Hale	568.87
35	"	"	Elias Calleway	717.50
36	"	"	William Hill	821.88
37	"	"	May Hill	717.50
38	"	"	Jack Morris	779.00
39	"	"	Cato Sproull	825.12
40	"	"	York Sibley	876.37
41	"	"	William Sproull	820.00
42	"	"	Harrison Coleman	922.50
43	"	"	Shelly Boyd	1,004.50
44	"	"	William Boyd	957.37
45	"	"	Balifoe Palmer	820.00
46	"	"	Ben Wright	932.75

No.	Dates of Purchase	From Whom Purchased	Names of Slaves	Cost
47	"	"	George Taylor	512.50
48	"	"	Robert Dye	871.25
49	"	"	Edmund Brownlee	912.25
50	"	"	Stephen Garmany	922.50
51	"	"	Aaron Gaskins	917.37
52	"	"	Ned Larkin	660.12
53	"	"	Nelson Skinner	963.50
54	"	"	Ben Cothran	871.25
55	May, 1852	F. Schwartz	Andrew Jackson	860.00
56	Aug., 1853	N. Calderbank	Ben	1,050.00
57	Dec., 1853	Jos. L. Inabinet	Isaac	1,000.00
58	Mar., 1854	J. J. Chisolm & J. Bryan, T's of Mrs. C. L. Chisolm	Robert	1,101.00
59	Apr., 1854	Est. of Geo. F. Raworth	Bob	850.00
60	"	"	Markly	850.00
61	"	Warren Wells	Peter	1,000.00
62	May, 1854	"	Philip	900.00
63	Dec., 1854	Nathan Calderbank	Austin	900.00
64	"	T. J. Robertson	Bill	1,000.00
65	Mar., 1855	Samuel George	Harry	1,010.50
66	July, 1855	James Coward	William	1,000.00
67	"	Mrs. M. E. Purse	Abram	900.00
68	"	E. M. Gilbert	Crockett	1,000.00
69	Sept., 1855	James Coward	Tom	900.00
70	Nov., 1855	Jacob H. Wells	Jim	1,000.00
71	"	"	Levi	1,000.00
72	"	C. T. Scaife	Daniel	1,000.00
73	"	"	Andrew	1,000.00
74	Jan., 1856	H. E. Walpole	Adam	900.00
75	Apr., 1856	Thos. P. Smith	Pompey	700.00
76	"	George P. Elliott	Ben	1,200.00
77	Jan., 1857	Dr. M. C. King	John	1,200.00
78	Feb., 1857	W. J. Magrath	Peter	900.00
79	"	"	Alexander	1,000.00
80	"	S. Kingman	Andrew	800.00
81	Apr., 1857	D. A. Ambler	Davy	1,050.00
82	Dec., 1857	B. S. Gibbs, Trustee	Maurice	1,200.00
83	Feb., 1858	Estate F. Stall	John	1,035.00
84	"	J. B. Seabrook	Frank	1,170.00
85	"	Benjamin Davis	Dave	1,075.00
86	"	A. S. Winter, et al.	Stephney	959.60
87	Jan., 1859	James W. May	Morris	1,000.00
88	"	D. A. Pendarvis	Harry	900.00
89	"	W. W. Harley	Robert	900.00
90	Nov. 1859	Z. B. Oakes	Jack	1,500.00
TOTAL				\$80,518.72

Source: *Centennial History of South Carolina Railroad*, pgs. 312-313

At the February 1847 stockholders meeting, the construction of the Camden branch line was discussed. It was determined that on the new line a different method of construction would be used in order to reduce the cost of future maintenance. The issue of the most cost effective labor was also presented. The following is an excerpt from the proceedings:

The procuring of the labor necessary and required on the different sections of Road, by hiring at fair rates, is another difficulty presenting itself. After hands, says the Superintendent, for many years in the Company's service, have acquired the knowledge and skill necessary to make them valuable, the Company are either compelled to submit to higher rates of wages imposed, or to pass others at a lower rate of compensation through the same apprenticeship with all the hazards of another strike in their turn by the owners. The difficulty involves the advantages of the policy of owning by purchase the labor necessary for service on the Road, or to continue to be exposed to all the hazards of hiring under the present system, and the chances of being raised upon in times of emergency. Mr. Lithgoe reports that ten women and seventy-five young men may be advantageously and profitably employed in the place of many of those now hired; the wages paid for whom, would be a high remuneration to the Company for the capital so invested. All of which views are respectfully submitted to the consideration of the Stockholders.

The response to the proposal of buying slaves versus contracting the labor is given by Committee member W. F. Desaussaure, Chairman and reads as follows:

Your Committee are of opinion that it is inexpedient to adopt the suggestion of the report as to the purchase of road hands. They are very sensible of the inconveniences of hiring slaves, but the disadvantages of an opposite course are perhaps as great. At all events they consider the question as now no longer open. The great appreciation in the price of slaves, has rendered too onerous an operation which might have been accomplished at a comparatively small expense three years ago.

While it is not defined, the "inconveniences" referenced in the above statement most likely refer to the same issues discussed in the previous section, namely the discomfort of the white population with the mobility and comparatively low supervision of the contracted enslaved African-Americans.

The use of female enslaved African-Americans is not specifically addressed in any of the annual reports of the South Carolina Railroad Company. There is a mention by Committee member Colonel Menninger relating to the purchasing of females alongside males in the 1847 report. It reads as follows:

As to that portion of the President's Report which relates to the purchase of road hands, your Committee are of opinion that if a sufficient number of women can be employed with the men who may be purchased, in order to prevent the demoralizing effects of separating them, it would be advisable to do so.

However, as can be seen in the previous paragraph, the company did not elect to purchase any enslaved African-Americans that year. Additionally, the company does not appear to have ever purchased any females as the names of the individuals in Table 1 indicate. However, this does not mean that females were not contracted for labor on the railroad. It is possible that some female enslaved African-American

field hands were employed for the purposed of heavy labor, but there is no written indication that such occurred.

The *Synopsis of Pay Rolls* for December of 1847 lists several blacks working at the depot and on the road pumps. In the Road category, however, there is a predominant use of slave labor. On the Columbia Road, 4 white/27 black carpenters/laborers and 1 white/17 black ditchers are listed. On the Hamburg Road, there are 15 white/129 black laborers and 1 white/6 black pile drivers listed. There are also 1 white/13 blacks embanking, with no road specified. Two white road walkers are also listed.

Based on the list in Table 1, it appears that by 1850 the railroad had reversed its decision regarding the cost effectiveness of purchasing enslaved African-Americans. As Table 1 shows, the railroad had acquired a total of 93 enslaved African-Americans by the end of 1859. This did not preclude them from continuing to contract for slave labor, however. Copies of such contracts on file at the South Caroliniana Library show that the railroad continued to use contracted labor up until the end of the Civil War.

III. SITE HISTORY

In 1838, when the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company was evaluating potential routes for their first branch line to Columbia, St. Matthews was known as Lewisville and consisted of little more than a few commercial structures that supported the nearby plantations. The area was primarily agricultural so the new railroad was desired by the planters as a faster means of transporting local crops to markets in Charleston, Columbia and Savannah. The census data for 1830 shows that the total population of Orangeburg District was 18,453: 7,516 whites, 10,931 enslaved African-Americans, and 6 free blacks.

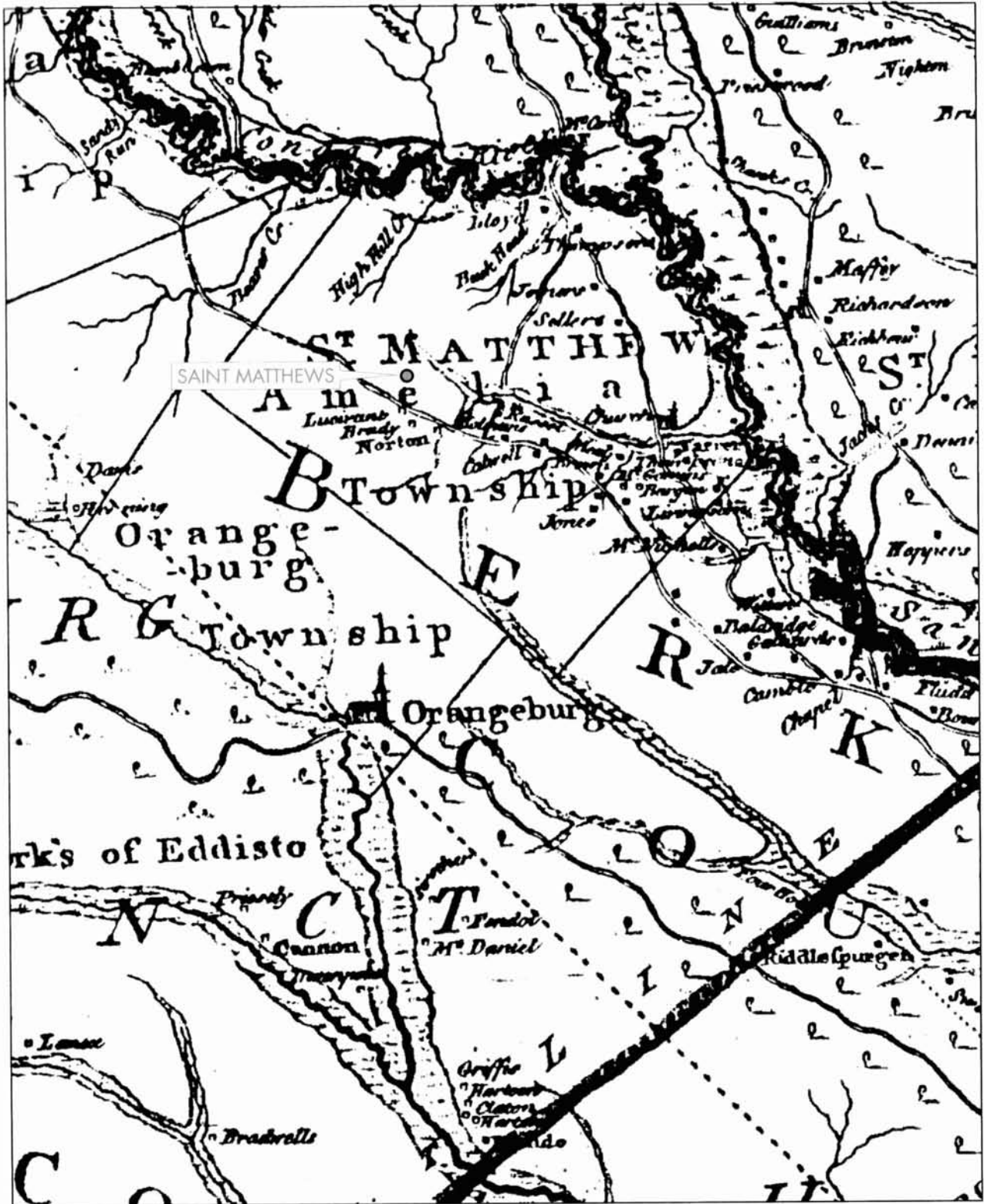
AREA HISTORY

European settlement of the St. Matthews area began after 1682 when the English province of South Carolina was divided into three counties. The future location of St. Matthews was in Berkely County which extended from Charles Town to Sewee (Salley 1898:11). Settlers were attracted to the newly designated area because of the potential of the deer skin trade with the Native American population. As the population increased, Fort Congaree was established by the Board of Commissioners of the Indian Trade in 1718 along the Cherokee Path near the Congaree River to regulate business with the Cherokee and Catawba (Meriwether 1940). In 1730, the governor of colonial South Carolina created new townships within the interior of the province. Amelia Township included the area that would later become the town of St. Matthews. The townships were created in an effort to attract more European settlers to the interior of South Carolina by granting 50 acres to each relocating family member as well as monies for the purchase of "tools, transportation and food" (Edgar 1998:53). Governor Robert Johnson and the Commons House of Assembly were concerned about increasing the white population in South Carolina in order to decrease the black majority. The new settlers would also act as a "defensive perimeter" (Edgar 1998:52) for the coastal populations from attacks by the Native Americans and Spaniards.

Many of the early settlers in the Amelia and nearby Orangeburg townships were of German or Swiss descent. Over time, as word traveled back to old neighbors and family members in Germany and Switzerland, immigration from those countries increased. By the end of the colonial era, Orangeburg Township was almost entirely populated by Germans as well as approximately one half of Amelia Township (Edgar 1998:56). A century later, descendents of these early German settlers played a key role in the construction of the railroad through St. Matthews.

Amelia Township began to rapidly grow after about 1748. Between 1749 and 1759, 190 warrants for land were issued, totaling over 28,000 acres. In 1764 Amelia inhabitants petitioned the House of Commons to have their township made into a parish. As a result, an act to form St. Matthew's Parish was undertaken that included Amelia and Orangeburg townships and an additional section below Amelia on the Santee River. Cook's map of 1773 shows that the majority of the settlements in St. Matthews Parish were located around Halfway Swamp and along the old Cherokee Path (Figure 5). By the time of the American Revolution, the Germans of St. Matthews Parish were doing well enough that they "produced enough wheat to satisfy domestic consumption and had some left over for export" (Edgar 1998:55). Located on the Santee, Congaree, and Wateree River systems, the area had excellent water transportation and access to larger markets downstream. The Santee River, however, empties

Figure 5
Cook's Map of 1773



into the Atlantic Ocean at a site between Charleston and Georgetown but not at a protected harbor or trading center. In 1793, construction began on a canal to link the Santee to the Cooper River and Charleston. In 1800 the canal was complete and ran from White Oak Landing on the Santee to Biggin Creek on the Cooper. One could now travel by boat from Charleston to Columbia (Edgar 1984). For a time the canal was successful, until the cheaper and faster travel by railroad made it obsolete.

St. Matthews Parish became a part of Orangeburg District in 1790 and encompassed "all places between the Savannah, Santee, Congaree and Broad Rivers" (Salley 1898:14). By 1825, when Robert Mills published his atlas of South Carolina, the Barnwell and Lexington Districts had been created out of portions of the Orangeburg District. Mills map of Orangeburg District shows that the town of Lewisville (St. Matthews) had not yet been established (Figure 6). There are, however, numerous mills along Mill Creek/Lyon's Creek just south of where St. Matthews would be located, as well as taverns and stores on the Congaree Road and the old Cherokee Path. Based on the data gathered by Mills, the St. Matthews area consisted of large agricultural tracts with a minimal number of villages. Geologist Edmund Ruffin passed through this area during his 1843 tour of South Carolina (Mathew 1992). Of interest is that Ruffin mentions that the area was sparsely populated. He states "since leaving Pinckney's Mill, & my companions at Felder's lime kiln, I had not met any person on the road, & had seen only 3 houses, all of which I went to, & found only women & children, who could give no information. The almost absolute solitude on this & and some other public roads is surprising - & a great cause of difficulty to my exploring. Yet this seems to be good land, & there must be much cultivation somewhere about . . ." (Mathew 1992:227).

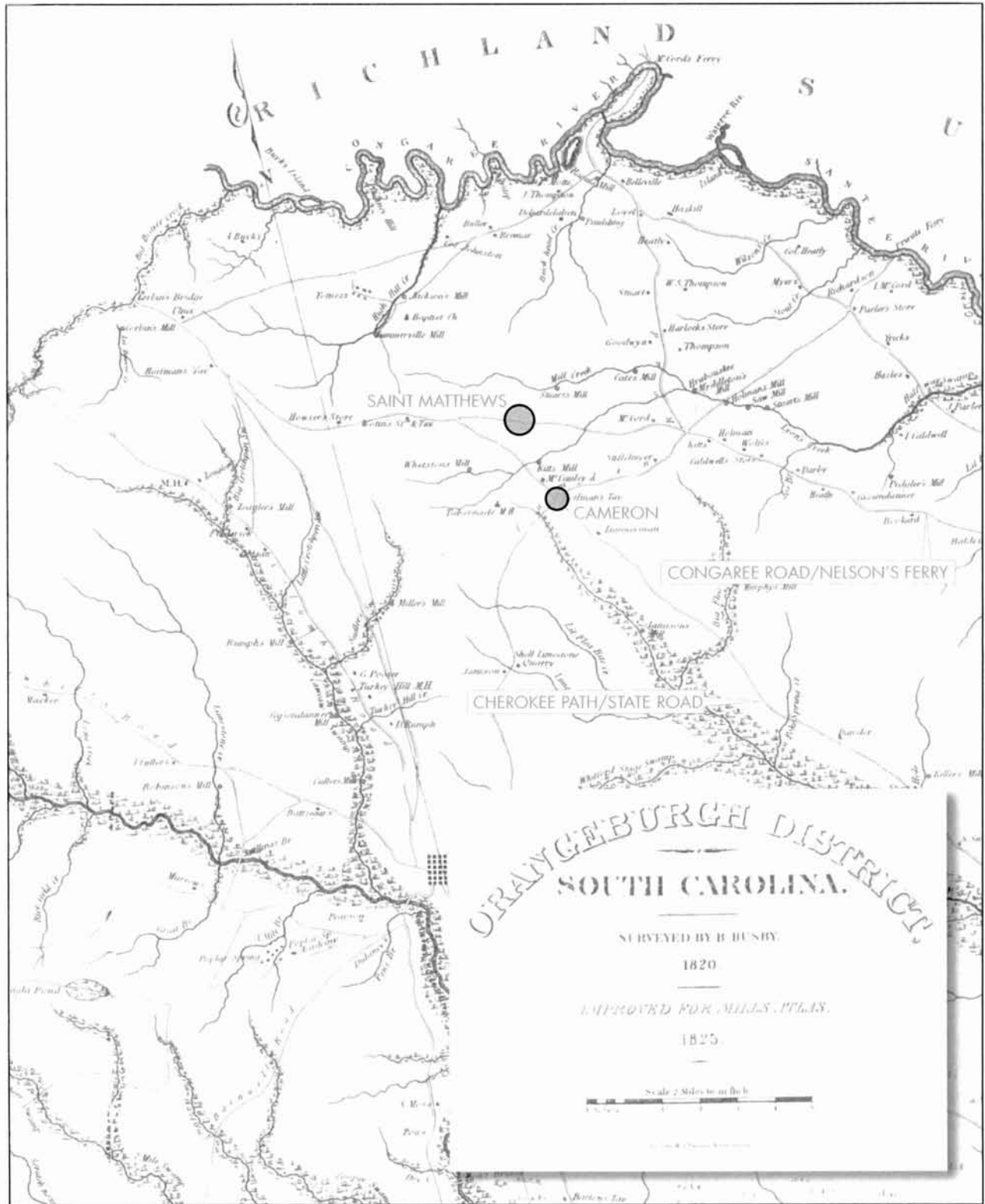
Despite the apparently low population density, the area was growing. The resort village of Totness came into being in the late 1820s as an ideal location for the summer homes of the area planters. According to Culler, "it occupied a lofty elevation some two hundred feet or more above the level of the river and was situated upon a sort of tableland" (Culler 1995:112). It was the practice of most planters in South Carolina to relocate their families during the malarial summer months to what was then perceived as healthier areas, which included higher elevations away from the coast, rivers and swamps. Additionally, the higher the elevation the better the chance of encountering a cooling breeze.

Just five miles south of Totness, the town of Lewisville was established sometime in the 1830s. The immediate vicinity of Lewisville also contained summer homes of local planters as well as year-round plantations. The town was named for Colonel Lewis, "a merchant and a man of considerable means and standing in the community in the 1830s" (Culler 1995:111). The first store in Lewisville was co-owned by Colonel Lewis and Mr. Stack (Culler 1995:111). The town did not become incorporated until 1872, and then in 1876 the name was officially changed to St. Matthews. However, in September of 1841, when the railroad was constructed through Lewisville, the town consisted of only a few merchant enterprises and no in-town residences.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RAILROAD TO ST. MATTHEWS

The South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company was one of the first railroads in the country. The state of South Carolina passed an act in December of 1827 authorizing "the formation of a company for the Construction of a Rail Road or a Canal or a Rail Road and Canal from the City of Charleston, on the most practicable routes to each of the towns of Columbia, Camden and Hamburg" (Derrick 1930:20). The first to be constructed was the Hamburg line which began running service to Charleston in 1830 and was completed to Hamburg by 1833. At the time, it was the longest railroad in the country, with the

Figure 6
Mills 1825 Map of Orangeburgh District



length of track totaling 136 miles. However, due to initial engineering missteps and underestimation of construction costs, as well as problems with the national economy, the fledgling railroad was not able to begin construction of their first branch line until 1838. This line extended in a northeasterly direction from Branchville on the main line to the city of Orangeburg by 1839. Because of the delay, another railroad, the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad, was organized to begin the construction of the branch line from Columbia towards Branchville. The alignment of the sixty-mile branch was a series of straight lines with a few shallow curves and "the line varied from a level to twenty-five feet to the mile, and even this small rise was found on only a few miles of the entire route" (Derrick 193-:166). Construction on the line did not reach Lewisville until two years later, with the first passenger car running from Branchville to Lewisville on September 5, 1841 (Figure 7). By that time, the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company was in the process of reorganizing and shortly afterwards merged with the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad to become the South Carolina Railroad Company.

The citizens of Lewisville and the Orangeburg District had been petitioning to have the railroad run through their area for many years and so, in order to expedite and ensure the construction, many of the local families donated land to the railroad. Culler writes that the Lewisville "town depot was built on lands given by Washington Mitchell" (Culler 1995:111). According to popular history, the land on which the railroad cut is located was given to the railroad by Jacob Miller Dantzler in exchange for the contracted use of his enslaved African-Americans for its construction. Research conducted for the preparation of this document corroborates this story while expanding the amount of data available in relation to the original ownership and construction of the St. Matthews Railroad Cut.

Public access to the legal paper trail of the railroad cut was unfortunately eradicated by General Sherman's march through the Carolinas in early 1865. The courthouse at Orangeburg was burned by Sherman and with it the legal recordation of deeds, land transfers, tax digests, and probated wills for the families and farms around Lewisville. However, Norfolk Southern Railroad, the present owners of the railroad and the cut, have on file a base map showing every parcel currently owned by the company with acquisition data. While access was not granted to NSA to see the map or any related documents, Norfolk Southern did confirm that the northern portion of the railroad cut was acquired from Jacob M. Dantzler and the southern portion of the cut was originally owned by John J. Wannamaker (Kelly Harris, personal communication, March 2004). Both the Dantzler and the Wannamaker families date back to the early settlement period of Amelia Township and were large land owners in the area at the time of the railroad; therefore, much of the research focused on these two families and the roles they played in the development of St. Matthews. Norfolk Southern also confirmed that they had on file in their archives one of the deeds and that it only contained a legal description of the land transfer and no other relevant information.

THE DANTZLER FAMILY

The first Dantzler family member to settle in the area was Harry Dantzler, a German émigré who came to South Carolina in 1739 (Wannamaker 1999:51). His son, Jacob, believed to have been born sometime in the 1730's, fought under General Francis Marion as a private during the Revolutionary War. The following is an excerpt from *The David and Elizabeth Shuler Dantzler Family* describing the early Dantzler holdings in Amelia Township:

Jacob, of the first generation of Dantzlors in America, lived near what is now Cameron, South Carolina. He was a large landowner. Besides lands in the Pope Springs and

Figure 7
Historic Photographs of St. Matthews and Railroad Cut

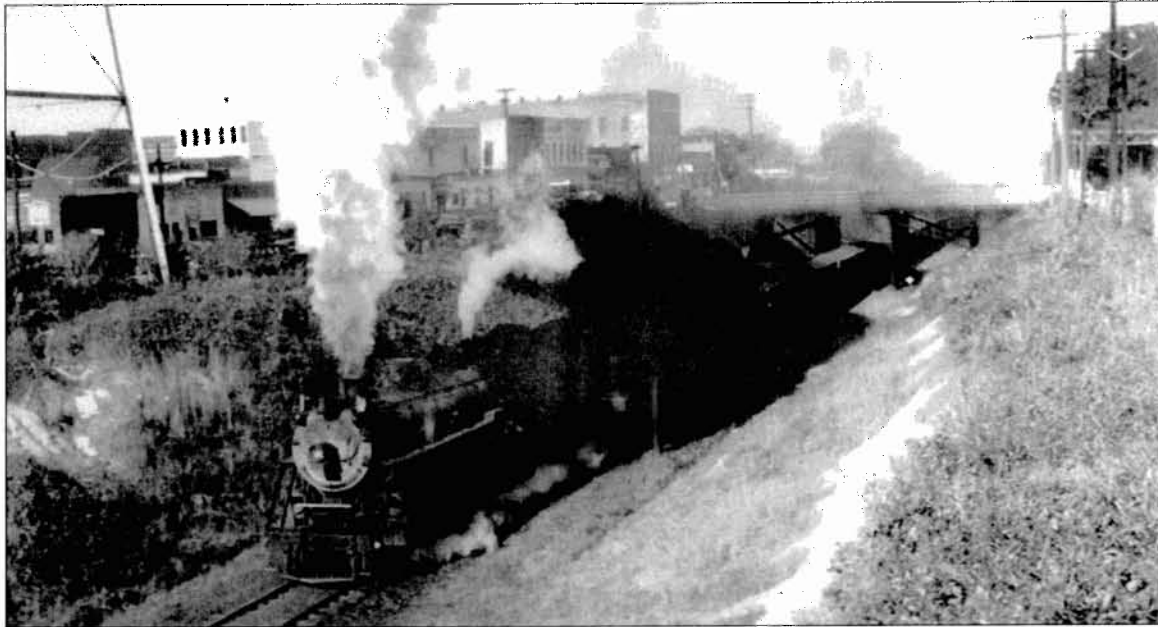


Photo 1 – Steam Engine Traversing Cut, c. 1930

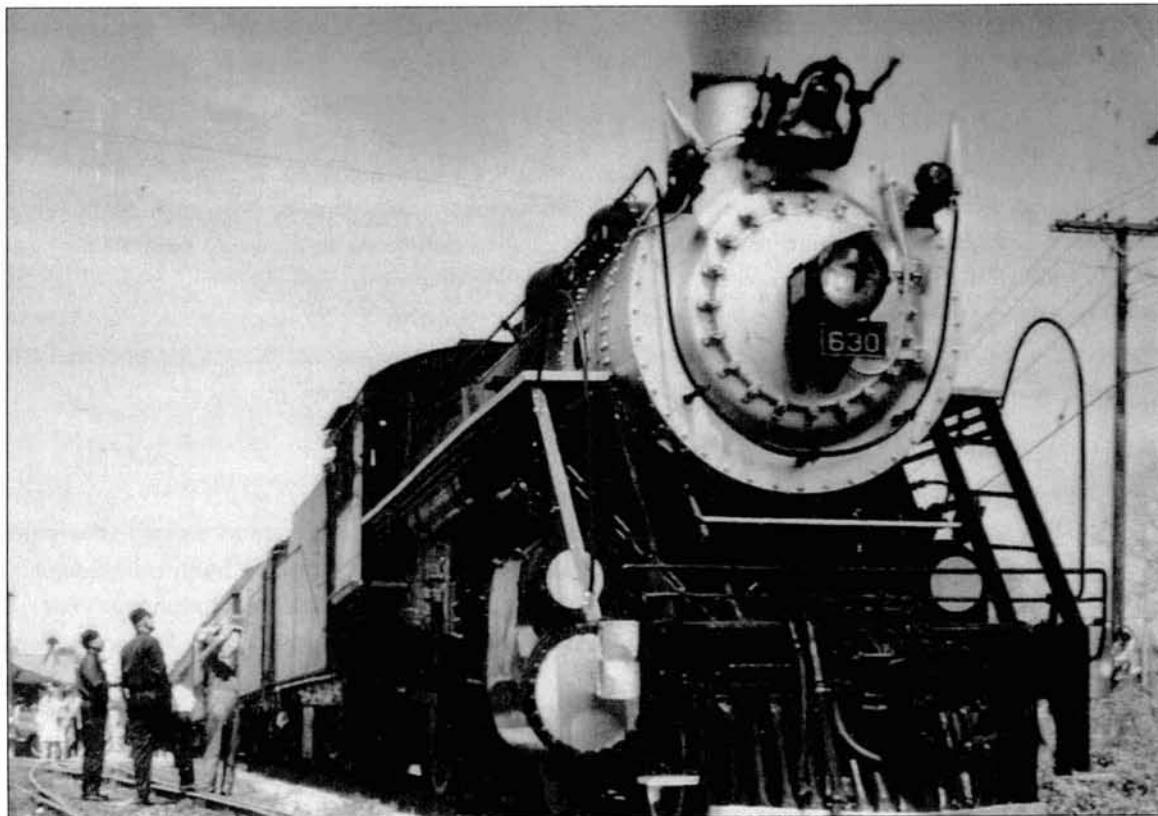


Photo 2 – Locomotive and St. Matthews Depot, c. 1930
(Photos Courtesy of the Calhoun County Museum and C.R. Banks)

Fleabite Creek sections near Cameron, he owned tracts in the Bushy Branch and Willow Branch areas of the present North Providence Community. There are records of more than 1,150 acres in ownership, with 400 other acres about which there is uncertainty as to whether they were granted to Jacob or to his son Jacob L. (Dantzler 1970:21)

The Dantzers originally settled around what would later become the community of Cameron and the Four Hole Swamp area (Figure 8). By the time of Robert Mills' data gathering journey in 1825, Dantzler properties could be identified throughout the district (Figure 6). Jacob's son, Jacob L. Dantzler, was married twice and had children with both wives. His second wife, Catherine Miller, was the mother of Jacob Miller Dantzler, owner of the northern parcel of the railroad cut at the time of exchange with the South Carolina Railroad Company. The Millers also owned land near Lewisville.

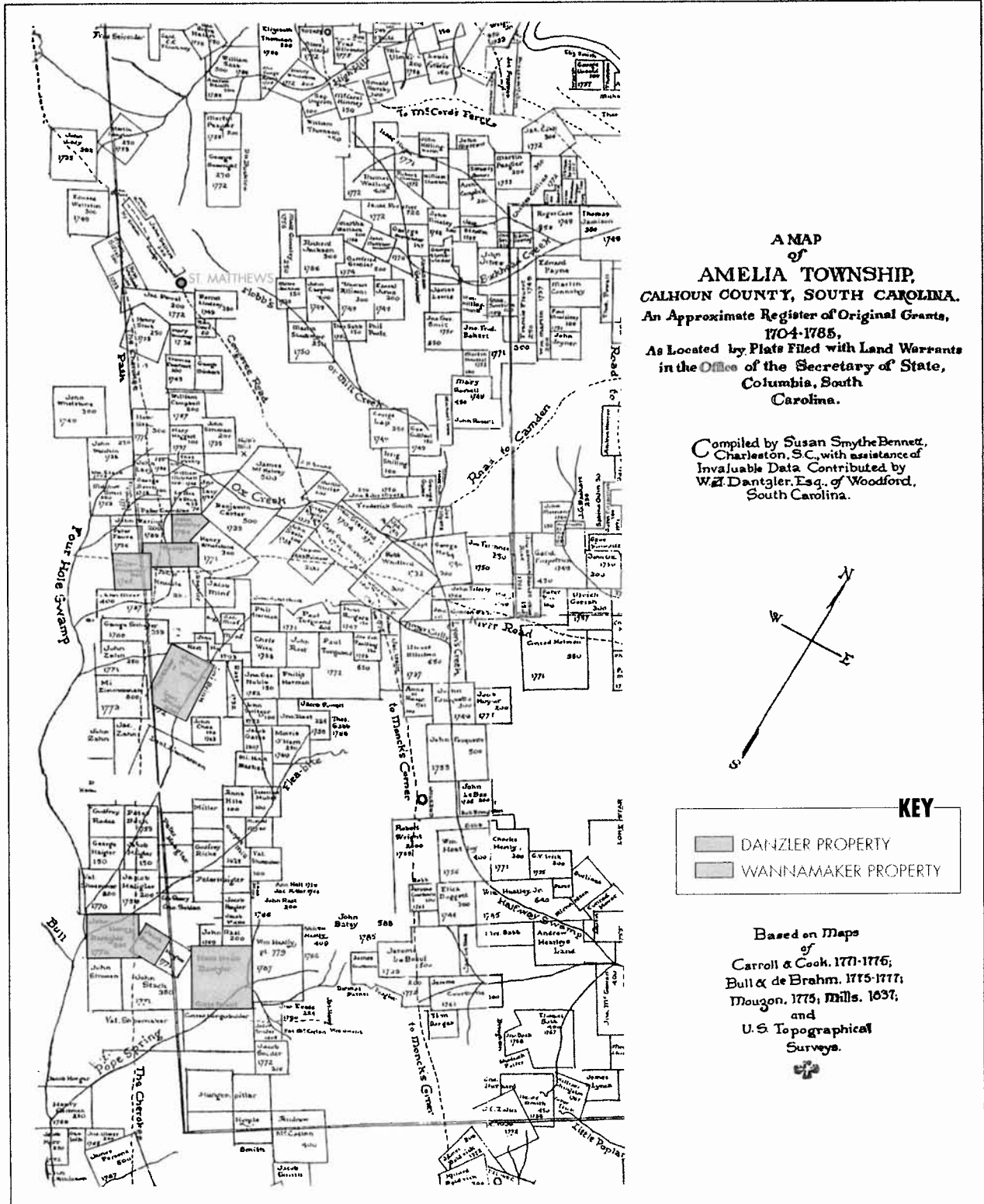
Jacob Miller Dantzler was born in 1804 and came to be known as "Gentlemen Jake," possibly because of the charitable contributions he made both locally and statewide during his lifetime (Dantzler 1936:7). According to the 1936 William Zimmerman Dantzler manuscript, Jacob M. Dantzler gave money on several occasions to the Trinity Methodist Church to rebuild after the 1838 fire (Dantzler 1936:7). In the 1830 Census, Jacob M. Dantzler's household consisted of 5 white persons and 43 enslaved African-Americans. Of the enslaved African-Americans, 18 were male and 13 of them were over the age of 10. There were also 21 female enslaved African-Americans listed in 1830, 11 were over the age of 10. No individual names were listed in the 1830 Census other than Jacob M. Dantzler.

By the time of the 1840 Census, the Dantzler household consisted of 6 white persons and 108 enslaved African-Americans, a gain of 65 enslaved African-Americans in 10 years. The majority of the male enslaved African-Americans were between the ages of 11 and 55, a total of 32 persons. There were 35 female enslaved African-Americans aged between 11 and 55. According to the census data, 40 persons within the Dantzler household were employed in agriculture and 2 were in manufacturing or trade. The 1850 Census lists Jacob M. Dantzler as a planter with assets of \$69,000. The slave schedule for 1850 has Mr. Dantzler owning 161 enslaved African-Americans, 81 males, 63 over the age of 11, and 80 females, 59 over the age of 11. Again, none of the individual slave names are listed in either the 1840 or 1850 censuses.

Based on the 1830, 1840 and 1850 census data, it is safe to assume that Jacob M. Dantzler owned enough enslaved African-Americans to lease out a portion to assist in the construction of the railroad through Lewisville. Also, depending on the time of year that the construction occurred, the contracting of his excess labor force would be fiscally advantageous because it would keep his workers profitable during the time between planting and harvesting the crops. However, no actual documentation could be found that confirmed he was one of the local planters who contracted out their enslaved African-Americans for the construction. A portion of the Dantzler family papers are archived at the Calhoun County Museum in St. Matthews. Included in these papers are records of purchase for a few of the enslaved African-Americans owned by the Dantzers. Unfortunately, none of the records indicate any transactions with the railroad.

Because it can be confirmed via the records of Norfolk Southern Railroad that a portion of the land used for the railroad cut came from Jacob M. Dantzler, it is possible to make certain assumptions based on what is known about the Dantzler family. For example, it is known that the raised cottage presently located at 412 Bridge Street in the town of St. Matthews was built as the summer home for the Jacob M. Dantzler family, whose winter home was located near Cameron on Four Hole Swamp, approximately seven miles

Figure 8
Plat Map of Amelia Township



Map Courtesy of the Calhoun County Museum

to the southeast. According to the National Register nomination form for the structure, the house was built c. 1850 as the family's summer residence but was given to oldest son, Olin M. Dantzler, upon his marriage to Caroline Glover in 1852 (Wright 1972). Local history maintains that the present home replaced another residence that had been moved to the site several years earlier. The home is located exactly 3/10th of a mile east of the railroad cut. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the original Dantzler parcel encompassed much of the northwest quadrant of what is now the town of St. Matthews. Additionally, Culler states that Olin M. Dantzler was "born in 1826 in Lewisville (and) attended local schools" (Culler 1995:274). This statement would confirm that the Dantzlars had a home on their property in Lewisville as early as 1826.

The Dantzlars were without a doubt one of the most prominent families in the area. Jacob M. Dantzler served in multiple offices of the local government until his death in 1857. Olin M. Dantzler was "a member of the Southern Rights convention of 1852 and represented St. Matthews in the House (1852-58) and in the Senate (1858-62)" (Culler 1995:274). He became a Colonel in the Twenty-Second Regiment of the South Carolina Volunteers and died in action fighting at Bermuda Hundred in Virginia in June of 1864, just before he was to be made Brigadier General. Additionally, Ms. Jeanne Ulmer, former director of the Calhoun County Museum, recalls that Ms. Lillian Cain interviewed 'Uncle Dunk', a former Dantzler slave, sometime during the 1920s (Debbie Roland, personal communication, March 2004). Ms. Cain reported that 'Uncle Dunk', who was close to 100 years old at the time of the interview, remembers working on the construction of the railroad when he was young. It is believed that this is the source of the oral tradition regarding the use of hand-made wooden baskets to carry the dirt away. Unfortunately, no written record of the interview remains.

Based on all of the above data, it is reasonable to assume that the Dantzlars may have leased their enslaved African-Americans to the railroad during its construction. While no hard data exists that confirms a direct link between the Dantzler enslaved African-Americans and the creation of the railroad, it appears likely that they did partake in the excavation of the cut.

THE WANNAMAKER FAMILY

The Wannamaker family was also one of the early families in Amelia Township. As shown on Figure 8, Jacob Wannamaker originally settled in the Cameron area and were neighbors of the Dantzlars. It is believed that Jacob emigrated from Switzerland or Germany and settled in South Carolina in 1735 (Wannamaker 1999:116). His son, Jacob, was a first lieutenant in Captain Jacob Rumph's Company during the Revolutionary War. He married Rumph's daughter, Ann, and they settled west of the Cameron area near the present day town of Jamison. His son, Jacob, became a Methodist minister. Reverend Jacob's son, John Jacob, was the owner of the parcel of land where the southern half of the railroad cut was located in 1840.

John Jacob Wannamaker was born in 1801. He became a local celebrity when he represented St. Matthews Parish in the Secession Convention of South Carolina in 1860, 1861 and 1862. He was married by the age of 19 to his cousin Rachel Treutlen, granddaughter of Governor John Treutlen of Georgia (Wannamaker 1999:162). According to the genealogical history of the Wannamaker family, he began his married life by "Inheriting from his father lands in St. Matthews Parish and purchasing other lands...he settled near the site of the present town of St. Matthews, South Carolina, and began the life of a

planter" (Wannamaker 1999:162). His plantation in St. Matthews Parish was known as Liberty Hall (Cote 1986:52). Oddly enough, the Dantzer's were once again neighbors of the Wannamaker's. Quoting from Yates Snowden's 1920 *History of South Carolina*, J. Skottowe Wannamaker (1999:162) describes John Jacob Wannamaker in the following manner:

John J. Wannamaker was a large slave holder and planter of the antebellum type. He was very successful and became a noted agriculturalist in his day, practicing rotation of crops and diversified operations in which live stock occupied a prominent place. He was kind and considerate for his slaves and scrupulously particular about the cleanliness and comfort of their quarters. A portion of land was set apart and planted in cotton each year for them. The cotton was worked along with his own crop. He had his crops picked, ginned and sold, and at Christmas time distributed the net proceeds to the heads of the families. On the plantation once owned by him, now in the possession of his son, there are negro men and women once his slaves. They have never left the place.

While this statement needs to be read in the context and temper of the time when it was written, one of the most interesting things about it is that Wannamaker's enslaved African-Americans actually received remuneration for their personal efforts. This is a very singular occurrence in the Antebellum South. Additionally, it is part of the oral history of St. Matthews that one of the local landowners sued the railroad in order for his enslaved African-Americans to be paid directly. Unfortunately, there is no longer any physical record of this lawsuit, but the Snowden description of John J. Wannamaker supports the theory that he would be the type of individual to undertake such legalities on behalf of those under his care. Another detail that contributes to the idea that Wannamaker thought differently than the average planter is that by 1840 he had become an ordained minister of the Methodist Episcopal church, where he became known as "a man well poised, having a fine sense of justice and right" (Wannamaker 1999:163).

In the 1830 Census, John Jacob Wannamaker is listed as having 18 enslaved African-Americans: 8 males and 10 females. By 1840, his household consisted of 65 individuals, 57 of them enslaved African-Americans. Of the total number of enslaved African-Americans over the age of 11, 17 were male and 17 were female, but their names are unknown. In one of the few existing pieces of legal documentation available from this period, the results of a matter before the Court of Equity in 1833 describe how the enslaved African-Americans from the estate of John Jacob Wannamaker's father were divided among family members. John Jacob received five enslaved African-Americans: Adam, Rose, Simpy, Levicy and Eve, for a total value of \$1,400. While this is the most direct information regarding who the enslaved African-Americans were in the Wannamaker household, it is not known if any of these five enslaved African-Americans actually worked on the excavation of the railroad cut. By the time of the 1850 Census, John Jacob's assets were listed as \$25,000 and he owned a total of 72 enslaved African-Americans, including 29 males and 33 females over the age of 11.

The Reverend John Jacob Wannamaker died in 1864. He had led the prayer at the opening of the 1862 Secession Convention and was a well respected member of the Lewisville community. Once again, there is no longer physical evidence pertaining to the contracting of slave labor in conjunction with the construction of the railroad. However, because Wannamaker was a large planter and did own enough enslaved African-Americans to contract them out for selected periods, it is possible that his enslaved African-Americans took part in the excavation of the railroad cut.

CONTACTING DESCENDENTS

An attempt was made to identify the descendents of the Dantzler or Wannamaker enslaved African-Americans who participated in the railroad cut. It began by searching the vertical files at the Calhoun County Museum for local slave interviews and slave stories as well as historic church information. Many of the slave interviews were conducted in the 1950s, making it impossible for any of them to have ever worked on the railroad. Additionally, the content of the interviews focused on the generalities of plantation life. No mention was made of the railroad.

The historic church data yielded information on the houses of worship formed by former enslaved African-Americans at the end of the Civil War. The Bethel AME Church was established in 1867 on land donated by the Keitt family with a Jack Dantzler listed as one of the first trustees. Given that many of the former enslaved African-Americans had patronymic surnames related to their former owners, it seemed likely that some of the former Dantzler enslaved African-Americans originally attended this church. Numerous unsuccessful attempts were made to contact Bethel AME church leaders. The Mount Pisgah AME Church was also contacted but they chose not to participate.

A search of Calhoun County for individuals with the surname of Dantzler or Wannamaker resulted in over 300 families of either name still residing in the area. Unfortunately, none of the local contacts in St. Matthews were able to identify any likely candidates who might have been descended from the Dantzler or Wannamaker enslaved African-Americans. Ms. Debbie Roland and her mother, Ms. Jeanne Ulmer were identified as the locals most knowledgeable about the railroad cut and its history. Ms. Roland played an integral role regarding the research for the St. Matthews Railroad Cut. Because she was so involved in the research aspect of the project, it was not deemed necessary to conduct an oral history interview with Ms. Roland.

IV. SUMMARY

The importance of the railroad cut to the development of the town of St. Matthews is evident to both the casual visitor as well as the long-time resident. It is the most prominent feature of the town. It also holds a special place in local history because it was excavated by hand, using the slave labor from nearby Antebellum plantations. While it was usual and customary for railroad companies to contract the hard labor jobs to enslaved African-Americans in the era before the Civil War, the St. Matthews Railroad Cut is significant because it represents some of the untold contributions of a race of people who had no voice in the Antebellum South. If it were not for the labor of the enslaved African-Americans, many of the civic improvements would not have been constructed.

Concrete documentation of the railroad cut proved elusive, but enough data was gathered to support the local tradition that the cut was originally excavated using local slave labor. It has been shown that slave labor was used on the construction of the railroad because white labor proved to be too susceptible to the heat and disease. Additionally, given the demographics of the era, enslaved African-Americans would have been the only available work force which could accomplish an excavation of the scale of the St. Matthews cut. There was no superfluous or itinerant labor in the area at the time of the construction of the railroad's construction and the work required was monumental. To gain an idea of the effort involved, the cut's volume is estimated at 5,400,00 cubic feet (2,700 foot length, 100 foot width, and 20 foot average depth). This volume equates to 8,078,961 US buckets of approximately 4 gallon capacity. Assuming that a worker could excavate, remove, and dump 20 buckets an hour, the excavation of the St. Matthews cut represents 403,948 hours of work. While no documentation was found which would indicate where this dirt was taken, it was likely hauled by wagon to the railroad crossing of Antley Creek, south of town, where a causeway was built. Enslaved African-Americans were the only labor force in the South capable of expending such an effort and furthermore had extensive experience with excavation through their efforts in building the canal, ditches and dikes of rice plantations. The St. Matthews railroad cut could only have been dug by slaves, and its excavation represented a monumental exercise which is still remembered in the town's history, even though it may never have been officially recorded.

Based on the *Statement of Slaves Belonging to the South Carolina Rail Road Company, December 31, 1859*, the railroad company only owned one slave prior to 1845, therefore making it necessary to contract out the labor for the construction of the St. Matthews Railroad Cut. It is extremely likely that both the Dantzler and Wannamaker enslaved African-Americans were contracted by the railroad for its construction, as oral history suggests, and that such contracts may have been connected to Dantzler's and Wannamaker's donation of the land used for the railroad. While the names of the enslaved African-Americans who excavated the railroad cut were apparently not recorded, their efforts were recognized and remembered in the town of St. Matthews and this legacy and contribution to the building of South Carolina has now finally made it into print.

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