

SAMUEL SHERMAN CONNER



On Christmas Eve, 1855, a covered wagon, carrying a family from Frankfort, Kentucky, arrived at the small town of Pleasant Grove, Texas. In this wagon which camped near what is now the Pleasant Grove First Baptist Church were James and Lucinda Pemberton Conner together with their daughter Ora, the eldest. Four other children were born later. The Conner family made their home near the area where the Pleasant Grove Church of Christ now stands.

In a few short years the family grew with the addition of another boy who was christened Samuel Sherman Conner in honor of General Sherman.

As a young man Sam decided that he would become a barrister. And for that purpose his parents sent him to school in Lebanon, Ohio, where he studied hard to become a member of the bar but failed because of impaired eyesight, which did not permit him to read. Returning to his hometown, Sam devoted nearly all of his time to farming and real estate. It was in real estate that Sam acquired the land north of Lake June Road, and the plot of land from Pleasant Drive to Second Avenue.

Out of Samuel Conner's many varied interests, his first thoughts centered around education. He believed that everyone should have a chance to become well educated. It was Sam's desire to help others to become good citizens and because of this he saw to it that many young people received an education. Through his love for learning, he was inspired to donate the land on which the S. S. Conner Junior High School stood.

The S. S. Conner Junior High School was built in 1937, with Hoke Smith as the Architect. The school was dedicated on November 12, 1937, by its first principal, B.H. Macon.

Sam or "Uncle Sam", as he was called by many people, was interested not only in schools but also in community projects. Although Sam was a Methodist, he donated land for the First Baptist Church of Pleasant Grove and also for the Pleasant Grove Christian Church. It was Sam Conner who was responsible for Pleasant Grove's first housing development, a group of apartment house.

Then in 1964 S. S. Conner Elementary was built and at that time W. T. White was Superintendent and Mark Lemon was Architect.

Samuel Sherman Conner's life of good-will brought to an end March 7, 1948, when everyone was saddened by his death. A masonic funeral was held at the Pleasant Mound Methodist Church in memory of this truly great man who for thirty-five years was president of the Pleasant Grove Independent School District.

