



# THE DICKSON-WILLIAMS MANSION



## *A House Divided*



CivilWarTrails.org

The Federal-style mansion in front of you was the home of Catharine Dickson Williams and Dr. Alexander Williams. Catharine Williams, a famous Greeneville hostess, counted Presidents Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson among her guests. She and her husband also entertained Davy Crockett, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, South Carolina Gov. Wade Hampton and his daughters.

Dr. Williams died in 1852 but his wife kept the home prominent until her death in 1870. During Greeneville's Civil War years, it was truly a house divided. Her daughter, Elizabeth, married William Sneed, a former U.S. congressman. Her son, William Dickson Williams, was a captain on



**Catharine Dickson Williams**  
(1802-1870)

*Courtesy Dickson-Williams House*



**Dr. Alexander Williams**  
(1793-1882)

*Courtesy Dickson-Williams House*

Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan's staff. Another son, Joseph Alexander, was a Union soldier, and a third son, Thomas Lanier, was a Confederate soldier. Catharine Williams would not say which side she favored, and she entertained both Union and Confederate officers when they were in town. Union Gens. Ambrose Burn-

side and Alvan C. Gillem and Confederate Gens. James Longstreet and John Hunt Morgan each visited the mansion when they were in Greeneville.

The Federal raid on Greeneville on September 4, 1864, targeted the Dickson-Williams' house, to capture Morgan, who was killed a few hundred yards away. Union Gen. Alvan C. Gillem returned Morgan's body to the



**Placeholder text**

*- Courtesy ...*

Dickson-Williams House, where Catharine and Lucy Williams and their slaves, including Minerva Clem, dressed the body in a clean shirt and uniform and then laid it in a walnut coffin in the mansion's parlor. "God only knows how I felt when I entered my room and saw what remained earthly of Gen. Morgan," recalled Lucy Williams. Soon local women, both Unionists and Confederates, filled the house and were "all deeply affected, and seeming, without distinction, to deplore his fall," said Confederate Capt. John H. McAfee.