

Shaw, Michael W. (1833–1923)

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SHAW, MICHAEL W. (1833–1923). Michael W. Shaw, founder of the first jewelry store in Texas, was born on November 28, 1833, at Lampertheim on the Rhine, in Hesse, Germany. In 1845 the Shaw family arrived in Galveston, Texas, searching for new opportunities. Shaw's sister, Mary, married Daniel H. Pallais, a Galveston master watchmaker. In 1848 Shaw went to live with his brother-in-law to learn the jeweler's business and in 1855, after acquiring considerable proficiency, opened the Shaw Jewelry Company on the corner of Twenty-third and Strand. Shaw's company flourished until the **Civil War** (</handbook/entries/civil-war>), which temporarily put a halt to his young business and depleted his savings. After serving in De Bray's cavalry in the Confederate Army and Col. **John C. Moore** (</handbook/entries/moore-john-creed>)'s **Second Texas Infantry** (</handbook/entries/second-texas-infantry>), Shaw returned to Galveston to rebuild his company. The business prospered, and the jeweler found himself on his way to fortune again, until another disaster—a great fire in 1869—devastated the Shaw store. Shaw then rebuilt the jewelry company in 1869 on the corner of Tremont and Market. In 1872 the quarters were expanded, and by 1880 Shaw's reputation extended throughout the Southwest. The company trade extended into a large part of Louisiana, all of Texas, and part of Mexico. Shaw manufactured many of his goods from raw materials and also carried the best imported lines from Paris and a large domestic stock from New York. The Shaw Company made Shaw a wealthy man, with investments that included a large part of the Montezuma silver mines in New Mexico. Gen. **Sam Houston** (</handbook/entries/houston-sam>) ordered his walking cane from Shaw, who engraved and studded it with bits of silver. Shaw was vice president of the Galveston Trust and Savings Company, a director of the Peoples Land and Homestead Company, and one of the first members of the Galveston Artillery Company, having become associated with it in 1856. In 1878 he married Annie Meyer of Houston; they had eight children. Shaw died on May 9, 1923, and his jewelry store continued in business in Galveston until 1938.

Galveston *Daily News*, August 27, 1922, May 10, 1923. Charles Waldo Hayes, *Galveston:*

History of the Island and the City (2 vols., Austin: Jenkins Garrett, 1974).

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