



**PETROLEUM  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**ARCHIVES**

*Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society*

*September 2006; Volume XVII, Number 4*

**P.H.S. Lunch and Learn Meeting – Wednesday, September 27, 2006**

**Speaker: Gunnar Nerheim, Director – Stavanger Museum, Norway on:  
Impact of Oil on City Growth in Two Oil Capitals –  
Calgary, Canada and Stavanger, Norway**

Gunnar Nerheim graduated from the University of Oslo in 1977 as mag. art. in the history of ideas. During the 1970's and 1980's he studied at several German Universities. In the fall of 1984 he was visiting scholar at Program in Science, Technology and Society at M.I.T. Gunnar is a historian of technology and business. From 1995 to 2005 he was the executive director of the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology in Oslo. In addition to his administrative duties, Gunnar has written a number of books dealing with the history of technology and business in Norway in the 19th and 20th centuries. During the 1990's he was involved in the writing of several books focusing with shipping, shipbuilding, regional utility companies, banking, the Norwegian oil and the offshore, and the petrochemical industry. On August 1, 2006 he became director of the Stavanger Museum. He is writing a book on the history of Norwegian oil from its beginnings up to 2005, for English-reading audiences, to be published by Texas A & M University Press. He is visiting Calgary as a part of a tour in which he is researching the comparative histories of cities that are energy centres. These include Calgary, Canada; Stavanger, Norway; Houston, Texas; Aberdeen, Scotland; Dammam, Saudi Arabia; Daqing, China; Halifax, Canada; Luanda, Angola; Perth, Australia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and St. John's, Canada. These cities are bound together as parts of the World Energy Cities Partnership that involves the mayors of each centre and is intended to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and technology.

**TIME:** 12 noon, Wednesday, September 27, 2006.  
**PLACE:** Fairmont Palliser Hotel (133 - 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W.) – Corral Room. (check marquee)  
**COST:** Members \$25.00 and Guests \$30.00 (most welcome) (cash or cheque only)

**R.S.V.P. if you wish to attend to: Clint Tippett, 691-4274 or  
[clinton.tippett@shell.com](mailto:clinton.tippett@shell.com) by noon Monday, September 25**

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[www.petroleumhistory.ca](http://www.petroleumhistory.ca)

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



**Next Board Meeting:** The Board will meet next at noon on Thursday, September 21 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 Tippet (691-4274), Doug Cass (268-4203) or Hugh Leiper (249-0707) if you would like to get involved.

**Next Luncheons:** Our next luncheon, following the Norway talk, will be coordinated by P.H.S. Member Imre Varga. The topic will be "A 50 year Retrospective: The Contributions made to the Canadian Petroleum Industry by Hungarians who fled their country following the failed 1956 Hungarian Revolution". If you have any stories along these lines or know of someone who does, please contact us and we will put you in touch with Imre. We are always seeking speakers and interesting subjects. If you would like to consider presenting, please contact Clint Tippet, President P.H.S., at 691-4274.

**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 exists between our two organizations. Please see [www.centreforenergy.com](http://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.



**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.

**Digital Archives:** As you know, you can elect to receive your Archives newsletter in hard copy, digitally as a pdf, or both. We would like to point out that the advantage of going digital is that many of the illustrations in the newsletter are in colour, an aspect that is not part of the black and white hardcopy but is yours to enjoy with the on-line version. Why not try it? Please advise Past-President Micky Gulless at [micky@fuzzylogic.ca](mailto:micky@fuzzylogic.ca).

**From a recent well report:** "Run in with alligator grab and recover sheep's foot, blind box and stem. Run in with overshot and recover remainder of fish." Just a bit of jargon eh!

**Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame Society:** The Hall has selected their latest inductees for this honour and the ceremony will be held in Edmonton on Friday, September 29. The venue is the Delta Edmonton South. Tickets may be ordered by phoning 780-944-9333 - but note that the cutoff date is Monday, September 25. Each ticket is \$100.00 and tables of eight can be reserved for \$800.00. Premier Ralph Klein will be the guest speaker in one of his last public roles. We will report details of the new members of the Hall in a subsequent issue.

**Passings:** The following individuals are of note due to their connections with the Canadian Oilpatch:

**Robert McRae**, University of Calgary energy economist. Doug Cass, Treasurer of the PHS, has identified these publications by Dr. MaRae as being significant:

*McRae, Robert N. "A quantitative analysis of some policy alternatives affecting Canadian natural gas and crude oil demand and supply", Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977*

*Helliwell, John F. and Robert N. McRae "The National Energy conflict", Canadian Public Policy 7, 1, winter, 1981, p. 15-23.*

*McRae, Robert N. "A Major shift in Canada's energy policy: impact of the National Energy Program" Journal of Energy and Development, Spring, 1982, p. 173-198.*

\_\_\_\_\_. "A survey of Canadian energy policy, 1974-1983", *Energy Journal*, volume 6, number 4, 1985, p. 49-64.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Canadian Energy Development", *Current History*, volume 87, number 527, March, 1988, p. 117-120.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Energy trade shocks: the impact on Canadian Economic activity", in David L. McKee, ed. *Canadian-American Economic Relations*, New York: Praeger, 1988, p. 31-46.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The emergence of North American Energy trade without barriers", in Stephen Randall and Herman Konrad, eds. *NAFTA in Transition*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, p. 79-92.

*Helliwell, John F., Mary E. MacGregor, R. N. McRae and A. Plourde. "Oil and Gas in Canada - the effects of domestic policies and world events", Toronto: Canadian Tax Foundation, 1988.*

**Maurice Palmer Paulson**, petroleum engineer and executive (July 13, 2006): Maurice was born in 1919 in Bawlf, Alberta and attended high school in Camrose. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1942 with a petroleum engineering degree. He was the engineer on the Leduc No. 1 and No. 2 discoveries and spent forty-five years working in the oil industry, first with Imperial Oil and eventually with Home Oil where he rose to become Senior Executive Vice-President. He was the President of the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada (IPAC) and was on the Board of Governors for the University of Calgary. He was a director of Home Oil, PanCanadian Petroleum and the Calgary Petroleum Club.

**Bill Hopper**, civil servant and company-builder (July 3, 2006): Bill Hopper is certainly best known for his advocacy for and execution of the growth of the former Crown corporation, Petro-Canada, beginning in 1975. Given the mandate by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his Liberal Government of bringing the Federal Government into the oil industry, initially in the aftermath of the first oil shock of the 1970's and then of the 1980 National Energy Program, Hopper succeeded in acquiring a range of both upstream and downstream assets for the company, primarily from multinational concerns who has misgivings about the future of the industry in Canada given the nationalistic passions of the day. P.H.S. Lifetime Achievement Award winner Peter Foster covered Bill Hopper's life in the oilpatch in considerable detail in books like "Other People's Money" and "The Sorcerer's Apprentices". Ian Doig was quoted in the July 7 Calgary Herald article by Suzanne Wilton as saying that "He was given a job and a lot of us didn't like what he was sent to do". Feelings run deep in the oilpatch and one gets the feeling that Hopper is still in our bad books. In any case he accomplished what he set out to do by being, as Ms. Wilton said, "a capitalist among socialists and a socialist among capitalists".

**Devon Interpretive Centre:** Our loyal correspondent and oil industry author, Professor Sandy Gow of Concordia University College, Edmonton, sent us this brief report from a recent visit to the world class Canadian Petroleum Discovery Centre near Devon, Alberta:

*"I was at the Interpretive Centre at Devon yesterday and saw the extension that had been made to the building. One part is designed to allow them to bring vehicles etc. into it for display purposes (it has two large doors on the east side). Some older men, with the help of some young roughnecks currently working on rigs, did a demonstration of cable tool drilling and rotary drilling. The cable tool restoration is an interesting one and they appear to have all the necessary tools there. Command Drilling (I'm not sure if it even exists any more) gave them a functioning rotary rig and they did a demonstration on that one as well, running pipe in and out of the hole."*

Readers should note that improvements to the facilities at the Centre are continually in progress as funds from various provincial government, industry and federal government sources pour in. A membership in the Leduc-Devon Oilfield Historical Society is highly recommended. Their address is #6 – 20 Haven Avenue, Devon, Alberta T9G 2B9 with phone number 780-987-4323 and an excellent website at [www.leducnumber1.com](http://www.leducnumber1.com). Membership entitles one to a subscription to the "Catwalk" newsletter. A P.H.S. field trip from Calgary to the Centre and other area petroleum attractions is being considered. Please let us know if you are interested.

#### **Good Publications:**

"William Stewart Herron: Father of the Petroleum Industry in Alberta", hard cover, 359 pages, published by the Historical Society of Alberta with orders to Box 4035, Station C, Calgary, Alberta, T2T 5M9. Full of well- researched historical correspondence and, at only CDN \$5.00, a real deal. Add \$3.50 for postage and handling. Phone 403-261-3662 for more information.

"Pack Horse Tracks – Recollections of a Geologist's Life in British Columbia and the Yukon, 1924-1954" by H. S. (Hugh) Bostock, Geological Survey of Canada Open File Report 650, 244 pages and one map, spiral bound. CDN \$35.00 in Canada, CDN \$45.50 elsewhere. Contact the GSC for ordering, tax information and shipping/handling details at [www.geoscan.ess.nrcan.gc.ca](http://www.geoscan.ess.nrcan.gc.ca)

#### **Alberta History:**

In December 2005 a time capsule sealed in 1955 was opened at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. The contents were primarily items related to the Golden Jubilee celebrations of fifty years ago. As such it was primarily symbolic and, as Archives Director Leslie Latta-Guthrie stated, *"As the new year draws near, Albertans may be thinking about preserving their personal and family legacies. If our history is to survive individually or collectively, its preservation must be thought of with care and adequate attention"*. As a part of its preservation initiative, the Archives are hosting talks and planning hands-on workshops to encourage the preservation of archival material held in private collections as well as in public institutions. The phone number of 780-427-1750 is provided. This information was gleaned from the "History Now" newsletter of the Historical Society of Alberta. We believe that we are doing our part at the Petroleum History Society but there is always more that can be accomplished..

The Glenbow Museum and Archives celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in July 2006. The Glenbow Archives, Canada's largest non-governmental archival repository, has extensive holdings of unpublished documents and photographs related to the history of Western Canada. The Glenbow Library collection contains over 100,000 books, pamphlets and journals relating to the history of the southern Alberta region. An irreplaceable resource for petroleum history.



**INDUSTRY APPRECIATION NIGHT  
GUEST RESERVATION FORM  
DESK AND DERRICK CLUB OF CALGARY**

**Speaker:** Kathleen Sendall, CAPP Board of Governors and Senior Vice President,  
North American Gas, Petro-Canada

**Topic:** Lessons I've Learned the Hard Way

**Date/Time:** Thursday, October 12, 2006  
**Cocktails:** 5:00 PM  
**Dinner:** 6:00 PM  
**Program:** 7:00 PM

**Location:** Calgary Petroleum Club, 319 – 5 Avenue SW

**Cost:** \$50 Tables of 8: \$400; Tables of 6: \$300

**RESERVATION DEADLINE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2006 BY 4:00 PM**

**PAYMENT REQUIRED AT TIME OF RESERVATION.  
Cheques payable to Desk and Derrick Club of Calgary.**

**Mail payment to:** Valerie Robertson, ExxonMobil  
Rm 04055, 237 – 4 Avenue SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 0H6  
Phone: 237-3048 or email Valerie.robertson@exxonmobil.com

.....  
(detach and submit with payment)

**Industry Appreciation Night, Thursday, October 12, 2006 Guest Reservation Form**

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

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meal Choice: Please indicate your choice of meal**

**Grilled Chicken Breast with Peppercorn Sauce:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Slow Braised Alberta Black Angus 'AAA' Brisket**  
**of Beef with Maple Whiskey BBQ Sauce:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Vegetarian:** \_\_\_\_\_

## EARLY DAYS IN THE WESTERN BASIN

From "Reading the Rocks" by Morris Zaslow, p. 116

*"Bell [a geologist with the Geological Survey of Canada] returned to the prairies in 1874, but this time he worked in the area to the north of Selwyn's [a more senior geologist] track, being between Lake Winnipeg and Athabasca River. From these three traverses, as well as the one carried out in 1874 by Bell's assistant J. W. Spencer, a picture of the overlapping sequences of beds began to emerge.*

*In 1874, Bell was also involved in another undertaking on behalf of the Survey. Geologists working in the prairies were faced with the difficulty of reaching satisfactory conclusions where the bedrock was almost entirely covered with drift. Without outcrops to observe, the geologist was lost, so borings seemed the answer, particularly since chances were good that coal, oil, salt, or artesian water might be discovered in the process. The Pacific Railway survey was sufficiently interested in ascertaining the mineral resources along its proposed route to pay half the cost of securing a drill.*

*In 1873 the government advanced \$6,000 to the Survey to purchase a steam-driven diamond drill. The rig, under the direction of Joseph Ward, an engineer from Petrolia, Ont., was sent to the North-West late that summer. The following year borings were made with the Survey's apparatus at Rat Creek and Fort Ellice by Alexander Macdonald, Ward's assistant, and a crew was sent west by the Fairbank Company of Petrolia to drill at Fort Pelly at a point indicated by Bell. Unfortunately, Bell did not wait for the arrival of the driller but left instructions with the trader at Fort Pelly for Ward to drill at Swan River Crossing, then returned to his own work. The upshot was that Ward drilled the wrong site, for there were two Swan River Crossings. A lengthy correspondence ensued, until Selwyn was glad to drop the whole matter."*

## ALEXANDER MACKENZIE (1764-1820)

From "Pioneers of the Athabasca Oil Sands" by Skolrood, Sabharwal and Lopatka

*"Alexander Mackenzie arrived at Pond's post on the Athabasca River in 1787. He was appointed to replace Pond as manager of the troublesome Athabasca post. Mackenzie, like Pond, was given a share in the North West Company. Prior to his arrival, amalgamation of the small sparring groups of traders and the North West Company had taken place at Grand Portage.*

*When he arrived in 1787 to take charge of the rugged Athabasca region, Mackenzie landed 24 miles from the junction of the Clearwater and Athabasca Rivers. The spot is near the current Syncrude lease at Mildred Lake, nine kilometers downstream from Tar Island, which is now the location of the "tailings pond" of the Great Canadian Oil Sands [Suncor] Plant. He described what he saw:*

***"At about twenty-four miles from the Fork, are some bituminous fountains, into which a pole twenty feet long may be inserted without the least resistance. The bitumen is in a fluid state and, when mixed with gum or the resinous substances collected from the spruce fir, serves to gum the canoes. In its heated state it emits a smell like that of a sea coal. [On] The banks of the river, which are there very elevated, [one can] discover veins of the same bituminous quality."***

*This was the first description of the oil sands."*

[Fountains? Comments?]

# Something to Watch For about the Petroleum Industry

Press Release April 11, 2006

## **Production Begins on New Outdoor Living Network Original Series, “The Rig”**

-- 13-part series by Edmonton-based Anaid Productions reveals the real life drama behind Alberta's oil industry --

Toronto, ON (April 11, 2006) – OLN together with Edmonton-based Anaid Productions announced today that production has started on *The Rig*, a new 13-part, 30-minute original series that explores the wildcat world of Alberta oil rigs. This documentary series will follow 5-6 members of the rig's 16-person crew and their numerous support staff across a number of oil fields throughout central Alberta. Principal photography is scheduled to last approximately 13 weeks. A broadcast date has not been announced.

From the producers of the Gemini Award-winning series *Taking It Off* and the new series *The Family Restaurant*, *The Rig* delves deep into the dark reality of life on the rig, following a colourful, motley crew of oil rig workers who risk life and limb – all in the name of fortune and flames.

This series will bear witness to the day-to-day grind as well as what happens when the shift ends. Discover the physical and emotional trials and the shifting dynamics of the rig's three crews; including members of the rough and tough drilling crew, geologists, engineers, their city-based bosses and the eclectic support community that keeps the camp running.

“This series will provide viewers with an inside look at the dark and gritty world of oil rig workers – a world experienced by few people,” said OLN's David Way. “The ‘work hard/play hard’ attitude of this subculture directly reflects OLN's mandate to broadcast programs that illuminate the human desire for truly adventurous experiences.”

“*The Rig* is a rare opportunity to discover not only the inner workings of a state-of-the-art drilling rig, but also the inner lives of the men and women who bring the oil and gas industry to life,” says producer Margaret Mardrossian. “These stories will fascinate and entertain those of us who rely on the fruits of their labour.”

*The Rig* is produced by Anaid Productions in association with OLN and with the participation of the Alberta Film Development Program, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Canada Canadian Film and Video Production Tax Credit Program. Anaid Productions is an award-winning film and television production company dedicated to the development and production of quality dramatic and factual programming [www.anaid.com](http://www.anaid.com).

For more information, contact:

Alexis Hood, OLN, 416.332.5076, [ahood@discovery.ca](mailto:ahood@discovery.ca)

Fran Humphreys Watson, Unit Publicist, 403.244.7774, [fran@franandcompany.com](mailto:fran@franandcompany.com)

## THE ORIGINS OF SULPHUR RECOVERY AT TURNER VALLEY

The following is adapted from "The Canadian Petrochemical Industry",  
by Shell Oil Company of Canada, Limited (1956), published by the Ryerson Press

*"Madison Natural Gas Company's gas scrubbing plant was built originally in 1925 to extract hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide contained in the gas from Turner Valley. This followed the completion of negotiations between Royalite Oil Company and Canadian Western Natural Gas Company for the marketing of "purified" natural gas. Canadian Western Natural Gas Company now [1956] supplies this gas to Calgary and to points south to Lethbridge and east to Bow Island. In recent years Madison Natural Gas Company has been called upon to supply peak volumes of up to 100 million cu. ft. a day during the winter [the sweet stream]. About 209 billion cu. ft. of wet natural gas with hydrogen sulphide concentrations of from 0.5 to 6.5% were treated in 1952 and in 1953 by the scrubbing plant. Resulting from the operation of Madison Natural Gas Company's gas scrubbing plant, there were sulphurous gases [the sour stream] analyzing by volume on a dry basis approximately 40.2% hydrogen sulphide, 56.8% carbon dioxides and 3% hydrocarbons. The gas available was sufficient to supply a sulphur recovery unit having a production capacity of 30 long tons a day of sulphur, representing an acid gas capacity of 2,130,000 standard cu. ft. a day.*

*That many tons of hydrogen sulphide were being vented each day to the atmosphere from the gas scrubbing plant [prior to the construction of the sulphur recovery unit in 1952] was acknowledged for many years before the sulphur recovery unit was built. The principal deterrent to the extraction of sulphur had always been the low delivered price of Gulf Coast sulphur. Sulphur that could be made from Alberta natural gas had a logical market in the large pulp and paper industry in the Pacific Northwest, but high mountain freight rates, compared to the low cost of transporting Gulf sulphur by water, made such a project uneconomic. Increased world demand for sulphur ultimately ended this situation. The price of sulphur increased and this was followed shortly by an allocation scheme in the United States and rationing of supplies to other countries, including Canada. Sulphur made in Alberta could then command a premium in price, which made its manufacture economically feasible. At present [1956] the Madison Natural Gas Company Limited owns the natural gas gathering system in the Turner Valley region that comprises some 67 miles of line, transporting wet gas from 195 Turner Valley wells."*

Editor's comments:

This overview of gas handling in Turner Valley was very timely as it occurred as the field was into decline and was soon to be dwarfed by newer and bigger fields like Jumping Pound, Waterton and Pincher Creek. Indeed Jumping Pound's sulphur recovery plant opened in 1951, slightly predating Turner Valley's. One is referred to Fred Stenson's landmark book "Waste to Wealth" for a comprehensive treatment of the evolution of gas processing in the Western Basin. The shortage of sulphur in the early 1950's was caused by several factors. Industrial growth sparked by general overall prosperity was certainly important. However, two military aspects cannot be ignored. Firstly, the Korean War and the confrontation between the Soviet Bloc and the Western Powers had led to a buildup and consumption of conventional ammunition and explosives, for which sulphur as an essential ingredient. Secondly, the demand for atomic weapons had led to a jump in the processing of uranium ores through the use of sulphuric acid leaching. It is also of note that large volumes of raw hydrogen sulphide were vented at Turner Valley for many years, apparently without depopulating the area or causing any long term environmental or health issues. David – you win the bet although I would never believe it if I hadn't read it!



## ESTABLISHMENT OF GLENBOW RANCH PROVINCIAL PARK – ERIC HARVIE STRIKES AGAIN

The name of the Harvie Family was once again in the news in Calgary with their generous cooperation in the establishment of a new provincial park just to the west of Calgary in the Bow River corridor. As was outlined in the remarks made by family spokesman Tim Harvie, published in the August 25 edition of the Calgary Herald, the new park is centered upon the heart of the Glenbow Ranch that their family had developed for more than seventy years. This picturesque and environmentally sensitive area includes the original mainline of the Canadian Pacific Railroad built in the 1880's. The Glenbow Ranch was once part of the historic Cochrane Ranch that was the first and largest sheep and cattle ranch established in Western Canada. The core of the Glenbow Ranch was established by Chester de la Verne in the early 1900's and it ran until the Depression. In 1933, the ranch was purchased by Eric Harvie, Tim's grandfather, expanded numerous times, passed to Tim's father in the 1950's under whom it continued its growth, and was ultimately taken over by Tim and his sister who have ranched it since the 1980's.

Why is this relevant to petroleum history?

The reason is that grandfather, Eric Harvie, played a pivotal role in the development of the oil industry in Western Canada. Through his acquisition of mineral rights in Alberta in the 1930's and 1940's, he was positioned to take advantage of the oil boom that followed the discovery of oil at Leduc in 1947. As the fairways for Devonian oil and other hydrocarbons expanded, his rights came into great demand and he was able to command premium prices and royalty rates for his freehold acreage through his company, Western Minerals.

But what Eric Harvie did with his newfound riches is at least as significant on light of the cultural development of Alberta. As outlined in the recent series "Alberta in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" history book collection:

*"Harvie was a Calgary lawyer who held leases on much of the land where the big oil strikes at Leduc and Redwater were made. A millionaire many times over, he did not flaunt his wealth. In only one area did he spend lavishly. He was an inveterate packrat, always buying and storing anything that caught his fancy, and his great wealth enabled him to develop his passion for collecting. In 1954 he established a foundation, named after his Glenbow Ranch, and set about amassing memorabilia from the West with the same care and efficiency that he bestowed on his business affairs. "I want you to collect like a bunch of drunken sailors" he told his staff. So they did, scouring the countryside for anything and everything that represented the Old West that Harvie had encountered when he arrived from Ontario in 1911. Native artifacts, farm machinery, tools ... somehow Harvie even managed to acquire a pair of Queen Victoria's bloomers! In 1963 Harvie donated everything he had collected to the Provincial Government, along with \$5 million to look after it. The massive collection became the foundation for the Alberta Archives: 14,000 paintings, 20,000 books, 10,000 pieces of pioneer furniture, 24,000 natural history specimens, 13,000 native artifacts and 5000 mineralogy, petrology and paleontology specimens. It was all housed in the old 1915 courthouse until 1973 when the Glenbow Museum and Archives was constructed as a part of Calgary's Convention Centre project. Eric Harvie, the incurable packrat whose passion ensured generations of Albertan's could experience their history, died in 1975."*

Please refer to the P.H.S. 2005 Annual General Meeting address by Earle Gray for historical background and to Aubrey Kerr's "Redwater" for the business side of Eric Harvie.



### The Testing of Frontier #1 – A Turner Valley Oilwell

by **Don Redman**, P.H.S. Sustaining Member (Photo of #39 equipment courtesy of Glenbow Archives)

*“Frontier #1 (11-16-18-2W5) was drilled and completed as an oilwell in 1938. The location was about a mile southeast of Little New York, now officially named Longview. In 1938 the Petroleum and Natural Gas Conservation Board was established to set equitable maximum allowable production rates for all Alberta wells. In Turner Valley, individual well allowables, now supervised by the new Conservation Board, were established using the tested production rate of the well, modified by an adjustment factor based on the well’s gas-oil ratio. Anglo-Canadian’s Production Department, headed up by Gene Denton, was the operator of the Frontier well. In the summer of 1939 a large diameter, low pressure and manually operated separator was rigged up on the wellhead pad of this well with a large diameter flare line and a large diameter flow line to the tanks. I was working in the Production Department and was assigned the night shift during the test. When I arrived I put my lunch bucket down about ten feet away and took over the opening and closing of the hand-operated dump valve on the separator to send the oil to the tanks. The oil was filling the separator so fast, as indicated by the glass tube gauge, that I stood all night operating the dump valve and was afraid to take the time to reach for my lunch bucket. I did not see the test results but a few days later the Calgary newspapers announced the well in the headlines as the largest oilwell in the British Empire. The Conservation Board immediately changed its required testing procedure to be calculated on a new “Brown Formula”. This formula was based upon a percentage of the open flow of the well and the number of acres of the lease being drained – but with a maximum of 25 bbl/acre/day allowed for the tests. The Conservation Board faced a great deal of opposition to the acceptance of this formula for the next several years. Anglo-Canadian’s testing equipment was dismantled from the wellsite, taken to the yard at their new camp near the river below Little New York and never used again.”*

**Editor’s Note:** Thanks to Don for this recollection. Records indicate that the initial production rate of the well after stimulation with 5000 gallons of acid was 1059 bbl/d with 6 mmcf/d of gas.