



Samuel A. Sloan 1972

Sam A. Sloan was what might be called a both-barrels pioneer. On the one hand he was a key figure in developing some of the very earliest oil production in the Permian Basin. On the other, he laid some of the groundwork for the aviation industry in the Southwest – an industry that has become a major customer for the petroleum industry.

He was raised in Altus, Oklahoma. During World War I he flew combat in France for the Army Air Corps and gained a love of flying that lasted to the minute of his death. After the war, in 1919, he went into the oil business at Colorado City. His first well on the Landers Ranch was dry but reached 4,008 feet which was quite a well for those days.

In the early 1920's Sam Sloan shared in a series of significant wells. In some of these he partnered with Steve Owen of Tulsa or with other men, and in some he was alone. These included the discovery well in the Chalk Field in 1926, and a very early and major well in the great Dora Roberts Field in 1926 – 27. He drilled one of the first wells in Loving County and a substantial number in Mitchell, Reeves, and Taylor counties. Taken as a group, these show that Sloan was one of the earliest and most active of the oil operators in the Basin.

He made a substantial amount of money from these ventures, and he used much of it in attempting to get the American public to forget their Model T's and look to the skies. He was instrumental in establishing the first airports at Midland and Fort Worth, and the Midland field was later named for him. He was working on establishment of a Fort Worth – El Paso commercial service at the time of his death.

On January 1, 1929, Sam Sloan, who had become a Midland resident, flew his plane to Colorado City. He circled the Country Club at 25 feet altitude and waved at his friends. Moments later he was dead in a crash.

It has been 46 years since Sloan died. He was a bachelor, and today is survived only by a sister whose health did not permit her to join us.

He might have sailed on to the far sky of forgotten men, but his selection brings him here tonight, with us.