



NOTICE

LUNCH & LEARN MEETING

12:00 Noon, Thursday (not Wednesday), June 7, 2001

Fred Stenson - Author

TOPIC

THE LAST STACK

"The Last Stack" is a corporate history of Western Research and Development, a frontier environmental company founded in Calgary in the mid-1960's. This company began with air quality monitoring of a fairly primitive sort and stack surveys at sulphur plants. In mid-life it helped revolutionize sulphur plant efficiency by designing a system that would optimize processing processes. The company gave international exposure to Canadian expertise in this vital aspect of sour gas plant facilities – a cornerstone of our industry.

Fred Stenson was raised on a farm and cattle ranch in southwestern Alberta. The author of numerous fiction and non-fiction titles, he is best known in petroleum history circles for his work "Waste to Wealth", a 1985 account of the birth and evolution of the natural gas processing business in Western Canada. He has also been a professional script writer for twenty-five years with credits to over 130 produced films and videos. Fred's latest work of fiction, entitled "The Trade", concerned the fur trade in the 19th century and was recently awarded the inaugural Grant MacEwan Writer's Award.

TIME: 12 noon (receipts at the door), June 7, 2001

PLACE: Palliser Hotel (133 - 9th Avenue SE) – Colonial Room (but check marquee on arrival)

COST: \$20 Members, \$22 Guests (most welcomed)

R.S.V.P. Clint Tippett (691-4274) by noon, Tuesday, June 5, 2001

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If you missed the talk...

Norman Wells, Canol and the Second World War

Wednesday, April 25, 2001

by Alex Hemstock

... catch a condensed version of Alex's presentation on page 3

THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY

Calendar of Events and Daily Tips

Next Director's Meeting: June 13, 2001 at Glenbow Museum.

Next Luncheon: The program for the Fall 2001 slate of luncheons has not yet been arranged.

Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame Nominations: Imperial Oil has been contacted for letters of nomination and photos for nominee Ted Link. Nominations must be submitted by May 31, 2001. There are 56 Hall inductees since initiating this recognition in 1997. Forms and a list of members will be available at future luncheons and newsletters. For more information, contact Canadian Hall of Fame Society 1-780-930-6833 or forward candidate suggestions to Clint Tippett at 691-4274.

Society E-Mail Address: petroleumhistorysociety@canada.com. All members with e-mail service please send in your address to Micky Gulless, Past President, Membership Committee " micky@fuzzylogic.ca " to build our file. Currently P.H.S. has e-mail addresses for 33 members.

P.H.S. Membership: Total 82 paid, including 26 Lifetime, 3 Sustaining and 54 Individual.

National Petroleum Show 2002: The Society considers it valuable to participate and is soliciting member participation to form a committee to coordinate booth promotion.

Oral History Project: Quarterly Reports have been distributed to all Board Members. Interviews began again in April. Transcriber has a backlog of interview tapes to work on and a list specific to C.S.P.G. will be prepared and forwarded. Tina Crossfield has recently been added as an interviewer.

History Trivia: New service to Members. Submit any question (person, place, thing – why, what, who, when) you may have on oilpatch history and our Board will be poled for adequate response. Queries and replies to be printed in this section.

New Book: Aubrey Kerr's "Corridors of Time II", 264 pages, \$20.00 – [collector's dream](#). Sixth self-published, non-fiction historical account from author's 58 years of industry notes and files, beginning with the *Story Of The Tar Sands* and ending with *Profiles Of Our Past Leaders*. Aubrey was inducted into the Canadian Hall of Fame in September 1998 and awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Calgary in November 1998.

Annual General Meeting: Election of Board of Officers. President – Clint Tippett; Vice President – Bill McLellan; Treasurer – Doug Cass; Secretary – Peter Savage; Past President – Micky Gulless; and Directors – John Frey, Aubrey Kerr, Hugh Leiper, Neil Leeson, Peter McKenzie-Brown, Joyce Wright and Edith Wenzel. Jack Porter continues as an Honorary Director.

2000 Awards: Nominations required for Multimedia, Preservation and Lifetime Achievement Awards. Best Article and Best Book awards will be selected from two article and four book candidates identified to date. Contact Clint Tippett at 691-4274 with any ideas you have.

Award: Aubrey Kerr has brought to our attention the fact that Helen Turgeon, one of our members and a recent inductee into the Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame, has recently been elected into the Saskatchewan Hall of Fame. The ceremony is scheduled for the Weyburn Oil and Gas Show in early June 2001. Congratulations Helen!

Discovery Days: Aubrey has also notified us that Turner Valley Discovery Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 2, 2001. Get out and have some fun celebrating our petroleum heritage!

New Publication: Doug Cass has indicated that Frank Dabbs's new book on the life of Bill Herron Jr. has been published with the official launch planned for early June.

NORMAN WELLS, CANOL AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A P.H.S. Luncheon Presentation, April 25, 2001

By Alex Hemstock

(Transcription by N. Tippett, excerpts and editing by C. Tippett)

It's an honour to be here today to talk to all you folks, it's a real pleasure to meet so many old friends "from years back". I'm going to try to describe to you what I saw and what I heard as a young engineer. I was hired in May of 1943 to work on the Canol Project. Canol became an epic of the north as much of it was built across areas that, as Robert Service might say "the mountains were nameless and the rivers ran God knows where".

A small seasonal refining operation was in place at Norman Wells when World War II started and when Japan attacked the United States. The U.S. was concerned that Japan might gain a foothold in Alaska. War plans were also being made for the Northwest Staging Route for supplies to Russia – this being a critical lifeline in the war effort. Canada and the United States, with the U.S. taking the leading role, agreed to examine the possibility of building a pipeline from Norman Wells to Whitehorse where it was proposed that a refinery would be built to produce fuel for those military operations – that was the Canol Project. It cast a very wide shadow on northwestern Canada as some of the components were, in themselves, major undertakings. They included exploration for oil over a large part of the Mackenzie Valley and the drilling at Norman Wells. The main pipeline contractor was Bechtel-Price-Callahan, a consortium of U.S. builders. The design and construction of the refinery in Whitehorse was looked after by Standard Oil of California.

I heard of this opportunity to go north for a job working with Imperial Oil who had undertaken the search for oil reserves on behalf of the U.S. Army – this sounded pretty exciting. It was a widespread effort and required a geological survey of the general Mackenzie Valley from the Redstone River in the south to Fort Good Hope in the north, with the tributaries of the Mackenzie providing access to the hinterland. You could fly into some lake up at the headwaters and start down on the river, doing your geology on the way. Our Chief Geologist was Ted Link, back in the north again, this time under the supervision of a U.S. Army officer. Wells were drilled on the basis of that summer's fieldwork. Most of the well sites were on obvious geological structures but no additional oil was found.

Since my training and interest were in engineering, I transferred to the Engineering Department at the end of 1943. Our main task was to build the infrastructure for the Norman Wells oil field – that is roads, housing, warehousing, oil storage and drilling sites – and it was all done under the pressure of deadlines. Progress on the pipeline out of Norman Wells had been very slow because the Army engineers were unfamiliar with permafrost and did what most engineers would do – they stripped away all of the insulation so that they had a nice bare foundation to work on. Very shortly they had something that looked like a canal! The side slopes of the hills harboured springs that formed ice buildups in winter – they called them "the glaciers". These could become complete barriers to roadways.

I was privileged to be asked to study and report on pipeline operations in the winter of 1944-45. This study involved driving the pipeline route and visiting each pump station. I recorded data on oil volumes, oil temperatures and variations over time. Pressures were high in the pipeline, up to 17,000 p.s.i. Pipeline temperatures varied greatly in summer under the 24 hour-a-day sun - the line might reach 140 degrees F. In other seasons a maximum daily variation of 110 degrees F was recorded. You can imagine how the pipe would move and twist all over the surface. Any small nick or dent could initiate a stress fracture. In all just over 1 million barrels of crude oil entered the pipeline – but it was difficult to monitor volumes at the pump stations because of the thermal expansion and contraction of the oil.

The commonly quoted number for the cost of the pipeline is \$134 million but if the military costs are included it would be more like \$300 million. Some 52,900 people worked on the project – and of them 28,000 did not finish their nine-month contract. There were never more than 20% Canadians in the workforce and upon shutdown most equipment was salvaged and the employees dismissed.

West Kern's Heritage Lives On

By Thomas G. Dolan, Correspondent, A.A.P.G. Explorer

Jane Kinsey knows a lot about oil camps. She was born in one, raised in one, and after a 37-year teaching career, she returned to one. The difference between then and now? Then she lived in the camp with hundreds of others, families that were drawn to the oil fields and steady work even during the Depression. Now she's trying to restore the same camp for posterity. Kinsey is director of the West Kern Oil Museum in Taft, California, a volunteer-run operation that is slowly-but-surely becoming one of the country's great examples of oil industry heritage. "Were trying to save all of this ... all of what it was like," Kinsey said. "One day, when we're finished, it will be just like it used to be". "Used to be," in this case, is a term of endearment for Kinsey, because she remembers her oil camp world as something that helped both her and others achieve successful lives. "In the 1930s there were 26 kids who grew up in the pipeline camp," she said, including herself in the group, "and 21 became college graduates." Kinsey herself went to school at Berkeley, Calif. Her father was a guager for Standard Oil – an agent who bought oil from independent producers for the home company. Her passion for all of the "good" that was part of that earlier world is what brought her back to Taft, she said, in hopes of restoring a part of American history before it was lost for good. "At one time there were over 7000 wooden derricks here," she said. "When it got down to the last one, we decided we'd keep it and build the museum around it."

Although there are a few scattered oil museums across the United States, most oil company-owned, this one is by far the largest and most extensive. Run entirely by volunteers, the museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting artifacts, books and equipment that tell the story of oil in California – particularly in Kern County. That mission covers a lot of territory – rather than just showcasing old oilfield memorabilia, the museum tries to tell of the businesses, communities and people affected by the whole historical experience. In other words, a lot of Kinsey's and others' personal experiences are included.

But the museum is also dedicated to increasing the public understanding and appreciation of the oil industry itself. Moreover, it has been steadily expanding its mandate, housing not only historical artifacts, but also creating a "living history", putting the grounds and machinery to work in a way similar to how they functioned in the past. Thanks to donations and restoration efforts on the part of the museum volunteers, you can find not only actual, vintage oil field equipment, but also examples of:

- Furnished residences, for both families and "singles", including a cookhouse.
- Old pipeline departments and machine shops.
- A pipe perforating plant.
- And, soon to open, an original "shotgun house".

"Just recently we opened a 1912 office building on the grounds that was given to us by Texaco," Kinsey said. "One of the owners gave us \$20,000 to restore it to its original look." And what about the shotgun house? "That was a house in the camp that started as one room, and then people kept adding rooms to the back of it," Kinsey said. "It would just be longer and longer." The restored shotgun house, the newest addition to the museum's grounds, was officially opened November 18, 2000. "As we get money from members, donations and oil companies," she added, "we restore." In October 2000, the museum played host to about 40,000 people who were celebrating "Oildorado," which marked Taft's 90th Anniversary. With the exception of the Oildorado activities, the museum attracts about 8000 visitors annually – last year from 38 states and 27 foreign countries.

The 8-acre museum grounds are landscaped using California native plants. A pond, stream and waterfall can be enjoyed as one sits in the outdoor classroom in the shade of several oak and cottonwood trees. This, too, has Kinsey's special touch, because it carries her special memories. "When we lived here there were five gardeners with us, and they always had the grounds looking so nice," she said. "It looked like a park."

Admission is free, though donations are accepted. There are some 500 members who offer membership donations. The museum is open six days a week – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. It is located just off Highway 33 at 1168 Wood Street, Taft. Taft itself is approx. 50 km WSW of Bakersfield or approx. 125 km NW of Los Angeles. Tours are offered – to book contact Jane Kinsey at the museum. The mailing address is P.O. Box 491, Taft, California, 93268. The telephone number is (661) 765-6664 – and for additional information you can visit their website at www.westkern-oilmuseum.org.

PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY

Individual Membership

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Enclosed is a cheque or money order for \$ _____, payable to **The Petroleum History Society**. Please mail fee and completed form to: Membership Committee - Petroleum History Society, c/o Glenbow Archives, 130 – 9th Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta T2G 0P3.
Attention: Doug Cass

Date: _____ Signature: _____