

- THE TOWN OF KENILWORTH AND KENILWORTH INN - A ROMANCE

At least five separate towns went into the making of Asheville -- Raymoth (Woolsey), Montford, West Asheville, Victoria and Kenilworth. Of all those towns the story of Kenilworth is the most intriguing.

There were two great periods of growth in Asheville's history: from 1880 to 1900 and from World War I to 1930. The first period began when the railroad came to town opening up the mountains to the outside world. Northern capital in enormous sums began to pour in to develop the natural resources and to build great hotels. In 1800 Asheville's population was 2610; by 1890 it was 10,000.

Colonel Reuben Deaver had operated a popular resort hotel at Sulphur Springs (Asheville School) near West Asheville since 1830. It had burned in 1862, but Edwin George Carrier, a rich Michigan lumberman, had come to town in 1887 and had built the luxurious Belmont Hotel on the site of the old one. Carrier even built a race track along the French Broad River and a bridge across the river.

There had been earlier hotels in Asheville, but none like the one Colonel Frank Coxe opened up on July 12, 1886. The great Battery Park Hotel sat in the midst of a twenty-five acre park on the highest hill overlooking the village of Asheville. It was perhaps the finest hotel in the southeast, attracting big names from the growing list of American millionaires. It was reported that fifteen to twenty of them came each spring.

The success of the luxury hotels caused others to be built around town. One of the largest was Kenilworth Inn, built in the midst of a 150 acre park on a high point overlooking the Swannanoa River valley at Best (now known as Biltmore) which was for a short while the terminal of the railroad. It cost more than \$300,000 and the man who dreamed it up was Senator Joseph Guzzam of Philadelphia. He formed a large corporation,