

mostly of Philadelphia business men, but George Vanderbilt and the Southern Railway owned stock in it. The hotel was a huge, rambling, wooden structure, much like the Battery Park Inn, with lots of porches, lobbies and sun rooms. It was named from the book "Kenilworth" written by Sir Walter Scott. The setting of the book was Kenilworth Castle, the home of the old Saxon kings of England. Scott wrote a great novel, but Asheville wrote its own romantic story. The Inn opened in 1890. It had tennis courts, a "clock" golf course and riding stables.

The year 1890 was a good one for Asheville. The Square had just been paved. A grand opera house had been opened on Patton Avenue. Work had begun on George Vanderbilt's Biltmore House. Bingham Military School had moved to town. Street cars were clanging merry tunes. Public schools had opened. The city had been lighted by electricity and it had a water works. There was talk of building a new city hall and a city market.

The depot at Best was Asheville's front door, but the road from the east still came down from the Swannanoa Gap at Black Mountain following Christian Creek, then it rambled through Azalea, down Haw Creek and across the hill to Ross Creek (where Kenilworth Lake now is), then through Fontainbleu (Kenilworth Road at Normandy and Duke streets) and Brackett Town to make junction with Biltmore Avenue on top of the hill above Newton Academy (Forest Hill Drive).

The massive Kenilworth Inn stood on the point of the ridge overlooking the river valley. It was only a jump down to the depot. As the years passed the big Inn grew in popularity, especially after 1895 when Vanderbilt opened his great Biltmore Mansion. It was still popular in 1909 when a spectacular fire destroyed it. Sheets of flame carried on the breeze set houses on fire in Biltmore. Senator Guzzam was badly burned and the guests lost all their belongings. The hotel was insured for less than \$100,000.