

ABSTRACTS – 2016 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM, CASPER, WYOMING

to date will be made available for attendees to view. It is anticipated that by the time of the meeting more than 2000 net pages will have been scanned from more than 500 separate publications.

MYRON KINLEY AND THE *TORCH OF MORENI*

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Myron M. Kinley (1898-1978) has been called the first, the dean, the grandfather, and the original pioneer oil well fire-fighter. In 1913 he and his father Karl are credited with being the first to use explosives to extinguish an oil well fire. Myron formed the M.M. Kinley Company in 1923, specializing in controlling well blowouts and extinguishing well fires. During Kinley's long career he fought hundreds of oil well fires throughout the world.

On May 28, 1929, while drilling at a depth of 1460 meters, the No. 160 Romano-Americana well in Moreni, Romania blowout and caught fire. The derrick was destroyed and the 100 m high flames could be seen in the city of Ploiesti over 50 km away. Attempts to extinguish the well were unsuccessful and the well burned for over two years. More than one hundred workers were injured and fourteen died. By the spring of 1931, the "Torch of Moreni" had created a crater 76 meters wide and 20 meters deep. Newspapers covered the attempts to extinguish the fire and many of the photographs of the fire were used to create postcards.

Kinley first visited the No. 160 well in 1930, but was unable to convince the operators to allow him to try his fire-fighting methods. It took a second visit, a year later, before he was hired by the Romano-Americana Company, an affiliate of Standard Oil. Kinley arrived in Romania on crutches. A few months earlier, Myron had broken his leg while fighting an oil well fire in the huge East Texas (United States) oilfield. The Sinclair No. 1 Cole fire, where nine oilfield workers died, was extinguished by Myron and his brother Floyd in May, 1931.

A three-man crew consisting of Americans Kinley and Grady Chupp and Romanian Costeca Luper battled the fire for three months. On September 19, 1931 the fire was finally extinguished and Kinley was paid his \$50,000 fee. American

newspapers recounted his exploits and praised his heroism. Some Romanian newspapers provided a different version of the well fire's demise, stating that the fire was not completely extinguished by Kinley and his crew and the fire had reignited. The fire was then extinguished when large amounts of water pumped into the crater resulted in the collapse of the crater wall, smothering the flames on November 4th. Eighty-five years later, oil production facilities and producing wells surround the crater and patches of carbonized ground attest to the intensity of the "Torch of Moreni".

**THE EARLY UNITED STATES OIL INDUSTRY ON
WHELOCK SOUVENIR CHINA**

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POSTER PRESENTATION

With the rapid growth of the railroad in the late 1800s to early 1900s, United States travel greatly increased along with the demand for souvenirs. Images, many taken from postcards, could be printed onto pieces of china. Scenes depicted on souvenir china include historical sites, courthouses, churches, bridges, monuments, natural wonders, and industrial sites. The china pieces include plates, cups, bowls, vases, mugs, candlesticks, pitchers, toothpick holders, and steins. Souvenir china's heyday began in the 1880s, peaking from 1898-1909.

One of the most prolific merchants of souvenir china in the late 1800s and early 1900s was the Wheelock Company. W. G. Wheelock opened a store in Janesville, Wisconsin in 1855, selling crockery, china, glassware, and general merchandise. By 1900, with the help of his four sons, a total of six Wheelock stores operated in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, with the main store in Peoria, Illinois. Charles E. Wheelock, one of W. G.'s sons, and his employee John Roth became interested in souvenir china around the time of the 1892-93 Columbian Exposition in Chicago and shortly thereafter began selling the china in their stores. Within a few years the Wheelock China Company employed thirty-one salesmen covering the United States and parts of Canada and Mexico; one of the first United States' companies with a national sales force. The Wheelock souvenir china was manufactured in Europe, primarily in Germany and Austria. On the base of the pieces "Wheelock" is written, along with the country of origin, and often a local shop name. With World War I, this Austria-Germany source ended in 1915. The Wheelock China Company continued selling other products until 1975.