

WILDCATting IN COLORADO - A LOT OF EXPLORATION, NOT A LOT OF PRODUCTION.

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POSTER PRESENTATION

What could be more fun than a buggy ride to the new oil well just 16 miles from town? Perhaps a ride in your friend's jalopy? Don't forget the picnic basket because the oil company has promised free lemonade and coffee to enjoy while you watch the drilling operation in progress. At least in the summer of 1918 it was a chance to forget the chores and the war overseas for a while.

Opportunities like this were common in Colorado from the earliest days until the mid-20th century. Small operators and wildcatters used variations of the social, public relations and fundraising events to great success. In some cases the whole community would pitch in dimes to support the venture, in hopes that this well would come in.

Newspaper accounts, historic photos, postcards and other records provide a unique look at the place of the wildcatter in the social history of rural Colorado.

BOOM, BUST, AND AFTER: LIFE IN THE SALT CREEK OIL FIELD

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Prospectors first struck oil in the Salt Creek Oil Field in northern Natrona County, Wyo. late in the 1880s. The first gusher came in in 1908. The subsequent boom lasted until the late 1920s, peaking in 1923, when the field produced more than 35 million barrels of oil. Tom Wall, who went to work in the field in 1917, stayed for decades and in the 1970s wrote out his memories of life in the oil patch through boom and bust. After 125 years and thanks to new technologies, the Salt Creek Field continues to produce today.

Editor's Note: See the full article at: <http://www.wyohistory.org/essays/boom-bust-and-after-life-salt-creek-oil-field>.

BE THERE OR "BE SQUARE" – THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THEODORE NEWTON BARNSDALL

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Born and raised in the shadow of Edwin Drake's landmark well in the Oil Creek Valley of Pennsylvania, it may have been no surprise that Theodore Barnsdall followed with dreams of his own petroleum ventures. Indeed, by the end of his relatively short life at age 66 in 1917, "Theodore" Barnsdall was an oilman well-known to the American public, and the companies he created and held interests in were often reported to be the only formidable rival to Standard Oil. However, while "the Standard" and John D. Rockefeller are names still widely recognized today, it seems that Barnsdall's role in the early exploration and development, transportation and refining of petroleum products has faded in U.S. petroleum history.

Theodore Newton Barnsdall was born in the summer of 1851 in Titusville, PA. His father, William Barnsdall, had emigrated from England and was a shoemaker-turned-petroleum pioneer in his own right. William partnered in the drilling of the second Oil Creek Valley well (Barnsdall, Mead, Rouse & Co. well no.1) following Drake's success, and is credited with building the first multiple-still kerosene refinery in Pennsylvania in 1860. Theodore reportedly learned his trade as a young teenager by first assisting with a well in Pithole, Pennsylvania, owned by his father.

Theodore Barnsdall later amassed numerous interests in coal, gold, silver, copper and silica mines; railway companies; and oil and gas companies within the U.S., Canada and Mexico. He both competed against and, reportedly, collaborated with Standard Oil. One of his most contentious business dealings involved allegations that he acted as a front man for Standard Oil's acquisition of the Osage Indian Territory lands in northern Oklahoma in the early 1900s. Following Barnsdall's death in 1917, his son-in-law, Robert Law, Jr., took over all of Barnsdall's interests and consolidated them into the Barnsdall Corporation.

In 1920, Barnsdall Corporation merged with the Bigheart Producing and Refining Company in Oklahoma, to create the Barnsdall Refining Company, which marketed its line of lubricating oils and other products under its "Be Square" and "Be Square to Your Motor" slogans. The International Barnsdall Corporation was incorporated in October 1921, with the Barnsdall Corporation owning a majority interest of its stock. In the early 1920s the company provided drilling equipment and personnel to improve development of the Baku oil fields under an agreement with Soviet Russia. In mid-1922, control-