

The Plank Road Mural

Read by Bert Smith

Here we are at the Plank Road Steakhouse mural. The Plank Road was built in the early 1850's for the purpose of improving the transportation from Greenville to Raleigh. Merchants in the area envisioned Greenville becoming a large seaport in the 1840's via the Tar River. The primary obstacle to the commercial development in this area was the excessive transport time to the more developed Piedmont cities.

A company was formed, and construction began, in 1851. Three huge sawmills began to mass produce long, wooden planks. The road started at the port terminal in Greenville, and went west, down what later became Dickinson Avenue, through Farmville and to Wilson. It never reached Raleigh but was still an important thoroughfare.

The road appeared to be profitable with toll booths every few miles. There were two villages that grew up along the Plank Road in Pitt County that were named Walshville (which is now Ballard's Crossroads) and Marlboro. At Marlboro, the Joyner family built a small general store.

Many references are made to the Plank Road through the years but it was essentially destroyed in the late 1850's by the elements. References continued down through history by the local population, but undoubtedly it is mostly forgotten by the history books.

The Plank Road Steakhouse opened in 2009. The building was originally built in 1905 by Mr. William Moye Lang and originally housed Baugh and Little Wagon Shop. Incidentally, William Moy Lang lived just off the Plank Road.

The mural was designed by Roger Kammerer, a freelance artist and local historian living in Greenville. He has designed numerous book covers, has worked on television commercials and produced artwork for homes and businesses. He is also known for his oil portraits, historical paintings and numerous mural projects.