

**By** Charlotte Laughlin in the Handbook of Texas  
Published: December 1, 1994  
Updated: October 19, 2020

**CHANDLER, WELCOME WILLIAMS (1813–1870).** Welcome Chandler, the first settler, farmer, county judge, postmaster, and store owner in Brown County, was born in North Carolina to William Hugh and Tebitha Elizabeth (Hodges) Chandler in January 1813. The family moved to Copiah County, Mississippi, where Chandler married Sarah Brown in 1834; they moved to Texas in 1854. That summer, Chandler, Samuel R. Coggin, and J. H. Fowler visited the Brown County area and resolved to settle there permanently. In July 1856 Chandler arrived with his wife, their eight children, J. H. Fowler (who became the first bridegroom in Brown County by marrying Chandler's daughter Mary Ann the following year, and who also brought the first herd of cattle to Brown County in December 1856), and seven slaves. On Pecan Bayou, just east of the site of Brownwood, they built the first dwelling in Brown County, a large log cabin. Chandler also operated the county's first store, a settlers' supply house, in his home. Although local mail service may have existed earlier, the first official post office in Brownwood was apparently established on February 20, 1860, and located in Chandler's house. Chandler was named postmaster, a position he held till January 23, 1867, when the post office was temporarily discontinued by the United States government.

On March 21, 1857, the first election in the county took place in the Chandler home, and Chandler was elected county commissioner; however, because of a mistake about county boundaries made by the state legislature, none of the officers elected in 1857 ever served. Instead they asked the legislature to correct its mistake, and it did so on February 8, 1858. The second election, on August 2, 1858, was also held in the Chandler home, and Chandler was elected chief justice (county judge). The first courthouse in the county, a log structure, was built on Chandler's farm in October 1858. Chandler was elected county treasurer on August 4, 1862. After the defeat of the Confederacy and the invalidation of county elections of the Civil War years, a new election of county officers was held on August 25, 1865, and Welcome Chandler rode with the results in less than a day to have them validated in Austin (140 miles from Brownwood), so that the county would not be without the rule of law. He was elected judge of the county board of appeals in 1869.

The Chandlers had five more children after arriving in Brown County. Their daughters Melissa and Laura Caldora were the first twins born in the county, and their daughter Ella was the second White child born there. The first Confederate flag in the county was made by Mrs. Chandler, her daughter Jane, and Mrs. Brooks W. Lee. It was first flown on February 23, 1861, when the residents of Brown County met in the Chandler home and voted to ratify the ordinance of secession. Chandler died in Williamson County, Texas, in May 1870 and was buried in Florence, Texas.