



Fred Turner, Jr. 1975

Fred Turner, Jr., of Midland, brought to the Basin's oil industry tremendous determination, outstanding business faculty, and an uncanny ability to see the unseeable beneath the earth's surface.

Born on a ranch in Coleman County, Texas, in 1896, he early dressed tools and learned about drilling. In April, 1927, he came to Midland as a scout for Marland Oil Company.

Shortly afterward he found what he believed to be a vacancy in the great Yates Field in Pecos County. Early-day surveying occasionally left such unsurveyed lands, and Fred Turner, Jr. found one and drilled it in 1933, after some classic litigation. It proved to be one of the greatest producing wells in the United States.

He pushed ahead with a discovery in Lea County, New Mexico: the West Lovington Field. There were others, in the Shafter Lake San Andres Field, and the Parker Wolfcamp and Parker Pennsylvania – all in Andrews County, Texas. He was active in Ector County and in many other Texas counties as well as in San Miguel County, Colorado.

As a successful oil operator, he might have been content, but his boyhood memories and natural bent took him into the ranching business as well. He raised fine cattle and thoroughbred horses, and distinguished himself in these Texas pursuits as well.

It was, in fact, while on his pecan farm near Brownwood, Texas, that he died, in February, 1964.

His and Mrs. Turner's spacious home in Midland now houses the Museum of the Southwest, the result of a family gift. His memory, however, is housed in the minds of many who remembered him as one of the foremost builders of the Basin.