

Yesterday

In December of 1819, the first permanent white settlers arrived in *Town One, Range One*, as Bolivar was known according to the Holland Land Purchase. These settlers cleared the land and built the first log cabins in the Little Genesee Creek Valley, thus paving the way for a steady stream of newcomers. The fertile soil, vastness of the forests, and plentiful game attracted increasing numbers of new visitors.

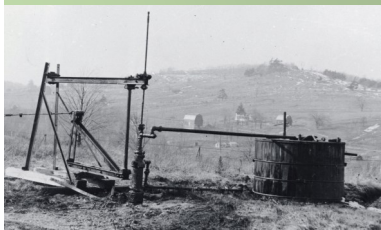
In February 1825, the citizens of the valley gathered at the intersection of the Root Hollow and Little Genesee Creeks to announce the formation of their new township, "Bolivar," the name of the then-living South American liberator, General Simon Bolivar.



Drilling activity on the "flats" between Bolivar and Richburg

For the next 56 years, the population of Bolivar seldom exceeded 160 industrious, religious pioneers who made their living as farmers, loggers, and tanners.

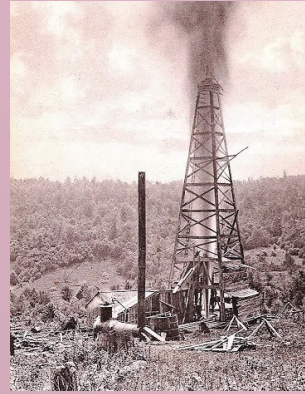
Suddenly in April 1881, a huge oil gusher was hit in the neighboring town of Wirt. Within ten months Bolivar became a "boom town" of 4500. The entire Bolivar-Richburg valley swelled to some 10-12,000 frantic fortune seekers. Business and vice both flourished. Oil fortunes were made or lost overnight due to gambling with the oil industry or gambling at the gaming tables.



A typical scene in the Bolivar oilfields

Growth and Prosperity

Oil production slowed and population decreased considerably by 1900. Then, around 1920, the advent of "flooding"-the secondary recovery of oil-brought Bolivar into a newer and longer-lasting period of prosperity. This new method caused oil production to soar to undreamed-of heights, and "black gold" flowed again into the coffers of a rejuvenated Bolivar. The new recovery per acre was considerably in excess of primary recovery, and the old leases were scenes of great activity.



Shooting a well outside Bolivar

Public and private improvements in Bolivar followed during this new oil recovery period as the village evolved into a modern, self-sufficient community. Insulated by jobs in oil production from the ravages of the Great Depression and awash with work during the "war effort" of WWII, by the 1940's Bolivar-as well as nearby Wellsville-had become two of the wealthiest communities per capital in all of New York State.

The much-needed wealth provided Bolivar with social and economic benefits not experienced by most other communities. The population grew not only in size, but also in affluence, and the bank balances of the oil producers increased in direct proportion.



The Bradley House - built by one of Bolivar's oil and gas families

Today

Today, Bolivar prides itself on its friendly residents, excellent school system, and hunting opportunities. Patsy Dougherty, a professional baseball star who in 1903 became the first player to hit two home runs in a World Series game, was raised here. Bolivar was also the boyhood home of Frank Gannett, former owner and publisher of the Gannett Newspaper Empire, which created "USA Today."



Bolivar-Richburg Middle/High School

Bolivar is the oldest town in the United states named after Simon Bolivar. The government in Venezuela recognized Bolivar in 1984 as its Pan-American friend in America because of the similarities in oil development as well as the shared heritage with the town's namesake. In 1994, the Venezuelan government presented the town with a statue of Simon Bolivar and a Venezuelan flag in honor of the connections between the two.

The recoverable crude oil potential in the local fields (the Allegheny Field) is estimated at upwards of 250 million barrels of high-quality Pennsylvania Grade Crude. Additionally, large reserves of natural gas in the Marcellus Shale deposits provide substantial quantities of natural gas that may be developed in the future.



A modern rig outside Bolivar

Sights to See

Bolivar Country Club
Pioneer Oil Museum
Bolivar Free Library
Old Ceres Schoolhouse
Richburg/Wirt Historical
Society Museum

Churches

St. Mary's Roman Catholic
United Methodist
Episcopal Church of Our Savior
Faith Bible Church
First Seventh Day Baptist Church

Service Clubs

Bolivar Lions Club
Bolivar Lioness Club
American Legion and Auxiliary
Masonic Lodge No. 258
Order of the Eastern Star
Volunteer Fire Department/Auxiliary



Bolivar Free Library



Pioneer Oil Museum



Bolivar Golf Club

The Bolivar Story

