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by Fred V. Byther
Oracle Resources

Exploration and Drilling Activity for the Deep and Downdip Woodbine Sands of Polk and Tyler Counties, Texas

Beginning with the discovery of the giant East Texas Field in 1930, the Woodbine has made its mark in the history of oil and gas. Yet 76 years later there are still significant contributions to be made from these remarkable sands. The search for new Woodbine fields has shifted far to the south, to Polk and Tyler Counties, Texas.

The Woodbine sands in Polk and Tyler Counties are distinctly different from those of the main Harris Delta in the East Texas Basin. The existing fields, all of which are located on the Cretaceous Shelf, have been referred to as the Downdip Woodbine. The Deep Woodbine applies to the Woodbine sands deposited south of the Cretaceous Shelf.

Production from the Downdip Woodbine in these fields is approaching 700 BCF and 26 MMBO, with the ultimate production on the shelf almost certain to exceed 1 TCF and 30 MMBO. An analysis of these fields suggests that they are largely deltaic and delta front sands consisting of coalescing, dip-oriented lobes at sites determined by abrupt increases in accommodation space.

Exploration for Deep Woodbine sands south of the Cretaceous Shelf is under way with large areas already covered by 3-D seismic. Drilling began in 2004 for reservoirs that could dwarf those found updip. Early results are encouraging, but the data from these 18,000- to 22,000-ft wells is being held tight by the companies who have invested in the play. What is now known is that these Deep Woodbine reservoirs exist; they are gas-filled and highly overpressured. Among the greatest hurdles to successful exploitation of the play may well be the engineering aspects of drilling and completing such wells. So today, the Deep Woodbine sands south of the

Cretaceous Shelf in Polk and Tyler Counties await the completion of a discovery well to announce their presence. And with that a new chapter will begin in the history of the Woodbine. ■

The Woodbine has made its mark in the history of oil and gas since the East Texas Oil Field was discovered in 1930. Today, 76 years later, the Deep Woodbine sands south of the Cretaceous Shelf in Polk and Tyler Counties await the completion of a discovery well to announce their presence, and a new chapter in the history of the Woodbine.

Biographical Sketch

FRED V. BYTHER attended the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) from 1964 to 1967. After serving in the U S N a v y , he returned to UTA from 1974 to 1977, receiving a BS in geology in May 1977.



Fred began his career in 1977 with J.D. (Jack) Sistrunk Jr. and began work for Sunmark Exploration in Dallas in 1980 as a Deep Anadarko Basin exploration geologist. Re-assigned to Sun Exploration in Denver as geological supervisor of the Williston District in 1985, he became a regional planner in 1986. He returned to Dallas in 1987 as a senior exploration geologist.

Fred moved to the Texas Gulf Coast with Oryx Energy Company, where he was assigned a seemingly insignificant field in Polk County. In a few years the field, Double A Wells, had become Oryx's most prolific onshore asset. Fred retired from Oryx in 1998.

Fred formed Oracle Resources, LC with Bryan Pershern and George Ainsworth in 1999. He is currently engaged in exploration for Deep Woodbine targets from 16,000 to 22,000 ft, supported by large 3-D seismic surveys.