

## **The Arnold Family of Montgomery County**

The history of the Arnold family in Montgomery County, Texas, begins with Dr. Epaphras Joseph Arnold who arrived in the Republic of Texas from New Orleans in late 1836 or early 1837<sup>(1)</sup> and proceeded to form a partnership with Dr. James H. Price. The two doctors established their practice in the town of Montgomery in about 1839<sup>(2)</sup> Eliphalet Lester Arnold, Sr., an older brother of Epaphras arrived in Montgomery County with his family in about 1840.

The Arnold brothers were born to Samuel Arnold (1779-1866) and Hope Shailer Arnold (1783-1862) in the town of Haddam in Middlesex County, Connecticut<sup>(3)</sup> and were part of the sixth generation of Arnolds to be born in that community. Their fourth great-grandfather, Joseph Arnold (1625-1691) was one of the earliest merchants in Connecticut and a founder of Haddam. Joseph's father, John Arnold (1585-1664) and his uncle, William Arnold (1587-1676) were born in the village of Ilchester Somerset County, England and immigrated to Massachusetts in about 1635.<sup>(4)</sup> While John made his place in American history as a founder of the town of Hartford, Connecticut, it is William's descendants that forever marked the Arnold name. Six of William Arnold's descendants carried the name Benedict Arnold. The most notable of these were Benedict Arnold I, who was president and governor of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and General Benedict Arnold V, who was labeled as a traitor in American history for his service in the British Army during the American Revolution.

It is uncertain why two prominent citizens of New England such as E. J. and E. L. Arnold would make their way to the untamed frontier of the Republic of Texas but they carried on the Arnold family tradition as pioneers of Montgomery County, Texas.

### **The Family of Epaphras Joseph Arnold**

Epaphras Joseph Arnold was born on or about February 15, 1811<sup>(5)</sup> in Haddam, Middlesex County, Connecticut. He married Rhoda Ann Warner in Haddam on March 28, 1835.<sup>(6)</sup> Their children were:<sup>(7)</sup>

1. Frances Ann "Fannie" Arnold 1840-1916, married Eldon Lewis / Jacob McNair Fullinwider<sup>(8)</sup>
2. Evelyn Pratt Arnold 1842-1921 married Alexander Eleazer Fullinwider<sup>(9)</sup>
3. Epaphras Arnold, Jr. 1844 (twin of Louisa, appears to have died as an infant)
4. Louisa "Ludie" Arnold (twin of Epaphras Jr) 1844-1928, married Reuben Davis Simonton

Dr. E. J. Arnold was a well loved citizen of Montgomery. He was active in politics, served on the board of Medical Censors for the Republic of Texas and donated land for the Montgomery Academy and served on the board of directors for the school after it was chartered in 1848 and was also a Justice of the Peace. Soon after his arrival in Montgomery, Dr. Arnold had built a small log home but replaced it in 1845 with a lavish Greek-Revival style home and used his old home for his office. His headstone in Willis Cemetery indicates that he died on September 12, 1858. His wife, Rhoda Ann is believed to have died in 1876. Family histories tell that Dr. Arnold was originally buried in Montgomery but was re-interred at Willis Cemetery in the 1880s next to his wife.

E. J. Arnold's oldest daughter Frances Ann "Fannie" Arnold married Eldon Lewis on Christmas Eve of 1857. Eldon, the son of wealthy planter John McClanahan Lewis, Sr., served in Company B, 24<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry (Dismounted), CSA, during the War Between the States. He was wounded in action near Jonesboro, Georgia and died at Hill Hospital, Cuthbert, Georgia, in December 1864.<sup>(10)</sup> After the war, Fannie married former Confederate veteran, Jacob McNair Fullinwider on November 16, 1868. Fannie's younger sister married Jacob's brother, Alexander Eleazer Fullinwider on November 16, 1876. Dr. Arnold's youngest daughter Louisa, lovingly known as Ludie, married Reuben Davis Simonton on December 7, 1865.<sup>(11)</sup> During the War Between



Arnold-Simonton House, Photo by Frank M. Johnson

the States, Reuben had served as a Sergeant in the 8<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiment, a unit more popularly referred to as "Terry's Texas Rangers."<sup>(12)</sup> Dr. Arnold's house, now known as the Arnold-Simonton House, became the home of Reuben and Ludie Simonton after the war. The Simonton family retained ownership of the Arnold-Simonton house for many years. In the late 1900s, the home was used as Montgomery City Hall and was later moved to its present location at Fernland Park in the town of Montgomery.

### **The Family of Eliphalet Lester Arnold, Sr.**

Eliphalet Lester Arnold, Sr. was born on or about December 26<sup>th</sup> of 1804 in Haddam, Middlesex County, Connecticut.<sup>(13)</sup> He married Clarissa Hope Cone in East Haddam on November 12, 1826.<sup>(14)</sup> The couple arrived in the Republic of Texas in about 1839, with five young children. Another four children were born of this union after their arrival in Montgomery County. The Children of E. L. and Clarissa Arnold were<sup>15</sup>:

1. Antoinette E Arnold 1827-1857, married William McRae.<sup>(16)</sup>
2. "Daughter" Arnold (unconfirmed family record of a daughter born between 1829 and 1831).
3. Frances B "Fannie" Arnold 1833-1899, married Alexander Whitaker.<sup>(17)</sup>
4. Margaret Hope Arnold 1834-1898, married Thomas Wesley Smith.
5. Owen William Arnold 1836-1913, married Minnie D. Alban / Lucretia "Lula" Dean.
6. Eliphalet Lester Arnold, Jr. 1838-1924, married Mary S. Boyd.
7. Huldah Ann Arnold (unconfirmed family record showing a daughter born on July 6, 1841 and died as an infant).
8. Maria Clarissa Arnold (also shown as C. M. and Clara H.) 1843-1881, married William Aylett Dean.
9. Anamelia A. "Annie" Arnold 1846-1931, married Thomas Jefferson Peel.<sup>(18)</sup>
10. Araadna Arnold (unconfirmed family record showing a daughter born October 27, 1849 and died November 3, 1849).

E. L. Arnold first appears in the records for Montgomery County, Texas on a tax list for the year 1846. The family appears on the rolls of the 1850 U. S. Census for Montgomery County listing E. L. Arnold, Sr., and wife Clarissa along with children Margaret, Owen, E. L., Jr., Maria C. and Ann A. Arnold. This census lists E. L.'s

occupation as “Smith”, suggesting that he was a blacksmith. Daughters Antoinette and Fannie, having been married prior to 1850, are not shown in this household.

Sometime between 1850 and 1860, E. L. and Clarissa bought land near Montgomery where they built and operated a sawmill. This was a profession that would be taken up by their two sons in later life. The 1860 census rolls for Montgomery County, Texas lists E. L. Arnold’s profession as “Miller.”

On November 13, 1855, Margaret Hope Arnold married local businessman Thomas Wesley Smith.<sup>(19)</sup> Shortly after their marriage, the couple purchased a fine home on Caroline Street in the town of Montgomery. E. L. Arnold, Jr., married Mary Boyd on March 7, 1861.<sup>(20)</sup>

Like most of the families in Montgomery County, the War Between the States had a serious impact on the Arnold family, both emotionally and financially. More than ninety percent of the able bodied men joined the war effort so there was very little business conducted during the war years. Both Owen Arnold and E. L. Arnold, Jr. joined the Confederate army. On October 10, 1861 Owen W. Arnold joined a company of men organized and commanded by Captain Robert F. Oliver. He was enrolled in Company I, 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry (Nichols’) by his brother-in-law, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Thomas Wesley Smith. This regiment was mustered into Confederate service for a period of six months to defend Galveston Island. When the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry was mustered out of service at Galveston, both Owen Arnold and T. W. Smith joined the 20<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry regiment. Owen was joined by his brother E. L. Arnold, Jr. in Company G, 20<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry and T. W. Smith joined company K of that regiment. Thomas Wesley Smith soon hired Isaac Hamby as a substitute to fill his position but was appointed Captain of Company C, Terry’s Regiment, Texas Cavalry on April 4, 1864. Both Private E. L. Arnold and Private Owen W. Arnold spent much of their Confederate service sick or in the hospital. Owen was discharged due to disability on August 22, 1864 and returned home to Montgomery County where he married Minnie D. Albin<sup>(21)</sup> on September 22, 1864. While home on leave, Captain Thomas Jefferson Peel, commander of Company K, 16<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry regiment, married Anamelia “Annie” Arnold on February 2, 1864.

After the war Owen W. and E. L. Arnold, Jr. returned to the sawmill business. Their twenty-two year old sister Maria Clarissa Arnold married former Confederate veteran William Aylette Dean.<sup>(22)</sup> Eliphalet Lester Arnold, Sr. died on December 1, 1867 and his wife Clarissa Hope Cone Arnold died on March 27, 1870. Both E. L. and Clarissa are buried in the Peel family plot of the Old Methodist Cemetery in downtown

Montgomery. Their daughter Annie and her husband Thomas Jefferson Peel remained in the town of Montgomery and were among the most successful and prominent citizens of the town until their deaths in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1870s daughter Margaret and her husband Thomas Wesley Smith moved to the newly formed town of Willis where they established the world renowned Willis Cigar Factory. In 1872, the couple built a fine mansion known in later years as the “Old Crawford House.” The home burned in 1964.



“Old Crawford House” Photo Courtesy of Heritage Museum of Montgomery County

The Arnold brothers from Connecticut are prime examples of incredible histories that are too quickly and too often forgotten. They descended from a family of pioneers who were instrumental in the founding and development of the early New England colonies. They arrived in the Republic of Texas during its infancy, settling in an untamed frontier. Their lives and the lives of their children leave a lasting legacy of accomplishment and perseverance and hope.

- **by Frank M. Johnson**

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<sup>1</sup> *Sons of the Republic of Texas*, Compiled by Turner Publishing Company, 2001, page 29.

<sup>2</sup> Gandy, William Harley, *A History of Montgomery County, Texas*, (Unpublished Thesis, August 1952), Page 67.

<sup>3</sup> 1820 U S Census; *Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut*; Page: 437; NARA Roll: M33\_2; Image: 431

<sup>4</sup> Hubbard, Edwin (October 1879). "*Early Records of the Arnold Family*". *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (New England Historic Genealogical Society), Volume 33, pages 427-432.

<sup>5</sup> Headstone, Willis City Cemetery, Willis, Montgomery County, Texas.

<sup>6</sup> CT Church Records, Haddam First Congregational Church 1739-1908; Book 48, CT State Library, Index #278227, 1956; Hartford, CT.

<sup>7</sup> Warner, Lucian C. and Nichols, Josephine Genung, *The descendants of Andrew Warner*, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, New Haven, CT, 1919, page 420.

<sup>8</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 2, page 196.

<sup>9</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 3, page 143.

<sup>10</sup> National Archives & Records Administration, Compiled service records of Confederate soldiers from Texas units, Twenty-fourth Cavalry (Wilkes') Regiment, Company B, Eldon Lewis, 17 pages.

<sup>11</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 2, page 112.

<sup>12</sup> National Archives & Records Administration, Compiled service records of Confederate soldiers from Texas units, Eighth Cavalry (Terry's Regiment, First Rangers, Eighth Rangers), Company K, R. D. Simonton. 9 pages.

<sup>13</sup> Headstone, Peel Family plot, Old Methodist Cemetery, Montgomery, Montgomery County, Texas.

<sup>14</sup> Ancestry.com. Connecticut, Town Marriage Records, pre-1870 (Barbour Collection) [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Andrews, H. Franklin Andrews, *The Hamlin Family: A Genealogy of Captain Giles Hamlin of Middletown, Connecticut, 1654-1900*. Self Published, Exira, Iowa 1900, page 217.

<sup>16</sup> 1850 U. S. Federal Census, Harris County, Texas.

<sup>17</sup> 1850 U. S. Federal Census, Montgomery County, Texas.

<sup>18</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 2, page 70.

<sup>19</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 1, page 245.

<sup>20</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 2, page 38.

<sup>21</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 2, page 80.

<sup>22</sup> Montgomery County Marriage Records 1838-1894, Book 2, page 115.