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Oil-Industry History, Volume 19 (2018)

ARCHIBALD GEIKIE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCOTTISH SHALE OIL INDUSTRY

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The Scottish geologist Archibald Geikie (1835-1924) played a fundamental, but largely unrecognized, role in the establishment of the Scottish oil shale industry by providing James 'Paraffin' Young with the critical information about the location, thickness and likely areal extent of the organic-rich shales during their field visit together in 1858. Young then used the information to establish where to buy leases to extract the shales for commercial oil production ahead of his competitors. Geikie acquired this critical knowledge as a result of his work preparing the first map of *The Geology in the Neighbourhood of Edinburgh* published in 1859 and the accompanying Memoir, published in 1861. In 1866, Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company Limited opened the Addiewell works, the largest oil works in the world at the time. By the late 1860s, there were no fewer than 120 works distilling oil in Scotland, mostly from the shales of the Lothians, to the southeast of Edinburgh. Eventually, more than 22 million gallons of crude oil a year was produced in the Midland Valley of Scotland in an industry that employed nearly 40,000 people. Although the Scottish Shale Oil Industry eventually closed in the 1960s, there is now a renewed interest in extracting oil and gas from British shales. This is, perhaps, the most important legacy of Archibald Geikie's involvement in the Scottish shale oil industry.