



**PETROLEUM  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**ARCHIVES**

*Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society*

*February 2003; Volume XIV, Number 1*

**LUNCH AND LEARN and ANNUAL AWARDS MEETING**

Noon, Wed., February 12, 2003, Fairmont Palliser Hotel, Leduc Room (Mezzanine Level)

**Speakers: Kirsten Olson and Myrene Hayes**

**THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE  
LEGAL ARCHIVES SOCIETY OF ALBERTA**

Kirsten Olson will discuss the background of the LASA Oral History Program – from initial interviews commissioned by the Calgary Bar Association to the expansion of the program throughout the province. This will include funding, management, possible pitfalls, historical significance of records (anecdotal vs. hard research) and legal responsibilities. Myrene Hayes will discuss how the Calgary program works: advisory committee, background research, pre-interviews, transcribing and editing. A brief sample of one of the interviews will be shown on video. This should be an interesting comparison to the PHS Oral History Project. Maybe we'll see how a lawyer conducts an interview!

Kirsten Olson started working with the LASA in 1996 and has been the Executive Director since 1998. She oversees the Society's many province-wide programs including publications, research services and oral histories. Myrene Hayes was hired on contract by the Society in 2002 to revive the Oral History Project in Calgary. She has succeeded in streamlining the process for the interviews from managing the committee (all lawyers) to doing background research, conducting interviews and editing transcripts

**TIME:** Noon (receipts at the door), February 12, 2003.  
**PLACE:** Fairmont Palliser Hotel (133 - 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.E.) – Leduc Room (check marquee on arrival).  
**COST:** \$25 Members and \$30 Guests (most welcomed)

**R.S.V.P. Clint Tippett, 691-4274 or [clinton.tippett@shell.ca](mailto:clinton.tippett@shell.ca)  
by noon Monday, February 10**

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Stan Pearson Talk – Dec. 11	7

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

**AN EAR ON HISTORY – THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY  
PROJECT**

Wednesday, November 13, 2002 by David Finch, Author  
and

**A LIFELONG CAREER WITH GULF**

Wednesday, December 11, 2002 by Stan Pearson, Explorer  
...enjoy condensed versions of these presentations in this issue of Archives

**THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**THE BULL WHEEL**



**March Annual General Meeting:** Following this month's talk, our next gathering will be our Annual General Meeting and elections that will take place on Wednesday, March 19, 2003 in the Canadian Pacific Room of the Fairmont-Palliser. We have been fortunate enough to have been able to arrange for John Ballem to be our meeting speaker. John is well known to many of you both as an oil and gas lawyer of local prominence and as the author of a series of novels that are often based upon intrigues in the oilpatch. John will be speaking to us on a wide range of reminiscences based upon his many years of experience.

**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".

**Membership:** Please consult your mailing label for the status of your membership. Renewal notices have been included with this February issue for those whose memberships are due. Thanks to Micky for her continuing hard work in maintaining our records!

**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!

**Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame Special:** For the interest of our members, here is a bit of additional background on Eugene Coste who was recently inducted into the Hall following his nomination by our Society. As Aubrey Kerr says, "now the true story can be told"! *"Eugene joined the Geological Survey of Canada, but left after five years to explore for oil and gas on his own, convinced that oil originated from "volcanic" or Precambrian rocks. Eugene hung tenaciously all his life to his mistaken theory about the volcanic origin of petroleum and natural gas, but that did not stop him from making the discoveries that laid the foundation for Ontario's [and Alberta's] natural gas industry. ...The Coste interests organized the Volcanic Oil and Gas Co. in 1906.."*

**The Prize:** This prize-winning television series, based on the book by the same name by author Daniel Yurgin, is being broadcast on the History Channel starting on Sunday, February 2. Hopefully you can catch the end of the series at least.

**Bad Boy made Good?:** It was recently announced that W. Edmund Clark has been named as President and Chief Executive Officer of the TD Bank Financial Group. You remember Ed. He was a senior mandarin in Pierre Trudeau's Liberal Government at the time that the National Energy Program was introduced in 1980. It was his doctoral thesis on "Public Investment and Socialist Development in Tanzania" that is alleged to have served as a model for that highly interventionist package of policies.

**"Canmore Miners" Book Released:** Lawrence Christmas has produced this book, subtitled "Coal Miner Portraits and Stories", through Cambria Publishing (Box 61083, Kensington PO, Calgary, Alberta, T2N 4S6) for the Canmore Centennial Museum Society. It was sponsored by Canmore individuals, families, businesses and the Town of Canmore. It is dedicated to the "salt-of-the-earth people: Canmore miners and their families". The publication is soft covered and has numerous glossy page sized photos over its 64 9" by 12" black and white pages. This high quality publication sells for \$24.95 plus shipping and GST. It combines a tradition of excellent portrait photo documentation with oral history.

**Turner Valley Revival:** Two items have recently appeared in the press to indicate a revival at Turner Valley. The first is the reconstruction of the Dingman No. 1 historical derrick in the centre of town. The earlier 10m version was blown down in a windstorm last winter. The new one cost about \$28,000 with the funds coming from a combination of donations and insurance. This included a \$5000 gift from Talisman who now operate the production units on the south end of the field – a legacy of their purchase of Western Decalta. Talisman is also "pumping" the region with a nitrogen injection scheme announced in December that is intended to boost the recovery of oil from the Mississippian reservoir. The three year pilot could lead to a full scale \$150 million project if encouraging results are obtained.

**Another Cable Tool Rig!** The Leduc/Devon Historical Society has announced in their "Catwalk" newsletter that a cable tool rig has been constructed at their Devon, Alberta location. As they stated "Our volunteers continue to amaze us! If you have driven by the site lately, you will have noticed a new addition to our skyline. Dwarfed by its modern family, our cable tool derrick was raised on September 10, 2002. Built by volunteer members, using a 1923 Oil Well Supply catalogue and the expertise of Garnet Edwards, the cable tool rig took all summer to complete and now provides an attractive addition to the Leduc #1 Historical Site and to the story of oil discovery and production in Canada".

**Growing Interest in History:** Items appearing in the press concerning the heightened level of public interest in things historical. Oct. 29, 2002: "Most want Canadian History as Required Course in High School" and Dec. 5, 2002: "Record attendance at Historic Sites, Museums". Hopefully our Society can play a role in this emerging trend.

**Petroleum Stamp:** On Sept. 14, 2002, the U.S. issued a new 37 cent stamp honouring Ida M. Tarbell (1857-1944) as a part of a series commemorating Women in Journalism. You will recall that Ms. Tarbell published a book entitled "The History of the Standard Oil Company". It was described as "a powerful expose of the Standard Oil Company in its attempts to monopolize the oil industry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries [which] led to Congress passing antitrust legislation that dismantled the company. Her journalistic style came to be known as muckraking". Ida, where are you when we need you for ExxonMobil?

**New Book:** Sheridan, D., 2000. Fahud, The Leopard Mountain, Oil Exploration in Oman and Libya in the 1950's. Published by Vico Press, Dublin, 256 p., 24.95 pounds (that's price, not weight).

**Volunteers needed!** The Petroleum History Society depends on its members to support its activities – whether by taking the initiative on a project, volunteering to staff a booth at a function or serving on the Board as a Director or member of the Executive. If you have an interest in getting more involved and helping out, we'd like to hear from you – so please call Clint Tippet at 691-4274 and let's make it happen. Elections coming soon!

**Why Value History? (and what you can do about it):** A recent article from EOS (The Transactions of the American Geophysical Union) reviewed the issues around why history is important and what you can do to ensure that it is preserved. The following five (adapted) suggestions were made: 1. Trust that future generations will want to know about your work, your contributions, your ideas. 2. If you have correspondence, notebooks, reports, photographs and snapshots – what historians call “papers” – contact the archivist at your company or organization to discuss donating them to an appropriate repository [The Glenbow?]. 3. Do not “weed” your papers in advance. Archives are willing to place access restrictions on sensitive materials. 4. If a historian requests an oral history interview with you, accept this opportunity. Interviews are an invaluable means of capturing a person's life story and experiences. 5. Consider writing a manuscript autobiography for deposit in the archives. Or write a historical account of your company or organization. Picking up a pen (or turning on your word processor) is the best way to start.

**Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Calgary:** Don Wetherell was recently hired by the U. of C. to teach museum and heritage studies. In the program, students combine museum studies with another subject such as ... history. Teaching methods that combine theory with practical projects are used and all students must complete a practicum at a museum, historic site or other cultural heritage facility.

**Japanese Approach to History:** National Geographic reported that one approach used in Japan to preserve historical practices is to employ individuals to learn old techniques, to actively use and reenact them, and to pass them down to future candidates for their positions. The above mentioned construction of a cable tool rig in Devon is the closest I've seen to this although Tom Wark's instructions on the Heritage Park rig would be close.

**Fun Items:** Recently spotted:

1. **Looking on the bright side.** In the summer of 1996 the Saguenay/Chicoutimi region of Quebec was ravaged by floods from heavy rains and burst dams. Geologists, however, saw a bright side – “... the geological community here has an incredible series of newly stripped outcrops to examine...”.

2. **“Parisian prankster plays with history”:** Apparently the abundance of historical plaques in Paris was too much for some and they have fought back. One prominent “anti-plaque” says (in French): “On April 17, 1967, nothing happened here”.

3. **Global Warming has affected some people's brains:** An article in the Calgary Herald of May 17, 2002, carried from the Associated Press in Washington D.C., was headlined “April's warmth makes record book – temperature in U.S. 16 degrees above average”. This is repeated in the text so it wasn't just a typo. Get a grip – 16 degrees?

4. **Getting Bombed:** Some of you may recall the wish of General Curtis LeMay to bomb North Vietnam back into the Stone Age during the Vietnam War. Ric Dolphin of the Calgary Herald has done him one better by speculating about bombing Iraq back into the Pleistocene, calling this the Pleistocene Option! Would this be an attack by stealth glaciers?

# 2001 PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY AWARDS

The P.H.S. is pleased to announce the winners of the 2001 awards process. The recipients have been invited to the February 12 luncheon and will be presented with their plaques at that time. Those winners are:

## Book of the Year for 2001:

To **Frank Dabbs**, for “Branded by the Wind – The Life and Times of Bill Herron”, published by Marjorie A. Herron and printed by Tri.Ad Press. This book describes the life of Bill Herron Jr. in the context of both the oilpatch legacy of his father (Bill Herron, Sr. who was one of the early promoters of the Turner Valley structure) and his own accomplishments in both the oil industry and ranching.

## Article of the Year for 2001:

To **Arn Keeling**, for “The Rancher and the Regulators: Public Challenges to Sour Gas Industry Regulation in Alberta, 1970-1994”, published in “Writing off the Rural West: Globalization, Governments and the Transformation of Rural Communities”, Epp, R. and Whitson, D. (eds.), University of Alberta Press.

## Preservation Award for 2001:

To **Evelyn DeMille**, owner of DeMille Technical Bookstore, for her long term support for publications dealing with the history of the Canadian and international oil industries. She supported the self-published works of Aubrey Kerr and others and was always the most reliable shop for this type of literature. (DeMille Technical Bookstore is now part of the new McNally Robinson Booksellers outlet on the Stephen Avenue Walk.)

## Multimedia Award for 2001:

To the **Petroleum Communications Foundation**, for its many excellent publications intended for public information and education about the industry. These books and brochures have included such classics as “Our Petroleum Challenge”, issued in multiple editions. The historical aspects of the Canadian oil and gas business have always played a role in these works with the activities and accomplishments of our predecessors setting the stage for the more recent events and improved technologies.

## Lifetime Achievement Award for 2001:

The Executive and Board have elected to forego making this award for 2001.

The P.H.S. initiated this series of awards a number of years ago with the intention of recognizing those individuals and organizations who have made significant individual and life long contributions to various aspects of the preservation, study and dissemination of Canadian Petroleum History. Please forward your suggestions for the 2002 cycle to either Clint Tippett (Shell Canada) or Doug Cass (Glenbow).

**Petroleum History Society Luncheon**  
**November 13, 2002**  
**David Finch - Author**  
**“An Ear on History – The Petroleum Industry Oral History Project”**

David Finch is a long time member of our Society and is a recipient of our Lifetime Achievement Award (although he has lots of time to earn a repeat on this one). David is also the lead interviewer for the PIOHP and as such works closely with PHS Secretary Peter Savage and Treasurer Doug Cass. To top it off, David is also one of the key users of the historical resource that is generated by the PIOHP in that he is the author of numerous books and articles related to the multiple facets of the oilpatch. Many look to David as a key player in this sector of historical studies. It is in this context that we invited David to speak to us about the current state of the PIOHP and to reveal any interesting insights that he may have gained along the way.

The presentation began with some historical background. The PIOHP was the brainchild of PHS Director Aubrey Kerr who began a series of interviews in the early 1980's. Aubrey wished that the initiative would continue and that a suitable repository for the results could be found that would allow access by future researchers. Following a period of fundraising, approx. 250 interviews were completed. In 1999 a second phase of the project began with new interviews and completion of transcription of the tapes from both phases. It is anticipated that about 100 more interviews will be completed. This phase was largely funded by contributions from groups like the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists and through Provincial Government grants.

David then spent some time describing how the transcripts of these interviews are used. Some are educational. The effects of industry booms and busts on companies and individuals are studied – how both coped (or didn't) provides valuable perspectives for current events. Technological evolution is another aspect of the industry that can be examined with these records. Operations in new areas and under difficult conditions led to the invention of new equipment. Horses and canoes (the latter regrettably) were followed by trucks and outboards. Long traverses were made obsolete by the use of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. Drilling in ice-infested waters was made possible through the invention of artificial islands and drilling platforms. The people being interviewed were often the ones most intimately acquainted with these changes and the impacts that they had on the industry.

David could not resist recounting some of the more humorous stories that he had heard in his interviewing. One story had to do with how Harold Farney came to Canada as a result of an overheard conversation. Another by this same individual related making a “deadstick” landing in winter on the frozen Athabasca River. PHS Secretary Peter Savage had told of pervasive constipation amongst his seismic crew due to a combination of minus 60 degree weather and an unheated latrine. And also about part of a crew being saved from starvation by the generosity of a local Indian band.

David's descriptive section closed off with a summary of some of the more controversial issues that he had run across in the interviews. These included the publication of a book by the CSPG deemed to be unacceptable due to its treatment of evolution (1970). Both companies and individuals have generally been reluctant to engage directly in political or regulatory matters but submissions related to the direction of the industry, such as the Dinning Commission of 1949 on gas reserves and the House of Commons Committee on future hydrocarbon potential in 1973 seemed fair game. Issues like the National Energy Program, the renaming of Mount Logan and the ratification of the Kyoto Accord have all triggered public stances within the industry.

The session closed off with an outlook for the project and a call for additional funds (of course!).

**Petroleum History Society Luncheon**  
**December 11, 2002**  
**Stan Pearson – Explorer**  
**“A Lifelong Career with Gulf”**

Stan Pearson talked to us in mid-December on this topic that is obviously near and dear to his heart. As we discovered only after the presentation, the lack of reading notes did nothing to hamper his recollection of details from virtually every stage of his life.

Stan would be an anomaly these days as he spent virtually his entire career with one company. That's how it was done “in those days”. As Stan told it he was a plumber's son from Pincher Creek who was educated at the U. of Alberta, who served his time in the Canadian Forces in WWII, who married his sweetheart in Brandon and who was diverted from his Waterton honeymoon by an opening on a Canadian Gulf seismic crew in Pincher Creek. Gulf was a pioneer in the application of geophysical technologies in Canada having tried gravity, having experimented with seismic at Turner Valley in 1943-44 and having perfected the application of refraction along the Foothills Belt. The last mentioned led to the discovery of the Pincher Creek Field in 1947 where high rates and subsequent seismic mapping indicated the presence of huge reserves (on the order of 3 TCF). These were later to serve as the springboard for the export-related TransCanada pipeline in 1957. Unfortunately, according to Stan, these were “constipated rocks” that drew up water along fractures when the field was brought into production – or as Aubrey saw it – “exploration success but flawed exploitation”.

In the late 1940's and early 1950's Stan was active in the central Alberta region where discoveries were made at Buffalo Lake-Drumheller, Fenn West, Westrose and Rimbey. 1949 was a record year for seismic acquisition for Stan and Co. in Gulf's “Gypsy Division”. This was followed by a spell in the Cadotte River area where attempts to work in muskeg required the invention of new equipment.

By 1954 Stan was Exploration Manager in Calgary and was instrumental in Gulf's successful programs in the Swan Hills region (1950's and 1960's) and the Zama region (1960's). At this point Gulf began to look north and in the 1956-1957 period “blitzed” the western Northwest Territories and Yukon. In 1957, following a meeting in New Orleans where a euphoric mindset on deltas was present, a decision was made to secure acreage in the Mackenzie Delta. According to Stan, two million acres were relinquished from the three million onshore acres originally taken up and these lands were subsequently acquired by Shell and Imperial. Gulf also filed on significant acreage in the Beaufort. Both fairways bore fruit for Gulf with the onshore Parsons Lake Gas Field and the offshore Amauligak Oil and Gas Field.

1968 found Stan based in London and in charge of Eastern Hemisphere exploration where again success soon followed with the acquisition of lands in the Brent trend on the U.K sector and in the Dan Field on the Norwegian side. Other successful campaigns were conducted in the offshore parts of the Niger and Congo River deltas of West Africa.

By 1977 Stan was back in Toronto as Senior V.P. He retired in 1979. He judged his career at Gulf to have been highly successful – and who would argue? He leads a bucolic existence on a farm near Cremona (from which hay is exported to Japan) and in Calgary.

Photographs on the back page:  
Clockwise from the upper left.

1. Wooden cable tool rig in the Flathead Valley.
2. Steel rig on the discovery well at Leduc (1947).
3. Making a connection on a rotary rig with a spinning chain.
4. The bull wheel on an early cable tool rig.



**Please see page 7 for captions. Thanks.**