

ABSTRACTS – SHREVEPORT MEETING, MARCH 26-29, 2003 – Mary Barrett, Chairperson

OIL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ARKANSAS 1921-2001

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We will discuss the historic discovery of oil in south Arkansas in 1921 and the subsequent production of oil through the year of 2001.

There will be references to the development of oil in the counties where oil production was established, the relative magnitude of the oil produced in each county. There will be a map showing the counties which had oil production and there will be a chart to indicate annual production during the time from discovery in 1921 through the total oil produced in 2001.

Oil- Industry History, v. 4, no. 1, 2003, p. 20-24.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE CADDO-PINE ISLAND FIELD, CADDO PARISH, LOUISIANA

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The Caddo-Pine Island Field, located principally in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, was the first of the very large oil and gas fields discovered in Louisiana. From its discovery in 1905 to the present it has had considerable influence both on the petroleum industry and the general economy of Northwest Louisiana.

The geologic feature responsible for this petroleum accumulation is a large, low relief, closed anticlinal structure which occupies the crest of the Sabine Uplift, the dominant feature between the East Texas Salt Dome Basin on the west and the North Louisiana Interior Salt Dome Basin on the east.

The majority of the production has been from reservoirs within the Upper Cretaceous together with those Lower Cretaceous zones which occur unconformably below the Upper and Lower Cretaceous contact. Other Lower Cretaceous zones have produced, but in relatively minor total quantities.

Through out the ninety-seven year history of the field total production has risen and declined only to be revived by deeper drilling, the development of new production techniques, and field extension drilling.

Now in its latter stages of depletion, most of this historic field's producing wells are being operated by local independents. Their future is tied to the price of crude oil as

they await new techniques capable of unlocking the millions of barrels of oil still in place in the Upper Cretaceous Annona Chalk.

Oil- Industry History, v. 4, no. 1, 2003, p. 3-12.

THE WELL AT WICHITA

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At the turn of the 20th century, municipalities in eastern Kansas were beginning to thrive because of large, recently discovered, natural gas reserves. Such discoveries and commensurate development attracted industries, capital and population from out of state. Understandably, those cities were envied by towns farther west. The *Wichita Daily Eagle* newspaper on March 7, 1896 noted that "If there is any one thing on earth that can prevent Wichita from becoming a great city, it is a lack of cheap fuel." Exhibiting foresight to avoid such failure, in 1894 the Wichita city council authorized a municipal bond issue of \$10,000.00 to drill an exploratory well on city property in search of economic deposits of coal, gas, salt or oil. Such well was spudded on October 19, 1895 in what now is downtown Wichita. From then until April 30, 1897, the city struggled with almost every imaginable problem before giving up the effort. There is a notable lack of information about this well, as being only published newspaper accounts of the day and a brief mention in an 1898 issue of *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science*. Problems of urban hazards posed by unreported and forgotten old wells became apparent in nearby Hutchinson, Kansas early in 2001 when fires and brine geysers erupted within the city. Thus, a search in old newspapers may prove useful to environmental geologists in finding pollution sources, potential hazards, etc. in urban areas.

Oil- Industry History, v. 4, no. 1, 2003, p. 25-31.

THE LOST HISTORY OF OHIO'S GRAND RESERVOIR OIL BOOM

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In 1984, citizens of Caddo Parish Louisiana proudly placed their new historical marker identifying the location of the "world's first over water oil well". The referenced well was the Ferry Lake #1, completed in 1911. Sources cited in making this claim included:

Franks, Kenny A. and Lambert, Paul F. Early Louisiana and Arkansas Oil: A Photographic History, 1901 – 1946. College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1982; and Shreveport Times, September 19, 1960.

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Once stated, the claim of “world’s first” was perpetuated in later articles and works. But, is it a valid claim? While certainly a significant achievement, with continuing commercial production to this day, Caddo Lake oil was not the first. Somewhere, lost in the archives, is the story of the oil boom in the Grand Reservoir located between Celina and St. Marys, Ohio. An article in the Celina Ohio Daily Standard of June 3, 1995 tells of the production from the 17,000 acre artificial lake that began in 1891. This allegation is substantiated by the 1903 volume of the Geological Survey of Ohio: “By 1890 the productive territory had been pushed to the eastern border of the Grand reservoir, and a year later wells were being drilled in that body of water.” By 1908 production had waned and many of the wells had already been abandoned, but in between, 200 – 300 wells were drilled in the lake. It is claimed that “hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil” were produced.

How did we lose this bit of history? Perhaps it was because the oil companies and operators were small businesses from the local area, and because the venture lasted only a short time. Possibly it was kept from the public eye because the experiment was viewed as a failure by locals. Also, oil was just a brief side-bar in the history of this man-made reservoir that was the “largest man-made lake in the world” at its completion in 1845. It had been constructed originally to provide water for the Miami – Erie Canal.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF SPINDLETOP

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The stories of the Spindletop oil boom in 1901 revolve around the roughnecks and the rascals who poured into Beaumont at the same phenomenal rate as the oil poured out of the ground. The small southeast Texas town swelled to five times its normal population, and for a period of only about two years the crowds ruled “the Hill.” Crime was rampant, money spilled out into the city streets, mud and muck and oil covered everything and everyone. The tales are boisterous and profane, hilarious and tragic, as a piece of the American Frontier made its way through the Big Thicket and Gulf Coast Plains of Texas.

But not all of the stories told have included the “rest of the crowds” that roamed the Beaumont streets and the nearby Gladys City rutted paths: the women and the children of Spindletop. Some were Beaumont born and bred; others came trailing after husbands and fathers. Babies were born in the crude camps, many of those same infants buried in occasional cemeteries. Women established homes as best they could. Many of the transient ones worked side by side with their men.

Their stories make up a poignant, easily overlooked chapter of the history of the oil boom at the turn into the 20th century. Seen through the eyes of struggling wives and wide-eyed children, Spindletop becomes a menagerie of sights and sounds and sensations dramatically different from the perspective of the oil millionaire, the banker, or the roughneck himself.

This paper looks through the eyes of the women and children of Spindletop, follows them across the Hill and along the corduroy road to Saratoga and Sour Lake and Batson Prairie, and presents a unique perspective of the hardships, and the innocent delights, of a world temporarily gone mad.

Oil- Industry History, v. 4, no. 1, 2003, p. 106-117.

**JENNINGS OIL FIELD
THE START OF LOUISIANA’S OIL INDUSTRY**

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Louisiana’s oil industry began September 21, 1901, with the discovery of oil at Jennings Field. The Jules Clement No.1 Well was completed as a spectacular gusher, spraying a fountain of oil into the air at a rate estimated to be 7000 barrels of oil per day. Just 9 months earlier, oil had been discovered near Beaumont, Texas, at Spindletop Field. Together, the Spindletop and Jennings discoveries ignited an “oil rush” of exploration and development activity throughout Texas and Louisiana.

Jennings Field has been a prolific producer, with total production of 124 million barrels of oil and 52 billion cubic feet of gas since 1901. Through 1920, the production from Jennings Field alone accounted for 67% of the total oil and gas production for the entire state of Louisiana. Jennings Field continues to produce oil and gas today and is still an area of drilling and development activity. Total production in 2001 amounted to 183 thousand barrels of oil and 148 thousand cubic feet of gas.

Oil- Industry History, v. 4, no. 1, 2003, p. 13-19.

**RANGELY OIL FIELD – COLORADO’S GIANT
STILL GOING STRONG AFTER ONE HUNDRED
YEARS**

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The Rangely Oil Field had a modest beginning in 1902 when Poole drilled a 750 foot test which produced 7 BOPD from a fractured, upper Cretaceous aged Mancos shale. Few would have imagined that this discovery would result in an oilfield