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ABSTRACTS

Edited by: William R. Brice

**IMPERIAL OIL'S DOMINANT ROLE IN
THE CANADIAN OIL INDUSTRY**

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Imperial Oil Limited has been Canada's dominant integrated oil company since it was established in 1880 as an amalgamation of Ontario refiners. Initially Imperial tried to fend off John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust, but succumbed to the Trust in 1898. After the breakup of the Trust in 1911, Imperial became a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, and is now 69.6 per cent owned by ExxonMobil. Imperial has led many of the notable achievements of the Canadian oil and gas industry:

- Sponsoring research that led to the process for desulphuring refined oil products;
- First cracking plant, and many other advances in refining;
- The Norman Wells discovery in 1920 and the Leduc discovery in 1947, two of the most significant in industry history;
- Extensive operations in South America from 1920 to 1948, and a tanker fleet supplying oil to Canada;
- Lead partner in the Interprovincial Pipeline, the world's longest petroleum pipeline;
- A major role in Alberta oil sands development, including the first commercial in-situ project at Cold Lake and a major interest in the Syncrude project.

This will just be a brief overview of a history that could fill volumes. Much of the material will be drawn from Earle Gray's new history, Ontario's Petroleum Legacy, which Bott has edited, and from Mileposts, the 1989 corporate history of Interprovincial Pipeline, which Bott authored.

**SAMUEL M. KIER (1813-1874) -
THE OFT-FORGOTTEN OIL PIONEER**

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During discussions of the early oil pioneers, one person is frequently absent from the hallowed group and he is Samuel Kier (1813-1874) of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Perhaps he is overlooked because he was about 10 years ahead of everyone else. But Kier deserves to be listed among all the other greats of the early days of oil, such as George Bissell, Edwin Drake, Abraham Gesner, and James Miller Williams.

Samuel Martin Kier, son of Thomas and Polly Martin Kier, was born September 19, 1813, somewhere along the Conemaugh River between Saltsburg and Livermore in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, and moved to Pittsburgh when he was 21. He quickly became involved in the express business (like the later Railway Express) as a forwarding agent. In 1846, Kier, in partnership with James Buchannan, later President of the United States, established "Independent Line," working with special "section" canal boats which could be taken apart and put on railroad cars where they were available, or put together and pulled along the canal system where there was no railroad. When later partnered with Benjamin Jones (of Jones and Laughlin Steel Company), this canal boat company eventually became, the "Mechanics Line." But by 1854 with expanded railroad competition, the canal boat Company was discontinued and Kier, Buchannan, and Jones went into the fire-brick business in Bolivar, Pennsylvania (later moved to Salina, Pennsylvania). They, Kier and Jones, also purchased iron furnaces at Armaugh, near Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Kier's connection to the oil business came through his father. Thomas Kier in 1839, financed by his son, began a salt business at Tarentum, Pennsylvania, on the Allegheny River near Pittsburgh. Thomas, had local drillers, using the spring-pole method, put down wells to depths of 500 feet to