



PETROLEUM  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY

ARCHIVES

Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society

November, 1999; Volume X, Number 5

*if you missed the...*

**OILPATCH CHARACTERS -  
industry builders who made their  
sector a fascinating branch of  
business.**

Wednesday, October 27, 1999 with  
Gordon Jaremko, Editor - Oilweek and  
Octane magazines and 25 year Calgary  
Herald veteran business & energy writer.

....share fascinating insights into four  
distinguished personalities, researched  
and interviewed by Gordon for past  
Oilweek articles, in our condensed  
version for this issue of Archives.

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Next Luncheon - December 15, 1999  
with Hans Maciej, retired Canadian  
Petroleum Association vice-president  
His topic, "Canada's Energy Wars",  
needs little introduction.

**ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON**

featuring

Hugh Grant, Professor of Economics,  
University of Winnipeg

**TOPIC**

*Refining in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ontario*

Hugh Grant, in addition to his luncheon delivery, will also receive an award for 1998 Best Article - "Solving the Labour Problem at Imperial Oil: Welfare Capitalism in the Canadian Petroleum Industry, 1919 - 1929". Hugh's research of Canadian grassroots refining techniques, to eventual purchase and consolidation by American and international interests, promises to be an enlightening aspect of our industry rarely understood in Western Canada where exploration and production is the dominating focus. As in most historical accounts, expect the unexpected. Join us and bring an associate.

Date: Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Time: 12 noon (receipts at the door)

Place: Palliser Hotel - Canadian Pacific  
Room (Penthouse level)

Cost: \$20 for members, \$22 for guests

\*\*Member attendance supports your Society.  
Posting this Notice for associates to join us for  
an entertaining Lunch & Learn benefits all!

RSVP to Bill McLellan, 286-2191 by Noon,  
Monday, November 15. See you there!

## Petroleum History Society 1998 Awards

At our November 17, 1999 General Meeting the Society will present the following Awards for 1998 in recognition of outstanding achievement in a number of areas important to the preservation and dissemination of the history of the petroleum industry in Canada:

- Book of the Year Award:** to Ottawa author Gary May for "Hard Oiler!"; *the story of early Canadian quest for oil at home and abroad.*
- Article of the Year Award:** to Hugh Grant, Professor of Economics, University of Winnipeg for (see cover), published in Labour magazine.
- Preservation Award:** to Provincial Archives of Alberta for their photographic (such as Pollard) and other archival collections.
- Multi-Media Award:** to Heritage Park, Calgary for their Cable Tool Drilling Rig replica and Gasoline Alley display.
- Lifetime Achievement Award:** to Peter Foster, national award winning author, for a series of oilpatch books in the 1980s such as *Blue Eyed Sheiks, Other People's Money, The Master Builders.*

### THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY - Calendar of Events and Daily Tips

Next Director's Meeting: 12:00 p.m., 01 December 1999, Glenbow Museum

**New Oilpatch Book:** "Hard Oiler" by Gary May, a journalist with 25 years experience writing, editing and managing for daily newspapers, including the London Free Press and Hamilton Spectator. He now lives in Ottawa and is editor of The Citizen. Experience the story of how James Miller Williams struck oil in southwestern Ontario, near Sarnia, in 1856. Soon thereafter he dug the first commercial oil well in North America, if not the world, and began refining and marketing his product as machine lubricant and lighting oil. Subsequent exploitation gave birth to what is arguably the world's most strategic industry today. *Hard Oil* will be available at our 17 November 1999 Luncheon for a reduced price of \$20.00.

**Oral History Project:** First video taped project interview of the new series was conducted by David Finch on October 8, 1999 with Ted Rozsa and has been transcribed. CSPG has compiled a lengthy list of candidates and future interviews are being scheduled. Our transcriber, Ms. Lennie Rae, officially began her duties using office, telephone and computer facilities generously provided by OILWEEK.

**Historical Field Trips:** PHS is soliciting contact with similar North America historical organizations to arrange exchange visits. Members who can contribute suggestions please call Joe Lamantia 691-3575(B); 278-8964(H).

**PHS Membership:** Currently standing at 61 paid-up members. Our goal is 100+ in order to participate in functions and events planned around Year 2000 World Petroleum Congress to be hosted by Calgary June 11-15, 2000. See membership Application on page 4 and help us reach our goal.

**History Preservation:** Although most of us associate Alberta heritage with energy alone, aviation has also contributed significantly. Canadian Airlines began its roots when our region was coming of age with global class oil and gas discoveries. To it we owe the exploitation of northern Canada's vast energy reserves for which our very existence may depend one day. Now with the defeat by the Quebec Courts of the ONEX bid to unite our two national airlines into one strong, global competitor, judgement typical of the National Energy Policy appear to have influenced Government intransigence in the aviation industry which is sure to result in the elimination of Canadian Airlines and yet another Western Canadian tradition.

## OILPATCH CHARACTERS – INDUSTRY BUILDERS WHO MADE THEIR SECTOR A FASCINATING BRANCH OF BUSINESS

PRESENTED BY OILWEEK AND OCTANE MAGAZINE EDITOR GORDON JAREMKO TO THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY LUNCHEON MEETING – 27 OCTOBER 1999

(edited by Peter Mckenzie-Brown and Neil Leeson, Directors, PHS)

**How does one define oilpatch heritage?** Special contributions during challenging circumstances by unassuming personalities might be one interpretation based on Gordon Jaremko's presentation. Considering Gordon focused his journalism talents covering business and energy for the Calgary Herald over 25 years, a day may come when he is nominated to join the prestigious fraternity he refers to as *Oilpatch Characters*. All four case studies presented were researched and interviewed in detail by Gordon for OILWEEK feature articles. While public awareness of oilpatch leaders depends on media exposure, more often than not the chemistry that binds notable events throughout history is the product of the unsung but deserving soldiers in the trenches.

*History is not necessarily about the distant past, nor is it about numbers. As an historian by training and a journalist by trade, Gordon contends the oil industry is about people, and always has been. This assessment is somewhat contrary to what he had been told when he first arrived in Calgary and launched his journalistic career. His recollections were comments to the effect that the oil and gas sector was a "numbers-driven industry".*

*Let there be no doubt, the industry is now, and always has been, about "characters" – as the title of his presentation suggests. Those who believe the industry is numbers-driven might do well to remember that in the early 1980s the numbers people were wrong almost without exception in their forecasts about future energy prices.*

*Those who believe individuals can have little impact on the industry might do well to remember the politicians who framed the "Halloween Natural Gas Agreement" of 1985. Essentially they had in mind a policy that was little different from those of the previous 35 years. It took the imagination and influence of NEB Chairman Roland Priddle to interpret that policy in such a way that it revolutionized the entire sector.*

*The energy industry still is an industry of strong characters, and contemporary history is thus no different from its often-romanticized early years. Four types of characters stand out – Builders, Survivors, Professionals and Freebooter. Using recent OILWEEK articles, examples of each type are illustrated:*

- 1) Builder John Lagadin, founder of Direct Energy, father of Alliance Pipeline and a man who speaks softly but delivers big deeds. "Lagadin exercises command with the force of his ideas and personality, rather than symbols of rank. He collects the most brilliant technical personnel he can find, accepting that they seldom fit easily into office images or routines..."*
- 2) Survivor Dan Echino runs CorLac, a service and supply business for Lloydminster's highly cyclical heavy oil industry. "That highly personal blend of optimism, ambition, willingness to take risks and resilience to bounce back from defeats drives Corlac Consulting & Equipment Inc., a partnership between Echino and like-minded veterans of oilfield operations."*
- 3) Professional Nora Stewart is a petroleum engineer who frequently serves as an expert witness at hearings and exemplifies "grace under pressure". "...Stewart is often called on for her mediating skills. She's probably the most non-judgmental person I've met. She creates a climate of trust" according to Jennifer Bobrovitz, neighbor and fellow book club member.*
- 4) Freebooter Mark Turner, colourful president of the Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association. "A sea captain, maritime lawyer, sometime university professor and entrepreneur, he has been around the world six times and worked on oil frontiers including the Beaufort Sea."*

So ended a highly effective presentation on contemporary history. Only by weighing the achievements of a host of memorable characters can our current petroleum industry receive justice from historians.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:

# PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY

## Individual Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: Business \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional or Company Affiliation (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Please register me as a (check **two** of the following):

- New Member                       Individual Member (\$20.00)  
 Membership Renewal             Sustaining Individual Member (\$50.00)  
 Life Time Senior(+65)Member (\$100.00)

## Institutional / Corporate Membership

Name of Institution or Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: Business \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Authorized Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Position or Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please register our Institution or Company as a (check **two** of the following):

- New Member                       Institutional Member (\$100.00)  
 Membership Renewal

Enclosed is a cheque or money order for \$ \_\_\_\_\_, payable to **The Petroleum History Society**. Please mail fee and completed form to: Membership Committee-Petroleum History Society, C/O Glenbow Archives, 130 - 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta T2G 0P3. Attention: Doug Cass

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_