



A Life in the Western Canadian Oilpatch including recollections of the Oilfield Technical Society

By Gordon “Gordie” Rowan
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Early Days

- Navy 1943 – 1945
- Was on a landing craft for the invasion June 6, 1944.
- Cable Tool – Cypress Hills
- Drilling through conglomerate.
- Highland Exploration - Seismic
- 6 months – didn't turn my crank.
- Diamond Drilling – Yellowknife 1946-1947
- First crew to drill permafrost at Baker Lake.

The Formative Years

- Roughneck for Shell Oil Drilling – Drilling Contractor 1947 – 1949
- Northern Development – Parker Drilling and McKivor Drilling.
- Upset jeep on way in from work. Fractured 6th cervical vertebrae – off work for one year. The doctor suggested I do something different so I went to work for Halliburton packing iron in Redwater – lots of work.
- Supervisor said I had two choices – (1) take a new Twin Jimm (Hot Dam) or (2) take cement to Grande Prairie. My wife complained that I hadn't been around very much so I walked across town and went to work for Dowell.
- Things didn't change. Went to Virden for Chevron first well. Got back to Edmonton to find I was moving to Okotoks.

Settling Down

- We were there for 2 years and then transferred to Lethbridge. This meant a lot of miles. Jean became the unpaid dispatcher for the south. She did receive a little empty plastic bucket for Christmas the second year – still have it as a reminder of the good old days.
- We bought a trailer when we were transferred to Dawson Creek. This move meant many more miles in order to cover the Peace River country. Roy Graves came to Dawson Creek to see if I wanted to go to Calgary in sales. Someone forgot to tell me he was coming so I missed the meeting. He was ticked off and that was the only time this big guy had ever been run off.

Central Alberta

- I caught on with Eskimo and went to Drayton Valley – then Edmonton – and finally to Red Deer for a few years. Then we were transferred back to Edmonton. We sold the trailer and bought a house – this was a time to get in shape, so I rode a bike for 6 months. We were in Edmonton for 8 years and then transferred to Calgary. Eskimo needed a sales office in Calgary.
- After 11 years with Eskimo, I had an offer to go back to my first choice – Trimble Drilling.
- I was really going to get rich until my boss – Bill Trimble – told the bank they didn't know very much. There went my first million.
- From there, I went to work for Thompson Drilling until they wanted to transfer me to Denver. I didn't want to move my family so I went to work for Jennings Drilling.

The Home Stretch

- Bill Kelsey said he would do the drinking and card playing and I could do the work. This seemed to work for us and so he set me up to run the company. Jennings Drilling was bought out by Cactus and I stayed with them until I decided to retire in 1989. Jean and I then motored across Canada – quite a trip.
- After 4 months of retirement, I went to work for Jo-Ann – then Speedy – Trucking which became Transco.
- After 64 years in the oil patch, I finally retired for good at the age of 84!

Formation of the Oilfield Technical Society (OTS) Historical Park

- The Oilfield Technical Society (OTS) was formed in 1951. The Edmonton-based group, in the words of Leroy Field, *“provided a forum for discussion of mutual problems and solutions – a sharing of information between individuals, regardless of their company affiliation”*. The result he noted *“... was the development of inter-personal communications and a close knit community in the oil patch, which was unique to Canadian operations”*.
- In the U.S., by contrast, the same level of information sharing was much more difficult because the companies were structured with independent divisions, and district offices.
- In Canada, as a result of this interchange of ideas and assistance fostered by OTS, field operations became more efficient, and safety was improved - much more quickly than would have been the case without the organization.

OTS - Overview

- I was the first individual from the service sector to be appointed President of the group,
- While OTS has a significant social aspect to its activities, the charter requires that a certain number of technical meetings are held each year.
- The OTS has seen the social side of the group's efforts develop into activities, such as curling and golf tournaments, across the communities in western Canada, where branches were established as the oil patch extended its reach. *"There was also an oilfield wives group that was a shoot-off from OTS".*

Origins of the Park

- In 1967, the Edmonton OTS began looking for a way to celebrate Canada's Centennial year. The focus was on providing a physical legacy. The following story emerges about the establishment of the Edmonton OTS Historical Park:
- *"... we were having a suds or two and someone suggested we find a way to celebrate the Centennial year. So one thing added to another and we had to find a place to hold our annual BBQ. Fin Lineham was listening and he said he had a piece of property not too far from Edmonton, beside the Whitemud Creek. So we went and took a gander and it looked real interesting. Some of the guys said it wouldn't last. This made some of the executive get on their "High Horse" and away we went. Some of the hard heads were Jack Hooks, Doug Eastcott, Tim Tyler, Jim Bonsel, Trevor Cuthill, Peter Kiss, Matt Baldwin, Larry Wickens, Mel Terrif, Les Cristy, Gordie Rowan and many more.*
- *I don't think there was any oil company, service company or people in the oil industry that didn't cooperate. Surplus equipment and some not so surplus was donated.*

Construction

- *We put up a fence around the Park and then decided to build a pavilion. We designed it with shutters to keep out the wind and rain and a large fireplace to heat the building and a BBQ. While clearing the area we noticed a weeping sand formation. Didn't pay much attention to it – much to our sorrow. The winter came and we noticed our cement floor started to heave. So we abandoned the building - but luck was with us - about the same time Nabors donated a rig which we set upon our foundation.*
- *So again, we went back to the industry to help us build a permanent pavilion. Donations came from everyone to finance The Finn Lineham Auditorium which is used by the oil industry and on a rental basis for outside functions.*
- *We then started to accept things that related back to the industry – cable tool rig and tools, service rigs, fishing tools, trucks, cats and motors. Stan Kondratiuk of Pan Am-Amoco should receive the industry's thanks for the ongoing work he did in getting donated equipment*

Opening and Activities

- In 1989, the OTS Historical Oilfield Equipment Park was officially opened. The park, just west of Ellerslie, houses many exhibits including the display by Imperial Oil to mark the original Leduc oil discovery.
- Individual OTS members have worked with their industry peers in other related trade associations like the CAODC, CAPP, PSAC, etc. Through those affiliations and groups, the OTS has contributed to the advancement of training, certification and technology in the drilling and service industry, for over 60 years.
- OTS members helped establish the Canadian Association of Drilling Engineers (CADE) and worked with the ERCB on regulations, as well as helping to establish technical courses at NAIT, SAIT and Enform.

Continuing Legacy

- As of this writing, the OTS continues and has an annual dinner meeting with over 200 people in attendance, at which awards are handed out to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of the Drilling and Service Industry
- Calgary OTS has held an Old Timer's night every year. Someone from every segment of the industry – drilling, logging, heavy oil, engineering, fracturing, rentals, safety supply, drill stem testing, oilfield trucking, service rigs, catering – and hockey, curling, football, entertainment – is honoured every year.
- The past presidents' listings were not available from areas such as Calgary, Red Deer, Slave Lake, Lloydminster, Regina, Estevan, or Fort St. John. However, Edmonton's data-retention provided the attached listing.

OTS Past Honorees Over the Past 46 Years

- **Research was assisted by Alister Thomas, Editor**
- **Roughneck Magazine – Sept 2012**
- Al Granger Arne Thorson Aubrey Kerr Boyd Nodwell
- Brad McGuinness Dale Simmons Don Binney Earl Griffis
- Ernie Forte Ernie Hokanson Ernie Yager Erskine Williams
- Fin Lineham Fred Pheasey George Cormack George Stevenson
- Gib Stewart Glen Lagore Gord Rowan Gus Cascadden
- Hal Kapchinsky Harry Alger (P) Herb Spear Hugh Leiper
- Hugh Planche (P) Jim Kelly John (Spi) Langston Ken Chugg
- K.J. (Smokey) Miller Len White Lloyd Gilmour Matt Baldwin
- Merv Stewart Murray Smith (P) Murray Todd Peter Bawden (P)
- Peter Kiss R.D. Hood Ralph Shirley Rob Robinson Ron Banister
- Ron Carey Tom Donnelly (P) Tom Eastland Tom Kimmet Wayne Harris

Edmonton Presidents

Year	Name	Year	Name
1951	Jack Gallagher	1981	Elmer Goulet
1952	Vern 'Dry Hole' Hunter	1982	Stanley Kondratiuk
1953	Bland Woofer	1983	Ernie Lucenko
1954	C. William 'Bill' Daniel	1984 and 1985	Douglas White
1955	Bud Kelly	1987 and 1988	Rick Kautz
1956	Jim Warke	1986	Jim Rutherford
1957	Ben Payne	1989	Henry Kilbach
1958	Jack Leask	1990	John 'Mac' Miller
1959	Sid Thorne	1991	Dave Kastelic
1960	Stu Armstrong	1992	Myron Yurko
1961	Labbie LaBerge	1993	Darrel Bohlender
1962	Jim Bonsall	1994	Cam Miller
1963	Norm Clarke	1995	Don Criss
1964	Gordon Rowan	1996	Bill Klotz
1965	Carl Guthrie	1997	Gary Fortier
1966	Doug Eastcott	1998	Tim Reynar
1967	Larry Wickens	1999	Doug Kilbach
1968	Trevor Cuthill	2000	Roger Boisvert
1969	Les Christie	2001	Dan Zimmer
1970	Lawrence Homer	2002	Bill Hodges
1971	John Petrie	2003	Jim Needham
1972	Jack DeCook	2004	Gil Bourgeois
1973	Jim Davidson	2005	Paul Wilson
1974	Garnet Edwards	2006	Barry Moore
1975	John Roskey	2007	Gordon Little
1976	Gordon Heddleston	2008	Lorne Stayko
1977	F. Lee Murdock, Jr.	2009	Dan Sly
1978 and 1979	Jack Savage	2010	Mark Hilton
1980	Allan Rasmuson	2011	Myron Myroon



Aerial View of OTS Park



Event at the OTS Park



Set for Dinner with Displays



The Buffet



1954 Nodwell Scout Car

One of the first tracked vehicles manufactured in Western Canada, this was the forerunner of many models now used worldwide. Such vehicles played an important role in opening up many otherwise inaccessible Canadian oilfields. Donated and restored by: Canadian Foremost Ltd.



Allis-Chalmers Crawler Tractor

Equipped with Baker bulldozer. Operated by Lorne Mittelstadt of Leduc Construction Company Ltd., it was used in September 1946 to prepare Imperial Oil's Leduc #1 discovery wellsite. Donated, restored and installed by Leduc Construction Company Ltd.



Boiler

Built in 1929 for Shell Oil, this skid-mounted unit typifies those used during the first half of the twentieth century to power and heat drilling rigs. Donated by: Harold Lister. Restored by: Porta-Test Systems Ltd. and Deluxe Sandblasting and Painting Ltd.



Rig Electric Generator

This unit was used on Peter Bawden's Rig No. 1 which was one of the rigs used to develop Alberta's oilfields in the 1940's and 1950's. Donated by: Peter Bawden Drilling Ltd.



Wireline Unit

Typical small wireline unit used during the 1950's and 1960's to service Canadian oil and gas wells, many of which were hot, sour and deep. Donated by Plains Perforating Ltd., Brooks, Alberta. Rebuilt and restored by: Matts Manufacturing Ltd., Calgary, Alberta and Earl Nordell and his Plains Perforating Ltd. staff at Nisku, Alberta.



Buckeye 407 Ditcher

This ladder-type ditcher was used from the early 1930's to bury flowlines during the development of early oil and gas fields. Donated and restored by: Gooding and Matt Construction Company Ltd. [OTS Equipment Museum](#)