

Samuel Dold Morgan, 1798 – 1880

Samuel Dold Morgan was born in Staunton, Virginia on 8 November 1798. His family moved to Maryville, Tennessee, and then to Huntsville, Alabama while he was a boy. His father traded with the Native Americans extensively, and was able to send Samuel Morgan to the University of Nashville, from Huntsville. In 1833 he moved to Nashville, and opened a dry goods store. He built a flour mill in Wilson County, and a foundry and machine shop in South Nashville.

Morgan was active at First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, and in the Whig party. In 1844 he was named to the Commission supervising the construction of the Tennessee State Capitol. He continued to serve on the Commission until the Capitol was completed in 1859, and was the Chairman from 1854 – the year the architect he selected, William Strickland, died--until 1861. He was a founding member of the Tennessee Historical Society in 1849.

He was a prime mover in the organization and construction of the Nashville to Chattanooga railroad. In 1853 he built Morgan and Company on the north west side of the Public Square.

Morgan opposed nullification and secession. He supported John Bell's Constitutional Union party in 1860. When war came however, he aided the south. He knew where saltpeter caves had been used during the War of 1812, and even though he had never manufactured munitions, he opened a gun cap factory in South Nashville. He supplied the caps used at First Bull Run or Manassas. He served as well as the Chairman of the Central Bureau of Military Supplies for the Tennessee Confederate forces. Two of his sons, Samuel Dold Morgan, Jr., and St Clair MacIntosh Morgan, died during the Civil War.

Following the war Morgan paid off all of his pre-war debts, and continued to prosper as "the Merchant Prince of Nashville." In 1875 he built the Tennessee Manufacturing Company in North Nashville, later the Warioto and Werthan Mills. The cotton factory is now the Werthan Lofts.

The day of Morgan's funeral at First Presbyterian was Saturday 12 June 1880. The businesses and factories were closed that day so that working men could attend the funeral. Morgan had died on Thursday, at his home on Fifth Avenue North, next door to Thompson's Dry Goods Store.

The Merchant And Manufacturer wrote in 1914 fitting final lines to Morgan: "These two geniuses, Strickland and Morgan, lived and worked for ten years together. The Phideas of this, the Athens of the South, lies buried by resolution of the General Assembly of Tennessee, within the walls of the north peristyle of the great temple that he designed. At the southend, the Pericles of Nashville, the wise, the just, the learned Samuel Morgan, by resolution of the General Assembly expressing full appreciation for that great man's life and greater service to

Tennessee, it was provided that his body should forever rest within the walls of this building. It is the grandest mausoleum any man has in America. It is the least that Samuel Dold Morgan derserved."

James A. Hoobler

Dedication

May 10, 2010