

HISTORY OF THOMASSON SQUARE

The Gus Thomasson area of Mesquite dates back to the mid-1950s, when the City of Mesquite named its major connector road to the Reinhardt community (Dallas now), after civic leader Gus W. Thomasson. The road was extended when the City annexed land up to the Casa View area and east to the Dallas Athletic Country Club in October, 1954, the same year Mr. Thomasson died.

Mr. Thomasson was the Dallas County director of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the middle years of the Depression, where he directed the work of 30,000 people. In 1942 he became the district director of the Wartime Office of Price Administration. The Office of Price Administration was established through the U.S. Office of Emergency Management to prevent wartime inflation. Mr. Thomasson would have directed the control of money, grocery pricing and rent while holding the position.

The annexation came during the City's building boom. Ben Tisinger, for whom an elementary school is named, is credited with building the sewer trunk line to the Casa View/Gus Thomasson area in 1955 at no cost to the City - he depended on the developers to repay him. Thus, development in north Mesquite began.

The Texas Business Review, a University of Texas publication, reported that, in June 1955, Mesquite led all other Texas cities in building permits per capita. The total was \$1,316 in permit fees per person, compared

to the second most in Irving of \$251 per person.

Getting an education in north Mesquite was difficult as schools were few and far between. To serve some of the elementary-aged students, Mesquite ISD leased four brick houses near the intersection of Gus Thomasson and La Prada for an annual fee of \$1 from the Centex Corporation. The school thus became known as The Centex School and housed up to 235 students.

In 1958 the City let two contracts for the erection of a 1-million gallon water storage tank and tower at Oates and Sarazen Drives to accommodate the growth. Building permits soared to \$14,365,341. Garland finished a distant second. In September, construction got underway for Mirabeau B. Lamar Elementary School, which would eventually become the Vanston Middle School campus during the 1964-65 school year.

And one month later, the City awarded an \$86,677 contract for the construction of Fire Station #2 at Sarazen and Oates Drives.

With schools underway, the area began to grow to fit other needs of the residents. In May, 1960, Cary Beth Israel opened on North Gus Thomasson, as did Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. For shopping, Broadway Square Center opened that same year.



**Gustavus Winzo "Gus"
Thomasson, Sr
1871 - 1954**



1952



1962