

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

*Calgary's Downtown Heritage of  
Petroleum History:*

A Walking Tour led  
for you by  
**The Petroleum History Society**

*A Part of Historic Calgary Week 2007  
Tents to Towers - Our Booms on the Bow*

Brought to you by the Chinook Country Historical Society

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

## Introduction

Calgary, Alberta has a rich and varied history related to the oil and gas industry. Calgary is also unique in a global sense with the extremely high concentration of petroleum-related company offices in its central area. This has served it well as a business centre where easy-to-arrange face-to-face meetings are the order of the day and set the stage for quick business decisions. Much of this past is reflected in the buildings that form the core of its downtown district. In some cases buildings are like ghosts of corporate structures long gone while in others new entities are arising phoenix-like from the remains of earlier organizations. In some cases important events are directly commemorated.

Downtown Calgary also has its own direct hydrocarbon heritage. Apparently in 1895 a "fanciful" wildcat well was drilled just three blocks east of City Hall. This may not be as unusual as it seems as this region of the Plains is known for its multiple stacked hydrocarbon pools. Indeed a productive natural gas well was drilled in 1908 by Archibald Dingman (of future Turner Valley fame) on the Walker Estate in East Calgary and it was tied into A.E. Cross's Brewery and 50 houses around it. The brewery constructed a natural gas flare on its premises that became a local landmark, stimulating interest on the potential of this fuel.

This walking tour is intended to pass along to participants some of the stories of the past with reference to these prominent landmarks.

The building that a company occupies is a partial reflection of its personality. Builders are keenly aware of this and generally encourage prime tenants to allow their building to be named after them - hence Shell Centre, Esso Plaza and the Dome Tower. With the higher levels of security in recent years this has become a less popular practice.

Quite a few companies have retained their solitary identities over the years, give or take a few purchases, for example Imperial Oil, Shell Canada, Suncor, Murphy and Kerr McGee.

Companies also sometimes change names to establish a new and sexier image for investors. Examples include Canadian Occidental to Nexen, B.P. Canada to Talisman, Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Corp. to Wascana, and Total to Rigel.

Some have grown primarily by acquisition of other companies or properties including PetroCanada (Arco, Pacific Petroleum, Petrofina, Gulf (downstream) and B.P. (downstream)), Husky (Canterra and Renaissance) and Talisman (Bow Valley, Encor, Rigel, Pembina and Petromet).

Mergers are also of interest including the recent combination of A.E.C. and PanCanadian to form Encana. A few major players have even divested their interests only to reappear years later through acquisition namely, Conoco (H.B.O.G. and Gulf) and B.P. (Talisman and Amoco).

There are a few other oily flavours in the downtown area. Until recently there was "The Field Bar and Grill" at 839 - 5 Avenue S.W. It featured a "Foreman's Steak Sandwich" and had as its slogan "When you're not in the Office, Tell 'em you're in The Field".

All in all it takes a lot of historical perspective to understand the many twists and turns of corporate ownership in "The Patch"!

## ITINERARY

The tour will commence at the north entrance to the Calgary Tower at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 28, 2007. The tour will be led by Dr. Clint Tippett of Shell Canada Energy, President of the Petroleum History Society, with the support of P.H.S. Directors Penny Colton and Bob Bott. A notional elapsed time of two hours was estimated initially but for a larger group allowing time for waiting, talking and questions, this seems optimistic.

As this is just the second running of this trip some patience is requested. As well, participants are encouraged to contribute their stories both during the tour and afterwards in writing so that they can be included in future versions of the guidebook.

The P.H.S. would like to thank Director Frank Dabbs for the contributions to this guidebook.

All stops are on or adjacent to the route but not all will be visited. The stops are listed below:

- Stop 1. Calgary Tower
- Stop 2. Glenbow Museum and Archives
- Stop 3. Fairmont Palliser Hotel
- Stop 4. PanCanadian Plaza
- Stop 5. The Leeson and Lineham Block
- Stop 6. Hudson Bay Store
- Stop 7. Bankers Hall
- Stop 8. Home Tower, Dome Tower and Devonian Gardens
- Stop 9. Gulf Canada Square
- Stop 10. Bank of Montreal
- Stop 11. B.P. Building
- Stop 12. Calgary Place
- Stop 13. Petroleum Club and Petroleum Club Mural
- Stop 14. Fifth Avenue Place
- Stop 15. TransCanada Tower
- Stop 16. PetroCanada Centre
- Stop 17. Lougheed Building