



**PETROLEUM
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

ARCHIVES

Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society

March 2003; Volume XIV, Number 2

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 19, 2003, Fairmont Palliser Hotel, Canadian Pacific Room

Speaker: John Ballem, Q.C., LL.D.

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CANADIAN OILPATCH

Come and hear the story of the Canadian oilpatch, as seen through the eyes of one of its most prominent players. John Ballem will touch upon pre-Leduc Alberta, Imperial's 133 dry holes, the role of "Dry Hole" Hunter, Leduc D2, Atlantic #3, U.S. oilmen, prorationing, pipelines (Montreal, Norman Wells and proposed Arctic connections) and mergers and acquisitions. Oil and gas law will round out the retrospective and John will throw in a look at what the future holds. An overview not to be missed!

John Ballem was born and raised in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. After wartime service in the Fleet Air Arm, he completed his university education, receiving a B.A., M.A. and LL.B. from Dalhousie University and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School. In the course of his career he has appeared frequently as counsel before regulatory tribunals and courts on matters pertaining to energy law. These appearances have included a number of landmark oil and gas legal cases and energy matters of national importance, including applications to construct the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, the Berger Commission, the Norman Wells Pipeline and matters related to the regulation of oil and gas pipelines. John is the author of the definitive textbook "The Oil and Gas Lease in Canada", now in its third edition. He is also the author of eleven best selling novels.

TIME: 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 19, 2003: Reception 4:00 – 4:20 p.m., Business Meeting 4:20 – 4:50 p.m. and Guest Speaker 5:00 – 5:45 p.m., concluding with Mix and Mingle 5:45 – 6:30 p.m.

PLACE: Fairmont Palliser Hotel (133 - 9th Avenue S.E.) – Canadian Pacific Room (check marquee).

COST: Free to both Members and Guests (most welcome)

**R.S.V.P. Clint Tippett, 691-4274 or clinton.tippett@shell.ca
by noon Monday, March 17**

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if you missed the last luncheon talk...

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

Wednesday, February 12, 2002

by

Kirsten Olson and Myrene Hayes

... enjoy a condensed version of the presentation in this issue of Archives

THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY
THE BULL WHEEL



Election of Petroleum History Society Executive and Board: One of the major features of the Business Meeting segment of this month's Annual General Meeting is the election of officials. A nominations committee has been struck and it will have a slate of candidates prepared for the consideration of the membership at the meeting. Please advise us through President Clint Tippett at 691-4274 if you would like to be considered. There is also the possibility of nominations from the floor if you are unable to contact us in advance.

Next Board Meeting: The Executive and Board are reminded that there will be a short meeting before the A.G.M. at 3:30 p.m. in the Spanish Room on the mezzanine level at the Palliser.

Next Luncheon: The next luncheon of the Society has been scheduled for May 21 and will feature Herb Laycraft addressing us on the famous 1953 Privy Council decision *Borys v. CPR and Imperial Oil*. This was a leading case in Canada on subsurface hydrocarbon ownership. It established that petroleum was to be determined at initial, or virgin, reservoir conditions of pressure and temperature. More specifically natural gas that was dissolved in the petroleum was the property of the petroleum rights owner and not of the natural gas rights owner. The context of the case was the early historical practice of the CPR to grant rights to one substance to purchasers of freehold rights but not to the other substance.

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 were included with this February issue for those whose memberships are due. Thanks to Micky for her continuing hard work in maintaining our records!

Donations: Several of our members have made generous donations to support the ongoing operations of our Society. Many thanks to them! We continue to try to find the right path forward to gain charitable group status for some of our activities.

Petroleum History Walking Tour of Downtown Calgary: The Board has been considering such an event for roughly the June timeframe. If you have some good reference material on this topic, for examples of the sites of current or former key buildings, or would like to see certain things included, please contact Clint Tippett at 691-4274.

History of the Petroleum History Society: The Board passed a motion at its last meeting naming the Glenbow Archives as the official repository for its organizational records. Maybe some day someone will write a book about us!

Oilsands Discovery Centre: The Society considered this institution in Fort McMurry, Alberta for our Multimedia Award for 2001 but none of the members has first hand experience visiting it. If some of you have done so, please pass along your impressions as to how the facility treats the historical component of the development of the tar sands. There is certainly a rich historical context there and we should be aware of it. Note that there is a group called the “Friends of the Oilsands Discovery Centre” that presumably is involved in running the Centre.

Historical Tidbit – The Nobel Connection: The Nobel family is best known for two activities. First is the invention of dynamite. Second is the funding of the Nobel Prizes. Less well known is the role that the Nobel brothers played in the early days of the oil industry, in particular the development of the oilfields in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea near Baku. There they alternately tangled with and cooperated with the likes of Marcus Samuel (founder of the Shell Transport and Trading Company) and the French financiers of the Rothschild family.

From the P.H.S. Historical Pin Set: “Oil Springs: James Miller Williams dug the first oil well in North America at Oil Springs, Ontario, in 1858, fully one year before the more famous Drake well in Pennsylvania. Although intended as a water well, the Williams No. 1 well found free oil twenty metres below the surface and set off a flurry of activity which made southwestern Ontario a world leader in petroleum drilling and production skills and technology.” Sets of six historical pins are available from the Society at a cost of \$100.00 which includes a one year membership. The contact for these purchases is Director Joyce Wright who can be reached at 252-4143.

Have you ever wondered?: When looking at some old photos one often wonders how the activity depicted compares to current practices. There is a shot of the Dingman well at Turner Valley “blowing in” with a rig hand controlling the valve and in the process spraying gas and condensate into the air, all over the rig floor and onto himself. Behind him are at least three well-dressed individuals obviously fascinated by the impressive show (and probably counting their speculative profits). So the question is this – who in their right mind would vent highly flammable hydrocarbons all over the place and place everyone concerned in obvious peril? Or was the shot staged for promotional purposes, perhaps using steam and water? Comments?

A Perspective on Houston, Texas: A recent issue of Upstream contained a feature article on Houston with the byline “The energy industry is unimaginable without the Texas city as its capital”. This position is defended on the basis of some observations made by Michael Economides, co-author of the book “The Color of Oil”. Dr. Economides says that Houston reached this lofty status due to the convergence of two events – the Spindletop discovery of 1901 and the development of the Houston Ship Channel (which led to the construction of refining and petrochemical facilities). Michel Halbouty is quoted as saying that Beaumont lost out because “those people in Beaumont are half dead and didn’t want oil exploration”. He then confesses that he is from Beaumont himself. Given Halbouty’s many successes obviously not all people from Beaumont are dead.

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 Tippett at 691-4274 and let's make it happen.

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!

The Glenbow – Oil Connection: In a recent article P.H.S. Director Aubrey Kerr described the link between the two as having originated as follows: “You might ask: what does this repository have to do with Redwater? Everything! Back in 1906, the CPR granted 500,000 acres in the Edmonton area to the Western Canada Land Company. By 1943, all the surface titles had been sold off and the minerals were to be subject to a new Alberta Government minerals tax. A Mr. Evans, manager of this (by now) bankrupt spread, brought this problem to Eric Harvie's attention. This well-known Calgary lawyer coughed up \$10,000 and took over these mineral titles. Crown lands were going begging, so why should anyone want this freehold? The discovery of a Devonian reef in August 1948 at Redwater changed all this. Some of the “Crown Jewel” lands in the heart of the reef were in the hands of Harvie's company, Western Minerals. By 1973, Harvie had amassed a fortune from crude oil production. He then decided to sell Western Minerals to Brascan for \$32 million in cash. Harvie always had a penchant for ancient firearms and other antiques. He was now able to exercise his “hobby” to the limit. Thus he erected the Glenbow Museum which continues to be a living legacy for both today's citizenry and future generations.”

History of Geology: The Geological Society of America has a website specializing on this subject. It can be reached at www.gsa.org Thanks to Brad Burton for bringing this to our attention.

Poster Geologists: The recent C.S.P.G. Convention featured a collection of posters that had been prepared at the University of Alberta commemorating the three founders of the Geology Department (John Allan, Percival Warren and Ralph Rutherford) and its eleven historical emeritus professors. The article that appeared on the U. of A. Virtual Museum website discussed the cumulative contributions of all these individuals to the economy of Alberta and placed it in the multibillion dollar category. Some thought has been given to publishing a book based upon this material according to Professor George Pemberton.

SuperRoughneck: A book by this title has recently been released by the publishers of “The Roughneck” Magazine. The volume is a compilation of articles from the magazine from over the years. It is hardbound and sells for approx. \$25.00. Copies have been available at Maptown on the main level of the Roslyn Building, 3rd St. and 5th Ave. S.W. We would welcome a detailed review if someone is interested in doing one.

Leduc-Devon News: The following notice appeared in the latest issue of “Catwalk”: “In the last issue of “The Catwalk” we asked members to tell us about themselves and their careers by filling out the history draft included. Many of you did just that, and thank you – but there is more! The Society has just received a grant from Heritage Canada as a part of their Community Memories Program. The Grant includes money, software and training to create a CD-ROM with pictures, video, audio and text to tell the story of Alberta's oil patch pioneers..”

Petroleum History Society Luncheon
February 12, 2003
“The Oral History Project of the Legal Archives Society of Alberta”
by
Kirsten Olson and Myrene Hayes
(review by President C. Tippett)

Kirsten Olson is the Executive Director of the Legal Archives Society of Alberta. Myrene Hayes is the manager of the Oral History Program. The following is a brief outline of the tag team presentation that they made to an attentive audience on this subject.

The Legal Archives or LASA was established in 1990 and is the successor to the Legal History Society. The major donor to its holdings has been the Law Society of Alberta but they also hold records from lawyers, judges, law firms and legal organizations. Its mandate is to preserve and promote Alberta's legal history. This is accomplished through several programs including a small legal history library, displays at courthouses throughout Alberta, legal history publications, answering research requests, maintaining the archives themselves and the oral history program. One of the initiating factors was the series of interviews that were done by Suzie Sparks for the Calgary Bar Association in the early 1980's. Author James Gray utilized this material for his 1987 book entitled "Talk to My Lawyer". According to Kirsten, the current project faces continual struggles for funds and priority – something that we can sympathize with vis-à-vis our own P.H.S. Oral History Project! Luckily for them a number of legally oriented organizations and firms have helped them with both funding and logistical support, for example the transcription of interviews.

The presentation included the screening of two videotape interview segments. The subjects were retired Justice Roy Deyell and company lawyer Harris (Gig) Field. These individuals were chosen as they were believed to be somewhat related to the oilpatch. To my eye these truly enhanced the appeal of the process as the expressions, mannerisms and body language added to the substance of the words themselves.

Myrene then described some aspects of the overall interviewing process. The program is guided by a committee. Its purposes are to establish objectives and goals and to select interview candidates. Health, age and the significance of an individual's accomplishments all figure in the latter. It is seen as important to clearly establish the focus of the program, for example early exploration or tar sands development – and to select individuals in that context. Clearly this involves some degree of research on the part of the committee members. It was also noted that it is important for the members to reach out beyond their personal acquaintances in this regard. Their experience is that few decline to become involved when approached on a reasoned basis.

Selection of interviewers is also critical in ensuring success. Some training is involved in striking the balance between allowing the interview subject to tell his or her story while at the same time staying on track and asking appropriate questions that are relevant to the project's mandate. Their experience is that it is often difficult for a volunteer to properly conduct such an exercise as it can comprise up to six to seven hours of time with three to four hours of preparation and two plus hours of interview. Having said that, budgets often decide what is feasible. Proper equipment is essential and its functionality needs to be verified before the interview begins. Backups are essential to ensure that the results are actually recorded! One of the more interesting initiatives described is the attempt to cross-reference the transcripts of the interviews for things like individual names, company names and so on as an assist to research.

All in all it was a very interesting talk. Full details are available from the reviewer.

2001 PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY AWARDS

The P.H.S. was pleased to invite the recipients to our February 12 luncheon where they (or their delegates) were presented with their plaques by P.H.S. President Clint Tippett . Those winners were:



Book of the Year for 2001:

To Frank Dabbs (picture left), for “Branded by the Wind – The Life and Times of Bill Herron”, published by Marjorie A. Herron and printed by Tri.Ad Press.

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. David Finch accepted on his behalf (picture right).



Multimedia Award for 2001:

To the Petroleum Communications Foundation, for its many excellent publications intended for public information and education about the industry. Accepting the award for the Foundation (picture left) were John Percic (right) and writer Bob Bott (centre).

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. Accepting the award on Evelyn’s behalf (picture right) was P.H.S. Board Director and longtime friend Aubrey Kerr.