



**PETROLEUM  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**ARCHIVES**

*Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society*

*September 2008; Volume XIX, Number 5*

**P.H.S. Lunch and Learn Meeting – Wednesday, September 24, 2008**

**An Oil Family History - 140 Years of Black Gold**  
by David Stauff, Director, Petroleum History Society

This talk, presented earlier in the year as a part of the industry's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in Ontario, will focus on Dave's recollections and research concerning his family's deep roots in the Canadian oil and gas industry. In his words: *"This is the story of five generations in an oil business family over the past 140 years. Those involved include my great grandfather, John McDonald; my grandfather, Francis David McDonald; my mother and father, Flora McDonald Stauff and Jacob Lauer Stauff; myself, David Lauer Stauff; and my brother Peter Stauff and his two sons, as well as my own son, Timothy Lauer Stauff, who is currently working for a Calgary-based oil company. Much of our family's involvement in the oil business has involved Imperial Oil Ltd and Standard Oil. My great grandfather first came to Petrolia in 1867. He founded a boiler works there and also built a refinery under the name of the National Oil Works, which he sold to Standard Oil in 1898. His son Frank operated an oil producing property he acquired from his father. He sold his oil to Imperial Oil Ltd. and as a child I remember helping him with this process."* Dave will bring the story up to the present day.

David Stauff graduated from the University of Toronto in Geological Engineering in 1955 and spent his entire career working in the oil and gas business, retiring in 2002. He started working with Imperial Oil Ltd. as a geologist and, after 19 years, followed this with employment by Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas, Wascana Energy and PanCanadian Petroleum. Dave has also worked overseas and as a consultant. He lives in Calgary.

TIME: 12 noon, Wednesday, September 24, 2008. **NOTE LOCATION**  
PLACE: Telus Conference Room, North Entrance - Saddledome – Calgary Stampede Grounds  
COST: Members \$30.00 and Guests \$35.00 (most welcome) (cash or cheque only)

**R.S.V.P. if you wish to attend to: Bob Rintoul, 251-9698 or  
grintou@shaw.ca by noon Friday, September 19**

**Individuals who indicate that they will be attending but do not materialize will be considered  
"no shows" and **will be invoiced for the cost of the luncheon.**  
Individuals who do not R.S.V.P. cannot be assured of seating.**

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



**Next Board Meeting:** The Board will meet October 16 at the Glenbow Museum and Archives. Thanks to Treasurer Doug Cass and the Glenbow for their hospitality.

**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:** We are seeking speakers and interesting subjects. If you are considering making a presentation, please contact Clint Tippett, 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.



**Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame:**

The inductees for 2008, as announced in July, are:

1. John Lineham (1861-1913) – Early petroleum pioneer associated with Waterton and Turner Valley.
2. Jack Turvey (1911-1990) - Co-founder of Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation (IPSCO).
3. Gerald Knoll (1932-2008) – Founded Knoll Rig and Equipment Company (KREMCO).
4. Bob Braun – Builder of Turbo Resources and numerous other companies.
5. Rick George – Modern builder of Suncor and community leader.
6. Tommy Hallett – Long time drilling equipment industry leader.

The induction dinner is **September 18**, 2008 in Edmonton – Delta Edmonton South Hotel. If you are interested in attending, please call Tanja Nelson at 780-944-9333, extn. 306.

**Offshore Pioneer for 2008:** The East Coast Offshore organization OTANS announced in the spring that their Petroleum Pioneer for 2008 is Entrepreneur and former Canadian Air Force pilot, Albert Bohemier who founded Dartmouth-based Survival Systems Limited in 1982. His company has a single stated purpose; to "Enhance and preserve workers' lives through safety education, training technologies, and applied research and development."

## Passings:

**Robert W. Campbell** (October 22, 1922 - September 1, 2008). Robert passed away on Monday, September 1, 2008 at the age of 85 years. He made a mark in the petroleum industry as "Bob Campbell". Bob spent his childhood in Cherry County, Nebraska and graduated from Valentine High School in 1940. He was a small town boy who went on to do well in the big city. He attended Creighton University in Omaha and later enlisted in the Infantry in 1943, after Pearl Harbour. He retired with the rank of Captain in 1947 having served with the 101st Airborne Division in Europe and participating in the Rhineland Campaign in Holland and in the Ardennes Campaign in Belgium. Bob graduated from Creighton University School of Law in 1950. He had a long and distinguished career in the oil business, beginning with Shell Oil Company in 1950. He held a series of executive positions with Home Oil Company Limited in Calgary, Canada and became chairman and chief executive officer of PanCanadian Petroleum Limited in 1971. He became vice chairman and chief executive officer of Canadian Pacific Enterprises Limited in 1982. Upon retirement in 1989 he held the position of chairman of Canadian Pacific Limited. He was inducted into the Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame 2006.

**Harold H. Carlyle** (November 28, 1920 - April 19, 2008). Harry passed away on April 19, 2008 at the age of 87 years. Harold was a major player and leader in the Canadian oil and gas industry. He was born in Lethbridge, Alberta, one of four brothers who, even as small boys, shouldered responsibilities in the Carlyle family dairy business. The family relocated to Vancouver in the early thirties, struggling through the Depression years, and Harold ultimately enrolled in Engineering at the University of British Columbia. World War II interrupted his education, like that of so many of this "greatest generation". Serving in the United Kingdom and Europe with the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1941 to 1946, Harold contributed to the highly secret development of new radar technology and led mobile radar units in the invasion of Europe. In a recollection of this time, he wrote about a posting in Lands End, England and a tremendous crew of radar mechanics in whose workshop was a sign that read, "The impossible we do at once. Miracles take a little longer." He was a loyal attendee at reunions of Radar Veterans until two years ago. "Harry", as so many colleagues knew him, had a long and distinguished career in the energy sector. Hired in 1950 by Gulf Research and Development Company for seismic fieldwork based out of Smoky Lake, Alberta, Harold was eventually promoted to Chief Geophysicist, then through various executive ranks, ultimately becoming President of Gulf Canada Resources Inc. in 1984. Through these years he was involved with discovery and development of oil and gas reserves in the Pincher Creek Field in Alberta, the Mackenzie Delta, the Beaufort Sea, and at Hibernia on the Grand Banks. Harold was elected President of the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysics and later served as Chairman of the Canadian Petroleum Association during the national debate that revolved around the National Energy Program.

Other passings of note are Peter Gretener, Ward Neale, Jack Pickel and Bill Rama.

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

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## **YUKON HISTORY LIVES ON MY WALL**

**by Herve Collet, VP Operations & COO, PanTerra Resource Corp.**

Thanks to Director Neil Leeson for arranging for the submission of this recollection by Herve.

### **This is an account of one day I visited Dawson City, Yukon in late July 1972.**

Summer of 1972 was spent working with a geology field party stationed close to the Porcupine River near Eagle Plains, working for Denver based Inexco (no longer exists and disappeared shortly after 1972). Our camp was a 17 hour DC-3 flight from Calgary. Inexco was drilling a fairly deep (10,500 feet) well, Mallard YT-0-18. This well turned out to be a dry hole and was abandoned, perhaps one of the causes of the company's eventual demise.

We were a group of 9 Geologists commissioned by Inexco for mapping and surface geology that summer. Our work area was known as the Kandik Basin, with our camp situated more or less on the Arctic Circle and close to the Alaska border. We arrived on June 1<sup>st</sup> when the snow was still thick and melting, departing sometime around August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1972.

The reason for our day in Dawson was to allow a small group of 4 young guys plus their helicopter pilot to get out of the "bush" to blow off some steam after 2 solid months of wandering the Eagle Plains with packsack, hammer and compass.

We flew into Dawson sometime around noon and landed by the river not far from the center of town. I don't think that our landing spot was a heliport, it was just an open place and a short walk to town. I don't imagine we could do that today but back then Dawson was pretty dead and no one seemed to object.

I had looked forward to visiting Dawson City in the hope of discovering the mythical Gold Rush City, having always been a curious type and an amateur history (local history) buff. Upon arriving I proceeded as always to search and seek out the oldest people I could spot and start engaging them in conversation. Depending on the answers I usually try to follow up and see where it leads. It's a rather amateurish method of enquiring; however it often leads to interesting conversations and sometimes discoveries. That day it led to a series of very interesting encounters that I documented in a recently found field notebook.

What follows is the account of that day in Dawson City in late July, 1972. As my first attempt at putting "pen to paper", I apologize for the simplicity of style and prose. The contents however are factual and in no way an embellishment of my account of that day in Dawson as best I recall with the help of my old field notebook.

My first impression of Dawson was one of astonishment at seeing that a historical place such as this was in such a state of disrepair and general abandonment. The streets were unpaved, potholed and very dusty. Older buildings with a few exceptions were either completely abandoned or run down and in need of paint and repair. There were many derelict buildings, vacant lots overrun with weeds. Yards of the dilapidated old houses were full of old rusting junk.

I was told the core population was maybe 500 but during the summer swells to 800 to 1000 as tourists (mainly Americans) venture up the Dempster Highway to visit. Many would continue on up the Dempster thinking it would lead to somewhere else, and could not understand how the

road could lead to nowhere. In those days it stopped somewhere in Eagle Plains where there was a service station. Tourists would inquire where the road went, be told that this was the end of the line, gas up – at an exorbitant price for the day - turn around and head back south.

The temporary population surge was also due to an influx of young people on summer holidays who would come up and work at the hotel, restaurants and especially at the two main attractions Diamond Tooth Gerties and the Palace Grand. These were two Gold Rush era dance halls that had survived since the days of the Klondike. Young folk would work there as waiters, bus boys, dancers etc. The entertainment was good but amateurish, the beer flowed, the atmosphere was joyous and the CanCan was danced by the girls dressed in turn-of-the-century costumes much to the delight of the patrons.

Point of note: Burl Ives the American folk singer would occasionally come up for a few performances in Dawson. I was told that at the time he owned either the Palace Grand or Diamond Tooth Gerties. I actually met Burl Ives in Whitehorse when I was coming out of the Kandik Basin in late August 1972. He was traveling with Chuck Connors –TV's Rifleman. I met them at the Whitehorse airport and spent most of that evening roaming Whitehorse with Chuck Connors, a favourite spot being the Taku Lounge. He was a very likeable giant standing about 6 foot 6 or 7.

One of Dawson's oldest citizens I met was a chap known by everyone as Black Mike. (I cannot recall what his real name was, however he did answer to Mike). I met him in his backyard where he was busy putzing around enjoying the warm weather. The exterior of his house was unpainted, patched up and generally unkempt. His yard was a mess of weeds and junk.

He was stooped, slight, and grey haired, standing 5 foot 6 or 7. It was obvious that in younger years he must have stood much taller and broader. Mike was dressed in old clothes, a brown plaid shirt, baggy pants and an old pair of shoes. His gnarled face, complete with a long grey white beard, was definitely that of a veteran old man who had weathered a tough and arduous life.

Black Mike's other noticeable feature was his hands. They were huge, thick, gnarled and sinewy - hands of a person who worked hard all his life. He claimed he was born March 15, 1870 - (that would have made him about 102 years old when I met him) - in Serbia and came to Dawson in 1901 or 02 just about the time the Gold Rush was winding down. Everyone I spoke to about him claimed he was at least 100 years old and that he was the oldest and longest living resident of Dawson City.

I spent an hour with him as he told me a number of stories that could have happened anywhere and were not of any real historical value. He spoke with a very strong voice despite his age. Obviously not very educated he was however quite worldly in his own way, speaking English quite well with a very strong central European accent and a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

He told me Dawson City had died late in the 50's and early 60's when the warehouses had shut down and the gold dredges had ceased working. A number of old rotting gold dredges could still be seen near talus piles along the riverbanks.

I questioned him about the gold business. He told me that although many stories had been written and told about the Gold Rush, he contended there was more gold to be found in and

around Dawson City. He also mentioned that the Gold Rush had only lasted about 18 months and more people had lost than gained during that time.

I hit the "Gold Mine" when I questioned Black Mike about the whorehouses of Dawson. He told me he could not talk about them as he never frequented them, however I should seek out an old lady who went by the name of Bombay Peggy. She apparently could answer all my questions -"if she talks to you". She could be found most days after 5 PM at the hotel, sitting at a table usually by herself. She apparently was one of the last Madams of Dawson who had run a brothel at the time they closed. He allowed me to take pictures, I thanked him and wandered off to check out other buildings including Robert Service's house (Service, who is known as the Bard of the Yukon, died and is buried in Lancieux, France near my home town.

I headed to the hotel and sure enough found an old lady of about 75 years dressed in dark clothes sitting alone at a table having a drink. I had a beer and thought of the best way to approach her. Here I was a 25-year-old kid about to question a 75-year-old ex-Madame who, judging from her looks, had wrangled and tangled with much tougher characters than me. I was sure she would have no qualms about telling me where to go and how to get there. I decided that the best approach was total honesty.

I told her I was a university student doing research for a thesis on the Yukon or some such thing, and asked if I could sit down and talk with her. She actually bought my yarn and told me to sit down, telling me her name was Peggy Dorval and had arrived in Dawson City in 1947. At that time the city was much more active than now and that over time it had fallen on hard times and people had drifted away. I continued to beat around the bush trying to figure out a tactful way of broaching the brothel stories.

I asked her about the Bombay moniker. She replied and I quote "some asshole, who's dead now, started that Bombay crap, I don't know why, but it stuck". It was obvious it was better not to dig further on that topic.

The old girl had a very colorful way of speaking and looked the part of a woman who had had a tough life. She must have been quite attractive in her youth, however the years had not been kind and had taken their toll. She not only looked her age but looked worn out. I suspect alcohol had helped the aging process. She was of moderate build, wearing dark clothes, with grey hair and a very distant look in her weepy watery eyes. I bought her a couple drinks, then broached the topic of the brothels.

She immediately became defensive and said, "I had nothing to do with them. I ran a rooming house. If you want to talk about the whorehouses you have to ask Ruby Scott". I asked who Ruby Scott was and was told she was an old French woman who had been in Dawson for many years before her and had run whorehouses all her life. She was living in the Old Folks' home and that I should go and ask my questions there. I was then told to leave her alone and she quit talking. Try as I might she would not say another word. So, that was the end of that. Peggy Dorval - Bombay Peggy, was a very forceful old woman. I guess she had learned the hard way and no young university punk kid was going to intimidate her. I finished my drink, thanked her, and went off to find Ruby Scott at the Old Folks' home situated near the edge of town a 5 to 10 minute walk from the hotel. It was rather shoddy and not as well kept up as similar places down south.

Walking in I had a strange eerie feeling. I had no idea what I was going to do there or what I expected to find. I remember asking myself what would I say when she opens the door? Nonetheless I asked the attendant which room was Ruby's and headed down a sparsely lit hallway whose floors were made of plain, creaky plywood. I reached the room and knocked. A tired low voice said "just a minute". A few seconds later the door was opened by a short, feeble looking old lady wearing a long flannel nightgown. I spoke to her in French. She smiled and asked who I was. She invited me to come in, pointing to a chair at one end while she sat on the bed at the other.

I'm sure a picture of our meeting would be a treasure. This big hulking fellow sitting on a chair at one end of the room and this very small, hunched over lady in a flannel nightgown sitting primly on her bed with her hands folded on her lap. I told her I had met Bombay Peggy and it was she who had directed me to her. When I mentioned Bombay Peggy all she said was "O celle-la" (Oh that one). It was obvious there was no love lost between them. I asked if she had many chances to speak French and remember her saying ".. O non pas souvent mais ca fait toujours plaisir de le parler" (Oh no not often but its always nice to speak it). She asked me if I was writing a book. I assured her I wasn't, however I would love to hear her story if willing.

Her name was Mathilde de Lignere (could be spelled many different ways), originally from northern France and now 85 years old. She had lived in Dawson since the 1920's. Scott was her husband's name and mentioned in a tone of very deep sadness she had a son. I have no idea where the son was and did not pursue the subject. When I asked her about Ruby, she smiled and said "c'est une longue histoire" (it's a long story). Everyone in Dawson knew her as Ruby but few knew her real name.

I was very surprised when she opened up and told me her story. She came from a very good family in the North of France, however events of long ago had changed the course of her life and as a result she had ended up in Dawson City. She never got into any pertinent details. I figured from her age that she was born about 1887. She told me that shortly before the 1<sup>st</sup> World War her life had taken a bizarre twist and she found herself working in Paris. She mentioned places like La Madelaine and Pigalle and houses in those areas and that her that her family had banished her to Paris. Prostitution was legal in France in those days and I assumed from what she said that she had gotten into a jam - an affair with someone or a pregnancy - she didn't say, however she intimated that I should understand. She left Paris after the War and arrived in Dawson in the 1920's. Dawson at that time was starting to fade and many of the old-timers who had stayed behind after the Rush were either dying or leaving.

She did not deny owning and operating a brothel, stating her establishments were always ".. propre, respectable et frequente que par des gens, messieurs et dames, de bonne societe.." (clean, respectable and frequented only by people, gentlemen and ladies of good society). She always treated her girls fairly and had them checked and treated by doctors - "comme dans le temps a Paris" - (like in the old days in Paris). After her husband died and the brothels closed, she ran a rooming house.

I must admit it was quite strange sitting for an hour listening and staring at an 85 year old ex-prostitute /Madame. I couldn't help but stare in wonder at this old lady - who was the age of my grandmother - and wonder about the life she had led and wish that I could spend more time with her to hear more. However it was getting late and she was very tired, asking me to come back to see her next time I was in town. Unfortunately I never returned to Dawson and never did get a chance to see her again.

Post script to my Ruby Scott story. She mentioned she had all but lost contact with her family in France. However she had a nephew who was a professor at the University in Amiens, France. The following year I happened to be traveling by train from Paris to Reims. I picked up a copy of the Herald Tribune and was reading it in my compartment where this other chap was sitting. He started to speak to me in English. I replied in French and a conversation ensued. We talked about various things and he mentioned he had an old aunt that lived in Canada, in Dawson City, Yukon. **This chap was the nephew Ruby had mentioned.** I told him I met her the summer before. I never mentioned anything about what she did in Dawson.

After leaving the Old Folks' home I returned to the hotel to meet my colleagues. We proceeded to do what most young fellows do when they get to town. We went down to one of the dance halls but it was pretty quiet. Since it was still relatively light we left Dawson City via helicopter to return to camp. Aside from these stories and my pictures, I have one other souvenir of Dawson City. It seems that one of us upon departing from the hotel took a fancy to a series of 3 "crummy" oil paintings. These paintings are of either Black Mike or some other old-timers, - all are signed Nils Dawson City. They spent many years hidden away in a cupboard and are now on display in my house.

## ORAL HISTORY IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

The following was downloaded from the site of the Minerals Management Service in the United States. This organization administers the oil and gas rights and activities on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS, as opposed to the shallowest inboard state waters). This government funding of an oral history project is notable.

**STUDY TITLE:** History of Offshore Oil Development in the Gulf of Mexico Phase II – Research and Synthesis

**REPORT TITLE:** History of the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry in Southern Louisiana: Interim Report; Volume I: Papers on the Evolving Offshore Industry. Volume II: Bayou Lafourche – An Oral History of the Development of the Oil and Gas Industry. Volume III: Samples of Interviews and Ethnographic Prefaces

**CUMULATIVE PROJECT COST:** \$195,000

**PROJECT MANAGER:** A.G. Pulsipher, Louisiana State University, Center for Energy Studies

**BACKGROUND:** The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has sponsored and organized this study to evaluate and document how its activities and policies affect the communities and economies within which it functions. A comprehensive and accessible history of the evolution of the industry, and its effects on the people and institutions of the coastal economy will assist those who are responsible for planning and managing the development of the offshore oil and gas reserves and understanding the consequences of such development on coastal institutions and the economy.

**OBJECTIVES:** The purpose of this project is to study, document and explain the history and evolution of the offshore oil and gas industry in southern Louisiana in an objective and comprehensive way.



**DESCRIPTION:** A critical element of the history of the offshore industry resides in the memories of the “old timers.” They were there. They remember how things were and how they have changed. Unfortunately, many of the people responsible for this phenomenal growth are passing away and their stories are being lost. There is a long list of innovators and pioneers from fabricators, port officials, helicopter pilots and catering crews, to divers, truckers, suppliers, boat captains and able-bodied seamen. They are all part of the growth and development of the industry. There are also civic leaders, business owners, spouses and family members who felt firsthand the impacts of this industry. Researchers have spent thousands of hours with people responsible for the offshore oil and gas industry in southern Louisiana. They recorded interviews, collected written documents, and obtained digital copies of photographs and video from the early days.

**SIGNIFICANT CONCLUSIONS:** Numerous interviews have been conducted with people from different sectors of the oil and gas industry. These interviews indicate that exploration can be characterized by preoccupation with risk, failure, innovation, and fortune. The exploration of oil and gas has gone from hunches and luck to the use of sophisticated technology to find prospects. One area of change occurred when the Gulf of Mexico was hit by major hurricanes. The industry moved into the Gulf during a decade of few storms and learned the hard way that wave height and wave force could be far worse than they had predicted. While wave height and wave force were always a major consideration in the design of platforms, the industry had underestimated the size of the waves that could occur and never considered damage that could be caused by mudslides during intense hurricanes thus causing the industry to set platforms higher and to account for the force of mudslides in their design. A second area of change occurred while the government and industry were learning to do business. It was a cooperative working relationship. Shell had secretly developed a deepwater drilling rig and lobbied the federal government to offer a larger area for leasing including acreage beyond the 300-foot contour. The Federal government agreed although it believed that there would be no bids on deepwater areas because of existing technology; however they were unaware of the new drilling technology. The sale turned out to be monumental in size and the government realized that offering large areas for lease could create millions for the U.S. Treasury. Shell was the only company that bid on the deepwater leases and Federal managers determined that they could not lease the deepwater areas because there was no competition. Consequently, Shell decided to share their technology with other companies realizing they would never have the opportunity to explore the outer reaches if there was no competition. The offshore industry could not have progressed as it did, had it not been for the adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit of commercial divers. As soldiers returned from World War II they were able to apply what they had learned in the Navy to diving for the oil and gas industry. The risk to divers was enormous and companies operated at the margins of safety, but injuries, deaths, and expanding liability caught the attention of the oil companies. Rapidly rising insurance costs and fear of government intervention and of unionization among the divers led companies to organize the Association for Diving Contractors to develop industry standards and address safety concerns.

**STUDY RESULTS:** The project fills a gap in the existing literature by addressing the growth and development of the petroleum industry and the related service industries in Louisiana that took exploration and development into the coastal zone and, then, into deeper and deeper offshore waters. In addition to its published reports and documents, this project is creating an organized archive of materials that can be used efficiently by other scholars and researchers. State agencies and local communities will also be able to use the materials to better understand the historical context of issues and problems of interest to them.

# Festive Atmosphere Marks the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Canadian Oil Industry

August 9, 2008, as adapted from the Globe and Mail

**OIL SPRINGS, Ontario.** — Hundreds gathered for a boisterous parade Saturday to mark the 150th anniversary of the digging of North America's first commercial oil well in this tiny community southeast of Sarnia.

The procession rolled through dusty streets around noon, trundling toward the historic spot where James Miller Williams dug the oil well that touched off the North American oil rush in 1858 and ushering in the modern petroleum industry.

"Today we're celebrating 150 years of oil from Oil Springs, which is 150 years of oil for the world," said Robert Tremain, museum curator for Lambton County. "This is the site of the world's first commercial oil well, it's also the site of Canada's first refinery and the site of the world's first registered petroleum company."

Oil derricks stretching to the skies and the faint whiff of crude - still being pumped in the tens of thousands of barrels today - formed the background for the festivities. "We call it the smell of money," joked Dawn Marie, a staff member of the Oil Museum of Canada and site of the preserved oil well.

Some 70,000 barrels are still pumped from the area each year and transported to Sarnia. The amount pumped is considered a tiny quality compared to what the multinationals pump today. The majority of these wells still use 19th century technology that was invented in Oil Springs, including the jerker line system and Canadian Pole tool drilling method.

Decked in a Victorian era bonnet and full green skirt, Connie Bell, the museum's supervisor, said she was pleased with the turnout. [*Connie is handling the sale of P.H.S. pin sets at the museum*].

After declarations by the mayor and local MPs, school children joined folk singer-songwriter Bernie Gilmore in a song. "Nylon, lipstick, gasoline and glue, we use oil in most things its true," they sang. "Because oil makes life's things today, what will we do when it runs out someday?"

Along with commemorating the event, a message about the importance of the area's heritage and preserving oil permeated the festivities.

Local historians hope the bash will help raise the Oil Heritage District's profile, so that one day it might gain UNESCO designation. "We've got enough national and provincial and world firsts, that we think this site and the Oil Heritage District of Lambton County warrants World Heritage status," Tremain said.

Carol Graham, the author and director of a play about the region's history, said people from Oil Springs and its bigger boom-town neighbour Petrolia spread their know-how across the globe. [*P.H.S. Director Dave Stauff is in discussions with Carol concerning possible Western Canada parallels*].

"Petrolia was better known than Toronto at that time," she said.