

several of these engines, illustrated with photographs of some of the original engines, both in the field and restored.

THE LAKEVIEW GUSHER IN VINTAGE POSTCARDS

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One of the most photographed oil wells of the early twentieth century was the Lakeview gusher near Maricopa, California. Touted as the “world’s greatest gusher”, many early picture postcards show the gusher reflected in a lake of oil. The stream of oil and sand shot up over 200’ above the derrick, making for impressive scenes for the “Golden Age” of postcards (1907-1915). On January 1st, 1909, the Lakeview Oil Company spud their No. 1 well within the Midway-Sunset Field. At a depth of 1655’ and faced with financial problems, the company approached another nearby operator, Union Oil Company, to take over the drilling of the well. In return for a 51% interest in the well, Union took over as operator and on March, 15th, at a depth of 2225’, the well blew out. Estimates had the well gushing 125,000 barrels of oil in the first twenty-four hours and averaging 60,000 barrels of oil a day during the first three months. Earthen dams, and later a sixteen acre reservoir, were constructed downstream to contain the oil. On September 9th, 1911, the well finally caved in and the gusher was quiet. The cumulative oil spewed from the gusher was estimated at over nine million barrels, of which only four million barrels were recovered.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH: WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT? ...AND...WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

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The International Year of Planet Earth www.yearofplanetearth.org is a joint global initiative of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The IYPE is in reality a triennium (2007-2009) with the central year 2008 having

been proclaimed the International Year of Planet Earth by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 22, 2005. The IYPE, subtitled “Earth Science for Society”, has two major components - a science component focusing on 10 major societal relevant themes and outreach and education component. The actual implementation of the IYPE mission, goals, objectives, programs and activities is accomplished through National Committees (NCs) constituted for that purpose in individual countries around the world. The oversight of the National Committees and general management of the global IYPE initiative is conducted by the International Year of Planet Earth, Inc., a USA-based Delaware not-for-profit, 501 c. 3 corporation, and administered through a Secretariat and its Executive Director. Many diverse IYPE programs and activities are now planned and/or already taking place around the world. Many more exciting and diverse activities will be undertaken as triennium progress. One universal goal on which much effort will be focused around the world will be making the general public, governmental officials and other decision-makers at all levels more aware of the contributions that geoscientists and the geosciences have made to date to modern society, but also their still under utilized potential to make even greater future contributions to our planet and our society’s safety, health and prosperity. The USA geoscience community can and should play a very major role in this noble global endeavor.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT AWARDS BANQUET

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OIL IN CALIFORNIA

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California has a rich heritage in oil. Oil seeps have been noted by Native Americans and Spanish explorers in the vicinity of Los Angeles since about 1543. The post gold rush era of the mid-to-late 19th Century represented the first major phase of oil exploration and production in California. It was a period when the State legislature was concerned about a declining economic climate and explored means to spur the economy, and encourage growth and development. Some individuals, such as Benjamin Silliman, Jr. and William P. Blake, expressed optimism. Josiah D. Whitney, State Geologist and Director of the first California Geological Survey (1860-1874) presented a pessimistic view of petroleum as a true commodity, and this pessimism eventually sealed the fate of the Survey. By the turn of the Century, things would however turn around. The Los Angeles City Oil Field was discovered in 1892 by Edward L. Doheny, Sr., and would be the most historically significant

field in California, and its discovery would have profound impact for the industry worldwide. The discovery, situated in what is now Echo Park, would set off California's first oil boom during the revitalization period (1875-1900). Being in close proximity to downtown Los Angeles, its discovery sparked one of the first major land booms in the city. By 1898, the Los Angeles field made up 65 percent of the total quantity of oil produced in California for that year. Within a few years there were over 200 oil companies and 2500 wells within the city limits. The Los Angeles City Field would become one of the major oil producers in the world. Of most importance is the effect this field had on the industry, attracting many due to its peculiar location to downtown Los Angeles. The discovery of the Los Angeles City Oil Field would soon lead to other fields being discovered throughout the Los Angeles Basin during the early 20th Century, including the proving of seven giant fields (Brea-Olinda, Beverly Hills, West Coyote, East Coyote, Montebello, Richmond and Santa Fe), with the Los Angeles Basin area becoming one of the major oil-producing areas in the world. It was also during this time that Doheny would be instrumental in the conversion of coal-to oil-burning locomotive engines, which serve as the harbinger of a new era of petroleum-fuel transportation.

During the early 1920s, California became the most oil productive state in the country, and by 1923, one of every five barrels of oil was produced from the Los Angeles

Basin. Notably, thirteen fields would be discovered along what is referred to as the Newport-Inglewood Structural Zone (NISZ). The northwest-southeast oriented Newport-Inglewood Structural Zone is an active fault characterized by major right-lateral movement in the southeastern portion of the Los Angeles Basin. Over 3.4 billion barrels of oil have been produced from these fields since the first field, Beverly Hills, was discovered in 1900. Most of the subsequent production was derived from discovery of the super giant Huntington Beach and Long Beach oil fields in 1920 and 1921, respectively. Dramatic production and decline trends during the 1920s and 1930s directly reflected the closely spaced town lot drilling campaigns and unrestricted wasting of reservoir pressure. Nearly 40 percent of the total oil production for Southern California has come from fields situated along this structural zone.

By the 1950s, California in total cumulative output produced 21 of the country's 81 top oil fields, with three fields in the top ten, and by the early 1980s, potential offshore production was in the forefront of California's oil industry. In 1957, the city of Los Angeles celebrated the rich oil heritage of Signal Hill with the symbol of oil derricks on the Seal of the County. Political correctness concerning the county's faith-based heritage resulted in removal of this symbol, along with the religious symbolism, in 2004.



California oil wells in the Los Angeles area, c1920s. [Postcard Courtesy of Stephen M. Testa].