

The Chilton House



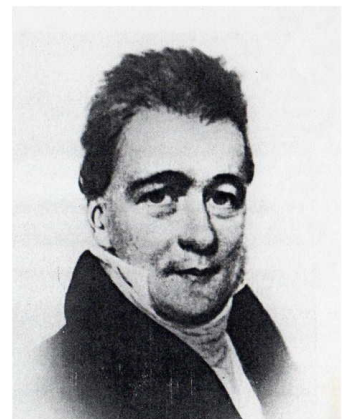
John E. Shelton

John E. Shelton, a local homebuilder in Montgomery, built the original two-bedroom house sometime between 1851 (Shelton Deed) and 1853. He sold the house to its first owner, Rev. Thomas Chilton, in January of 1854 (Chilton Deed).

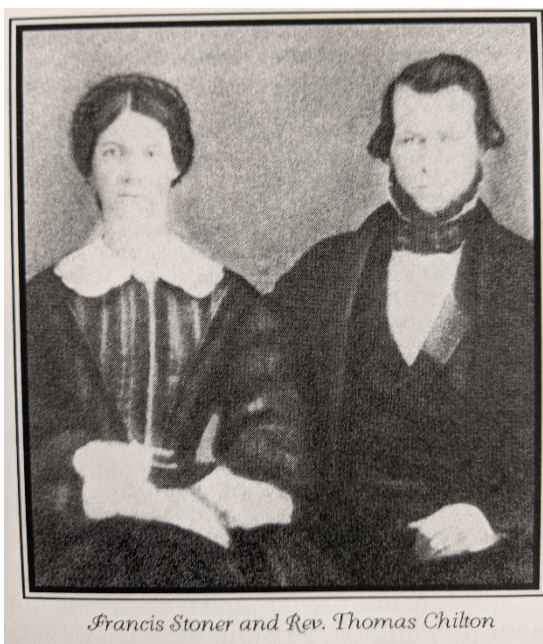
Mr. Shelton then built the Magnolia house to the west of the Chilton House on other side of Eugenia Street (Biskamp, p. 123), the Bell House to the south of the Chilton house on Caroline Street (Bell Deed), the Shelton-Smith house on Caroline Street (Historical Marker Shelton-Smith House, 2021), and the Cathalorri on Eva Street (Historical Marker Cathalorri, 2021). These five historic houses are still standing today.

Rev. Thomas Chilton

Rev. Thomas Chilton, son of a Baptist minister, was born in Kentucky in 1798. At the age of 21, he started practicing law in Bath County Kentucky. In 1827, he was elected to the Kentucky State House of Representatives. Later, he was elected to the United States House of Representatives, as a Jacksonian, representing the state of Kentucky in the 20th and 21st Congress. Losing his reelection to the 22nd Congress, he later reran as an Anti-Jacksonian for the 23rd Congress and won. (Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 2021)



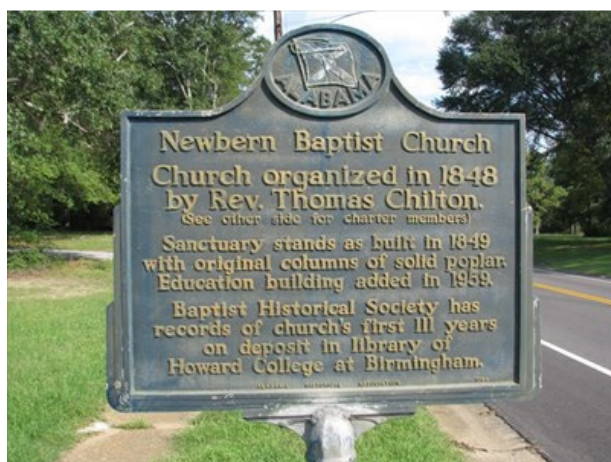
During his time at Washington, Chilton was a roommate with the legendary David (“Davy”) Crockett, congressman from Tennessee, and they became good friends (Stephens, 2016, p. 77). They shared similar political views and clearly worked together (Hannum, 1964, p. 101). Chilton co-authored Crockett’s well-known autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of the State of Tennessee*, published in 1834. The proceeds from the book were split 50/50 (Hannum, 1964, pp. 107-108). David Crockett stated in a letter dated 1834, “I am engaged in writing a history of my life ... and Mr. Chilton to correct as I write it”, and in a letter of the same year he wrote, “The manuscript of the book is in his [Chilton’s] handwriting though the substance is entirely my own. The aid which I needed to classify the matter but the style was not altered.” (Stephens, 2016, p. 78)



Francis Stoner and Rev. Thomas Chilton

Both men left politics in 1835. Chilton entered the ministry and practiced law while Crockett left for Texas to fight in the Texas Revolutionary War (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). Chilton decided against going to Texas in order to instead take care of his growing family: wife Francis, three daughters, and three sons (Brown, 2021) (Boren, 1999, p. 18).

In 1839, Thomas Chilton moved his family to Alabama where he focused his full energy into the Baptist ministry. He was the pastor of various Baptist including congregations in Talladega, Montgomery, Greensboro, and Newbern. He also served as president of the Alabama



Baptist State Convention in 1841 and from 1846 to 1851 (Hannum, 1964, p. 108). In 1839, R.E.B. Baylor who was Chilton’s cousin and then living with Chilton, converted from agnosticism to Christianity. Baylor soon thereafter became ordained as a Baptist minister. R.E.B. Baylor later moved to Texas and became influential in Texas politics and in the Texas Baptist ministry. He would later help establish the Baylor University in Independence, Texas which was

later moved to Waco (Shiver, 2015).

In 1851, Chilton moved his family again to Texas in order to pastor the First Baptist Church of Houston, Texas (Riley, 1907) stating “I have for years past had the conviction on my mind that duty prompted me to Texas as the field designated for my labor” and “now God’s providence seems to have opened the way before me so as to leave me without excuse should I hesitate to go.” (Hannum, 1964, p. 109). In Houston, he was greeted with much popularity and church grew in numbers as a result (Riley, 1907). However, he only served at that church for two years before accepting the position as the first full time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery (Morrell, 1873, p. 319).

Chilton is known as one of the earlier pioneers of the Baptist Church in Texas (Daniell L. E., 1892, pp. 380-381). Z. N. Morrell, who met Chilton in person, stated that Chilton was

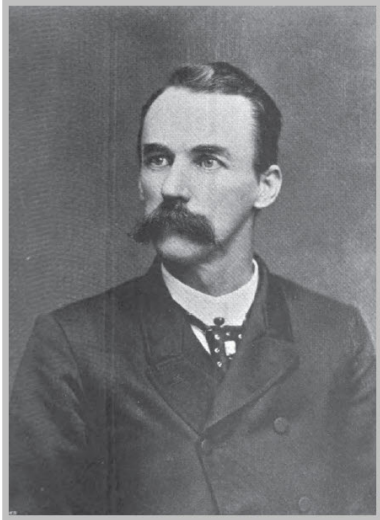
a man of acknowledged ability, much decision of character, and as a pulpit orator ranked among the first in the denomination. His personal appearance was commanding, and his manner bold and fearless. With a clear head and an earnest delivery, he pressed his conclusions with great power... His sojourn among us in Texas was short, but his name and deeds of love live on, and will, in the memory of many Texas Baptists. (Morrell, 1873, pp. 318-319)

Unfortunately, the same year that he came to Montgomery, Chilton suffered a stroke while preaching and died a few days later in his home (Hannum, 1964, p. 111) (Morrell, 1873, p. 319). He left behind his widow, Louisa, and his ten sons and three daughters (Daniell L. E., 1892). He is buried at the Old Montgomery Cemetery. A tall granite stone remains today and reads “Reader, Pause... You too must die. Prepare to meet thy God.”

After the death of Thomas Chilton, his family remained in the two-bedroom home on College Street (Louisa Deed) (Frank Deed).



Frank Bowden Chilton



Frank Bowden Chilton, Thomas's son, quit school at the age of twelve to help support the financially struggling family. He initially took up various jobs including hauling lumber from Montgomery to Houston, transporting mail on horseback between Navasota and Columbus, and clerking for the P J Willis & Brother mercantile business (Daniell L. E., 1892, p. 381).

At the age of 16, Frank signed up to fight in the Civil War for the Confederate Army and became a member of Company H of the famous Hood's Texas Brigade. He served in the battles around Richmond and in the Peninsular campaign. Frank returned home after contracting Malaria, but he quickly he rejoined the army and joined Major's brigade where he was promoted to Second Lieutenant. In 1865 he was promoted to Captain and transferred to the Reserve Corps (Daniell L. E., 1889, pp. 39,41).

After the war, he moved the Chilton family down to Fort Bend County where they took up farming near the Brazos River while he prepared to practice law. In 1880, he erected the first house in the town of Sealy in Austin County. Following the death of his wife and child, he left the plantation and moved to Marlin where he became active in business, politics, and public affairs. In the late 1800s, he lived in Austin, Texas, working as the secretary of the Texas State Immigration Committee, as the general manager of the Southern Interstate Immigration Bureau between 1889 and 1892, and as the manager of the Texas State Immigration Bureau from 1891 through 1892 (Daniell L. E., 1889, pp. 55-67).

Frank, later in his life, was president of the Hood's Texas Brigade Association when it erected the Hood's Brigade statue located near the state capitol building in Austin, TX. He published the book, *Unveiling and Dedication of Monument to Hood's Texas Brigade on the Capitol Grounds at Austin*, which covered the dedication of the Hood's Texas Brigade Monument and included speeches about the brigade, short biographies of some of the soldiers, and history of the brigade (Chilton, 1911).



Frank died in 1926 and is buried in Willis Cemetery in the City of Willis.

The Desperados

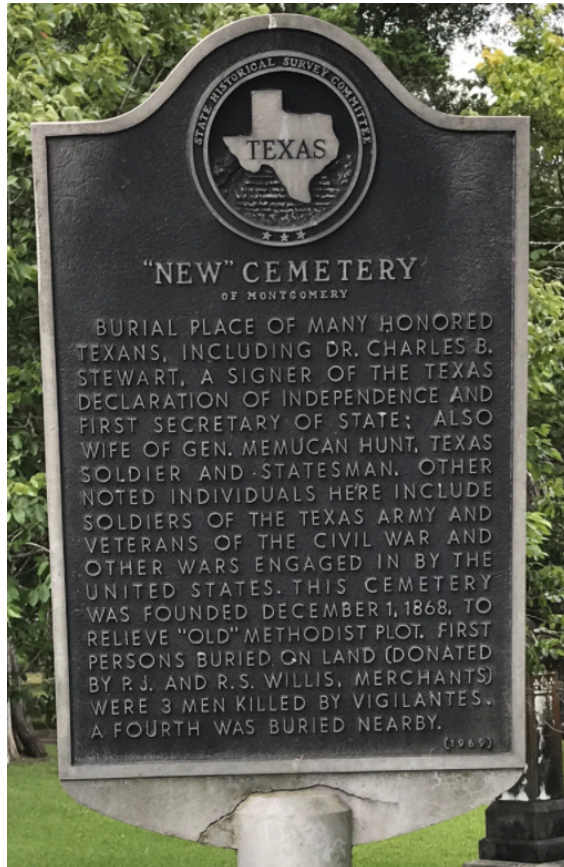
On December 28, 1868, while Frank Chilton and his mother, Louisa, owned the house on College Street and ran a stagecoach inn out of the house, two horse thieves were killed in the house. While there are no official public records of the event, Narcissa Boulware interviewed W. C. Cameron and Buck—longtime residents of the City of Montgomery—and provided the following account:

These desperados had ridden their horses into stores and terrorized the people generally. When they stole a fine horse from the Cartwrights and came into town to rob the stores and head out on "a scout" for Mexico, a mob was formed at Bear Bend where the Gaffords, Cartwrights and others who came in after the men lived. Bob Oliver the youngest, was scarcely 16 years old at the time. When the shooting started, he ran to Mrs. Chilton's house. The mob followed, promised not to shoot him if he would come out. Someone killed him with a Bowie knife. He ran back into the house before he died. Here he died under a bed. The blood stains can still be seen on the floor.

Additionally, Nathaniel Hart Davis, recorded the event in his journal with the subject title "McGrew-Oliver Killing of Dec. 28, 1868" stating:

On the 28th of December in the forenoon four men, Wm McGrew Esq. County Atty. for the last two years and his two half-brothers, John and Bob Oliver of this town and "Charles Brown" of Cokesbury, S. Carolina alias "Texas Brown" of whom an account is given in Harper's Monthly of Dec. 1868 were shot to death here (Montgomery) by some ten to 20 or thereabouts, men of this town and vicinity. If the people or society can be said to act in necessary self-defense in the destruction of lawless desperados then I am of the opinion that this was such a case- a few others hereabouts may be nearly as bad as they-or some of them-one, May, made a narrow escape. McGrew for a young man was a moral disgrace to the legal profession as we as to the office he filled. I did not recommend him to the Police Court - the appointing tribunal. After I started for Miss. and Tenn. in Jany., I learned that he was in the crowd that took the Negro at court and that he and others had disguised themselves in the Post Office that night. On my return I found quite a change for the better in Montgomery. It is now rather an orderly quite place. And the general expression is that much good was done in the killing of Dec. 28. There may be some, for reasons best known to themselves who regret the death of McGrew. One white single female to whom he paid marked attention both before and since his marriage, manifests a fondness for his memory and a sorrow at his loss and continues to talk long after with a silly sentimentality-so says gossip. I heard not talk but believe it true. Miss E.A.

Deemed unworthy of interment in the Methodist churchyard, the men were buried in the new cemetery, “New Cemetery”, instead. William McGrew’s burial site is the only one that is marked. It is presumed that the Olivers are buried in the immediate vicinity (Moore, 2021) (Boulware, Montgomery County News, 2021).



Dr. D. A. Young

Frank Chilton sold the house in 1872 and later, in 1891, Dr. F. A. Young purchased the house (Young Deed). Dr. Young saw his patients in the front addition of the house, the parlor. Patients would enter through a door located off the front porch which has since been sealed off (the outline can still be seen on the exterior of the house). Dr. Young served the Montgomery community until the 1930s (Placeholder3).



The Deans



Mr. and Mrs. David Boyd Dean. "Aunt Minnie and Uncle Davie Dean"

David and Minnie Dean purchased the home from Dr. Young in 1894 (Dean Deed). "Uncle Dean" was in the business of farming and raised cattle in the open range (brand DAV). He built the white picket fence around the front and side of the house using heart pine that was cut and hand-selected from the lumber mill located south of Dobbin that he ran with his brother Henry and brother in law Owen. While the fence has been replaced a few times over the years, the picket design is still the same. David and Minnie were members of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery—the same church Thomas Chilton pastored—and were strong pillars of that church. Minnie taught the children's Sunday School for many years (Steger, TBD).

They are both buried in the "New Cemetery" in the City of Montgomery (Steger, TBD).

The Stegers

Not having any kids of their own, the Deans cared for their nephew, Morris Steger. Morris likely grew up in the Chilton House. He would later inherit the house, adding onto it and expanding the garage (initials found around the premises). Morris and his wife, Bace, would care for the house until his death in 1982.

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