

Pioneer Oil Museum of New York, Inc.

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Pioneer Oil Museum of New York
Box 332
Bolivar, NY 14715

New Addition Completed; Museum Still Awaits State Grant

In August 2004, work was completed on a new addition to the Pioneer Oil Museum. The project, measuring approximately 19 feet by 44 feet, provides the museum with room to house several large antique engines that had previously been stored outdoors and exposed to the elements. The addition includes sheetrock walls and a drop ceiling with fluorescent lights.

Among the items on display in this area of the museum include an eccentric and rod lines, a Buffalo engine, a model rig donated by Hahn and Schaffner of Bolivar, and the purported "dynamite wagon" the museum has been in possession of for many years. Also on display are the plaques and trophy case designated for the New York State Oil Producers Association "Wall of

Fame." (Please see page 3.)

Future plans for this addition are to acquire more antique engines, motors, and similar items related to the local oilfields. Photos, sound effects, and more hands-on items will be designed to provide the public with an idea of the type of work carried on in the regional fields.

Originally the funding for this grant was supposed to come from New York State, but complications arose during construction. With a state-imposed deadline of August 31, 2004 for completion, construction began in late July. In mid-August when the work was nearly three-quarters completed, the state's Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation informed the museum that it would not accept the plans for the addition. We received this notification at that late date, even though the plans had reached that particular department of the state the first week of May.

At this time we are working with Senator Pat McGee's office to change the designation of the grant from construction to operating expenses and/or purchase of equipment. Hopefully this will allow us to still receive the anticipated grant funds and continue with improvements to the museum. Without these funds, we will have a difficult time meeting our financial commitments for 2005.



The museum with the newly-completed addition on the right-hand side.

Preserving the
Oil Heritage of
Southwestern
New York and
Northwestern
Pennsylvania

Museum News and Notes from 2004

Houghton College Students Visit Museum

In April 2004, the museum played host over three days to approximately 30 students from nearby Houghton College. Each day a different group of ten students combed the museum under the direction of curator Ray Payne and a geology professor from the college. The students had been studying geological characteristics of this area in their class. As part of the curriculum they learned about oil sands and rock formations unique to the oilfields of the Bolivar area.



After each daily tour the students were then taken to visit a local oil lease. Local oilman Terry Collins provided tours of his

leases on Mead Hollow in Little Genesee and Messer Hill Road in Richburg. The students, who came from a variety of hometowns both near and far, were delighted that they were able to see, taste, touch, and smell the "crude" from our local wells.

They all went home with pamphlets about the museum and the history of Bolivar, as well as other memorabilia from their trip.

Wine and Cheese Tasting at the Museum

This year during Pioneer Oil Days the museum will join with the Bolivar Lioness Club to sponsor a wine-and-cheese tasting gala on Friday, June 24. This event is designed as a fund-raiser for both organizations. The Bolivar Free Library is also acting as a limited sponsor for the night. That evening's festivities include the official grand opening of the museum's new addition.



The Bolivar, Richburg, Allentown, and Genesee Historical Group (BRAG) is the official sponsor and co-coordinating group annually for Pioneer Oil Days. Their plans for the night include having a brass band from Buffalo playing across the street from the museum. During past celebrations working (nose-making) antique oilfield engines have been set up outside the museum on Friday night.

Several wineries will be represented at this event. A variety of their products will be available for sampling. Empire Cheese (Cuba Cheese) has agreed to donate several kinds of cheese. Other treats will be provided by members of the Lioness Club and Board of Directors of the museum.

Tickets can be purchased by returning the form found on the last page of this newsletter. Tickets will become available in mid-May. The public is invited to attend this night of good food and drink.

American Oil & Gas Historical Society Executive Director Visits

During the summer the executive director of the American Oil & Gas Historical Society (AOGHS), Bruce Wells, visited the museum. The AOGHS, dedicated to preserving the history of the oil and natural gas exploration and production industry, is based in Washington, DC. Wells traveled through the area visiting the Pioneer Oil Museum and other historic oil museums in northwestern Pennsylvania to learn more about the history of the industry in this area. For his summer 2004 newsletter "The Petroleum Age," Wells wrote a very complimentary article about the museum accompanied by several photographs. This article (with several more of his photos) can be found at the organization's website, www.aoghs.org. Lots of interesting information can be found at that site.

Reminiscing with Ray

by Ray Payne

Working on the rigs and leases was not only a dirty, gritty job, but it could also be dangerous at times. Years ago there was a guy named Davis working near a band wheel power, cleaning the belt dressing. He got caught between the belt and the band wheel. It pulled his entire body in, so that he went round and round, with the wheel eventually crushing his body.

Another guy was working on a Franklin oil engine that he bought off from Bob Dermott up in Richburg. This guy, kind of a young fella, got his dad and a couple of other men and hauled it down here to Bolivar. He went out and threw the felt off the blower to dress bits. He had coveralls on, and they got caught. He went around three times dragging his head across the concrete every time. Another guy thought the engine sounded funny, so he threw it out of gear, ran out there, and found the body. He ran down over the hill and called his dad and the undertaker.

There were a lot of people killed around here on leases, but for the amount of people working and the number of wells drilled, I guess the number was small. One night Merle Hall's father was workin' on his lease, and it got to be late - 5:00 and then 6:00, and he still hadn't shown up at home, so they went up looking for him. He was walking from one power to another, and he died right there from a heart attack. They found him sittin' right there.

A lot of guys lost hands and fingers. One guy, Harold Jones, like a lot of workers, had gloves on. He was working with the big line they drilled with, and he was on the outside where it spooled in. He didn't get his hand out of the way in time, and it pulled his hands in, cutting his fingers off. It didn't actually cut his fingers completely off, but sliced through them most of the way. So he just yanked and pulled his fingers off. I asked him how he could do that, pull his fingers off in the machine. He told me, "Hey, if you know you're gonna get pulled into the machine and get killed, it's an easy decision."

Another dangerous spot is coming out of the power where the rod lines come out, you've gotta be careful and step over the lines. Plus when you're hookin' off the rod lines, that's dangerous. A lot of guys lost fingers doing that if they didn't get them hooked in time.

New York State Oil Producers' Wall of Fame Comes to Life

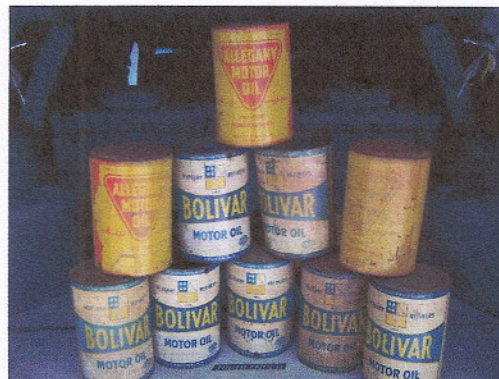
With the new museum addition completed, it is time to unveil the NYSOPA "Wall of Fame." This organization has donated \$250 each in the names of Gordon Hahn, Tom Hungerford, and William "Jack" Plants. An elegant plaque in memory of each man includes a photo, biographical data, and contributions to the local industry. Assorted memorabilia for each of these men can be found in a display case near the plaques.

The "Wall of Fame" will be officially opened on Friday, June 24 at 6:00 just prior to our wine-and-cheese tasting event during Pioneer Oil Days. The public is invited to attend the opening of the "Wall of Fame," stay to tour the museum during the grand opening, and enjoy good food and drink during the wine-and-cheese tasting gala.

Museum Website Goes Online

A new website developed by life-long Bolivar resident and museum board member Dan Davison is up-and-running. The site provides a brief overview of the local industry with a special emphasis on the Allegheny Refiners refinery built outside Bolivar in 1934, operating until 1947. Photographs help highlight the local flavor of the industry. Eventually we hope to link our museum to others of a similar nature around the country.

A demonstration of a producing well should help the general public understand the inner-workings of a well. More photos and articles will eventually be added as the site is expanded. The site's address is www.pioneer-oil-museum.com.



Cans from the old Allegheny Refiners refinery which was located outside Bolivar. Your donations made this recent purchase possible.

Memorials 2004

In memory of Robert Jordan
by Marguerite Jordan

In memory of Bonnie C. Nitsche
by Barbara Claire

In memory of Alma Johnson
by Edith Freaney

In memory of Ellen Lindquist
by Pat Lounsberry & Family

In memory of Gladys Jordan
by John & Velma Jordan Family

In memory of Bruno Codispoti
by Codispoti Family

In memory of Vince Schiralli
by Pat Lounsberry & Family

In memory of Bob Cawley
by Pat Lounsberry & Family

In memory of Albert Cline
by Gail Hahn, James Hahn, & Martha Panzeca

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. JW Bucher
by Joseph Bucher

In memory of Frank X. Thorwart Family
by Anne Thorwart

In memory of Dale Lee Howard
by Sunrise Drilling Supply, Inc.

In memory of Betty Webster
by Louie & Barb Schiralli

In memory of Dan Klinger
by Otis Eastern Service, Inc.

In memory of Richard Smith
by Frances Dunn

In memory of Frank Schiralli
by Pat Lounsberry & Family

In memory of Richard Smith
Jacqueline & Curtis McCollough

In memory of Louis Claire
by Barbara Claire

In memory of James Champlin
by Virginia & John Swain

In memory of Tom Hungerford
by Mary Hungerford

In memory of Dale Davison
by Louie & Barb Schiralli

In memory of George Brabham
by Otis Eastern Service, Inc.

In memory of Reubens Iantorno
by Pat Lounsberry & Family

In memory of Dick Smith
by Pat Lounsberry & Family

Volunteers Loved!! (and Needed)

The museum is staffed entirely by people willing to give a couple of hours a week. Each volunteer works just one three-hour block per week. We really need more people to help fill our available slots.

You don't need to be a petroleum engineer to help, just have a willingness to learn about the amazing history of this valley and tell people about it.

Please call Ray Payne at 928-1344 if you are interested in helping. We are very flexible in working around people's schedules.



Right -Mike and Lance during the Pioneer Oil Days parade

Type casting?

Hours of operation

Memorial Day - Labor Day
Monday-Friday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Saturdays and Sundays by appointment only. Call Dick Fitch at 585-928-2587 or Barb Webb at 585-928-2377 to schedule a tour.

Pioneer Oil Days: June 23-26, 2005

Fifth Grade Students Visit Museum

Each year the Bolivar-Richburg Central School fifth-grade students visit the museum. They are given tours by curators Ray Payne and Dick Fitch. While visiting, the students receive brief descriptions of the artifacts, as well as a short history of the oil

industry and the "old days" in Bolivar. The trip is a follow-up to activities the students do in April in commemoration of the 1881 oil boom that hit this valley. The students watch a video of wells being shot and view many slides of oil-related activities in this area. Finally they draw pictures of a well being shot to hang in the front windows of the museum.

FUND DRIVE

With the improvements we have made the past few years, we hope you are able to see that the museum, an historic treasure, belongs to the local community and to the local oil and gas industry. Our goals have been two-pronged. One is to both physically and financially stabilize the museum and its contents. The other is to spread the history of our local heritage beyond the museum's doors, and we hope that our annual newsletter has shown proof of our having done so. Looking at the enclosed articles should demonstrate how we have attempted to "spread the wealth" of the history of the amazing local petroleum industry.

In order to continue to meet our goals and keep the museum improving and chugging forward, we again ask that you support us. Please contribute to our annual fund-drive and make us part of your yearly donations. Donating in memory of a loved one is an especially wonderful way to preserve his/her memory. Thank you for your support.

Oil Baron	\$501 or more	—
Shooter	\$101-500	—
Wildcatter	\$51-100	—
Roustabout	\$26-50	—
Well Plugger	\$25 or less	—

Checks can be made payable to:

Pioneer Oil Museum of New York, Inc.
PO Box 332
Bolivar, NY 14715

All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!

Water Flooding Breathes New Life into Dormant Wells

By the early part of the 1910's oil production in most wells in this area had dwindled to a trickle. New wells were drilled to help stimulate production, but they too performed poorly. Oilmen did not wish to junk their pricey equipment, so finding another method to spur the wells to life was of the utmost importance. Little did they know it at that point, but this secondary recovery would cause a renaissance in the local fields unlike anything ever seen. Yields per acre skyrocketed, new wells by the thousands were drilled, and many in the industry were to realize millions of dollars in profits!

What was this miracle salvation? Water flooding! A stream of water injected under high pressure into an oil well would force the oil through the sands away from the well in an ever-widening circle. This allowed the oilmen a certain amount of control over the direction of the oil through the sands. Through trial-and-error, many types of flooding were attempted.

The "circle flood" soon became the industry standard. Water was forced into an old oil well, and then four or five new oil wells were drilled equidistant from that well and at an equal distance from each other, forming a rough circle. Other types of flood patterns were used, but eventually the "five-spot" became the favorite. The basic design involved an oil well in the middle of a square with the four corners of the square having water injection wells. Pressure was applied to an intake water well slowly forcing oil through the sands to the center well.

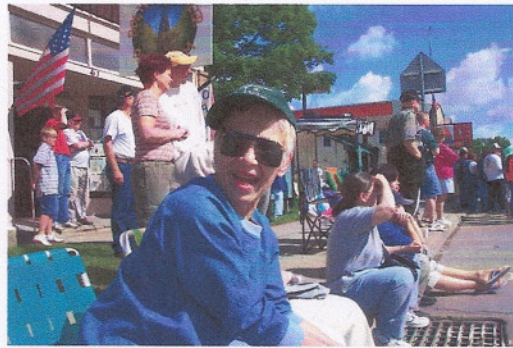
No matter the flood pattern used, output was phenomenal. The "circle" flood increased recoveries to 3500 barrels per acre, and the "line" flood accelerated that to 5000 barrels per acre. "Five-spot" flooding, combined with selective shooting of wells and other advancements, boosted that to 12,000 barrels per acre.

As flooding became more widespread, the value of old leases soon skyrocketed. Before flooding, leases were sold based on per barrel daily production. After flooding, this changed to an acreage basis. As an example, a 100-acre lease with 20 wells making three barrels a day might sell for \$10,000. This same parcel might easily bring \$250-350,000 on an acreage basis if flooding was feasible. (Empire Oil, p. 294)

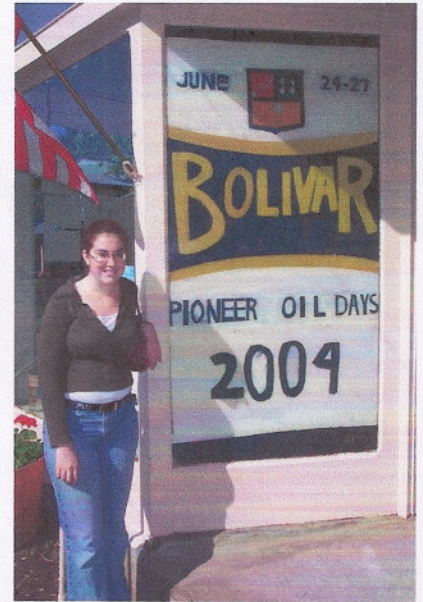
Memories of 2004



American Oil & Gas Historical Society (AOGHS) director, Bruce Wells, on his visit to Bolivar, meets with curator Dick Fitch and museum board president Paul Plants



Bolivar resident Jerry Hungerford Dunn enjoys the Pioneer Oil Days parade.



Local renowned artist, Angel Hardy, shows off her latest creation for the museum. It is a replica of an oil can from the Allegheny Refiners refinery built outside Bolivar in the 1930's.

Right - Working engine on a lease located on Horse Run Road over the border in Pennsylvania



Above - replica model of oil field engine on display at museum day of Pioneer Oil Days parade

Right - Sean Lounsberry puts finishing touches on exterior of new museum addition



Above and right - summer construction on new museum addition

Above - reinstalling New York State historic sign on front of addition

Right - construction commences as large equipment previously stored outdoors is temporarily moved to new location



An Oil Man's Wife

by Ethyl Virginia Burdick
(former museum curator)

I thought when I got married
everything would be so good;
I'd originate new recipes
and extra fancy food.

We'd speak about so many things-
but I found 'twas not my station;
I had to learn "crude oil" talk-
if I wanted conversation.

And then - as though 'twas not enough
to eat and dream oil factor;
Next thing I knew we were pulling wells,
and I was driving the tractor.

We pulled three wells, and all was fine,
our fourth was in contemplation;
Then the reason I had to quit -
"not covered by compensation."

"Now days" you could be a petroleum slave,
and no one would question a thing;
But I really can say, "I enjoyed it though,"
and the money that "oil" can bring.

Now I'm retired, and oil is scarce
but still with oil I doddle;

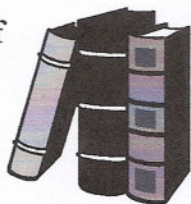
Derricks and pump houses and all the like-
"Pioneer" oil wells have a model.

I'm still writing poems and still writing songs,
with so many lines I have toiled;

And after being at the museum for nearly 6 years,
you might say, "I'm pretty well 'oiled.' "

Local History Books Available

The Pioneer Oil Museum has limited quantities of two previously out-of-print titles of interest to local citizens, members of the local petroleum industry or those with an interest in the local oil fields. Bolivar, NY: Pioneer Oil Town, written in 1952 by J.P. Herrick, provides a quaint glimpse into the way of life of Bolivar long ago. Another book by Herrick, Empire Oil, is the quintessential history of oil in New York State and this area. Books can be purchased at the museum after it opens in early June.



WINE-AND-CHEESE TASTING TICKETS

Friday, June 24, 2005
6:30-8:00

\$10 - Single Ticket

\$25 - Two tickets and designation as Bronze Patron

\$50 - Four tickets; Silver Patron

\$100 - Five tickets; Gold Patron

(business and corporate sponsors, as well as for individuals)

*Tasty Snacks and a variety of cheeses
along with a wonderful sampling of
different wines - all available that
evening!*

Tickets may be purchased by writing to the museum at the address below, at the Bolivar Free Library during regular hours, or at the museum once it opens for the season in June.

Tickets available in mid-May

Checks can be made payable to:

Pioneer Oil Museum of New York, Inc.
PO Box 332
Bolivar, NY 14715

Bolivar Free Library hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 6:00-9:00
Tuesday & Friday: 12:30-4:30
Saturday: 12:30-3:30