



**PETROLEUM
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

ARCHIVES

Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society

October 2005; Volume XVI, Number 6

P.H.S. Lunch and Learn Meeting – October 26, 2005

Speaker: Art Dixon

On:

**Pioneering Prairie Politicians of the 1930's:
Coldwell of Saskatchewan and Aberhart of Alberta**

Art, a P.H.S. member of long-standing, will present the film, ***Pioneering Prairie Politicians***, created in celebration of the Saskatchewan and Alberta centennials this year. The film depicts the lives and influence of M. J. Coldwell and William Aberhart who rose up during the 1930's to lead their respective provinces in achieving economic stability. Both lay preachers, Coldwell and Aberhart espoused two very different means by which Saskatchewan and Alberta might become provinces whose wealth exceeded their debt.

Art Dixon came to Canada with his parents from England in 1928. They settled at Okotoks where his father was employed for a time with Royalite Oil. In 1952, Mr. Dixon was elected to the Alberta Legislature. In 1960 he was appointed Deputy Speaker of the House and became Speaker in 1969. After the Conservative Party took power in 1971, Art continued as Millikan South's M.L.A. until 1975.

TIME: 12 noon, Wednesday, October 26, 2005.

PLACE: Fairmont Palliser Hotel (133 - 9th Avenue S.W.) – Leduc Room (check marquee)

COST: Members \$25.00 and Guests \$30.00 (most welcome)

**R.S.V.P. if you wish to attend to: Clint Tippett, 691-4274 or
clinton.tippett@shell.com by noon Monday, October 24**

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Archives is published approximately 6 times a year by the Petroleum History Society for Society members. Back issues are archived on our website at:

www.petroleumhistory.ca

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THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY
THE BULL WHEEL



Next Board Meeting: The Board will meet next on Thursday, October 27, 2005 at noon at the Glenbow Museum and Archives. Meet in the lobby just before noon.

Volunteers: We are always on the lookout for people with the energy and dedication to help us grow and to undertake projects on the Society's behalf. Please contact Clint Tippett (691-4274), Doug Cass (268-4203) or Hugh Leiper (249-0707) if you would like to get involved.

Next Luncheons: Our luncheon slate for the Fall session is firming up nicely. Our November 23 luncheon will be "Perspectives from Petrolia" and will feature a "triple header" of speakers, specifically Director Bob Bott on the historical context of Petrolia, Ontario in Canada's early oil industry, Director Debbie Knall on some family connections and stories from this area and previous resident Craig Melton who recently spent a summer working in their still-active oil patch. This promises to be an excellent series of features. We are always seeking speakers and interesting subjects. If you would like to consider presenting, please contact Clint Tippett, President P.H.S., at 691-4274 or Director Debbie Knall at 780-463-3859 (Edmonton).

Canadian Centre for Energy Information: The P.H.S. has a "Content, Marketing and Traffic Partnership" with the Centre. This arrangement is an expression of the mutually beneficial cooperation that we hope will exist between our two organizations. Please see www.centreforenergy.com for more details. Of particular interest to our members is their on-line historical volume "Evolution of Canada's Oil and Gas Industry" that can be downloaded free of charge.



Canadian Centre
for Energy Information

www.centreforenergy.com

Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame Society: On September 30 this Society awarded this honour to its most recent group of prominent petroleum industry participants. They are: Angus Alexander Mackenzie, J.R. (Bud) McCaig, Ian Nicholson McKinnon, Linden Jay Richards, Ronald D. Southern, Charles Richard Stelck, Vernon L. Horte, Richard Francis Haskayne, Marguerite Flood Mosher, Archibald Wayne Dingman, George Mercer Dawson and C. William (Bill) Daniel. We are pleased to note that the Society and its members were instrumental in several of these nominations. Director Aubrey Kerr accepted the award on behalf of Archibald Dingman. The September issue of Oilweek contains full descriptions of the award winners and their accomplishments. For more information concerning this organization as well as current and past inductees, please refer to their website at www.canadianpetroleumhalloffame.ca.

P.H.S. Pin Sets: Our pin sets (of 6) have been reduced in price to \$40.00. Please contact the Society if you are interested in buying one or several sets. These make great and original Calgary- or Western Canada-related gifts. Detailed comprehensive descriptions accompany each plush-boxed set.

Petroleum History Society Awards: We are planning to hold our awards ceremony for 2004 at the November 23 luncheon. If you have any suggestions for Book of the Year, Article of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Preservation or Multimedia Awards, please let us know as soon as possible. You can refer to the P.H.S. website for details of past recipients. Book, Article and Multimedia nominees must have been released in 2004.

Oil Sands Discovery Centre: This excellent interpretive facility in Fort McMurray was the recipient of the Society's Multimedia Award for 2003. It was recently featured in a special full colour, magazine format, 40 page supplement of Oilweek entitled "Celebrating 20 Years".

Naturally: Our last issue contained a short article concerning offshore rig mishaps making the point that such serious incidents are rare. Naturally Hurricane Katrina followed shortly thereafter and created havoc in the Gulf of Mexico. According to the newspaper Upstream, numerous rigs were impacted by the storm. LeTourneau 52-class slot jack-up rig Rowan New Orleans capsized and sank in 155 feet of water. Diamond Offshore's jack-up Ocean Warwick was uprooted and later beached by Katrina. Platform rig Ensco 29 toppled and sank after the derrick and drill floor were blown overboard during the storm. Nabors platform rig SuperSundowner XII and the platform it was drilling from were both lost. It is remarkable that there was very little environmental damage related to releases of oil or gas during these events. This must be attributed to the application of proper shut-down and securing procedures that were exercised in anticipation of the approach of the hurricane. In a historical sense, the Gulf of Mexico was also the site of one of the biggest blowouts and rig incidents of all time when the Ixtoc well blew out in the offshore region of Campeche in the 1979 as it discovered a significant new oil field.

Steel Rigs: We recently had a discussion concerning the timing of steel rig introduction in Western Canada, in contrast to the traditional wooden constructs. An illustration on page 135 of DeMille's classic book indicates that Dingman #2, drilled in 1914 after the #1 discovery, utilized a steel superstructure. Both wells were, however, still cable tool operations. Thanks to Director Frank Dabbs for pointing out this application of modern technology.

Saskatchewan Oil History: Your President has just returned from a recruiting trip on which he passed through Moosomin in southeastern Saskatchewan. The somewhat amusingly named local paper, "The World Spectator", had a special insert entitled "Salute to the Oil and Gas Industry" that contains a bit of local history. To quote the article by Dawn M. Barber:

"The industry which provides more royalty revenue to this province than any other has deep roots that run more than a half-century into the prairie soil. The petroleum industry came into full swing in southeast Saskatchewan in 1955 when the first oil well was drilled in the Carnduff area by Imperial Oil. That year, Saskatchewan enjoyed Canada's second largest investment in the oilfield industry, with an investment of about \$74,800,000 directed toward intensive exploration and development, according to the record of then-M.P. Carl Nickle. However, the very first attempts at establishing an oilfield industry date back to 1888, before Saskatchewan was a province, when a well was drilled near Oxbow, in the Territory of Assiniboia. The prospective drillers went to a depth of 155 feet, some 4000 feet above the oil-bearing sands in the area. Similar unsuccessful attempts were made before the fruitful 1955 well was created."

P.H.S. Challenge: At the conclusion of his talk, Earle Gray threw down a challenge to the P.H.S. and its members. The essence of it was that with the 150th anniversary of the 1858 discovery of oil by Williams in southwestern Ontario only three years away, we should take it upon ourselves to document once and for all that this event, and not the Drake well of 1859, marked the beginning of the oil industry in North America. Some preliminary discussions have taken place at the Board level but additional suggestions and involvement will be needed. Director Bob Bott has volunteered to oversee this work. Let's get at it as this is truly an historical opportunity!

Membership Dues: Please note: At the September 15, 2005 meeting of the P.H.S. Board a motion was passed to alter the Society's dues structure as follows effective January 1, 2006:

1. New applications for the lifetime membership category will not be accepted. All lifetime memberships existing at that time will, of course, still be honoured.
2. Individual memberships will increase to \$25.00 per year from their current level of \$20.00.
3. Sustaining individual memberships will remain unchanged at \$50.00 per year.
4. Membership applications and renewals received before January 1, 2006 will be handled under the 2005 dues structure.

Memoirs?: A short article in the most recent issue (Sept./Oct. 2005) of the Chinook Country Historical Society Newsletter may be of interest to our members. It was entitled "Who, Me? Write my Memoirs?" and its substance is as follows:

"Deborah Grey did it. So did Pierre Trudeau. And Bill Clinton made a fortune with his. What about you? Is it time you wrote your memoirs? Give your children and your grandchildren the story of your life. It will contribute to their sense of identity and their self-esteem. And it will give you the good feeling of accomplishment. Plans are underway for a memoir-writing workshop. If you are interested, please call Bill Corbett [author of the piece] at (403) 283-5413 or e-mail him at dbcorb@shaw.ca. Details will be announced in a future newsletter."

Model Rigs: We received a note from a fellow with an interesting hobby and think it may be of interest. His note is as follows:

"Hello,

I am a retired oil rig contractor from Canada and I build model oil rigs. Is your company looking for an exceptional office or rotunda display, or perhaps you are planning to attend or exhibit in an oil show? You might be interested in obtaining a model oil rig to enhance your display. I have for sale the following models, which portray in complete detail the last 100 years of oilwell drilling, beginning in the early 1900's to today, including an offshore rig similar to the "Ocean Ranger" which capsized off the Nova Scotia coast [sic – Newfoundland] a few years ago. The models are:

1. *Wooden Cable Tool Rig - circa 1920*
2. *Metal Steam Rig - circa 1930*
3. *Jack Knife Rig – circa modern*
4. *Pontoon Style Off Shore Rig – circa modern*

Please email or phone for pictures, prices and information.

I thank you for your time...

Vern Blinn 1-250-748-3019 Duncan. BC Canada"

Cold Lake Museum Wins Award: Member Cal Sikstrom, who worked in Cold Lake for Imperial Oil for quite a few years, brought to our attention that the Cold Lake Museum Project had won a 2004 Museums and Schools Partnership Award. The announcement read *that "Thanks in part to a partnership with Imperial, this award-winning museum has helped hundreds of students in Cold Lake gain valuable workplace skills as well as an appreciation for Canada's natural heritage."* Cal pointed out *that "tremendous strides have been made over the past several years to design, build and install Cold Lake area petroleum development history displays in the Oil and Gas Building. Oil and Gas is one of four galleries in the Cold Lake Museum. The other galleries relate to aviation, heritage and First People's history in the area. Possible work in the future might include a heavy oil oral history project in cooperation with high school teachers (history, social studies, media) and students."* The award was presented by the Canadian Museum of Nature to the Cold Lake Museum on June 9, 2005.

News from Sakhalin: Member Cal Sikstrom (as above), is now working on the ExxonMobil side of the massive Sakhalin oil and gas project. In a recent communication he noted that *"Lots of oil history here as the northern part of the island was developed in 1920 by the Japanese. The Okha fields are still producing through a pipeline to the mainland and a city on the Amur River. During WWII an emergency pipeline was built to Kosomolsk in a manner similar to the Norman Wells pipeline. I am trying to find out more but access to information is very limited."* We look forward to Cal's updates!

The Music Connection: If any of you have heard of Fred Eaglesmith you will know of his down-to-earth musical style and his legions of devoted fans (Fredheads). He is very popular in the States but is actually from Port Dover, Ontario. Some of Fred's tracks that have an oilpatch connection are entitled: *White Rose* and *Lipstick, Lies and Gasoline*. Whether *Caroline*, *Seven Shells* and *Water in the Fuel* are likewise connected is unknown.

Amazing Stories: I'm sure that most of you have seen the displays in many stores of inexpensive soft-covered historical books with this series name. They are published by Altitude and generally run at \$9.95 each. There are some interesting volumes such as *Rebel Women*, *The Heart of a Horse*, *Great Dog Stories* and *The Early Voyageurs*. I don't like to be critical about anything historical but would have to confess to being a bit disappointed by the poor showing of the oil and gas industry in this series. The only related material that I could find was in the volume entitled *Alberta Titans* where a chapter was devoted to Bill Herron Jr. under the heading *"Buckskin and Oil"*. Maybe the Hall of Fame should hook up with Altitude to publish a series about the patch.

East Texas Field: One of the biggest oil fields in the United States is the East Texas Field. It was recently over-run by Hurricane Rita as it sits near the town of Kilgore close to the Texas-Louisiana border. According to the caption of a picture in the Oil and Gas Journal's 1959 historical volume on the 100th anniversary of the U.S. industry *"In 1930 this scene was at the discovery well of North America's greatest oil field. C.M. (Dad) Joiner drilled two random wildcats before this one [both dry holes] before this one, the 3 Daisy Bradford, came in at 300 bbl. a day from 3592 feet to open the East Texas Field. There was never another like it. So far [1959] it has produced 4 billion barrels and has 2 billion more yet to go."* The Society's library has a book entitled *"Three Cheers for the Colonel"* that deals with one of the leading figures in the Texas Railroad Commission (the ruling body in the Texas industry) and his struggles with the huge oversupply issues that arose as this field was developed. Many early approaches to prorationing and even the validity of regulation first occurred here.

RAINBOW CONOCO

AN HISTORICAL GAS STATION IN SHELBY, MONTANA



This gas station in Shelby, Montana is listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior in cooperation with the Montana Historical Society. The caption on the commemorative plaque reads:

“At least three generations of motorists have depended upon the courteous reliable service provided by this longtime Shelby landmark, designed by Continental Oil Company (Conoco) architects and built in 1936. As an adaptation of the competing Pure Oil Company’s classic domestic form known as the English cottage-type station, the building reflects Continental’s architectural policies of the mid-1930’s. The design was intended to blend with both commercial buildings and residential environments. This beautifully maintained 1930’s classic station features off-white glazed brick accented with orange-red brick trim and a steep gable roof of contrasting green asphalt. The colour scheme made the station familiar and recognizable as a Continental Oil outlet to passing motorists. Except for the addition of modern pumps and signage, the station remains virtually unchanged; even the restrooms retain the original multi-coloured tile trim. Oscar Gunlikson and his son, Jim, operated the station from the 1940s until 1960, but it has long and affectionately been known to residents as “Joe’s” after Joe Kincaid, who took over in 1965. Today, Rainbow Conoco is one of the state’s finest examples of 1930’s gas station design and equally impressive as one of the state’s oldest, continuously operated outlets.”

How many places in Canada have historical gas stations? Our heritage buildings are generally large downtown buildings and little thought is given to more modest facilities. Oil companies appear to have complete control over the “modernization” of their network outlets with no concern or accountability for the values that are celebrated at Rainbow Conoco. Perhaps we should care. Old gas stations in Canada are basically restricted to the photo albums, if that.

THE PUMPJACK AT LONGVIEW, ALBERTA



This pumpjack on the northwestern edge of Longview, Alberta is a mainstay of most field trips through the area. The well is operated by Talisman Energy, heir to the Western Decalta Company. The information on the signs surrounding the equipment states as follows:

“Well Name: Brown #2

Original Well Owner: Brown Oil Corporation of Calgary

Original Land Owner: Thomas A. Merriam of High River

Drilling Contractor: Newell & Chandler

Drilling started: March 29, 1937

Drilling completed: September 25, 1937

Drilled to Total Depth of 6997 feet (2133m)

Well initially flowed at 344 barrels per day

Producing from the Upper and Lower Porous Zones of the Rundle Formation [Turner Valley Formation]

Well put on gas lift 1963

Pumpjack and Rod Pump installed 1971

Present production 4 barrels per day [and probably a bunch of water]

Locator UWI: 8-20-18-2W5M

Warnings: H2S Poisonous Gas; No trespassing; authorized personnel only; no smoking; matches or open lights; work permit required; hard hats must be worn at all times; 24 hour emergency phone [number provided].”

A lot of history can be distilled from this location. This was one of the first delineation wells drilled after the 1936 discovery of the oil leg in the Mississippian in the field by R.A. Brown.

THE CAIRN AT LITTLE CHICAGO, NORTH OF LONGVIEW



The cairn at the previous location of Little Chicago in the Turner Valley Field was unveiled in 2004 and was the subject of a Society luncheon talk by Helen Goldenberg on October 28, 2004. The second part of Helen's remarks follow but to this we add some information concerning the cairn itself. The main explanatory plaque contains the following caption:

"In 1934 a man named R.A. (Bobby) Brown believed that the Turner Valley Oilfield was capable of producing more than just naphtha and natural gas. He believed that crude oil could be found at greater depth in the formation. Brown, Moyer & Brown was formed to prove this theory. On April 17, 1934 a cable tool rig, operated by Roy J. Widney Sr., was brought to a site near here and drilling began. At a depth of 6828 feet Turner Valley Royalties #1 was brought into production. Crude oil had been discovered in the Mississippian Limestone formation. Almost overnight a rush to drill in the area took place. People arrived, found work, built simple accommodations near the job site and set about raising their families. Businesses sprang up, schools were built, friends were made and life in "Little Chicago" was good. Pete Leman applied for a post office and it was granted and named Royalties after the discovery well. The production from this field became very important at the onset of World War II and fueled the machines of war. Drilling was nearly completed in the area and production required fewer people due to modernization. With the discovery of Leduc, Redwater, Swan Hills and many other new fields, many of the families relocated and with the closing of the post office in 1969 "our town" returned gradually to the farm and ranch land it had once been. This cairn is on the north edge of the former community. The well, Turner Valley Royalties #1, is about ½ mile southeast of here and Highway 22 is what was our main street. We dedicate this marker to the good people who lived this story."

“Little Chicago Revisited” – Part 2 of a story by Helen Goldenberg (Part 1 appeared in the December 2004 issue of Archives)

This part of Helen’s story describes the efforts that she and her committee had to make to liaise with people at this location, stakeholders like Talisman Energy, the various departments of the Provincial Government and all their supporters in order to allow this commemorative initiative to become a reality. In some ways the cairn is a monument to the perseverance of the committee. The amount of work involved in such an undertaking is a lesson to us all.

“In September 2002 I attended an oilfields school reunion. The reunion was held in the community hall in Blackfals, a community close to Red Deer. On the bulletin board of the hall among pictures of school days, I hesitantly tacked a notice typed in big bold letters describing the following "Would you like to erect a monument on a site depicting where Little Chicago, later known as Royalties, thrived?" If so, please sign your name with your phone number below so we can form a committee to succeed. Thank you." and signed my name.

I simply couldn't understand why the historic town, the town I loved and grew up in, so important to Alberta and so important to me, had disappeared and was now covered by fields of wheat intermingled with oil and gas pumps quietly pumping up and down.

Following our luncheon one of the conveners of the reunion spoke welcoming everyone. In his speech he suggested it might be of interest to read my request. Following this moment, Gerry Horne a former resident, now living in Edmonton, showed me his 3 photo albums of Little Chicago and offered his immediate assistance. Suddenly there were 20 names on the sheet and we were on our way. I instantly realized I was not alone in my goal of recognizing our little town.

I phoned the Bews, who owned a ranch in the area. The family had attended school in Little Chicago, leased land close to Highway 22 and would be willing to let us use some of their leased land to place a sign describing the history of the area, if the owners - Talisman Energy - would agree. I contacted Talisman Energy in Calgary and described our request. The following day I was asked to contact Blair Mackie, in charge of Talisman Turner Valley oilfields, which I did, and Blair immediately said "sure - no problem". Our request was granted and a couple of the fellows who signed the sheet drove out to check the location. It was situated close to Highway 22, approximately one and a half kilometers north of Longview. Alongside the site was a secondary road used by Talisman. The location was perfect. The Department of Transportation gave us permission to install a sign there. I then contacted the Province, discussed the historic significance and requested the possibility of a financial grant. In a few days the answer was "sorry but no funds are available" - however if we raised \$9,000.00 the Government would erect the sign for us. I checked this out with Gerry. Contact was made with those who had signed the sheet and we held a meeting July 17, 2003 in the Talisman boardroom. Thirty-eight people attended including representatives from Turner Valley, Longview and Black Diamond.

At the meeting it was decided that rather than putting up a sign we should erect a cairn or monument. I was told not to worry, that we will receive enough financial assistance. Immediately people at the meeting pledged money. We agreed to name our project “Little Chicago Revisited”. We formed a committee. You could feel the excitement in the air. People were giving me names of former residents to contact. Just think now grandparents, former residents, could bring their children and grandchildren to see something concrete where they once, worked on the rigs, or went to school and lived. But there was one individual at the meeting who stated “good idea - but it will never get off the ground”.

Following the meeting we drove out to the site. We all agreed it would be perfect to place the cairn opposite a grove of trees on the site - and we got to work. It would take hours to tell you how we progressed - somehow everything fell into place. Judy (Hector) Parker (father Sam and Uncle Morris owned Hector's machine shop the town) drew a painting of what the cairn would look like with the help of Gerry's ideas.

Gerry, who was now my co-chairperson, prepared a brochure describing this painting. People donating \$100.00 received a matted copy of this painting. Those donating \$300.00 received a copy of the painting and their family name would be placed on a plaque on the monument. Over 100 people donated monies from all over the country. Everyone on the committee worked so very diligently. Friendships developed that will be with us forever. We received letters of support from town councils in the area - and from our supporters. Meetings were held regularly.

Blair Mackie invited us to join Talisman Energy at their open house in September taking place in the community hall in Longview. The reason for the open house was to describe to the community the new plant to be built in the area. Actually it was to be built behind our monument and was planned to be named the Little Chicago Plant. We wrote letters inviting former residents to the open house and we certainly had a large crowd join us at that time. What support - we wrote a lot of receipts that day! It was exciting. Talisman Energy did build their plant behind our monument - actually where our cluster of schools once stood. And they did name it the Little Chicago Plant. Blair Mackie was and continues to be a wonderful supporter of our project.

We received the support of an anonymous donator who offered to install a plaque recognizing all our town's residents who fought in World War II. The Department of Transportation gave us permission to place a monument/cairn on the site and it was placed 40 meters from the highway right beside the grove of trees. Believe me our committee traveled to the location as often as possible to view progress. We attended several meetings in Longview with the Town Council and agreed to celebrate our dedication the same day as Little New York Daze [Helen's spelling] - the former name of Longview. Cooperation with Longview was inspiring. Even all the contractors and their workers were thrilled with the project. Gravel was donated. The steel for the derrick was donated. Hours of preparation for the exact construction of the derrick and base resulted in a first class monument.

Soon the monument was finally placed onto the site one year and a few days following our first meeting at the Talisman boardroom.

We were ready. Dedication Day was scheduled for July 24, 2004. The day was sunny. Between 350 and 400 people attended our ceremony. Everyone was absolutely thrilled with the monument. The speakers paid homage to our project, an honour guard thrilled all the spectators and the day was a success.

But I must once again thank our committee, our families for their encouragement and naturally all our supporters for their belief that it could be done. We are in the process of having two point of interest signs erected on Highway 22. Believe me when I tell you that dreams really do come true.

P.S. At the dedication we presented Judy's original painting of the monument to the fellow who said our project would never get off the ground. And of course it can't because it's cemented pretty solid to the ground."