



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE GENESIS OF THE OIL INDUSTRY IN CYPRESS

By Bob Tierney

On January 10, 1901, ninety-six miles east of Cypress, the Lucas #1 blew in at Spindletop Knoll, 3 miles south of Beaumont. The well produced 800,000 barrels in the eight-day period in which it remained uncapped. Eventually the Spindletop Dome produced 142,000,000 barrels. The Lucas #1 captivated the state and initiated the statewide search for another Spindletop. In the following decades it was soon discovered that Texas was blessed with oil and gas deposits from one end of the state to the other, and Cypress was not left out of this blessing. In fact, there were three gas wells drilled and completed within a thousand feet of the Cypress Historical Society's Research Library.

One well was drilled where the feeder road is now located next to the Wells Fargo Bank at Spring Cypress and 290. Another well was completed where the parking lot located between the Chick-fil-A and Bed Bath Beyond now sits. The third well was completed to the south, across the railroad tracks where an apartment complex now exists. These wells were completed in the Cypress (Cockfield A) sand at a depth of 6000 feet in 1980. The wells were plugged in 92', 00', and 2002. The Cypress (Cockfield A) sand is one of approximately 35 productive sands within the designated "Cypress" field area. The depths of these sands ranged from 7,750 feet up to 6000 feet. Principle drilling activity started in 1959. Most activity in Cypress ended in the early stages of this century. There are no producing wells in Cypress today.

There is much oil and gas history surrounding Cypress. To the east is the Satsuma field in the Jack Rabbit Road area down to Lakes on Eldridge North subdivision. In Jersey Village, the area east of the Sam Houston Tollway saw significant production in the Winfern Forest and Woodland Lakes subdivision locations. The Josey Ranch area located off Fry Road saw significant drilling activity in the 90's when operators were chasing

the Wilcox (Deep) gas play at a depth from 12,500-16,000 feet.

The massive Tomball Field starts 6.5 miles to the north at Hwy 99. The Katy Gas Field north and northwest of old downtown Katy was one of the most prolific gas fields in the state. After the success of Spindletop, salt domes have always been coveted by "wildcatters" as drilling prospects because these dome formations have historically proven to be a very good geologic structure for trapping oil. Salt dome formations are located west of Cypress and south all the way to the coast.

Our area dome is the Hockley Dome to the west, located just south of the town of Hockley. This dome was discovered in part by John Warren in 1895 while he was

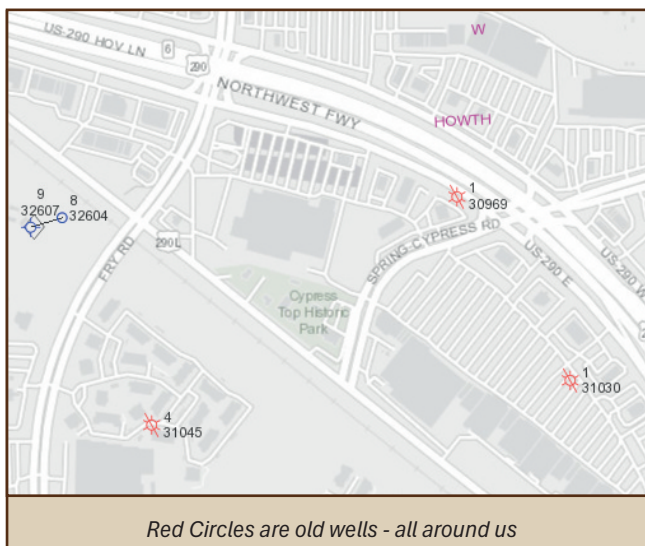
digging a water well. He ran into a hard rock at about 20 feet below the surface and being unable to make any progress with picks and hammers he tried dynamite. After one shot, he observed that the rock had oil stains on it.

Pattillo Higgins, original operator at Spindletop and Sour Lake heard about Warren's story. He came out to Hockley and walked the dome. He found paraffin dirt, sulfur outcropping and gas seepage. Higgins leased the dome in 1907 and drilled 4 or 5 wells, none of

which were commercial. In 1916 another company, perhaps the earliest version of Texaco, drilled a well that penetrated salt, confirming what all believed, that Hockley was a salt dome.

In 1917 Gulf Oil drilled a well that hit oil at 297 feet. Gulf drilled a total of 19 wells in Hockley, none deeper than 3500 feet and none proved to be commercial. In 1933 a well was drilled and flowed from a 2400-foot sand at about 75 barrels /day for approximately 30 days. A good enough well to keep wildcatters on the hook.

The Hockley Dome is about 10 times larger than Spindletop and has been explored for decades and decades. Hockley is one of the most mineralized domes on the Gulf Coast showing deposits of salt, sulfur, calcium



Red Circles are old wells - all around us

sulfate and gypsum. To this day a salt mine operates on the Warren Ranch. However, oil production in good sustainable quantities has never been discovered.

For me, my interest in the oil industry probably started with my first trip to the Astrodome in the summer of 69. Stopped at the light at Kirby and 610 and seeing the Dome was truly spectacular. But equally intriguing was while stopped at the redlight looking to my right and seeing all the pumpjacks just pumping away to the south. I would later learn that this was the "Pierce Junction" salt dome. This field was discovered in 1921 after the observance of gas seeps, paraffin dirt and a slight surface elevation.

Seeing this field in action may have planted the seed to one day enter the oil industry. Another introduction to the industry was working as a pipeline roustabout in the summer during college, primarily in the El Campo area. I graduated from the University of Texas in 1981 with a BBA majoring in Petroleum Land Management. As a student I was very excited about a career in the oil industry.

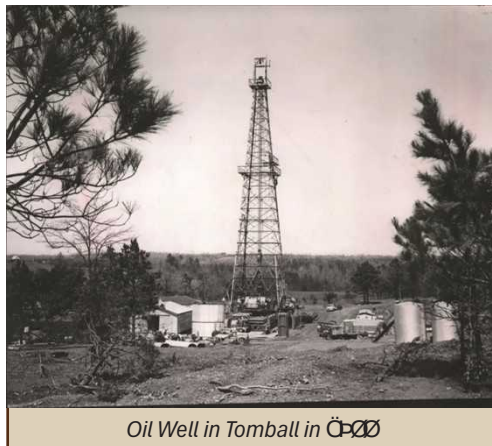
As a graduate I was totally fooled by the highs and lows of the industry. No jobs! I believed the placement office on campus eventually recorded that I was in a class of 107 and 5 received jobs through the University's placement office. Nuts! In my senior year I had written a paper on the Texas Railroad Commission and employment with the Commission became plan B. Fortunately I was hired in June of 1982 as an oil proration analyst in the Oil & Gas Division of the Commission. I worked in Austin for the Commission for 9 years. I returned to the Houston area and settled in Cypress in 1991. I worked 15 years as an

independent consultant, then 10 years for Plains Exploration / Freeport McMoRan as Manager of Regulatory and Compliance Affairs, and then as a consultant again up until COVID shut everybody down.

My years as a consultant provided many opportunities in the Cypress area which I will elaborate on in future articles. I haven't found any records of current production in any of the fields I have mentioned, although if I was to guess maybe the far western edge of the Katy field may still have some life. And as far as any future oil and gas activity in our area is concerned, I doubt any operator would want to accept the challenges or find it profitable to set up a drilling program here today.

Many years ago I permitted a well for a client to directionally drill under the high school football field in McAllen during Spring Break. And some years ago, I had a similar client

discussion concerning drilling directionally under the back side of the athletic complex at Cy-Fair High School during the summer break. Although the geology looked sound, and risk minimal, the path to get a permit to drill was just too daunting. And I suspect that is the case all over our area. Who knows, there could possibly be some nice wells completed under your subdivision. But although the mineral estate has always been ruled as the dominant estate, entitling the mineral owner the right to produce their minerals, good luck these days finding an operator who will drill on a townsite tract or a small acreage ranch. I think our area oil and gas history is just that, history that is until oil gets to be \$150 -175 a barrel, and natural gas gets to \$7/mcf. Then maybe the game will be back on!



NEWS & EVENTS

UPDATES FROM THE EDITOR

That fascinating cover story is quite the welcome from our newest contributor, Bob Tierney. Bob will be writing articles for our newsletter, specializing in Oil & Gas and covering other topics as well.

You've no doubt noticed the newsletter looks a bit different. Thanks to reader feedback, I've changed to a more readable font. Your feedback helps me make the newsletter better, thank you!

Our new website is live! Same address, cypresshistoricalsociety.com and for now mostly the same content. We're saving a good amount of money, and I hope to enable additional functionality over time. Online

memberships and ordering, the option to receive the newsletter electronically, I have all sorts of plans! Your patience is appreciated, feedback welcome.

We've had a very productive summer. Many new volunteers, and they have made huge progress with documenting the settler families and sorting through boxes and file drawers, helping us consolidate, arrange, and clarify content received from donors and the county.



CY-FAIR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

On Saturday, June 22, Juergen's Hall was filled with the fun and laughter of the CFHS Reunion, classes 1942-1960. CHS staff were on site to provide a tour of the store, and to meet our members and benefactors. It was such a treat to meet those of you I've only known as names on the mailing list!

Pictured here is Robert Rivera, one of many whose family is on the wall at Juergens. His father was foreman for the railroad. That's his father and his crew, the lower picture on the wall. His father was responsible for maintaining the track from Fairbanks out towards Hockley. Mr. Rivera said his family lived in a boxcar when they first came to Cypress, waiting for the railroad company to build them a house. I'm sure that was fun for a boy, possibly less so for mom and dad!



We at CHS are privileged to attend these reunions and happy to help where we can by providing meeting/planning space and access to old yearbooks or other memorabilia that may be of interest to the attendees. We look forward to helping next summer!

COMING OCTOBER 4: UP BIG BOY WILL ROLL

PAST CYPRESS TOP HISTORIC PARK

Union Pacific 4104, Big Boy, world's largest operating steam locomotive, is coming through Cypress as part of the Union Pacific Heartland of America Tour. It departs Hempstead at 12:45 on Friday October 4, so will pass right by CHS sometime around 1 or 1:30pm. The train will be at the Houston Amtrak station for free viewing and tours on Sunday, Oct 6.

The Big Boy steam engines came into use during WWII, they were the most modern and powerful steam locomotives ever built. Big Boy was retired in 1961, fully restored, and now tours the country to remind us all of the golden age of rail.



We will be at CHS on that Friday, if you'd like to come say hello and watch the big train go by!

LIBRARY & MUSEUM & HISTORIC PARK

HURRICANE BERYL'S IMPACT ON OUR PARK

The Derecho in May was not the last of this year's weather damage in our treasured Historic Park. In July, Hurricane Beryl took another two of our big trees. Most painfully, the big beautiful oak from the front of the house fell right onto a section of the fence and tore up the yard.

We're blessed that none of the trees fell on buildings - no people were hurt, no lasting damage to buildings or contents, and the county cleaned up and fixed the fence promptly. But losing three trees in one year? That's painful, no two ways about it.

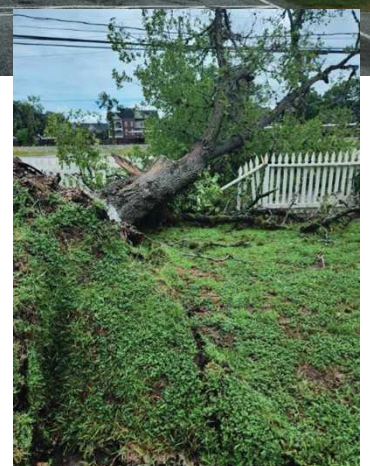
We have a remaining tree that could benefit from Arborist expertise - do you know anyone who would be willing to donate their time and expertise? Contact us!



This tree completely snapped and fell onto the metal sign



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MUSEUM DONATIONS FROM THE GUIDRY FAMILY

CHS received a call from the Guidrys, a lovely Cypress couple with a few historical items they wished to donate so that they and the history they represent could be preserved. In short order, they came over with a portrait of Harry Whitmell Dolese as a young WWI soldier and a lovely line drawing of the Moreau Place on Bayou Teche near Arnaudville. They then made arrangements for pickup of a very well preserved treadle sewing machine, and gifted us with a very generous monetary donation.



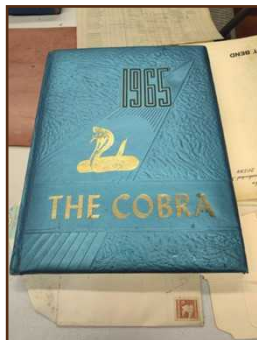
These objects are currently at the museum. Cleanup, research and labeling is ongoing, as well as search for the ideal location for the lovely sewing machine.



A SURPRISE HIDDEN IN A BOX OF "STUFF"

Over the summer and into the fall we've had an influx of volunteers to help go through boxes and file cabinets and get things sorted. There have been moments of surprise and delight when something unexpected is found.

One of those surprises is The Cobra 1965. Yearbook from Carverdale schools. It's in EXCELLENT shape, the cover is still iridescent blue and shiny gold. Inside all the pages are clean and crisp. Just a beautiful specimen, so glad to add it to our collection.



Beverly Richardson was at the office when Elena found it - Beverly remembered their football cheer and delighted us all by chanting it.

This was the first year that Carverdale schools put out a yearbook, and all grades are covered, all the way down through elementary. Great pictures of staff and the clubs.

Once segregation was ended, the students integrated into Cy-Fair, and the Carverdale schools were closed. All of the buildings have by now been torn down.

It's an honor to be able to preserve what we can of all things Cypress; to me, that extends to Fairbanks and Carverdale without question. If you'd like to see that old yearbook, stop by anytime we're open!



FAMILY & AREA HISTORY

DID YOU KNOW? ELEANOR ROOSEVELT ATTENDED THE DEDICATION OF CFHS

The WPA National Youth Association program of the New Deal was deployed to assist in the construction of Cy-Fair Senior High School, in 1940 and 1941. That program was designed to provide employment education and training opportunities for people between 16 and 25.

The opening of the school was a chance for the FDR Administration to get some positive attention on their programs and on the communities they were assisting, so Eleanor Roosevelt was sent out to attend the dedication.

Ultimately, the NYA constructed 125 schools and libraries across the country. CFHS' first graduating class in 1942 had 35 students - so that school that Mrs. Roosevelt visited has grown and changed quite a bit in the 80+ years since!



REMEMBER WHEN: THE OLYMPIC TORCH CAME TO TOWN IN 1996

The Summer 1996 Olympics were to be in Atlanta. A huge part of Olympic promotion is the Torch Relay, carrying the flame from Greece to wherever the Olympics are to be held. In 1996, the route came through Cypress.

One of our volunteers, Janice Anderson, was there, May 21, 1996, and remembers it well. Arnold Junior High was to be a handoff point, perfect chance for festivities. The Olympics folks brought a trailer with snacks, beverages, and souvenirs.



The bicyclist from Cypress brought the torch into the field - and it went out. The Olympic Committee had to relight it from the "backup flame" they carry.

All got back on track, and a man named Dan, from Atlanta, took off with the torch on the next leg of the relay. He was headed for Houston - Sam Houston Park - and then to Olympic history.



THANKS TO OUR BENEFACTORS (JUL - SEP)

- * BKBO-I) RKA
- Juanita Guidry
- John & Virginia Alamanza

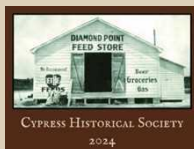
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- Nancy Andrews

Donations under \$25 are anonymous, Thank you!

ITEMS FOR SALE

- Calendars \$15
- Hats \$10
- Polo shirts \$20
- T-shirts \$10
- Cookbook \$20
- Postcards \$1



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Our mission is to discover, educate, promote, collect, preserve and make available to the public, historical documents and artifacts of the Cypress area.

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TUESDAY 9am-4pm
THURSDAY 9am-Noon
FRIDAY 9am-Noon

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1pm, first Friday of the month, all are welcome

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MEMBERSHIP

\$20/yr individual
\$30/yr family

WHO WE ARE

The Cypress Historical Society (CHS), a 501(c)3 organization, was founded in March 2008.

Our mission is to make the rich, colorful history of the Cypress area known to the current residents of Cypress and the public in general.

WHAT WE DO

We preserve local artifacts, conduct genealogical research of the settling families, assist the public with their own family history research, offer history presentations, assist the County with tours of Cypress Top Park, and more.