



**PETROLEUM
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

ARCHIVES

Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society

March 2008; Volume XIX, Number 3

P.H.S. Annual General Meeting and Awards – Wednesday, March 26, 2008

**Petroleum History Society A.G.M. featuring speaker
Jim Gray and the 2007 P.H.S. Awards Ceremony**

This year we will be conducting our annual Society business and highlighting our annual awards program by presenting expressions of our appreciation to individuals who have made significant contributions to the preservation of Canadian Petroleum History. The awards and their recipients are described in detail on page 3 of this issue of Archives.

As announced in our February issue, our Keynote Speaker will be prominent Calgary oilman Jim Gray who will address us on the late 1970's re-discovery of the Deep Basin natural gas accumulations that remain an important component of exploration and development in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin.

The schedule for the meeting will be:

4:00 p.m.	Meeting commences – call to order
4:05 p.m.	President's Report
4:20 p.m.	Treasurer's Report
4:30 p.m.	Election of P.H.S. Officers and Board for the 2008-2009 term
4:45 p.m.	2007 P.H.S. Awards
5:15 p.m.	Keynote Speaker Jim Gray on the Deep Basin (see page 4)
5:45 p.m.	Questions, Answers and Discussion
6:00 p.m.	Mix and Mingle with snacks and cash bar - Please come out and join us!

TIME: 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 26, 2008.
PLACE: Fairmont Palliser Hotel (133 - 9th Avenue S.W.) – The Penthouse (check marquee)
COST: Members and Guests (most welcome) - free of charge

**For the sake of our snack planning, please
R.S.V.P. if you wish to attend to: Clint Tippett, 691-4274 or
clinton.tippett@shell.com by noon Monday, March 24**

THE PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY
THE BULL WHEEL



Next Board Meeting: The Board will meet at 3:30 p.m. on March 26 in the Spanish Room at the Palliser Hotel, immediately preceding the Annual General Meeting.

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 help out.

Next Luncheons: Our slate seems to be coming together for the Spring session. We have tentatively assigned our **April 24** date to those members who plan to address the May P.H.S./P.H.I. petroleum historical convention in Sarnia and would like to dry run their petroleum history talks on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the oil industry in Canada. A May date is being passed on given this Convention with the final talk of the Spring being on **June 4** when Dr. Johan Dormaar and Senior Park Warden Robert Watt will be speaking to us about Oil City in Waterton National Park and the recent book that they authored on this subject, as published by the Lethbridge Historical Society. In the meantime, we are seeking speakers and interesting subjects for the Fall session. If you are considering making a presentation, 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 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.



Passing – Jim Hamilton: Long time P.H.S. member Jim Hamilton passed away on January 13, 2008. Jim was born on May 21, 1932 in Glenelg Township, Grey County, Ontario. He grew up in Sarnia, Ontario and graduated with a degree in Geology from the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario in 1956. Also in 1956 he married his wife, Donna Dentinger, and they moved west to Calgary to take advantage of the developing oil patch, where he worked at Gulf Oil Limited, Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas Limited, PanArctic Limited, and International Petrodata Limited. During his career he traveled the Rocky Mountains in pack-horse parties during the 1950's and worked in Northern Quebec, Alberta and the High Arctic up into the 1990's. Jim was known for his keen wit and sense of humour.

2007 Petroleum History Society Awards:

Book of the Year Award for 2007 - Dick Haskayne with Paul Grescoe for "Northern Tigers: building ethical Canadian corporate champions: a memoir and a manifesto", published by Key Porter Books, 320 p.

Article of the Year Award for 2007 - Laura Golebiowski for "Oil Discovery in Turner Valley – Press Reactions", Alberta History Magazine, Summer 2007, v. 55, No. 3, pp. 20-27.

Multimedia Award for 2007 – Randal Kabatoff for "Alberta Petroleum Discovery Calendar 2008" published by Soul of Alberta.

Preservation Award for 2007 - Not awarded.

Lifetime Achievement Award for 2007 - Not awarded.

Passing – Aubrey Kerr:

Long time P.H.S. Director S. Aubrey Kerr passed away on February 19, 2008 at the age of 92, predeceased by Elsie, his beloved wife and solid supporter for sixty-three years. Aubrey was born in Orillia, Ontario on November 29, 1915. He attended Oakwood Collegiate in Toronto. Following studies at the University of Toronto he enrolled in the graduate program at U.B.C. (Vancouver) obtaining his M.A. (Geology) in 1942. Immediately thereafter he was recruited by Imperial Oil as part of Canada's war effort to search for oil in Southern Alberta. After years of exploration with Aubrey as field geologist, Leduc "blew in" February 13, 1947, changing the course of Canadian history and making Alberta a major player in the world oil market. In 1959, Aubrey was chosen by the National Energy Board as Chief Geologist and the family moved to Ottawa. Following success in the capital he retired and returned to Calgary in 1975. He turned his attention to an intense study of the history of Alberta's oil industry by collecting and documenting a wealth of information. He interviewed and taped many "oil patch" personalities leaving a large collection to the Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary. All of this culminated in eight great books (including Leduc, Redwater and Atlantic #3). In 1998 he received an Honourary Doctorate from the University of Calgary and was inducted into the Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame in Leduc. He participated in numerous professional organizations including the CIM, CSPG, PHS and APPEGA. Both he and Elsie enjoyed annual escapes from the -30 degree weather in visits to Barbados and Victoria. He continued to be involved with his writing even to his ninety-first year. ***This obituary, adapted from the Calgary Herald, will be superseded by a more extensive description of Aubrey's many talents, experiences and accomplishments in a coming issue of Archives. Aubrey was a cornerstone of the Petroleum History Society. A Memorial Service is being held for him on March 28, 1:00 p.m. at the Anglican Parish of Christ Church, 3602 – 8 Street S.W. If you plan to attend, get there early as Aubrey had a very wide circle of friends.***

Archives is published approximately six times a year by the Petroleum History Society for Society members.

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Back issues are archived on our website at www.petroleumhistory.ca

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**PETROLEUM HISTORY SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND 2007 AWARDS
MARCH 26, 2008
FAIRMONT PALLISER HOTEL AT 4:00 P.M.**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



James K. Gray

on

“The Creation of Canadian Hunter and the Search for Tight Gas in Western Canada”

Mr. Gray received his early education in Kirkland Lake, Ontario and his secondary and post-secondary education at Ridley College in St. Catharines, Ontario and at the University of British Columbia. For the past 50 years, Mr. Gray has been engaged in the oil and natural gas exploration business in Western Canada. In 1973, Mr. Gray co-founded Canadian Hunter Exploration Ltd., one of Canada's larger natural gas producers. Over the 28 years of his involvement with Canadian Hunter, he served in the positions of Executive Vice President, President and CEO, and Chairman until the company was purchased by Burlington Resources in December 2001 for \$3.4 billion (\$Cdn).

Mr. Gray has participated in a wide range of community activities and projects. Among his current activities, he is Chairman of the Canada West Foundation, a member of the Board of Governors of the Calgary Academy, a Director of the Max Bell Foundation and an Honorary Life Director of the Calgary YMCA. Mr. Gray was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1991 by the University of Calgary, a Citation for Citizenship by the Government of Canada in 1992 and the Fellowship of Honour by the YMCA, Canada. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1995. In March of 2001, Mr. Gray received the Energy Person of the Year Award from the Energy Council of Canada. He was inducted into the Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame in October 2001. In October 2002, Mr. Gray was invested as a Member of the Alberta Order of Excellence by Her Worship, Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole. Mr. Gray was inducted into the Calgary Business Hall of Fame in October 2004 and the Canadian Business Hall of Fame in May of 2005.

DESCRIPTIONS OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORIC SITES IN WESTERN CANADA

By Janet Wright (Parks Canada) for the Turner Valley Gas Plant review, courtesy of P.H.S. Member David Finch

- 1. Maclean Mill National Historic Site, Port Alberni, B.C.:** Maclean Mill is located on a 12.8 hectares site and features 35 structures that form a self-contained community of residences, offices and service buildings centered around the steam-driven sawmill and mill pond. The R.B. McLean Lumber Company was a family-run business that operated from 1926 to 1965. Although small in scale, its logging, milling and marketing operations were similar to larger mills in the province. Much of its original machinery and buildings have survived, making it a rare example of a sawmill complex from the first half of the 20th century.
- 2. North Pacific Historic Fishing Village, Port Edward, B.C.:** Established in 1889, the North Pacific Cannery is the oldest and best surviving example of a north coast cannery. The 18-hectare site is situated near the mouth of the Skeena River overlooking the Inverness Passage. Twenty-five surviving buildings are strung out along the shore and are linked together by a boardwalk, which comprises the self-sustaining cannery village that was developed to support the cannery operations.
- 3. Claybank Brick Plant, Claybank, Saskatchewan:** The Claybank Brick plant was a major manufacturer of domestic clay firebrick and other clay-based products for the railway, oil refining, power, and metallurgical industries. Although it operated from 1912 to 1989, nearly all the surviving buildings were constructed prior to 1938 and much of the original brick-making equipment still survive. Occupying a 132-hectare site, the plant is a remarkably intact example of an early 20th century brick-making complex.
- 4. Nordegg Mine, Nordegg, Alberta:** Nordegg is the site of the former Brazeau Collieries, a coal-mining operation that produced almost ten million tons of coal between 1914 and 1955. The surrounding landscape contains evidence of three crucial elements related to underground coal mining – the mine entries and associated features; the above-ground facilities in which the coal was cleaned and processed; and the railway lines that transported the coal to market. The site's coal preparation plant represents the most complete example of such pre-1955 technology in Alberta and southeastern British Columbia.
- 5. Atlas Mine, near East Coulee, Alberta:** The Atlas No. 3 Coal Mine played a significant role in the history of the coal industry in the Drumheller Valley — the most productive plains coalfield in Alberta from the First World War until the 1950s. The remnants of the mine that includes the only surviving tipple in Canada as well as the mine portal remnants, slack piles, a railway bridge and a host of other structures and artifacts, comprise a historical mining landscape of rare value.
- 6. Crowsnest Pass Ecomuseum Trust:** The Crowsnest Pass Ecomuseum Trust is a not-for-profit society with a mandate to preserve and interpret the history and landscape of the Crowsnest pass area. The society principal historic resource is the Bellevue Mine, which was one of dozens of coal mining operations in the area, which operated from 1903 to 1962. The main attraction at the site is the mine adit, which provides a brief but effective underground tour. The site also includes two surviving mine buildings and a substantial collection of coal mining equipment.

EARLY DAYS IN THE OIL PATCH (Agricola, 1556)



Fig. 15. Crude-oil winning and refining (after Agricola, *De re metallica*, 1556).

This picture appears to show the collection of oil from a stream and the accompanying text indicates that in 1734 Jean-Theophile Hoeffel published a treatise on the oil of Lampertsloch (France) in which this skimming was said to have yielded 500 grammes a day.



Fig. 16. Smelting bitumen from bituminous rocks "Destillatio per descensem" (after Agricola, *De re metallica*, 1556).

Early oil distillation directly from bituminous rocks (oil shales?). Both figures from Forbes, R. J. 1958 *Studies in Early Petroleum History*, E. J. Brill, Leiden.

“Archie Was No Greenhorn”

A Story by P.H.S. Member Sandy Gow, Concordia University College, Edmonton

When he stepped on to the rig floor to spud in the well later to be named after him, Archibald Wayne Dingman was no oil patch greenhorn. This Ontario boy had roughnecked in the Pennsylvania fields until around 1900; drilled a gas well within Edmonton city limits; formed the Calgary Natural Gas Company; and provided the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company with the energy it needed to supply the city's saloon bars with plenty of suds.

Undeterred by the number of dry holes or “dusters” drilled by other entrepreneurs at places like Morinville, around Jumping Pound, and Athabasca, for example, in 1913 Dingman wanted to keep trying. But he needed a backer, and that man was Okotoks rancher William S. Herron (1870-1939), a former logger and railroad builder from Ontario with a working knowledge of geology. Herron believed that an anticline near the Sheep Creek, where gas was seeping into the water, was the place to drill. Herron had bought up land with both surface and mineral rights, but he needed a driller and an oil company.

With Dingman as that driller Herron formed the Calgary Petroleum Products Company, acquired a rig and a crew, and sited them on a bluff overlooking Sheep Creek. Not only was the geology complex, but the largely American crew had never before drilled into such a hard formation. It took all Dingman's talent to keep the rig making hole, and his job was not made any easier by the fact that money for supplies, equipment, and wages kept running out.

The Canadian Pacific Railway lent the two men \$5,000 to keep the operation going down to its planned depth. Nonetheless, Herron and Dingman had chosen the site well and on 14 May, 1914 C.P.P. #1's heavy steel bit smashed through the rock at 2,718 feet and up came a straw-coloured fluid, naphtha. Of such a gravity that it could be put directly into automobile and truck fuel tanks, this “skunk juice” burnt out more than a few engines.

This first well became known as “Dingman #1” and assured his fame as a driller. Said Dingman as he was completing this well: “We have only just begun.”

C.P.P. was later taken over by Imperial Oil, but Dingman continued to drill throughout the west, even forming his own firm, Highwood Petroleum, and in that same year (1934) brought in a producer in south Turner Valley.

Dingman was a strong believer in the future of the petroleum industry in Alberta and said on one occasion that he was: “confident that a great future await[ed] the oil industry...and that Turner Valley [was] just one of the many structures in which large quantities of oil would be found.

Archie Dingman died in 1937, 10 years before Leduc #1 was discovered, ushering in the province's modern petroleum age. But his persistence and entrepreneurial attitude set the standard for all that have followed.

Editor's Note: *We anxiously wait for the reports from the Provincial Government's review panel concerning the restoration of the old Turner Valley Gas Plant Site. Those of you who have visited it will recall that the C.P.P. #1 well is right on the south edge of the plant (although how that relates to the massive berm that has been constructed to protect the plant from flooding is not known. Hopefully the plans for an interpretive centre there will be fulfilled. Archie would be pleased.*

2. THE ONLY GIRL AT THE RIG

*This poem by Dymphny Dronyk is from her collection **Contrary Infatuation**, launched by Frontenac House in April 2007. One section of the book is entitled "Oil Patch Poems, 2006" and details the life of a female oil patch worker.*

Dronyk now lives and works in Grande Prairie where she is a member of the Alberta Arbitration and Meditation Society. Thanks to P.H.S. Past President Micky Gulless for bringing this to our attention and for donating a copy of the book to the P.H.S. Library.

I zip my coveralls
firmly up to my chin
and step into the rig shack
as the laughter stops.

The guys shuffle
restlessly, mouths
tight with words
they can't speak.

Turning a blind eye
to the leering
pin-up girls
on the wall
over their shoulders
I smile broadly,
square my shoulders,
swear appropriately
and the mood shifts.

I wonder about
oil patch superstitions,
like sailors
who fear
women on ships.

Perhaps they believe
a woman
working at the well site
will result in
the drilling
of a dry hole.

Other poems in this section of the book are entitled "1. Separating the Men from the Girls"; "3. The Legal Survey System"; "4. Surface Rights Acquisition – What We Don't Say"; "5. Interest-Based Negotiation"; "6. Drilling Mud"; "7. Cross Threaded"; "8. Perforating"; "9. Flanged Up"; and "10. Love by Cell Phone".