

Owen and Margaret Montgomery Shannon Trading Post

by

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The town of Montgomery actually has its beginning when Owen Shannon and his wife, Margaret Montgomery Shannon, established a trading post in the southwestern corner of their colonization grant from the Mexican Government through Empresario Stephen F. Austin. The small stream upon which they located became known in later years as "Town Creek". This small stream is actually the western extreme of Atkins Creek, a tributary of the West Fork of the San Jacinto River.¹

As a very young man, (age fourteen years), Owen Shannon served in the Continental Army of the American Revolution.² For his services, he received land in Franklin County, Georgia. In Georgia, he met Margaret Montgomery, sister of William Montgomery. On October 22, 1792, in Wilkes County, Georgia, Owen Shannon and Margaret Montgomery were married.³ Of the children of this union, most received Mexican Land Grants and settled in Texas under Stephen F. Austin's colonization efforts.⁴

Shannon's first daughter, Ellinder, married Jonas Harrison and settled in Shelby County. Nancy, the second daughter, married Charles Garrett, Sr., a member of Austin's "Old Three Hundred". Ruthy Shannon married James Miller, and they received land in what is now San Jacinto County. The oldest son, John, received his grant within the bounds of the earliest Montgomery County, while the other son, Jacob, received his grant of land in the present-day Montgomery County.⁵

"Few pioneers helped create one Republic, but Owen Shannon is listed as being one of forty that helped create two Republics."⁶ In addition to his

service in the American Revolution, at age 66, Owen Shannon mustered in the Ayes Bayou District of Texas and Coahuila in 1826.⁷

Jacob Montgomery Shannon, second son of Owen and Margaret Montgomery Shannon, was an Indian trader whose land grant lay about five miles west of that of his father's grant. Here he and his wife, Kitty Yoakum Shannon, (whom he had married in 1823 near Fort Jessup, Louisiana)⁸ established their trading post in an area that became known as Shannon's Prairie, just north of the present town of Dobbin.⁹

According to both Montgomery and Shannon family histories, the two groups came to Texas from Georgia together in about 1824.¹⁰ They lived near San Augustine for several years. In about 1827, they moved on to their land grants in what became Montgomery County in 1837.¹¹

These dates coincide relatively well with information given by son, Jacob Shannon. In a letter, responding to a request in 1870 from the Texas State Historical Association for information about early settlement of Texas, Jacob Shannon wrote:

"I settled on the Red Sandy near San Augustine in November, 1821--staid there 9 years then moved to Montgomery where I have lived ever since."¹²

This indicates that father and son moved on from San Augustine to land grants, each to establish and operate trading posts, only five miles apart, sometime between the years of late 1827 and 1830. Each grant bears the official patent year as 1831. (Owen Shannon's being dated April 8, 1831)¹³

Owen and Margaret Shannon traded with the friendly Indians as well as the settlers of the area. This trading post was located at a crossroads of travel for Indians and Anglo settlers, especially those headed to take up land in

Austin's colonies. People came here from miles around to trade for necessary supplies and to visit and exchange news. Many travelers stopped to spend the night or to secure information about other parts of Austin's colonies and the people coming into Texas.¹⁴

What this trading post on Town Creek was actually called is still unclear in history. The story has been handed down in the Shannon family that it was called "Montgomery" (Margaret Shannon's maiden name) to distinguish it from Jacob Shannon's trading post located only five miles to the west of his parents' business.¹⁵

Montgomery family descendants, however, claim that Margaret Shannon's nephew, Andrew Montgomery, may have traded with the Indians here before Margaret and Owen Shannon arrived and then turned the business over to his aunt and uncle.¹⁶ At any rate, Owen and Margaret Shannon settled on their land grant here just north (about 1 mile) of the present site of the town of Montgomery while Andrew Montgomery settled some twenty miles to the west in present-day Grimes County. His grave in the Stoneham Cemetery declares him to have been a soldier of the Texas Army at the Battle of San Jacinto:

"Andrew Jackson Montgomery

Born in Alabama in 1805,

came to Texas in 1830 with his brother, John,

participated in the battle of San Jacinto

as a member of Captain James Gillaspie's Company."¹⁷

When the new town of Montgomery was located and platted about a mile up the hill south of Town Creek, A. McCown, proprietor, placed an ad in the Montgomery PATRIOT newspaper of April, 1846, informing the public that he has had the town re-surveyed and is now ready to make sale of lots. He describes

the area in this manner:

"The lands surrounding Montgomery, known as Lake Creek Settlement, being of such a rich and fertile character, and having a rich and industrious population, it is destined to be, in a short time, a town of considerable importance.

Montgomery is the site of the most flourishing, populous, and intelligent county in the Republic."¹⁸

By this time the trading post on Town Creek had served its purpose. On November 15, 1838, Montgomery County executor for the estate of Owen Shannon was named.¹⁹ His exact place of burial, however, is still uncertain. A commemorative government grave stone was placed in the Old Methodist Churchyard in Montgomery under the direction of the Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The inscription on this stone says:

"Owen Shannon

G.A. Troops

Rev. War"

on a bronze plaque:

"Revolutionary Soldier

1775-1783

Placed by Margaret Montgomery Chapter D.A.R."²⁰

On the Montgomery County Census of 1850, Margaret Shannon is listed as 77 years of age, born in South Carolina, listed adjacent to the family of her son, Jacob.²¹ It is said that after the death of her husband, she lived with her son, Jacob, at Shannon's Prairie.²² A stone in her honor stands in the

Jacob Shannon Evergreen Cemetery, located just south of the old Jacob Shannon home site on land given by him for a a cemetery. The inscription reads:

"Margaret Montgomery

Shannon

1772-1854

wife of Owen Shannon, Revolutionary soldier

Member of Austin's 4th Colony

He founded and named the Montgomery Trading Post.

He is buried in the Old Cemetery in Montgomery, Texas."23

Notes

- 1 General Highway Map, Montgomery County, Texas
- 2 Daves, Harry, "Owen Shannon Family", Montgomery County History, p.475
- 3 Ibid, p.476
- 4 Ibid, p.476
- 5 Ibid
- 6 Ibid
- 7 Ibid
- 8 Daves, p.476
- 9 Local tradition
- 10 Montgomery, J.T., MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORY, p.407
- 11 Ibid
- 12 Gandy, W.H., A HISTORY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
- 13 Map, Montgomery County (Original Land Grant Map), General Land Office, Austin, TX, 1945
- 14 Martin, W.N., HISTORY OF MONTGOMERY, p.2
- 15 Gandy, W.H.
- 16 Montgomery, J.T., MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORY, p.407
- 17 Jones, William M., TEXAS HISTORY CARVED IN STONE, p.316
- 18 MONTGOMERY PATRIOT newspaper, p.4, Vol.1, No.10
- 19 Montgomery County Probate Records-Black Box Documents 1838-1843, p.6
- 20 Gravestone, Owen Shannon, Old Methodist Churchyard, Montgomery, TX
- 21 Census Records of Montgomery County
- 22 Family tradition
- 23 Stone, Jacob Shannon Evergreen Cemetery, Dobbin, TX

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Commemorative Gravestones:

- A. Montgomery, Andrew, Texas Centennial Marker, Stoneham Cemetery,
Stoneham, Texas
- B. Shannon, Margaret Montgomery, Jacob Shannon Evergreen Cemetery,
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- C. Shannon, Owen, Old Methodist Churchyard, Montgomery, Texas

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