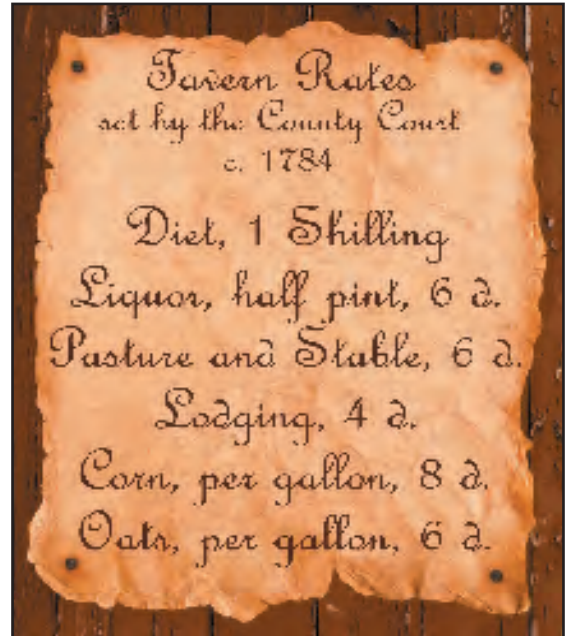


I. The DeWoody Tavern and the Death of General John Hunt Morgan

The first building known to stand on the site now recognized as the General Morgan Inn was the DeWoody Tavern, a wooden structure built in the early 1790s by William Dunwoody (also Dinwiddie or DeWoody). A friendly establishment, the tavern offered food, supplies, and lodging to pioneers traveling westward from the mountains of North Carolina along the wagon trail that would eventually become Hwy 321 (locally known as Main Street). Greeneville's Big Spring, with its daily abundance of fresh water, made the location an ideal stopping point along the trail.

Over the years, the DeWoody Tavern's operators and its name would change several times. From the late 1820s to the 1860s, the establishment was known as "Bell Tavern." It was advertised as "a Public House at the sign of the Bell in Greeneville" and operated by William K. Vance.

Joshua Lane operated the tavern during the Civil War, when it was commonly known as the "Lane House."



BELL TAVERN

*The Subscriber
RESPECTFULLY informs his friends and the public in general
he still continues to keep a*

Public House
AT THE SIGN OF THE
BELL
IN GREENEVILLE TENNESSEE

He is constantly supplied with every thing in his line; as good as the country affords - Ever grateful for past favors, he still hopes to merit, and solicits a share of public patronage.

Ladies and Gentlemen from the South, and Travellers in general, will be strictly attended to, and every exertion in his power made use of to give general satisfaction.

WILLIAM K. VANCE

Greeneville, May 12, 1823 - 4m.

Did You Know?

The DeWoody Tavern was Greeneville's second tavern. Robert Kerr, one of Greeneville's earliest settlers, was said to have also kept a tavern, a one story log structure built in 1784, on the north side of Main Street across from The Big Spring.

General John Hunt Morgan

As the Lane House, the tavern hosted friend and foe of both the Union and Confederate armies, but on the morning of September 4, 1864, guests of the tavern witnessed one of Greeneville's most notorious skirmishes.

Morgan arrived in Greeneville late in the afternoon on September 3, 1864, and arranged to stay in the home of his friend, Mrs. Catherine Williams. According to tradition, Union troops were given a tip about Morgan's location, and eager to capture The



Thunderbolt of the Confederacy (as he was nicknamed), troops moved into the town early on the morning of September 4.

Though it was located in the middle of town, the Williams mansion was adorned with a number of trees, gardens, and a vinyard. With the help of Mrs. Williams and her family, Morgan attempted to escape. However, outnumbered and ambushed, General John Hunt Morgan was shot and killed by a young soldier named Andrew Campbell as he attempted to run from the yard to the stables. He was shot in the back.

Some reports stated it was young Lucy Williams, daughter-in-law of Mrs. Williams, who gave the tip to Union officers. Lucy denied the charge throughout the rest of her life, but many considered her the "murderess" of



The Grand Central Hotel and Mason House Hotel, c.1890

John Hunt Morgan. Other reports state that “the notorious Mrs. David Frye” also betrayed Morgan by pointing him out to Union soldiers during the skirmish, saying “there he is, there’s Morgan, over there in the vinyard!” According to tradition, she shouted from a window at the Lane House.

II. The Grand Central Hotel

In 1886, the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad built a new train depot in Greenville, which brought dramatic change to the entire community.

In support of the new train depot, the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad arranged schedules so that their passenger trains stopped in Greenville during meal times.

Col. John H. Doughty, a local entrepreneur, was ready for a new project and recognized the need for an excellent hotel to accommodate the many business travelers the railroad would bring to Greenville. Doughty purchased and demolished the Lane House (the original wooden DeWoody Tavern) and began construction of a new brick structure that would become the Grand Central Hotel.

The Grand Central was a beautiful four-story brick building adorned with marble trim and looked very much as it does today. Containing about 60 rooms originally, the structure was considered one of the finest hotels between Roanoke, VA, and Chattanooga, TN. Elegantly furnished with wide halls having nearly 200 yards of carpeted promenade and then-lavish furnishings, the exterior of the building originally had an upper balcony that extended across the front at the second-story level, and a flight of stairs that opened onto Main Street.

The street level of the Grand Central was devoted to retail stores. Stairs ascended to what was then the lobby located on the second floor. Later, the position of the stairway was changed, and the first floor was converted into an elegant marble foyer and lobby. One of the most important functions of the hotel in those days was providing a place for traveling sales representatives and other businessmen to meet with customers. For that purpose, the Grand Central rented long-term rooms, called “sample rooms,” in addition to providing overnight accommodations.



The Grand Central Hotel c.1910

Fun Fact: Guests of the Grand Central Hotel, in the spring of 1879, were treated to an overnight rate of \$2 and \$2.50.

Other Hotels As Well:

Other community leaders were also building hotels in response to the coming of the railroad. One of the most impressive was The Mason House, located adjacent to the Grand Central on the corner of Main and Depot Streets: a spot known for generations as “Mason’s Corner.” In fact, within a few short years, four railroad hotels, all interconnected at the second floor level with a bridge across an alleyway, had sprung up on the corner of Main and Depot Streets. The hotels each maintained “drays” that met each train at the depot and transported passengers to the hotel of their choice.

Did You Know?

The Grand Central Hotel was not the only business inspired by the location of Greenville’s new train depot. In the years following the Civil War, a local woman named Mrs. Betsy Ward owned and operated a grog shop near Greenville’s train depot. She continued operation of the shop throughout the turn of the century...even serving and selling through the Prohibition Era.

III. The Brumley Era:

In 1910, Col. Doughty passed away, and the Grand Central Hotel was passed on to his four children. Mrs. E.J. Brumley, sister-in-law of one of Col. Doughty's sons, had been operating the hotel for Col. Doughty since 1907.

In 1920, Mrs. Brumley purchased the hotel from the Doughty heirs and, along with her son, Judd L. Brumley, began full operation of the newly renamed Hotel Brumley.

Under their direction, the Hotel Brumley became the center of Greeneville's social and civic community, known regionally for its lively, friendly atmosphere, excellent food and collection of fine antiques placed in the hotel by Judd Brumley.

An Affair to Remember

1925, well-known orator and three-time presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, stopped at the Hotel Brumley on his way to the Scopes trial in Dayton, and a magnificent luncheon was prepared in his honor. Bryan was very fond of strawberries, and a shipment of fresh berries was brought from Knoxville for the festive occasion.

The General Morgan Room

In 1928, the Brumley's began an extensive remodeling of the hotel, adding the Crystal Ballroom on the second floor, where formal events such as balls, formal dinners, and wedding receptions were frequently held. The Hotel Brumley continued to prosper as a continual flow of railroad travelers, the local Burley tobacco market, and the growth of the community kept the hotel's rooms and dining areas filled to capacity over the next two decades.



The Hotel Brumley c. 1940

The elegant Crystal Ballroom was closed in 1948, with Judd Brumley opening The General Morgan Room, a supper club-style private dining area adjacent to the main dining room on the first floor. The General Morgan Room was an instant success, and quickly became the region's most popular and location for formal affairs.



One of the most notable and unique additions to The General Morgan Room were the hand-carved, blue glass bas-relief etched mirrors, which Judd Brumley had commissioned from a regional artist in 1948. During the hotel's extensive renovation in 1996, the etched glass treasures were completely restored. They now are on display behind the Inn's beautiful mahogany bar in the lounge area.

The End of an Era:

Mrs. Brumley passed away in 1964, and shortly afterward in that same year, her son, the successful hotel owner, Judd L. Brumley, died as well. The hotel continued to be owned and operated by various Brumley family members until 1981, when the hotel was sold to the Greene County Bank.

By that time, much had changed at the Hotel Brumley and, unfortunately, within the entire community of Greeneville. Passenger train service to Greeneville had stopped years earlier, and the retail department stores that anchored the downtown area for decades had moved to shopping centers outside of the historic downtown district. Although the Brumley Coffee Shop remained a popular spot to gather and eat, both during the week and on Sunday, by its last day, the hotel had long since stopped renting rooms and apartments and, in fact, had fallen into a state of disrepair.

Without fanfare, the Hotel Brumley Coffee Shop, the last operating portion of the once magnificent four interconnected railroad hotels, closed its doors for the final time after serving Sunday dinner on May 24, 1981, to a sizable group of customers and friends who had come to say goodbye to an era - a great era - for the town of Greeneville.

IV The General Morgan Inn

In 1983, Main Street Greenville was formed after the town of Greeneville was selected by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the first five towns in Tennessee to be a part of the "Main Street" program. The National "Main Street" program was designed to show communities that their historic downtowns were worth saving, while also providing structure for revitalization efforts.

Three years later, Greene County Bank, recognizing that the task of restoration and revitalization of the Hotel Brumley was too great for them to undertake alone, donated the property to Main Street Greenville in the hope that the property would be redeveloped and once again serve as an important downtown landmark. Acquiring the Hotel Brumley was a major achievement for the organization since the Brumley was one of the four historic railroad hotels that dominated downtown Greeneville's landscape. However, the Main Street program was unsuccessful in getting the Brumley developed and, in fact, found itself facing increasing liabilities from a structure which was in such critical need of attention.



A few of the members of Main Street, recognizing the organization's dilemma, asked the board of directors to entrust the Hotel Brumley property to them for a sum of \$50,000 over 10 years at no interest. Those individuals would assume responsibility for paying the back taxes and insurance, stabilize the building from pigeon and water intrusion, and continue to seek a developer for the building.



The group created a new board under the name of Olde Town Development Corporation. Realizing that until, and unless, an appropriate way to reuse the Hotel Brumley was found, the broad community credibility needed for revitalization of downtown Greeneville would never materialize, and the building itself would continue to decline until it fell, depriving Greeneville forever of a priceless landmark. Therefore, Olde Town Development set about acquiring other property around the hotel so that a large enough area could be part of the same development to stand on its own aesthetically.

In many ways, the hard work had just begun for Olde Town Development, as now their attention turned to securing the large amount of funding - more than \$12 million - that would be needed to renovate the buildings they planned to develop.

After fighting many difficult challenges - one of the most critical being the legal sale of alcoholic beverages in Greeneville - Olde Town Development was now able to direct their attention fully on matters directly related to finding a way to renovate the old hotels. The group had been unsuccessful in getting a developer from outside the community interested in the project. For this and other reasons, the group concluded the project need to be locally based. Therefore, they began concentrating on coming up with a project that could be coordinated by local people for local people, and which would be economically self-sustained once built.

So the direction of the project moved toward designing a plan that would promote revitalization of the downtown area and provide a method of financing and public participation in other projects as well. A formal attempt was made to foster public/private partnerships and leverage private reinvestment in the city's downtown core. Old Town Development



then submitted plans for a large portion of the block to be transformed into what would become the Morgan Square, a complex of hotels, shops and offices. The centerpiece of the project would be the General Morgan Inn and an adjacent conference center. The Morgan Square name was drawn from the Confederate raider, General John Hunt Morgan, who was shot and killed in the approximate center of the block that was to become Morgan Square.

By early 1993, Olde Town Development had been able to put most of the unusual public-private financial package in place. At the foundation was a major grant through the federal ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) Program awarded to the project through the State of Tennessee and the Federal Highway Administration for a total of \$3 million. In addition, the Tennessee Valley Authority committed a grant to the project of \$1 million. A consortium of six local banks provided \$1.5 million for construction of the conference center. Finally, individuals and businesses in the community provided more than \$2.5 million in the form of loans and grants to the Morgan Square project.



Breaking Ground:

In April of 1994, Olde Town Development sold its assets for a nominal sum to a newly formed corporation, Morgan Square Inc. With Morgan Square Inc. as the community-based developer of Morgan Square, construction on the project finally began in August 1994. The construction lasted for more than two full years.

After more than nine years of planning, fund-raising and construction, the historic General Morgan Inn and Conference Center opened its doors for the first time September 18, 1996, to a private weekend designed for project contributors. The overnight festivities, aptly named the "First Night," were held for sponsors and supporters of the project.

The four-story historic General Morgan Inn, located in the very heart of Greeneville's National Register Historic District, was one of the first non-profit community efforts of its kind in the nation's history.

On November 29, 2000, as part of a foreclosure sale conducted on the steps of the Greene County Courthouse, the General Morgan Inn, along with its accompanying Morgan Square property, was sold to the Morgan Inn Corporation, a local corporation dedicated to maintaining Greeneville's downtown historic district.