

# ##### Can you find the . . . Trains Around Main? #####



The railroad crossing lights are a clue to what you will find on the inside of this building. Built in the 1880's as a family home, it now houses the Central Railway Museum. Step

through the door and you will be transported to 1950's Central and its surrounding towns as you delight in watching a double deck train pass through many familiar sights. The Central Railway Museum is a joy for all ages!



In the late 1800's, Main Street was lined with shops for railroad workers and their families to buy supplies and food. Look to your left at the green space. This area once held the Morgan's General Store where workers could purchase groceries, dry goods, furniture, hardware, and even coffins. Founded by the prominent Morgan family who lived in what is now the Central History Museum on Church Street, the store stood for almost 100 years.



Picture this. You are standing right where you are now, facing the train tracks. It is April 13, 1945. The town is eerily quiet, awaiting the passing of a special train — U.S. Car No. 1. Men

hold their hats in their hands out of respect. Women are crying. The 32nd President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, passed away the day before at his home in Warm Springs, GA. His funeral train came through Central, where local residents were able to see his lighted coffin and military honor guard through the Pullman car's large picture windows. The funeral train continued to Washington, DC and then on to his final resting place in Hyde Park, NY.



In July 1897, Central became a ghost town overnight. Southern Railway moved their headquarters to Greenville and the railroad families followed. As if that wasn't bad

enough, a fire almost wiped out the entire Main Street. But the first settlers of Central persisted and the town rose from its ashes. Over time, business revitalized and new families moved to town. Central would not be what it is today without the hard work of those that came before us.



Look across Highway 93. Can you spot the white schoolhouse? In 1913, 45 students enrolled in the Central African-American Schoolhouse. It is believed to have been originally established in 1889 at a different location and moved to this property. Between 1917 and 1932, over 5,000 African American schools across the south were built by Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute and Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears Roebuck. In 1954, these segregated schools became obsolete when the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools are unconstitutional.



Though Main Street is paved today, it wasn't always. In the late 1800's, the dry summers brought dust clouds as railroad workers walked to the corner of Watkins and Main to have their shoes repaired by Pat Little, Central's first black educator who taught a small group of children in his shoe repair shop.



Listen for the train coming down the track! At every train crossing, the horn sequence is long, long, short, long. The first train to ride along the tracks in front of you was the Atlantic and Richmond Air-Line Railroad Company on September 28, 1873. Central linked Atlanta to Charlotte, about 133 miles in each direction. This is why Central was originally aptly named Central.



The street you are standing on, Gaines Street, holds a large amount of Central's history as far back as the 1870's. The first telephone in Central was installed on this street in a small red framed building no longer standing. The little building, believed to have been the oldest building in town, sat across from the Roller Mill, which opened its doors in 1902. One of the first cotton gins in Central opened on Gaines Street in the early 1900's. Why was it important to build cotton gins near railroads?



Look out at the railroad. Imagine a large water tank and a coal chute sitting along the tracks, ready for the next steam locomotive to chug into Central. This is what you would have seen in the 1870s in this bustling railroad town. During the age of steam locomotives water tanks were usually found every 100 miles, and coal towers every 200 miles, along a rail line to replenish the water and coal in the locomotive's tender. Today, trains are fueled by diesel and diesel-electric power. Modern locomotives produce enough electricity to power an entire hospital!



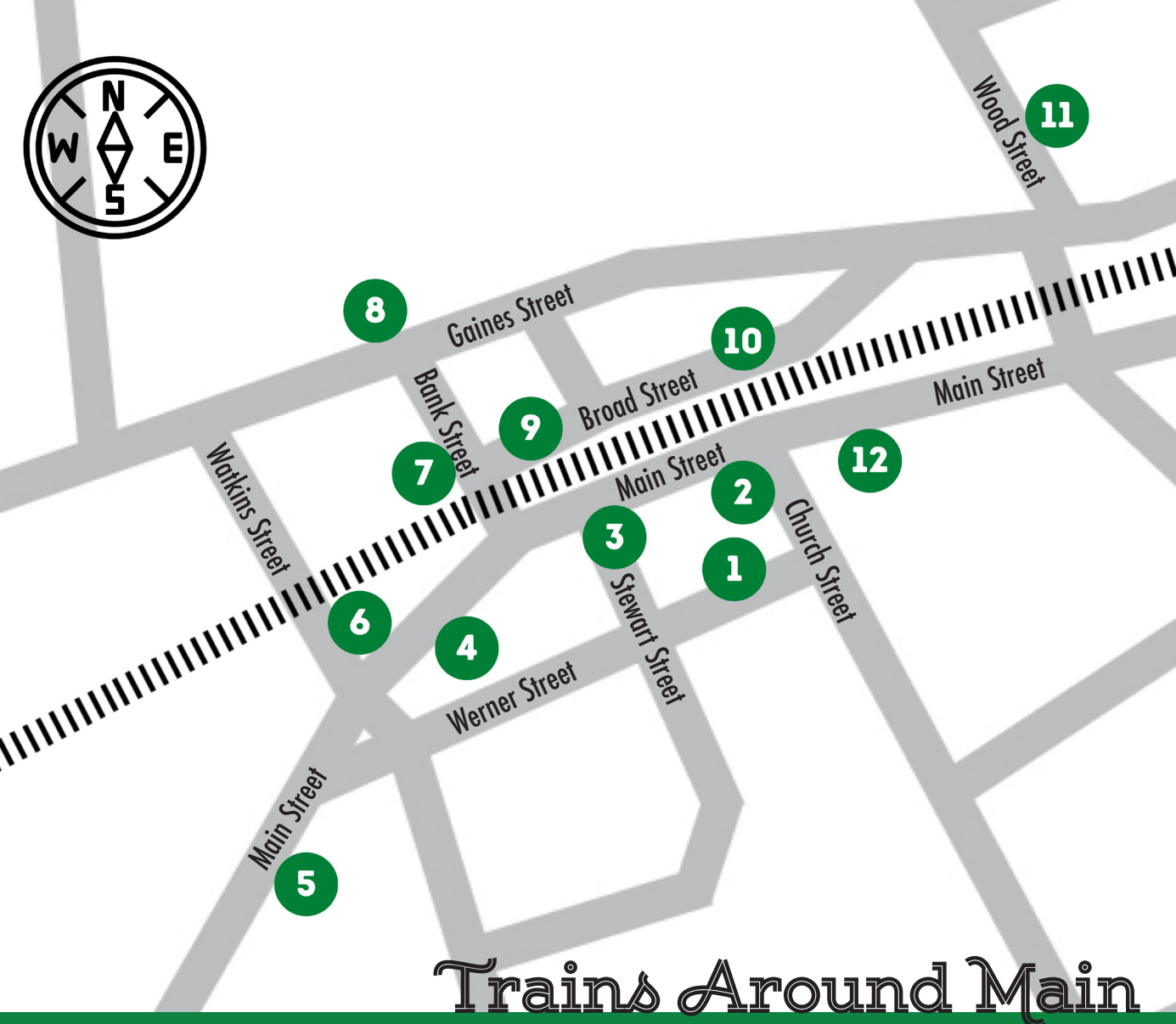
It's noon in 1873. Can you hear the northbound train No. 12 and the southbound train No. 39 chugging into town? The passengers disembark and are greeted by a porter with a dinner bell as they head inside the Central Hotel for lunch, a daily occurrence. The hotel also held a ticket office, telegraph operators, a waiting room and sample room for traveling salesmen (also known as drummers) to display their goods. The hotel met a tragic end in 1923 when it burned to the ground.



The original train depot, built in the 1870's, sat across the tracks from the water tank as a stop for freight and passengers to load and unload. The first depot burned down after 1897 when Southern Railway moved its headquarters from Central to Greenville, SC. The train depot before you is the third and final building, moved to its final resting place in this location. It was eventually donated by the Southern Railway to the town of Central.



The caboose may signal the end of the train, but the future of the railroad is bright. The railroad industry generates billions of dollars for the nation's economy. The railroad connects buyers and sellers and plays an integral role in facilitating trade between the United States and other countries. Without trains, the United States' economy would roll to a halt. Dwight D. Eisenhower said: "Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him."



## Trains Around Main

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  1 Central Railway Museum                    |  7 Atlantic & Richmond Air-Line Railroad Co. Site |
|  2 Morgan's General Store Site               |  8 Historic Central Roller Mill                   |
|  3 Roosevelt's Funeral Train Site            |  9 Water Tank and Coal Shute Site                 |
|  4 Great Main Street Fire Site               |  10 Historic Central Hotel Site                   |
|  5 Central African-American Schoolhouse Site |  11 Southern Railway Train Depot                  |
|  6 Little's Shoe Repair Shop Site            |  12 The Red Caboose                               |

## Trains Around Main



Can you find the trains hidden around Main Street Central? Explore the sites on this map and learn about our town.