



**PETROLEUM  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**ARCHIVES**

*Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society*

*September 2002; Volume XIII, Number 4*

## **LUNCH AND LEARN MEETING**

Noon, Wednesday, September 18, 2002 at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel,  
Canadian Pacific Room (Mezzanine Level)

**Speaker: Leroy Field, Drilling Engineer**

### **THE EVOLUTION OF HORIZONTAL DRILLING**

In his talk Leroy will describe for us the evolution of horizontal drilling and the impact that it has had on exploration and production. From the early days in which such practices were restricted to whipstocking around downhole problems to today's sophisticated operations, this revolutionary technique has fundamentally changed the drilling industry in Canada and around the world.

Mr. Field, a native Albertan, graduated from the University of Alberta in 1954 with a B.Sc. in Petroleum Engineering. During his early career he worked for a number of service companies involved in the oil and gas business as a jug hustler, roughneck, salesman, engineer and on-site supervisor. He completed 25 years with Amoco in various capacities culminating in Drilling Manager. Since 1989 he has been providing engineering consulting services in drilling operations. He has been a leader in developing new technology and procedures in the drilling business.

**TIME:** Noon (receipts at the door), September 18, 2002.

**PLACE:** Fairmont Palliser Hotel (133 - 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W.) – Canadian Pacific Room  
(check marquee on arrival).

**COST:** \$25 Members and \$30 Guests (most welcomed)

**R.S.V.P. Clint Tippett, 691-4274 by noon Monday, September 16**

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*if you missed the last luncheon talk...*

#### **THE LEXUS AND THE OLIVE TREE**

Wednesday, May 15, 2002

by Andrew Nikiforuk, Journalist

**...enjoy a condensed version of Andrew's presentation in this issue of Archives**

## **THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY**

### **Calendar of Events and Interesting Historical Items**

**Next Director's Meetings:** October 16, 2002 at the Glenbow Museum and Archives.

**Society E-Mail Address:** All members with e-mail service who have not already done so, please send in your address to Micky Gulless, Past President, Membership Committee at her address "[micky@fuzzylogic.ca](mailto:micky@fuzzylogic.ca)".

**Membership:** Total now stands at 105. Please consult your mailing label for the status of your membership. Thanks to Micky for her continuing hard work in maintaining our records!

**Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists Convention Booth:** Director Joyce Wright coordinated a very successful P.H.S. booth at this early June event. Thanks to all involved. Full details will appear in the next issue of Archives.

**Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame:** The P.H.S. has reason to be proud on this front this year for three reasons. Firstly Director Hugh Leiper has been selected for inclusion in the Hall. Secondly, member Tony Vanden Brink has also been chosen. These individuals bring to seven the number of P.H.S. members who have been so honoured. They join Aubrey Kerr (1998), Arne Nielsen (1998), Gerry Maier (1999), Helen Turgeon (2000) and Don Axford (2001). Thirdly, the P.H.S. nomination of early gas field developer Eugene Coste was successful. The ceremony will take place this year in Edmonton at the Delta Hotel on September 27. Tickets at \$75.00 are still available. Contact P.H.S. President Clint Tippett at 691-4274 for details if you are interested.

**P.H.S. Website Update:** Website coordinator Micky Gulless is continually updating the Society website at <http://www.petroleumhistory.ca> Tune in from time to time and see what new features and links have been highlighted!

**Member Featured:** P.H.S. Lifetime Member Dick Shaw was profiled by writer Andrea Lorenz in the March 4, 2002 issue of Oilweek Magazine. This four page feature provides insights regarding the popular series of geopolitical novels (with a strong petroleum flavour!) that Dick has been authoring, as described in his presentation to the Society last year.

**Trivia:** It has come to our attention that "D&A Stationary Inc.", formerly located just north of the Grain Exchange Building and just south of the Bay on 1<sup>st</sup> Street S.W., has closed up shop. It's about time! Who would name a store "D&A" in an oil town like Calgary. "D&A" means "Dry and Abandoned"!

**Old Petroleum Book:** The following book was recently advertised for \$250.00. By William T. Brannt, 1895 and entitled "Petroleum: Its history, origin, occurrence, production, physical and chemical constitution, technology, examination and uses; together with the occurrence and uses of natural gas". Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird with xxvii, 715 pp., 2 folding plates and 32 pp. of advertisements. Many B&W illustrations throughout, cased in burgundy morocco grain cloth and lettered in gilt on the spine. Sounds like they already knew a lot in 1895!

**Symposium on the History of the Oil Industry:** The Drake Well Foundation, Titusville, Pennsylvania, is sponsoring a symposium on "The History of the Oil Industry" in Shreveport, Louisiana on March 26 to 29, 2003. Full information about the meeting, as well as its talks and field trips can be found at their site <http://www.oilhistory.com>. Abstract deadline is December 1, 2002. Pre-registration cost is \$180 (U.S.), including sessions, guidebooks and field trips and all meals. *Note: This is the information that we received but I'm a bit suspicious of the last item. I suspect they mean that the lunches on the trip are included ... but follow up if you are interested!*

**Petroleum-related National Historic Sites in Alberta:** According to a tabulation in the July 2002 issue of the of the Chinook County Historical Society Newsletter, the following are the sites in Alberta that have been nationally recognized as having significance (so far):

1. Leduc/Woodbend Oilfield
2. Turner Valley Oilfield
3. Royalite Gas Plant
4. First Oil Well in Western Canada (presumably Oil City in Waterton National Park)

I suppose that I could complain about the lack of recognition for our industrial heritage but at least we came off better than the railways – for whom there are zero sites (at least in this listing)!

**WWII Article on English Channel Petroleum Products Pipeline:** For those of you to whom this would be of interest, a recent issue of "After the Battle" contains a very long, comprehensive and well illustrated article on the "Pluto Pipelines" that were built in the late stages of the European campaign to convey petrol from England to both Calais and Cherbourg in France. This critical but less known logistical aspect of the war was stressed by Daniel Yurgin in his book "The Prize" where the link between the ability to supply petroleum and military strength was illustrated.

**"Cable Tool Rig for Okotoks Heritage House":** An article on this subject was recently published by P.H.S. Member Tina Crossfield, Historical Services, Okotoks Heritage House, in the May/June 2002 issue of the Chinook County Historical Society newsletter. A portion of that article follows:

"The Okotoks Heritage House has acquired a brand new addition for its Gateway to the Oilfield exhibit. It is a large working model of a cable tool rig reflecting the style of the Ranchman's Well, which used to stand on Gladys Ridge near Aldersyde. This model was built and donated by Garnet Edwards, who was raised and educated in this area, and who spent most of his career in the oil industry. The Ranchman's Well was an independent venture that began in 1927. The well was drilled intermittently for thirteen years to a final depth of 7238 feet in 1940. Shares were owned by a great many local farmers, retired people, and small businessmen. It was a shoestring operation, always short of money, and many investors lost out on the deal. Despite its early promise, it never produced very much oil, and was finally incorporated as the New Ranchman's Oil Company in 1942. In the end it was abandoned and cemented over in 1945."

Our members will recall that Garnet has been a guest of the P.H.S. on two occasions.

Summary of the P.H.S. Luncheon Presentation:  
**“The Lexus and the Olive Tree:  
A History of Industry and Landowner Relations since the 1960’s  
And a critical examination of the Wiebo Ludwig Case”**  
By Andrew Nikiforuk, Writer  
May 15, 2002  
At the Fairmont-Palliser Hotel

*“At Trickle Creek in northern Alberta, Wiebo Ludwig thought he’d buffered his tiny religious community from civilisation, but in 1990 civilisation came calling. A Calgary oil company proposed to drill directly in view of the farm’s communal dining room. Ludwig hadn’t realised that his land ownership didn’t include mineral rights. He wrote letters, petitioned, forced public hearings and discovered the provincial regulator cared little about landowners. ... This is a taut, careful work of non-fiction that reads like a thriller and raises unsettling questions about individual rights, corporate power, police methods and government accountability. The reader comes to question whether Wiebo Ludwig can be dismissed as a zealot. And to ask “What would I have done in his shoes?”.”* **from the dust jacket of “Saboteurs - Wiebo Ludwig’s War against Big Oil” by Andrew Nikiforuk.**

This was the context of the presentation made to a very well attended Society luncheon late last spring. Andrew Nikiforuk both informed and entertained the audience with a well paced combination of discussion and readings from his above mentioned book. Stories of Wiebo Ludwig’s tactics like bringing bottles of sour crude into a bureaucrat’s office to make a point made the presentation that much more tangible. I would have to say that I was surprised that at least some of the problem involved a lack on knowledge on Ludwig’s part of the basic difference between surface and subsurface rights. As well, with the context being the 1990’s, one has to wonder if the financially-driven retrenchment of the E.U.B. wasn’t at least in part to blame for the poor responsiveness of the Board in the face of Ludwig’s many issues and complaints. A P.H.S. videotape of the talk has been prepared.

Our luncheon talk coincided with some additional press coverage of Andrew’s book and the situation that it addresses. The May/June 2002 issue of Alberta Views contains three pieces that touch on it. The first was a major review by Fred Stenson (also a recent P.H.S. speaker and award winner). The second was a reprint of an article by Mary MacArthur from the Nov. 29, 2001 issue of the Western Producer called “Spread the Oil Message: Author” (a reference to Andrew). The third was an excerpt from an article the March 2002 issue of Business in Calgary by Richard Bronstein entitled “Death, lies and the oilpatch” – again a reference to the book with some additional reference to the role of the petroleum landman in these types of situations.

We should note that Andrew does not choose to simply document the issues and events that he writes about. The MacArthur piece describes his advocacy role in regards to surface land owners with the Alberta Federation of Surface Rights. At the talk we were presented with the additional emerging problem of excessive water use and conflicting priorities in the province. As well, on his website at the time of the luncheon was an appeal to those who might be concerned with the “Provincial Government takeover of Confined Feeding Operations in Alberta”.

*Thanks again to Andrew for a thought provoking presentation on an important issue!*

## TURNER VALLEY MYSTERY SOLVED!

**Question:** The following was included in the last issue of Archives: *“At a recent Board meeting a question arose concerning the production of aviation fuel at Turner Valley during the Second World War – a vital component of the war effort in that it supplied the numerous air crew training programs across the Prairie Provinces. The story is often told involving the Turner Valley Gas Plant and the high security surrounding its operations (guards, searchlights) during that period. This is in contrast to the apparent lack of security at one or more of the refineries that operated in the field using crude oil feedstock from the oil wells in the oil leg of the field. If today’s type of operation is valid, one would have expected the refineries to be the source of the aviation fuel, perhaps supplemented with a small component of condensate from the Gas Plant. Was there something special about this condensate? Were the refineries also guarded? If anyone can shed some light on this question it would be appreciated. Replies to the Society will be published either with attribution to source or anonymously.”*

**Reply:** We are pleased to announce that we received a response from Director Hugh Leiper who grew up in the Turner Valley area during the WWII and recalls the details of the Purity 99 oil refinery near Longview where his father worked. (I have paraphrased Hugh’s comments – ed.)

The refinery, whose address was Hartell, was owned by A.W. Mayland of Mayland Heights (area of Calgary) fame. He brought the equipment to Turner Valley from Big Springs, Texas in 1934. During WWII it produced aviation fuel (avgas) for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. There were never any guards at the plant – and as far as Hugh recalls there were never any at the Royalite Gas Plant in Turner Valley either. So where this story came from is a bit unclear.

As some background information, the Royalite Plant shipped its condensate to the Imperial refinery in Calgary via the Valley Pipeline. The slate of products from that Calgary refinery is not known but presumably would also have included avgas. The timing of the construction of the Purity 99 refinery in 1934 is also interesting as it predates the Royalties #1 Mississippian oil discovery by two years. This would seem to imply that it’s original feedstock was condensate from the Mississippian gas zone that had been discovered in 1924 at Royalite #4 and would still have been under development in 1934. According to Hugh, Mayland owned a series of producing companies called Mercury Oils, Miracle Oils, Mill City, and Gas and Oil Products. Most likely he did not want to have to deal with Royalite and Imperial and therefore chose to establish his own refining infrastructure and marketing network.

Apparently the 2000 bbl/d plant employed 50-60 men, was sold to Gulf after the war and was eventually shut down and dismantled during the 1950’s.

Thanks to Hugh for his assistance in solving this mystery!

**Poetry Feature:** Your editor recently stumbled onto a volume of oilpatch poetry at DeMille Books called “*And the Grass Grew Greener ... as I meandered through the Oilpatch*” authored by R. J. (Bob) Dunn and published by Dunderosa Publications of Vernon, B.C. An excerpt follows:

### “Rescue at Rig Nine”

The stories are legion of how a great many Camp Attendants were recruited for work in the north country. It was not uncommon for an operator to stop at an out of the way beer parlour on the way to a camp job, and literally hijack some unfortunate derelict who happen to be a little the worse for wear, and had passed out. He would awaken the next day a couple of hundred miles out in the north bush, with his only hope for survival, to make the beds, and clean up the camp, until the camp moved somewhere near a town where he could resume his pub crawling career, his pockets now lined with money from the camp job.

A well known Oilman, Jack, literally a legend in his own time, told me the following story. A camp attendant died unexpectedly in a camp way up north. The camp was snowed in , so the Campy was placed outside on the roof out of reach of the wolves, and to preserve him for a proper funeral when taken to town. My interpretation of the story follows.

I would like to point out that there have been many men and women who have had a successful career as Camp Attendants, and who were an invaluable asset to any camp.

### RESCUE AT CAMP NINE

Tall stories are told  
Of the search for black gold  
When Roughnecks get together.  
They tell of the fights  
And the long lonely nights,  
And they brag of the terrible weather.

It was fifty below,  
With six feet of snow,  
A wind coming from the northeast,  
It turned skin to leather,  
This God awful weather,  
Not fit for man nor beast!

The Toolpush was cursing,  
His frozen nose he was nursing  
As he tried to see the rig light.  
“If that Head Office jerk  
Had just bid this “Day Work”,  
We could shut her down for the night!”

“It’s so blasted cold  
I feel a hundred years old,  
This work is a real killer.””

*To be continued ...*