

Mr. Oil and Gas

By *Aubrey Kerr*

Wednesday, September 27, and the first luncheon meeting of the Petroleum History Society for the 1989-90 season was chaired by Bill McLelland, President.

The guest speaker, former Deputy Minister, H.H. Somerville was introduced by Aubrey Kerr. In his inimitable style, (the odd wink), Hubert left no doubt as to why he and Peter Lougheed had parted company in 1972, "I figured he was going to be around longer than I was" (this in
(Cont'd, p. 2)

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Luncheon Presentation
"The Road to Turner Valley"
(The Hell's Half Acre Interpretive Centre)
by Larry Clausen*

Time: 12 noon

Date: Tuesday, October 24, 1989

Place: Palliser Hotel

Cost: \$16 for members; \$20 for non members

RSVP: Rhonda Boorman 269-6721 by noon, October 23

*Biographical Information on Mr. Clausen on p. 5.

sharp contrast to the Manning/Tanner days of mutual respect and esteem).

Somerville had started off as a filing clerk with the Alberta Government and his first contact with mining lands was in March 1931 shortly after Edmonton had finally gained its natural resources from Ottawa.

This native of St. Marys, Ontario who grew up at Clive would advance in the Department of Lands and Mines over the years to become deputy minister in 1952. On "retiring" in 1972, and after a brief stint as chairman of the Suf-field Project, Somerville consulted for Alberta Energy's heavy oil pipeline from 1975 to 1986. Hubert's remarks carried a common thread: wry cryptic irony of how his erstwhile opponents would finally realize that he was really trying to achieve "pro bono publico".

His accounts of how he cut through red tape (something we see little of anymore) was exemplified by the spacing unit problem. Industry was trying to evade offset obligations by moving over into a far corner of the new 160 acre patterns. Ian McKinnon then chairman of the Conservation Board was greatly agitated and sought Somerville's help. The order in council cutting off escape.

The society was truly fortunate to have had a speaker of Hubert's stature, one who has really lived through Alberta's entire oil history and made such important contributions to the smooth administrative process for which Alberta had become famous.

The Publisher

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Submissions on historical topics related to Canada's petroleum industry are welcome. For information on membership or society activities, contact society president W.R.S. McLellan (403) 290-2840.

President's Report

With this first newsletter since the summer break, I feel it is appropriate that our membership be informed of all the recent developments affecting our Society. At present, the Society has four exciting projects under way:

Hell's Half Acre Interpretive Centre at Turner Valley

At the invitation of the Alberta Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, your executive has nominated two members, one of whom will serve on the Turner Valley Gas Plant Advisory Board together with other interested organizations and community leaders. Currently, the Historic Sites Service is preparing architectural drawings recording the site's current condition. The service is also securing the site from trespassers and, as much as possible, from the elements. It is the Minister's intention to prepare a development/preservation strategy for the site, with the Petroleum History Society's assistance, as soon as possible.

Oral History Project

Unfortunately, our efforts to reestablish the Petroleum Industry Oral History Project proceed with frustrating slowness. The Society, together with the Canadian Petroleum Association, is applying to establish a separate organization to undertake the project and be accredited with the status of a charitable organization for income tax purposes. We hope the necessary bureaucratic and legal steps will be completed by year-end.

Series of Commemorative Lapel Pins

Together with INFO-TECH, a Maclean Hunter affiliate, the society has developed a limited edition lapel pin series commemorating six significant events in the first 100 years of the petroleum industry in Canada. The six pins are of antiqued gold colour with an accent colour border, beautifully displayed in a red velvet carrying case. A pamphlet highlighting the significance of the events commemorated is enclosed. We expect delivery of the 500 pin sets before the end of October, in time for Christmas gift giving. The sets will sell for \$120 each. The society will apply revenue generated from the sale of these pin sets to our Oral History Project.

A special "thank you" is extended to Esso Resources Canada Limited for their assistance. Three Esso artists, Susana Espinoza, Philip Penrose and Doreen Ouchi, worked closely with a society committee and INFO-TECH to produce this excellent quality series. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

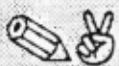
Underwriting of CKUA Radio Programming Project

Your society has entered into an agreement with CKUA Radio in Calgary (part of the Alberta Government sponsored radio and television education network, ACCESS) to produce two series of radio programmes and educational materials for distribution to schools and libraries throughout the province. The project is an ideal opportunity for our society to fulfill its expressed purpose "to collect, conserve and disseminate information relevant to the history of the petroleum industry in Canada". The project will also assist our society in our objectives to develop "programming and products for use in all levels of education" and to produce "audio-visual programs...for public viewing."

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Here it is Fall again, and time to renew your membership in the Petroleum History Society. Each year we build upon the successes of the preceding year and 1990 will be no exception. As detailed elsewhere in this issue of *Archives*, your Society is actively working towards renewing the Oral History Project, has undertaken to produce a limited number of commemorative lapel pin sets before the Christmas season, and is underwriting a project to produce two radio broadcast series and related educational materials. Our noon luncheon meetings with guest speakers continue to be well attended.

Please make use of the Application for Membership/Renewal form included in the issue of *Archives* and renew today. We are a small but increasingly important Society, and every member is critical to our success.



Renew Now!

Research and program development, and fundraising by CKUA, will begin shortly. The first series of radio programs will be broadcast next fall.

As you can see from the above, your society is moving ahead on many fronts to fulfill its objectives. As these projects progress, more and more of our membership will become involved on advisory committees and the like. If you will help with any of these projects or have ideas for additional ones we should begin, please give me a call at 290-2840 (office) or 288-9089 (home).

W.R.S. McLellan,
President

RADIO PROGRAMME PROJECT

The Petroleum History Society has entered an agreement with the ACCESS NETWORK (CKUA Radio in Calgary) to produce two series of radio programmes as well as educational materials for use in public libraries and schools. The project will entail the interviewing of numerous oil industry pioneers and using selected segments of the oral history tapes stored in the Glenbow archives, to produce a series of 26 half-hour radio episodes for broadcast in 1990. Subsequently, the research and accumulated interviews for this first series of 13 "docudramas" of selected historical events. This shorter series will be broadcast in 1991, using actors, sound effects and innovative production techniques. In the Fall of 1991, materials from the two radio series will be used to develop audio materials, teaching aids, etc. for distribution to provincial schools and public libraries.

Funding for the project will be obtained from industry and government sources by Access Network, with a modest contribution by the Petroleum History Society. Your Society, as underwriter of the project, will primarily provide advice and background material on the people and events involved. Copies of all taped interviews and programmes will be donated to the Glenbow Archives.

Your Executive is excited about this project and looks forward to involving many of our membership in a resource or advisory capacity.

Book captures Clark's contribution to oil sands*

Edmonton -- On these long, hot Indian summer nights, to drive between Calgary and Edmonton is to touch an elemental Alberta which is part of the past as well as the present.

The fields are flecked with the lights of farmers' pickup trucks and combines working around the clock to bring in the grain crop.

And the skyline is etched with the lights of drilling rig masts; central Alberta is, once again, a major geological target as oil companies join the long-anticipated rush to punch down some 2,500 wells planned before the yearend.

This season of harvest was a fit setting, Tuesday night, for the University of Alberta Press to launch the publication of the book *Oil Sands Scientist, The Letters of Karl A. Clark 1920-1949*.

During this career, Clark modestly described himself as a research engineer.

He was much more.

For better than 30 years, Clark devoted his career at the University of Alberta and with what is now the Alberta Research Council to develop, then see through to successful commercialization, the hot water separation process used to extract oil from the bituminous sands of northern Alberta.

The magnitude of his accomplishment is measured by the fact that he and his colleagues had basically solved the problem of commercial oil sands development by the mid 1920s.

It took the greatest oil companies and the most sophisticated regulators in the world 40 years to accept and apply the breakthrough.

In coaxing and prodding the process along, Clark pioneered technology transfer between the academic and

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business communities of Western Canada.

He never made more than an academic's salary; he left a modest estate, in monetary terms.

But he have an enormous legacy of scientific and engineering knowledge to the companies and people of Alberta.

When the depression struck in Alberta, he found himself almost out of a job, as a parsimonious government wound down its budget.

Yet he had established a network of colleagues, and they kept his career going.

Chief among his associates was Sidney Martin Blair, the first president of Canadian Bechtel Ltd., and the father of Nova Corp.'s chairman and chief executive officer, Robert Blair.

As a young graduate student, Sid Blair worked with Clark to develop the hot water separation process for the tar sands.

Clark and Blair also did fascinating work in the commercialization of bitumen as a paving material.

There are still roadsides in the Jasper National Park, in Alberta, where one can gather up traces of the asphalt that Clark and Blair used in their tests.

During the depression, Sid Blair -- by then a researcher with British-based Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd., a forerunner company to Texaco Inc. -- took Clark into his company as a consultant.

When he helped to create Canadian Bechtel after the war, Blair had the joy of building both Great Canadian Oil Sands and Syncrude, the two major oil sands plants now in operation in Alberta.

Here, he was able to see the work of his former thesis adviser, mentor and employee, Karl Clark, come to fruition.

And, in one of the poignant turns of this region's history, Clark died in 1966, six months before the Sun Oil Co. (now Suncor Inc.) commenced synthetic oil production at the Great Canadian Oil Sands plant in Fort McMurray, using the chemical engineering breakthroughs Clark spearheaded.

In spite of the significance of his work, it has taken Mary Clark Sheppard two decades to produce and find a suitable publisher for the kind of genuine labor of

(Clark, cont'd)

love that only a daughter can accomplish for a father.

Clark was a literate man and a wonderful, prolific writer; with a rhythmic, North American style evocative of his contemporaries Dashill Hammet and Ernest Hemingway, he recorded his own history in hundreds of letters to friends and associates.

Thankfully, much of this correspondence survives, and has been assembled, edited and narrated by his equally literate daughter.

On Tuesday night, at the university's faculty club, academics and family friends gathered to launch the long-overdue definitive record of Clark's life and times.

The oil sands, as they are now known, have been a chief preoccupation of Canadian oil producers for 100 years.

The significance of the Athabasca sands has been known to geologists since Robert McConnell, of the Geological Survey of Canada, made the first scientific field study of them in 1888 and 1889.

It is perhaps the most fitting book mark to Clark's letters that the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board has just revised upward its estimate of the heavy oil and oil sands resource in Alberta to 3.5 trillion barrels of oil.

Just the commercially mineable portion of this wealth is now assessed at 33 billion barrels.

The British-American poet T.S. Elliot wrote during Clark's lifetime, "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring is to arrive where we started and to know the place for the first time."

Karl Clark, we finally know you.

Larry Clausen

Larry Clausen, Manager of Corporate Administration for Pembina Corporation, will address the Petroleum History Society at a luncheon on October 24th. The subject of Mr. Clausen's address will be the involvement of the Hell's Half Acre Society in establishing an interpretive centre at the site of the Turner Valley gas plant. The Turner Valley plant began operations in 1914 and was the first plant in Canada to refine and produce natural gasoline.

Mr. Clausen will outline the Hell's Half Acre Society's background and original purpose, as well as the changes in the Society's purpose through time, leading to its current vision for the Hell's Half Acre site. Included in this narrative will be a review of the Society's lobby and negotiation efforts with respect to the gas plant and a discussion of the current plans for the site.

In addition to his responsibilities at Pembina Corporation, Larry Clausen is chairman of the Petroleum Resources Communications Foundation, Chairman of the Canadian Petroleum Association's Human Resources Committee, Chairman of the Calgary City Ballet and Director charged with promotion for the Hell's Half Acre Society. In this capacity, he sits on the Alberta Minister of Culture's Advisory Board for the Hell's Half Acre site.

The Pin Craze Lives!*

Remember how crazy people were about pins during the Olympics? While you probably weren't one of the committed who spent days and weeks collecting pins, chances are you were still affected. Don't you wear a favourite pin on a coat or jacket? Or have a pin collection in a drawer somewhere? It seems that most people do.

The phenomenon is probably here to stay, and the Petroleum History Society is taking advantage of it to help fund the Oral History Project. During the summer, your board struck a task force to investigate whether there was a market for a series of high quality pins commemorating the first 100 years (1850-1950) of Canada's petroleum industry. Based on firm orders from the Society's corporate members, we determined that there is a market.

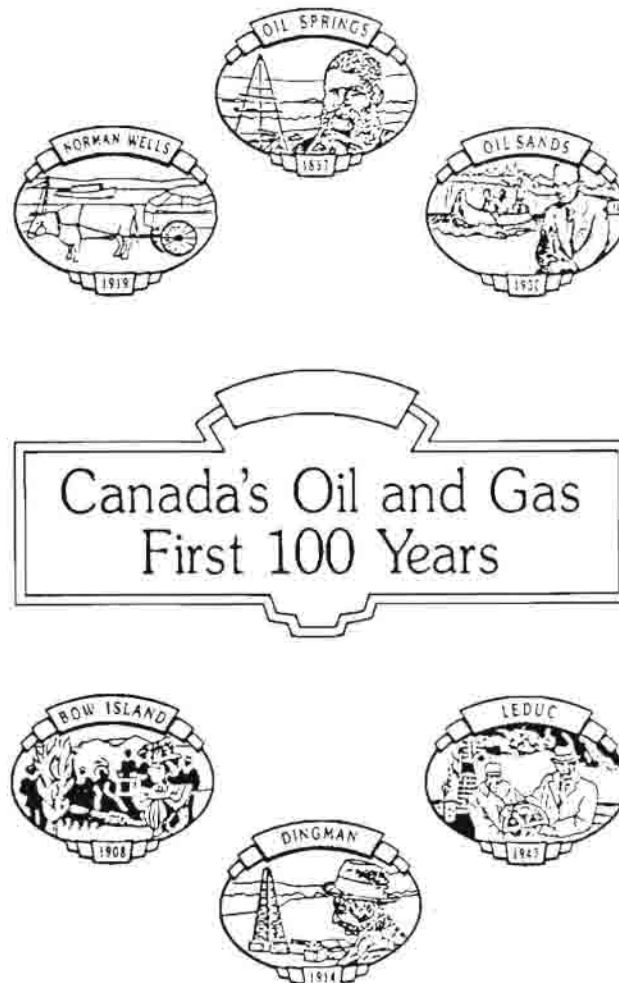
Consequently, we have begun a campaign which, if successful, will raise a fair amount of money for the Oral History Project.

In case you've forgotten, the Oral History Project is a two year, \$200,000 project which will record the memories of oil patch oldtimers, and the transcribed cross-referenced tapes kept in the Glenbow archives. The idea is to preserve the early years of the industry for posterity.

How will pins help serve this cause? Esso contributed the talents of

three artists who, among them, designed pins around six key events in industry history: Oil Springs (1857); the oil sands; Old Glory (1908); Dingman #1 (1913); Norman Wells (1919); and Leduc # 1 (1947). With the assistance of an organization called Infotech, we will market limited edition sets of these high grade pins for \$125 each. Our net from these efforts could total \$20,000. That's a small part of the total we need for the Oral History Project, but it's a big step in the right direction.

To place your order, 'phone Infotech at 276-7881.



*We hope.

The Petroleum History Society gratefully acknowledges financial support from the following institutional members:

Alberta Chamber of Resources
Alberta Natural Gas Company Ltd.
Alberta Patch Work
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