

Montgomery History

Montgomery traces its roots to 1823, when Andrew J. Montgomery established a trading post a few miles to the west of the current townsite. On December 14, 1837, the town named for Andrew Montgomery became the first county seat of Montgomery County, the third county formed under the Republic of Texas. The county originally extended from the Brazos River to the Trinity. Owen and Margaret Montgomery Shannon, colonists with Stephen F. Austin, had settled on their grant of land and traded with the Indians. In July of 1837, an ad in the *Telegraph and Texas Register* advertised the sale of lots in the newly organized town of Montgomery. The article stated that a new county was expected to be created and Montgomery, from its central position, would be selected as the seat of justice. Montgomery remained the seat of government until 1889, when the records were moved to Conroe. In its early days, Montgomery was the trade center for a large farming area, where stagecoach, railroad and telegraph lines crossed. A post office opened in Montgomery in 1846. The city was officially incorporated in 1848 with Judge Nathaniel Hart Davis as Mayor. In the era of antebellum Texas, Montgomery had a newspaper and a telegraph line and was at the crossroads of two stage lines. It became a trading center especially in lumber and cotton. In 1850 it had Baptist and Methodist churches, a Masonic lodge, a private school, a new courthouse, and two physicians, E. J. Arnold and J. H. Price. In the 1850s, Montgomery experienced a building boom. Some of the fine homes built at that time remain today with descendants of the original owners or early owners occupying them. (Pick up a Historic Montgomery Texas City Tour Guide and take a stroll around our beautiful town). A yellow fever epidemic and the Civil War and Reconstruction stopped all progress in Montgomery. The political and economic power in Montgomery County shifted away from Montgomery to Conroe in 1870. By 1900, numerous mercantile establishments were in business, as well as three cotton gins, (one still exists at the corner of Hwy's 105 and 149) railroads active with freight and passengers, five hotels and boarding houses, doctors, dentists, and lawyers. After the county seat moved to Conroe, Montgomery reverted back to the little town it is today – quiet, peaceful, and loaded with history. It's relatively small population of 489 people makes it even more amazing that so few could preserve so much of their past.

Enhance your visit! Pick up a *City Tour Guide (Historical Sites & Buildings)* and a *Shopping Guide (Antique/Gift/Retail Stores, Restaurants, Other Services & Events)* from our local merchants.

Enjoy Our Montgomery – and come back y'all!

Charles Bellinger Tate Stewart (1806-1885)

Charles Stewart, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on February 6th 1806 to Charles and Adrianna (Bill) Stewart. He studied medicine in the early 1820's and after 1825 he worked as a druggist in Columbus, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina and received his license in pharmacy in June 1829. Stewart then moved to New Orleans and worked as a coffee merchant. He moved to Texas in the spring of 1830 and operated an apothecary shop in Brazoria. In June 1832, during the Anahuac Disturbances, Stewart joined Francis W. Johnson's command and fought at the battle of Velasco. He was later appointed secretary of the judicial district of Brazos. In the spring of 1835 he moved to San Felipe de Austin and opened a drugstore. On May 4th, 1835, he obtained a license to practice medicine in Texas. On July 17, as secretary for the Austin delegation, Stewart attended a meeting with representatives of Columbia and Mina to discuss the capture of Antonio Tenorio's troops by William B. Travis's troops at Anahuac. On October 11th Stewart was elected secretary of the Permanent Council. On November 11th he was appointed by the General Council as enrollment clerk and secretary to the executive, thus becoming in effect the first Texas Secretary of State. Stewart and Thomas Barnett were elected to represent Austin at the Convention of 1836. On March 2, 1836, Stewart signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. He moved to Montgomery in 1837, established a medical practice, and opened a drugstore. In 1839 he served on the committee appointed by the Third Congress of the republic to design a new state flag. Stewart is credited with drawing the original draft of the Lone Star flag. On March 5, 1840, he was appointed district attorney pro tem of Montgomery County, and President Mirabeau B. Lamar appointed him notary public on May 11, 1841. Stewart represented Montgomery County in the First, Fourth and Fourteenth legislatures. Stewart married Julia Sheppard in March 1835, and the couple had 5 children. After the death of his first wife he married Elizabeth Antoinette Nichols Boyd. They had two children and he also adopted her two children from a previous marriage. Stewart died on July 2, 1885 and is buried in the Montgomery Cemetery. *The Handbook of Texas Online*

The Lone Star flag with its vibrant fields of red, white and blue and a single five star has served as a proud symbol of Texas since 1839. At the request of Mirabeau B. Lamar, Dr. Charles B. Stewart of Montgomery County created this inspirational banner, and the elegant simplicity of his design truly exemplified the united will of the citizens of the new Republic of Texas. After winning approval by a committee of six signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and then Congress, the Lone Star flag was officially designated in 1839, and since that time it has graced flagpoles across the state of Texas. Following Dr. Stewart's passing (he is buried here in the New Montgomery Cemetery) his flag sketch was handed down first to his son and later to his grandnephew. A copy of the original design and Mirabeau B. Lamar's signature can be seen in our Museum located in the Davis Cottage at 308 Liberty St. Dr. Charles B. Stewart's design of the Lone Star flag created in cloth and in color are an embodiment of the spirit and will of the people of Texas, and his work remains a great source of pride to the people of Montgomery County today. On May 30th 1997 the House of Representatives of the 75th Texas legislature officially commemorated Montgomery County as the birthplace of the Lone Star flag.



An early day scene of Main Street in Montgomery