The community of Canadian petroleum geologists lost one of its founding and best-known members when T. A. Link died in Victoria, British Columbia, on June 25, 1980, after a long period of failing health. Ted, or “Doc,” as he was affectionately known by many, had legions of friends and acquaintances in the United States as well as in Canada. He was a vice-president of AAPG in 1950 and president in 1956-57.

Ted is survived by his wife, Viola; two sons, Ted and Bob; his daughter, Mrs. Albert Lehmann; and his brother, Walter (a distinguished petroleum geologist, now semiretired). Ted’s eldest son, Tom, lost his life in the service of the U.S. Air Force in World War II.

Ted was born in Laporte, Indiana. He grew up there with five brothers and four sisters. Most of the family were very serious scholars in several academic disciplines. However, geology, and hydrocarbons seemed to make Ted and Walter something different because, although both were very professional in their chosen field of geology, both were renowned practical jokers and humorists; in the opinion of some, Ted substantially exceeded even Walter in this regard.

Ted obtained his bachelor’s degree at the University of Chicago in 1918; about a year later he joined Imperial Oil Ltd. (and affiliated companies). He did field work in the United States Mid-Continent, in Colombia, and in the Western Canada sedimentary basin. In 1920, he may have been the first petroleum geologist to examine the entire periphery of the lower Mackenzie River basin, plus the then uncharted Richardson Mountains of the Northwest Territories. Also in 1920, Ted staked the discovery well of the Norman Wells oil field; but, because the location was next to well-known seepages, he never sought any personal credit for the location, preferring to emphasize the regional significance of this first-ever Arctic oil field.

In the late 1920s, Ted returned to the University of Chicago where he obtained his doctoral degree, his dissertation involved structural geology; indeed about one-third of his subsequent professional career was devoted to the foothills of western Canada where structural prospects are the consequence of the tectonic forces which gave rise to the building of the Rocky Mountains. Today, in the 1980s, the trade journals and the bulletins of the CSPG and AAPG give considerable emphasis to the activity in the “overthrust belt” from Utah-Colorado north to Wyoming, Montana, Alberta, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. Few realize that Ted Link, in the 1930s, was probably among the first to publish on the commercial significance of this long trend of eastward-thrusting sheets. Ted’s early cross sections are remarkable, in view of his hypothetical concepts without the benefit of seismic correlations and with very sparse subsurface geologic information.

In the middle 1930s in western Canada, funding of exploration during those depression years was miniscule—of the little commercial petroleum geology there was to do, Ted and one assistant did everything. Ted, perhaps to keep occupied, took a leave of absence and returned to Chicago, where he designed and built some of the dieramas of the petroleum industry as exhibits for the Second Chicago World’s Fair.

With Japan’s entry into World War II, Ted returned to the Northwest Territories in the early 1940s and directed an exploration program designed to find “backup reserves” for the Canol wartime project (a pipeline 550 miles across the Arctic from Norman Wells to Whitehorse).

After World War II, Imperial Oil Ltd. redeployed its exploration effort to the general Edmonton area, and in 1947, Imperial Leduc 1, a rank wildcat well, found oil in a Devonian reservoir of reefal material—a discovery which was the effective birth of Canada’s modern oil and gas industry. Naturally, Ted had immersed himself in this reef exploration play, but he did not forget to spend time with a young expanding geologic staff, often emphasizing to them the importance of reading Charles Darwin’s writings on Pacific Ocean reefs to appreciate Devonian reef reservoirs; and sending as many geologists as he could to see west Texas where reef pro-