

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.

Yet little is known about McGarvey's European exploits and what became of his company and family after he died in 1914. Author Gary May is intent on learning more about McGarvey and ensuring he takes his deserved spot among Canada's pioneers of oil. Last year, Gary travelled to the oil fields of Eastern Europe, and the streets of Vienna, in his bid to unearth more pieces of the McGarvey puzzle, and returned with an emerging picture of a man who is revered to this day in petroleum circles there as a key figure in the development of the industry.

McGarvey arrived in the Austria-Hungarian province of Galicia as head of the Continental Oil Company of Hanover, Germany, determined to learn whether the Canadian drilling methods he brought with him could be applied in conditions there. His early years in Galicia were marked by stories of subterfuge and low-tech industrial espionage, as local oilmen sought to understand his revolutionary methods. McGarvey was a hit, but his success did not come without controversy, as he found himself hauled into court over patents on the equipment he introduced.

One hundred and twenty years ago, the typical worker employed in those enterprises was from an agrarian, peasant background. McGarvey, aware of how foreign an industrial existence must be to them, employed a level of enlightenment with his workers and their families that placed him generations beyond his North American counterparts.

While he never learned the local languages, McGarvey was readily accepted into Galician society and recognized as a European businessman who introduced foreign capital to the country. The Canadian-born oil tycoon known to his friends simply as "Mac" was truly respected. His reputation was such that his visits to dozens of small communities across what are now Poland and the Ukraine, to put down test drilling holes, became the big news of the day.

If you visit Glinik, Poland today, you will still find the oil refinery and machinery factory McGarvey and his partner, Palestinian-born financier John Simeon Bergheim, built in the 1880s. The factory survived czarist Russian and German occupation, as well as the Communist era and today, under Poland's new democratic regime, it still churns out equipment for the mining industry.

## A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY THROUGH TWO EARLY OHIO OIL BOOMS

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Photographs and postcards have helped to illustrate the history, geography, and industrial growth of the United States. This is evident in their depiction of the early "boom days" of the oil industry. Two of Ohio's oil booms, the oil boom of northwest Ohio and the Bremen-New Straitsville boom of south-central Ohio, are well-represented by photographs and postcards of oil derricks, oilfield fires, storage tanks, and refineries.

The first giant oil field in the United States was discovered in northwestern Ohio near the city of Lima in 1885, a year after natural gas was discovered near the town of Findlay. The discovery of the Lima-Indiana oil field set off the *oil boom of northwest Ohio*, a period of land speculation and rapid oil field development that lasted over 20 years. The field propelled Ohio into the leading oil-producing state from 1895-1903. As the field was extended to the south, the nation's first *over water* wells were drilled in Grand Lake St. Marys, then the largest man-made lake in the world. John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil of Cleveland, soon to monopolize the oil refining industry, built storage tanks, pipelines, and a refinery near Lima. The Ohio Oil Company, now Marathon Oil, was organized in the state in 1887 and still maintains an office in Findlay.

South-central Ohio's Bremen oil field was discovered in 1907 in Fairfield County, which led to the discovery of the New Straitsville oil field in adjoining Perry County two years later. The villages of Bremen and New Straitsville saw the oil fields extended to town lots. Wells were often so close together that a person could jump from one derrick floor to another. The Bremen-New Straitsville oil boom lasted until the early 1920s and was the last significant Ohio oil boom in the early 1900s.

## THE EARLY PETROLEUM INDUSTRY OF PETROLIA, ONTARIO ILLUSTRATED ON POSTCARDS

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In the early twentieth century, picture postcards were both a means of communication and a popular collectible. The North American petroleum industry was represented with postcard views of wooden oil derricks, oil gushers, oil fires, and refineries. Although Petrolia's earliest oil boom was years before the *Golden Age* of postcard collecting (1907-