

# Morgan City, Louisiana

Morgan City, Louisiana has its roots in the Civil War, and embraces its past in order to shape the future. As the train passes through Morgan City, you might be able to catch a glimpse of the Atchafalaya River. This river is the heart and soul of Morgan City; every aspect of its past stems from the flowing waters of the Atchafalaya.

In the 1830s, surveyors hired by President Andrew Jackson's Administration floated down the Atchafalaya River to map out the uncharted lands of Louisiana. When they reached what is now Morgan City, Jackson's surveyors claimed to see a tiger standing along the shore of the river. The Surveyors dubbed the area "Tiger Island," and the name stuck until 1860. Walter Brashear, a prominent planter and surgeon from Kentucky bought large tracts of land on Tiger Island to begin a sugar cane plantation. This business led to the first permanent settlement in the area. The town was renamed Brashear in honor of the plantation owner.

The next five years in the town's history were shadowed by the civil war. Again the Atchafalaya River played its part. The Union army erected Fort Starr in the town (then known as Brashear) due to its location along the river and its proximity to the state of Texas. Soldiers based at Fort Starr successfully destroyed the Avery Salt mines, severed the rebel supply lines into Texas, and wrested Texas and Louisiana from Confederate control. The remains of the Union Fort Starr are still visible and remain a popular attraction for tourists and residents alike. In fact, it has become a favorite pastime of many residents to walk through the old battle grounds in search of Civil War artifacts.

After the war ended, Charles Morgan, a steamship businessman, decided that Morgan City's position along the Atchafalaya River made it the perfect location his trading company. During this time, the town became a hub of trade in fur, cypress timber, textiles, and most importantly, jumbo shrimp. Due to Mr. Morgan's impact on the town, the area was renamed Morgan City and was dubbed the Jumbo Shrimp Capital of the world. In 1937 Morgan City held the first annual Louisiana Shrimp Festival, which is still celebrated as the state's oldest harvest festival.

Due to Morgan City's location along the Atchafalaya River, it became a strategic Civil War base and later a prominent focal point for trade. The Atchafalaya River still runs through

Morgan City as a flowing reminder of the town's history, culture and traditions...including delicious jumbo shrimp.

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