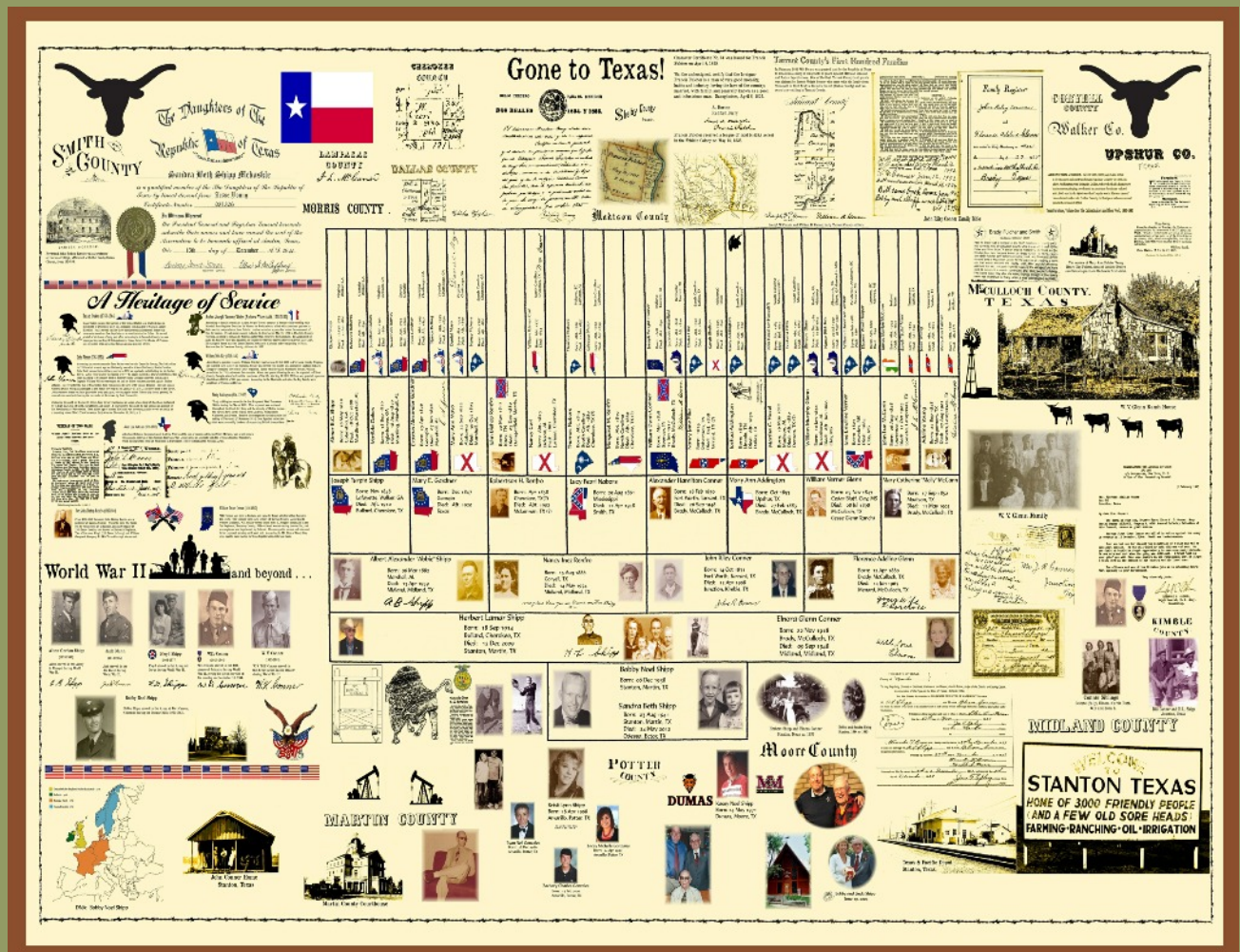


Shipp-Conner



Our Family History
(the fine print)



Reverend John Bishop Renfro

Reverend John Bishop Renfro, the son of William and Mary Renfro, was born in Knox County, Tennessee on May 20, 1817. He received his education under the tutelage of Dr. Isaac Anderson, a Presbyterian minister and founder of Southern and Western Theological Seminary, in Maryville, Tennessee.



The family moved to Benton County, Alabama sometime in the 1830s, where John married Nancy Curl, daughter of William and Nancy Curl, on January 8, 1838. Ten years later, along with her parents, they migrated to Rusk, Cherokee County, Texas. In 1852 they moved to the new town of Larissa, where in 1848 a one-room schoolhouse, Larissa Academy, was built. In 1855 the school came under the leadership of the Brazos Synod of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. From 1856-1858 John served as a professor at Larissa College.

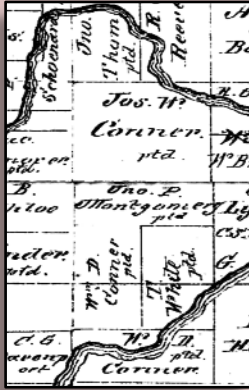
In 1860 John attended the annual session of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters, and Grand Commandery of Knights Templar in Huntsville. As a member of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters he was elected Chaplain.

During the Civil War John joined the 13th Texas Cavalry, also known as Burnett's Regiment, serving as Chaplain. Two sons also served: Virgil (a teacher like his father) in the 17th Texas Infantry and William (who later became a doctor) as a Sergeant in the 34th Texas Cavalry. In the years following the war, John continued to teach throughout north and northeast Texas (Pilot Point, Hallsville, New York and Jacksonville, to name a few).

John and Reverend J.H. Wofford worked together over the years. The 1870 *Texas Almanac* noted they were serving as agents, working to secure endowments for Trinity University. In 1873 they began publishing the *Texas Cumberland Presbyterian* newspaper in Tehuacana. Schools throughout the region benefited from John's instruction. At the time of his death on December 5, 1880 he was in charge of Chapel Hill College at Daingerfield. Nancy died in 1882 and both were buried in a family cemetery near Larissa.

Together John and Nancy had eleven children: Virgil (1839); Mary (1843), Martha (1845); William (1847); Frances (1849); Laura (1852); John Calhoun (1856); Robertson (1858); Ida (1860); Ella (1862); and Ada (1864).

LARISSA COLLEGE.



Joseph Wright Conner

On January 4, 1841 the Republic of Texas Congress authorized a contract with William S. Peters of Louisville, Kentucky to establish a colony (“Peters Colony”) along the Red River in north Texas. The Republic of Texas was in need of families and single men to settle that region, standing guard against Mexican invasion from the west and, of course, pervasive Indian depredations. The colony would expand through a series of contracts and eventually establishing a number of counties, including Tarrant.

Settlers emigrating to Texas under this contract were coming from Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois and Tennessee, and each head of family would receive 640 acres, while single men received 320 acres. Tarrant County had almost 150 headrights for these tracts, marking the introduction of some of the county’s most distinguished families. The Joseph Wright Conner was among the first hundred families to settle Tarrant County.

Joseph and his family emigrated from Tennessee to Texas in 1847 in an ox-drawn covered wagon. They stayed for a time at Farmer’s Branch in Dallas County before moving to Tarrant County in 1849, where they headrighted 640 acres of land about 2.5 miles west of an old Army post. Joseph’s land extended from the Trinity to an area which in the next fifty years would become the southwest part of Fort Worth, where industries like The Moore Iron Works were established.

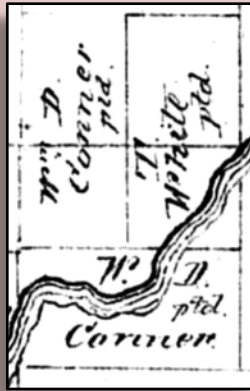
The family’s first home was a comfortable log house. However, when the families of Stephen Terry, James Allen arrived and purchased Joseph’s land, Joseph shared his home by moving his family into one room and shared the other room with the Terry and Allen families – a houseful! The three families lived together for about a year before the Conners’ new home was built about a mile south. The Conner, Allen, Terry and Peak families were good friends and remained so through the years. The Peaks family, instrumental in establishing the First Christian Church, which Lucinda (Wakefield) Conner later joined.

Joseph was born in Indiana, the son of Ishmael and Elizabeth (Dunn) Conner. He married Lucinda Wakefield in Spencer County, Indiana on October 12, 1826. To their marriage were born: William Dunn Conner (1828), John W., Margaret, Joseph, Jr. and Jesse. William, John and Joseph, Jr. enlisted in the Confederate Army, although John (Private) and Joseph (Bugler) were both discharged due to disability not long after signing up in January 1862. Joseph’s Certificate of Disability states he “never has been fit for duty by reason of heavy diseases”. Likewise, John was discharged on June 14, 1862 due to being “unfit for duty by reason of disease and general disability”. Both came home, but neither lived to old age. Joseph died in 1863 and John in 1866. Jesse Conner was an Indian interpreter and able to speak with them in their own language, as well interpreting (and dancing) their dances.

Joseph Wright Conner, Sr. died around 1859. Following his death Lucinda went to live with Dr. C.M. Peak and his family, who cared for her until her death in 1863. Both were laid to rest in Pioneers Rest Cemetery, Fort Worth’s oldest public cemetery.

Sources: *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 6, 1927, p. 102 and Fold3 (military records for John and Joseph Conner).

The Family of Wright Conner Among The Earliest in the County
Tarrant County’s First Hundred Families



William Dunn Conner

William Dunn Conner

William Dunn Conner was born in Spencer County, Indiana in March 1828, the firstborn child of Joseph Wright and Lucinda (Wakefield) Conner. Along with his parents and siblings he came to Texas in 1847. On March 18, 1849 he married Nancy Jane Fike, the daughter of Elisha and Sarah (Shelton) Fike of Farmers Branch, where his family first lived upon arrival in Texas. They soon moved to Tarrant County and settled on a 480-acre grant near Joseph's place.

Their firstborn son, Alexander Hamilton Conner was born on February 18, 1850, the first white child born in Fort Worth. Their other children were: Christian, Lucinda, Frank and Josephine.

William enlisted in the Confederate Army in Texas in 1863, although he was attached to John H. Morgan's 7th Regiment, Kentucky Cavalry. According to his Confederate pension record, William was severely wounded at the Battle of Chickamauga. An affidavit signed on his behalf by W.R. Rice of Brady, who served with William, provided additional details.

According to Rice's affidavit, William was wounded and also "at one time was captured by the Federals and made his escape from them." Rice also indicated he was with William from 1864 until the close of the war, adding "we started to Texas together with Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy." The Adjutant General's office in Washington, D.C. added the following to his service record (somewhat different than other accounts):

It is shown by the records that W.D. Conner, private, Company B (composed of remnants of various companies of Gano's Regiment), Morgan's Division (Cavalry), which was designated at various times as the 2d, the 3d and the 7th Regiment Kentucky Cavalry, was enlisted January 10, 1863. . . The Union records of prisoners of war show that one W.D. Conner, a private of Company A, 7th Kentucky Cavalry, C.S.A., was surrendered and paroled at Columbus, Mississippi about May 19, 1865.

In 1875 William sold his Tarrant County land and moved to San Saba County. On December 10, 1879 a short news item appeared in the *Austin American-Statesman*:

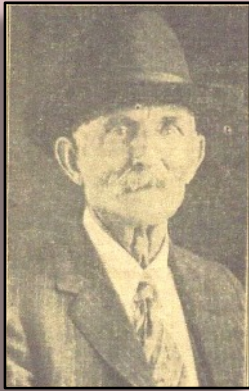
Dr. Saunders, assisted by Mr. Sedars, captured the man who abducted the patient from the asylum on Monday. His name is W.D. Conner, from San Saba. The case will be tried before Justice Lee today.

Although it's unclear who he had abducted, it's possible it was Nancy, who appears to have died around 1879 since he married Susan A. Tenny on November 25, 1880 in Hamilton County. To their marriage was born two children: twins Mattie and Jasper in December 1882.

William applied for his Confederate pension in 1907 in McCulloch County, describing his physical condition as "very bad . . . ruptured" due to the wound he received at Chickamauga. At the time, had he been able to work, he stated his occupation as blacksmith. His friend testified as to his inability to "support himself by labor of any sort. He is very old and feeble. He made a good soldier and was wounded while in service."

William died on June 16, 1917 in Brady at the age of 89 and is buried in the Live Oak Cemetery.

Sources: *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 6, 1927, p. 102 and Alabama, Texas and Virginia U.S., Confederate Pensions 1884-1958.



Alexander Hamilton Conner

Alexander Hamilton Conner was born on February 18, 1850, the firstborn son of William Dunn and Nancy Jane (Fike) Conner, and the first white child born in Fort Worth. Not long after his parents married on March 18, 1849 they moved to Tarrant County where his father purchased 480 acres near his grandfather Joseph Wright Conner's place along the Trinity River. At the time Fort Worth was considered the gateway to West Texas.

Even when he was enumerated for the first time in the 1850 census he was "A.H. Conner". On February 28, 1871, he married Mary Ann "Minnie" Addington, the daughter of Joshua "Parson" and Martha (Hazel) Addington, in Dallas. To their union were born: Carrie, John Riley, Alice, Lelah, and Elizabeth. According to one newspaper account, one [unnamed] son "met a tragic death a few years ago when he was killed between freight trains, and a child who died in infancy."

Years later A.H. fondly remembered their life in Tarrant County and early history of Fort Worth, when the county seat was Birdville. As was often the case in that era, towns would battle over the right to become the county seat. He recalled in 1926:

I remember quite distinctly when the county seat was at Birdville and the fight that was made to bring it to Fort Worth. The issue was decided by an election and whisky and sugar were set out in front of the two stores that were there. An Irishman went from one to the other and would yell out, "Fort Worth water tastes like whisky Fort Worth salt tastes like sugar. Hurrah for Fort Worth!" I followed him around from place to place to hear his next 'get off'. Then he would catch me and make me drink. Soon I was in the same fix the Irishman was.

Also I can remember clearly the Tonkawa Indians that were camped about our place. Our log cabin was fenced about with poles and we had old-fashioned stile [sic] blocks to go over instead of a gate. The Indians would never come over the blocks, but would jump the fence. I frequently drove sharp stobs for them to jump on, but they would always miss them. ¹

Through the years A.H. either attended Fort Worth pioneer reunions or was interviewed for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Here are some of his accounts:

He recalls the first election held in Fort Worth. He was only 6 years old. He served as Texas Ranger when he was 16 and engaged in a number of fights with Indians and outlaws. He still bears a wound in his head from an arrow which lodged in his skull. Dr. C.M. Peak of Fort Worth removed the spike, Conner stated. ²

"I was born in the residence of Ed Terrell in the heart of the fort settlement," Conner writes to the Pioneer Editor, "on February 18, 1850. At that time my grandfather and family, my father and family, and several other families were camped west of the fort, where the park is now. I have been told how our camp was surrounded by Tonkawa Indians, who camped close to the white settlers for protection against the Comanches. All were afraid of the Comanches.

"My mother was moved to the fort for my arrival for further protection, for trouble with the Indians was threatening. I believe that this was about six years before the election over the county seat, which then was at Birdville, but was moved to Fort Worth.

I went to school to Professor Hanna, and I often think of those happy days. I can almost see my dear schoolmates, Howard and Casley Peak, Bug Daggett, Dave and George Terrell, among others.

"A grandfather and grandmother, my mother, two uncles and an aunt are buried here in the Pioneer Rest Cemetery." ³ (October 7, 1938, p. 20)

In May of 1876 A.H. decided to head farther west to Brady, McCulloch County – or what would soon be Brady. Again, over the years A.H., a well-known and much beloved pioneer, was featured in a number of articles in both the *Star-Telegram* and Brady newspapers (*Brady Herald* and *Brady Standard and Heart O Texas News*):

Fifty-seven years ago Conner went to West Texas, settling near Brady. Later he conducted the first county meeting to determine the county seat, then located at Rochelle. Nineteen votes were cast, Brady getting the majority of them.

Conner recalled the establishment of the first store in Brady in 1876, the beginning of the present town of 4,000 people. Conner took part in one Indian chase in 1880. A ranch hand was killed by the Indians about a half mile from the ranch house. Conner, Dude Locklear, Bill Rice and Alf Reeves gave chase, but the Indians gave them the slip in the tall grass.

Relatives of the ranch hand, whose name was Parmer, only last year learned of Parmer's fate. His brother who sent to Mason to buy cotton, continued on to Brady to inquire about his kin, only to learn that he had been slain by Indians 53 years before. ⁴

Conner was born Feb. 18, 1850, in the little frontier town, which had its beginning from the garrison established in 1849, by Maj. Ripley Arnold and a detachment from the Second Dragoons, United States Army.

Conner grew to manhood in Fort Worth and its vicinity. At 18 he married Miss Minnie Addington of Dallas and in 1876 he decided to go farther west. He moved his family to McCulloch County and acquired land where Brady was about to be built. There were only two houses in the neighborhood when the Conner family moved there.

Rochelle, which had one store, was the county seat and was supply headquarters for the few ranchmen in the entire section Conner recalls. Voca was the largest settlement, boasting 10 families. McCulloch County's first election was held in the Fall of 1886, with Conner in charge. A majority of the 19 votes cast in the election favored moving the county seat to Brady. . .

Conner found the body of the victim of the last Indian raid in McCulloch County, a cowboy named Parmer. Parmer worked for Bill Doty, whose ranch was nine miles west of Brady, and had started to San Saba for a load of shingles. The Conner family had gone to the Doty ranch for a short stay while Doty and his partner, A.J. Storm, were in San Antonio on business.

One of the horses from the wagon came back to the ranch, the harness cut off, a short time after Parmer had started out. Conner found the wagon with Parmer's body under it, all the clothing gone, except for hat and boots. The Indian band was tracked for a time but escaped. This was in 1880 and was the last instance recorded of Indian depredations in McCulloch County, according to Conner. The country was settled up rather rapidly and Brady continued a steady growth. ⁵ (Star-Telegram, June 7, 1936, 25)

It appears the last child of A.H. and Minnie died on the same day, February 27, 1883, as did Minnie. Mary Ann was buried in the Live Oak Cemetery in Brady. A.H. married for the second time to Mrs. Alzeneth Bowers (née Holden). To their union were born two daughters, Emma and Addie.

A.H. died on September 26, 1948 in Brady and was buried in the Live Oak Cemetery.

Historical

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

A TEXAS OWNED NEWSPAPER

1849-1931

FORT WORTH, TEXAS *** Where the West Begins *** SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 1931.

The Story of Fort Worth

~~~~ ROMANTIC EPISODES IN  
THE RISE OF AN ARMY POST TO A METROPOLIS ~~~~



THE ARMY POST - 1849



FORT WORTH ~1869

Brief accounts are presented herein of some of the outstanding events in Fort Worth's history. The complete record of a people who have lived so robustly can not be told in so brief a space, but authentic details of the past that made possible the future have been sought. A good deal of time has been spent digging into musty files in an effort to relate truthfully and catch the spirit of early settlers.

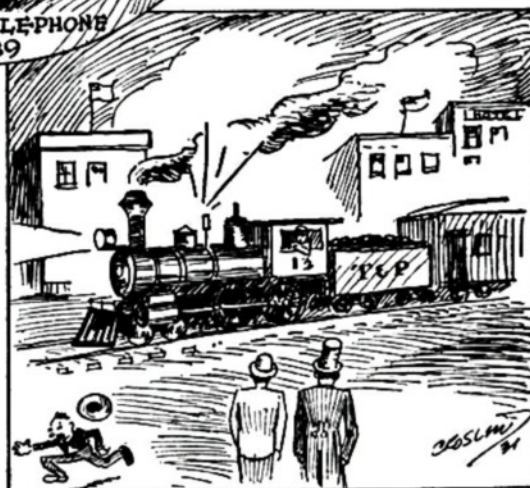


FIRST TELEPHONE  
1889

Some famous firsts connected with Fort Worth:  
First military units built camp in 1849.  
First boy born here was A. H. Conner, 1850.  
First girl born at the post was Sue Farmer.  
First county seat was Birdville.  
Julian Feild was the first postmaster.  
Dr. Carroll M. Peak was the first physician.  
The first mayor was W. P. Burtis, 1873.  
First permanent courthouse started in 1860.  
First church erected in 1871.  
First city hall erected, 1875.



FIRST NEWSPAPER - 1860



T & P ENTERS FORT WORTH ~1876