

Arthur Sherrill
Town Donor



On April 4, 1846, an act was passed by the Legislature of the State of Texas to locate the county seat of the newly created Lavaca County.

Arthur Sherrill, of Colorado County, who owned a league of land in newly created Lavaca County, donated 350 acres of land to Lavaca County for the location of the county seat. The county seat was called Petersburg and located in the Sherrill League in a wooded area on the east bank of the Lavaca River about a quarter mile from the Zumwalt Settlement and about five miles downriver from the Hallet Settlement.

As per the agreement on April 6th, County Judge Andrew Ponton deeded to Arthur Sherrill eight choice lots in the town of Petersburg. The County Commissioners would also select a public courthouse square, a lot for a church, a lot for a school house, a lot for a jail and other necessary public buildings. Also, per the agreement, after the survey was completed, the county would deed every fourth lot to Sherrill.

On September 14, 1846, William A. Shepard (William Austin Shepherd) was employed to survey the town of Petersburg. The town was divided into 25 blocks. Each block had six lots 50 ft. wide and 100 ft. long and the streets were 60 ft. wide.

That same day, Arthur and Mary Sherrill sold to Andrew Ponton, the County Judge of Lavaca County, 350 additional acres for \$1000.00.

On February 3, 1847, the following lots were deeded to Sherrill:

Block 1 Lot 2	Block 3 Lot 1 & 2	Block 4 Lot 1 & 2
Block 5 Lot 2 & 3	Block 6 Lot 3 & 4	Block 7 Lot 4 & 6
Block 8 Lot 3, 6 & 8	Block 9 Lot 4	Block 10 Lot 5 & 6
Block 11 Lot 4 & 5	Block 12 Lot 1 – 5, & 8	Block 13 Lot 1
Block 14 Lot 4 & 5	Block 15 Lot 1, 5 & 6	Block 16 Lot 4
Block 17 Lot 1, 7 & 8	Block 18 Lot 5	Block 19 Lot 1, 5 & 6
Block 20 Lot 2, 4 & 5		

Sherrill, born in Tennessee on January 8, 1808, arrived in Jackson County, Texas in 1835 and married Mary W. “Polly” Grant on March 25, 1836, in Gonzales County, Texas. The couple then moved to Colorado County.

After the deed from the county, Sherrill started selling property to interested parties:

1847 August 10	Arthur Sherrill to F. M. Cheney	Block 17 Lot 1
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1847 Nov. 18 Arthur Sherrill to Wm. T. Townsend Block 8 Lot 6

1848 February 27 Arthur Sherrill to Geo. W. Smith
Block 1 Lot 2 Block 3 Lot 1 & 2 Block 4 Lot 1 & 2
Block 5 Lot 2 & 3 Block 6 Lot 3 & 4 Block 7 Lot 4 & 6
Block 8 Lot 3 & 8 Block 9 Lot 4 Block 10 Lot 5 & 6
Block 11 Lot 4 & 5 Block 12 Lot 1 – 5, & 8 Block 13 Lot 1
Block 14 Lot 4 & 5 Block 15 Lot 1, 5 & 6 Block 16 Lot 4
Block 17 Lot 7 & 8 Block 18 Lot 5 Block 19 Lot 1, 5 & 6
Block 20 Lot 2, 4 & 5

Plus, the undivided $\frac{1}{4}$ of said 300-acre tract not included in said town.

1848 February 29 Geo. W. Smith to Mary Sherrill “solely for her own use”
Block 1 Lot 2 Block 3 Lot 1 & 2 Block 4 Lot 1 & 2
Block 5 Lot 2 & 3 Block 6 Lot 3 & 4 Block 7 Lot 4 & 6
Block 8 Lot 3 & 8 Block 9 Lot 4 Block 10 Lot 5 & 6
Block 11 Lot 4 & 5 Block 12 Lot 1 – 5, & 8 Block 13 Lot 1
Block 14 Lot 4 & 5 Block 15 Lot 1, 5 & 6 Block 16 Lot 4
Block 17 Lot 7 & 8 Block 18 Lot 5 Block 19 Lot 1, 5 & 6
Block 20 Lot 2, 4 & 5

Plus, the undivided $\frac{1}{4}$ of said 300-acre tract not included in said town.

1849 January 12 Arthur & Mary Sherrill to Geo. W. Smith Block 7 Lot 6

In the 1850 Lavaca County census, Sherrill was living in Petersburg operating an inn and mercantile.

While Sherrill was a foundation piece in the success of Petersburg, he and his neighbors did not always see eye to eye.

In April 1851, it was reported by several newspapers that the building used as a courthouse at Petersburg, Lavaca County, was consumed by fire on the 6th around 12:00 am. The building, which was being used as a courthouse, church, school house, County Clerk’s office and Sheriff’s office, was entirely enveloped in flames and in a few hours was totally consumed.

That following November, Petersburg petitioned the state legislature to make the town the permanent county seat. During this time, local newspapers reported that the courthouse was not the only thing on fire; that quarrels in the area grew with such bitterness and intensity that it reverberated throughout the county.

It was primarily a fight between Sherrill, the town donor, and Spencer Burton Townsend, the local storekeeper, and their respective followers. Reportedly the feud became so strong that few persons were even visiting Petersburg.

In August 1852, Arthur and Mary Sherrill made their last deed transaction when they sold Lot 8 in Block 8 to Thomas F. Royster.

Before leaving Lavaca County, Arthur Sherrill and the county had one more piece of business to settle: Civil Case #96 County of Lavaca vs. Arthur Sherrill

On September 23, 1852, a petition filed in the case stated that Sherrill had deeded 350 acres to Lavaca County for use as county seat. Lavaca County surveyed the town of Petersburg with a public square and built a courthouse on that square for \$800.

Since the county seat was to be removed from Petersburg, the county court decided to make an estimate of the amount of money received by the county for all lots and parcels of land sold over the years in public sales and issue to Sherrill, in county scrip, that part of the estimate that was due to him. That amount was determined to be \$340.00 Yet Sherrill refused to surrender the courthouse building and had converted it to his own use.

On October 15, 1852, the court ruled in favor of Sherrill in that the property was that of Sherrill and that the County's case be dismissed.

By January of 1856, Arthur and Mary Sherrill had moved back to Columbus Texas and were operating the Columbus Hotel. By September 1860, the hotel had new management.

The last mention of Sherrill was in September 1873 when it was reported in the Columbus newspaper that livery stable owner, Sherrill, was stabbed four times by an itinerant salesman named O.M. McKinney with whom he had argued. He survived the attack.

Sherrill died in Columbus, Texas on June 13, 1899.