

Springs, Wyoming, and carbon dioxide injection began. Today Rangely produces about 16,000 BOPD from 348 producing wells

GIANT UNDER THE HILL: DRILLING FOR THE SPINDLETOP GUSHER FROM 1899-1901

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When the Civil War ended, the search for Texas oil began in earnest. The unusual mounds and sour springs of Southeast Texas drew attention early, and by 1892 the Gladys City Oil, Gas, & Manufacturing Company was formed to focus the search on Sour Springs Mound several miles from Beaumont with its 9,000 residents. After three early dry holes in the middle of a national depression, investment capital dried up, and it took a mining engineer working on the salt domes of Louisiana and a one-armed reprobate, turned religious, from Beaumont to revive interest, drill one dry hole, and then finally bring the stunning Lucas Gusher into this world -- roaring, rock-laden, fouling the bayous and prairies, and leaving the world with the opportunities and problems that emerged from its discovery.

The men and one particular woman who were involved in the fifth and successful well are the focus of this presentation. Interesting individuals, they teamed up to solve the problems of drilling on the hill that had defied earlier attempts. They invented tools and processes that would lighten the load of others who drilled on these salt dome formations, and when they succeeded, they scattered around the world to continue the search for that all-consuming oil.

The Spindletop oil that erupted into the cold air in Beaumont, Texas, on January 10, 1901, dramatically changed the industry that fostered its discovery. One of the drillers predicted a flow of fifty barrels a day when they hit an oil sand at 900 feet. No one could conceive of the 70,000 to 100,000 barrels per day this one well would produce over the first ten days. The industry would have to change or be overwhelmed by the sheer size of this discovery, so Texas led the way into the oil-based 20th century economy.

FROM SALT LICKS TO STOCK TANKS – A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE EARLY SALT AND OIL INDUSTRIES IN WEST VIRGINIA

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In many places throughout the world, saline springs, oil and gas seeps, and related phenomena have proven to be surface indications of associated hydrocarbon accumulations at greater depths. That has certainly been the case in West Virginia. From salt licks visited by buffalo, deer, and other animals in prehistoric times, to the utilization

of saline springs for salt by Indians and early white settlers, through the salt brine drillers in the early 1800's who encountered oil as a nuisance (but utilized gas to fire their boilers), to the drilling of the first successful well drilled specifically for oil in 1860, the saga of salt licks, saline springs, gas seeps, burning springs, and their commercial implications and consequences are an interesting and important intertwined vignette in the tapestry of West Virginia's industrial and economic development.