

**COWBOY ACTOR WILLIAM S. HART BATTLES  
REFINER MILON J. TRUMBLE**

Ann Mauer

*2284 Griffin Way 102-144*

*Corona, California 92879*

*mauerann@yahoo.com*

*<http://www.enviortechnicalimaging.com/>*

In 1928, a cowboy movie star protested a plan for a Trumble refinery in Newhall, California. Trumble refineries were well known by that time in the industry, and his processing units and large refineries were making millions at key oil fields around world. Behind the scenes, in the area surrounding the actor's ranch, was a rapid growth in oil, fuel, and hydrocarbon development. Advances out West in carbon-based energy had quickly become sophisticated with the arrival of fuel and hydrocarbon processing methods from Eastern U. S. and European groups. From the early 1920's until the year Hart drew his guns, investors built projects to extract minerals and hydrocarbons at this location with new processing techniques, including methods patented by M. J. Trumble. Competition amid these dynamics was soaring by the time Hart testified before the Los Angeles County Planning Commission to halt a Trumble refinery proposed for construction on a parcel that lay a mile from the actor's new mansion.

The incident remained off the local historical radar until Trumble's biographer learned the oral history of Trumble's conflict and examined old news reports. Heritage papers for the Western American inventor's career revealed an influential pioneer in traditional refining, synthetic fuels and metals. Why would the cowboy actor ride his established star-power to maximum advantage in order to influence townspeople and the county until the renowned refiner scrubbed his plan to build a facility on land he owned in the oil town 23 miles northwest of Los Angeles?

Trumble held the support of the federal government behind his successive ventures and self-funded experiments. He donated patented technology to his government and engaged in work with every major oil company on earth. News reports reveal that prospecting, drilling, storage, transport and energy processing in Hart's immediate area did not lead to the conflict choreographed by Two-Gun Bill. Trumble's refinery in particular was what Hart aimed to stop.

Bill Hart's mansion today is a museum located at 24151 Newhall Road, Newhall, California 91321. The actor became a renowned cowboy hero in 65 silent films between 1914 and 1925. His 10,000 square foot home with 27 rooms was called La Loma de los Vientos (Hill of the Winds). Hart's 256 acres in Newhall was named Horseshoe Ranch. Surrounding the

property today exists extensive oil drilling and hydrocarbon processing.

Among milestones in Trumble's race for progress, his encounter with Hart was brief and ended decisively. On the surface, this historic incident reveals gentility of earlier times, but legal contests that followed involving the Hart property provide a window to the kind of parallel development in Western petroleum, synthetic fuel, and hydrocarbons launched in Newhall in the 1920's.