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**FREEING THE FURNACE SLAVES, OR THE BATTLE
OF THE BASEMENTS: HOW FUEL OIL DISPLACED
ANTHRACITE COAL, 1925-1940**

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The years between about 1925 and 1940 witnessed a dramatic transformation in the ways Americans in the eastern United States heated their homes. Although comparatively expensive, anthracite or “hard” coal had been the domestic fuel of choice in the northeast, especially among affluent households. It was comparatively clean to handle, while burning resulted in a fine ash without the clinkers that characterized combustion of its bituminous cousin. Best of all, it was all but smoke free, making it especially appealing at a time when many cities were experiencing anti-smoke campaigns. Its one drawback, not stressed by the industry, was that coal made men and women slaves to the furnace. The dramatic shift from hard coal to automatic oil heat that began about 1925 is a neglected aspect of American energy history. Writing on energy transitions often focuses on the broad shifts among primary or secondary fuels. Such an Olympian view obscures as well as illuminates, for all such changes arise out of many small decisions made by households, businesses and governments. The shift from anthracite as a domestic energy source to fuel oil involved many such small changes. It reflected consumer responses to the rising price of hard coal, cooperation among industries and government to standardized fuel oil, the development of complex dealer/service networks, disinterested assessments from technical journals, and the entrepreneurial actions of oil burner manufacturers. About 1925, the latter launched an advertising campaign aimed at women as well as men that promised to “free the furnace slaves.” By World War II, hard coal had lost the resulting “battle of the basements” and was well along the road to extinction.

**THE CHANGING OILFIELD: AN ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT PERSPECTIVE**

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Practices in Petroleum Industry have changed dramatically from the industry's origins for both oil and natural gas wells. Although we continue to drill and complete wells, virtually every practice involved in the process has changed. Technology has not only allowed the industry to drill deeper wells in a fraction of the time, but technology and practices have also impacted things from an environmental perspective. Today's multi-well drilling pads and horizontal wells mean less surface impacts while wells that may have taken years to drill with historic technology are now drilled in 2-3 weeks. The abundance of tank fires that used to be commonplace in areas like the Glenn Pool oilfield are extremely rare and the produced water disposal impoundments throughout Ohio have been remediated and are now absent from the landscape. Impacts to the environment have decreased considerably over time in the United States but also in many areas outside of the United States. This paper will present the evolution of several key practices that have had a significant effect on the environmental impact of hydrocarbon development and provide not only historical context, but also a brief comparison to practices elsewhere in the world. Further, the idea of best practices does not mean there is a single “best practice”. Rather, practices vary (sometimes dramatically) and it is common for different types of practices to be utilized in different areas to achieve both technical and environmental goals. With this in mind, the paper will also include some discussion on how and why practices vary by area, specific target horizon, and so on.