

patent for his process despite the fact that Gesner was first in the field, and the consequences of this.

**A MISSING LINK? THE CARMAN & FAIRBANK OIL FIELD AT BOTHWELL, ONTARIO (1900-1920) AS A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL AND CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT IN CANADIAN OIL PRODUCTION**

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A year before North America's first commercial oil well began production at Oil Springs in 1858, oil was found near Bothwell, twenty miles southeast. Forty years later, in 1898, on leases purchased by partners C.O. Fairbank and Frank Carman, Bothwell oil production resumed in earnest. Oversight of the new field was entrusted to drillers from Fairbank fields at Petrolia, Bruce McLeod and his son J.H. McLeod. The McLeods corresponded regularly with Fairbank office manager, A.M. McQueen, concerning field operations; this shared oversight strengthened their friendship, forming a foundation for development in the next stage of Canadian petroleum production at Turner Valley, near Calgary.

In 1915, Fairbank Oil's long association with the Imperial Refining Company resulted in McQueen accepting the position of vice-president responsible for Imperial's newly created exploration and production departments. With Imperial's 1921 acquisition of petroleum assets at Turner Valley, McQueen asked his trusted friend and colleague, J.H. McLeod, to carry the collective experience of three generations of Southwestern Ontario's oil producers to a new generation of oilmen emerging at Calgary. For the next quarter century, McLeod provided increasing leadership to Western Canadian petroleum production.

This paper draws on over twenty interviews with people in Alberta and Ontario, as well as analyses of primary and secondary sources, to provide a picture of oil production at Bothwell during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. More importantly, this research reveals managerial and social networks evolving at Carman and Fairbank, as they were in businesses across North America during this period. These findings reveal a previously missing, but critical link in Canadian petroleum history, key to understanding the chain of events that brought Southwestern Ontario oilmen to Alberta.

**“STORIES OF A THIRD-GENERATION INDEPENDENT OIL PRODUCER”: AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

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Today more than ever, Americans are keenly aware of the influence that oil has on their daily lives. However, when they talk about oil, most Americans limit their conversations to the industry's major companies and their record earnings. It seems that over the years the public's definition of the petroleum industry has become corporate offices filled with people in expensive suits. In response, the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism (ORA) is attempting to broaden this definition by shining a light on an oft forgotten member of the petroleum industry: the independent producer.

In July of 2007, the ORA began an oral history project entitled *Stories of a Third-Generation Independent Oil Producer*. The project highlights 66-year-old independent oil producer William L. Huber of Plummer, Pennsylvania. With the help of his son, Mr. Huber operates 80 active stripper wells in the Oil Region National Heritage Area on the same lease his grandfather drilled. Using a humble and straightforward style, Mr. Huber communicates his family's history and the traditions behind independent production. His story challenges Americans to remember the independent producer. This paper will document the process of creating *Stories of a Third-Generation Independent Oil Producer*, emphasizing the importance of collecting oral histories from the wide variety of people in the oil industry. Furthermore, it will describe the challenges associated with this particular historical methodology.

**THE POLISH CONNECTION**

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The historic oil fields of southwestern Ontario are strewn with tales of success: John Henry Fairbank. Jake Englehart. John E. Crosbie. But perhaps the most poignant is the story of William Henry McGarvey. Rising from his beginnings as the son of a humble shopkeeper, to rubbing shoulders with European aristocracy, McGarvey ultimately died brokenhearted at how the clash of First World War superpower armies laid waste his empire.