

THE CALL



Story of Oil Dims Romance of Gold

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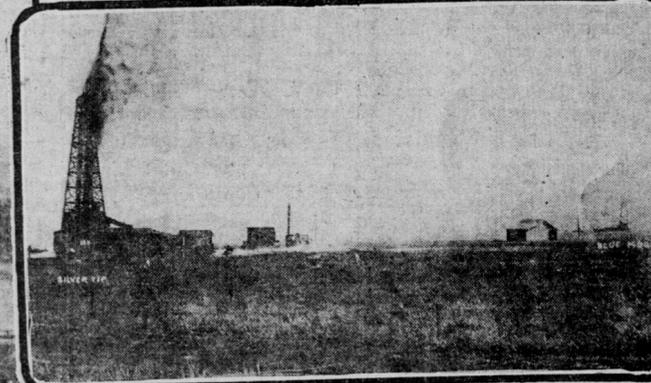
SOME OF THE FAMOUS GUSHERS THAT HAVE DRAWN THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD TO THE OIL FIELDS OF CALIFORNIA



LAKEVIEW NO. 1

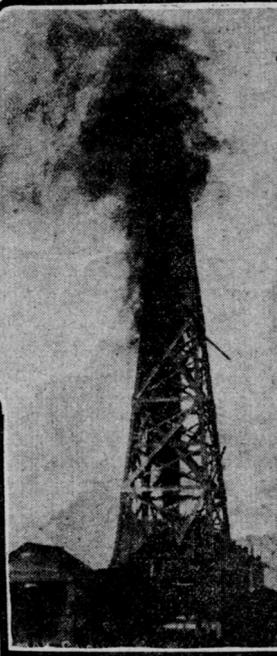


PREMIER GUSHER, NO. 9

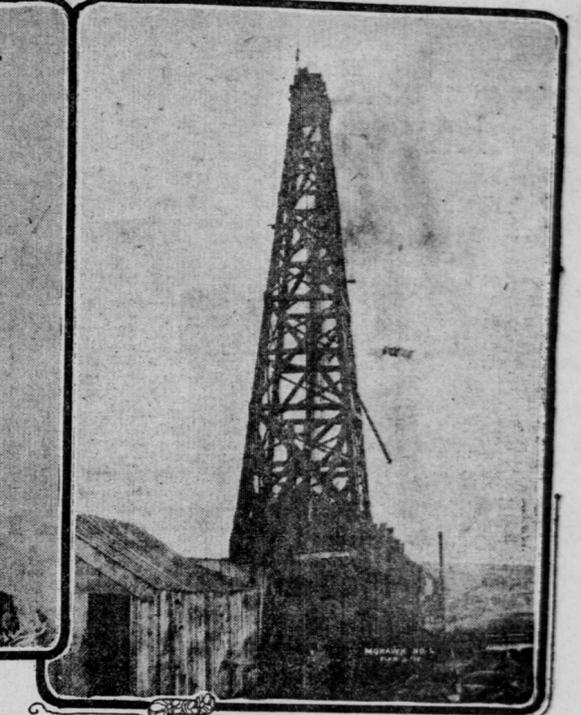


SILVER TIP GUSHER

BLUE MOON GUSHER



THE MAYS GUSHER



MOHAWK GUSHER NO. 1

LAKEVIEW GUSHER ECLIPSES WELLS OF ALL OTHER FIELDS

Produces at Rate of Nearly \$25,000 a Day and Has Continued More Than a Month

Monday, March 14, the drill of the Lakeview well was pounding methodically through a sandy formation more than 2,100 feet below the surface. Gradually the sands hardened and the signs of approaching water appeared. Prompt orders were given to cease drilling. But once again it is the story of the man who dared to disobey. The next day the big drill was hoisted and sent down for another exploration. There was a crack as of breaking bones, and the long cylinder slid into the soft ooze. A rush of gas sent a warning hiss up the tube. In a few moments there was a rumble, and then an explosion. A column of black mud shot over the derrick and splashed over the boiler house. Another roll of thunder sounded from the depths and the slime from below was hurled high over the tower as though from a volcano. Again and again the pitch was ejected by intermittent explosions. As it gathered force the well threw stones and boulders high into the air. Then, clearing itself of all refuse, it spouted a full, free stream of petroleum 400 feet high. Thus the famous Lakeview gusher was born.

SEEN FROM AFAR

In its brief career of 35 days it has poured forth more than 1,250,000 barrels and has earned for its owners nearly \$750,000. It has maintained a steady flow between 30,000 and 40,000 daily, gaining the first place among the gushers of the world's oil fields. It is an imposing sight on the edge of the unproductive desert, pouring its unlined wealth into the lap of man. The great well lies within sight of the beautiful Buena Vista lake, and this it was that suggested its name. It is one mile to the north of the Midway district.

From far across the desert the column of oil can be seen, blackening the earth and darkening the landscape, giving the impression that the entire section lies under the shadow of a threatening cloud. For two miles in each direction the oil spray has been spread by the wind until the sage and the greasewood wind black from blacker earth. The houses nearby have been coated as with tar.

SPOUTS LIKE GEYSER

The gusher itself plays in a most spectacular manner. It spouts oil, geyserlike, to great heights, the fluid falling into darkness, spray that forms in the wind. It is as though Bridal Veil falls in Yosemite, inked to blackness, should shoot upward from the precipice with the same wonderful grace with which it descends. The drops pelt like hailstones upon the earth, the heavier stream tumbling like a cataract. As the oil rises from the well it carries a fine sand. The wind carries the sand some distance from a slight angle, has heaped up a mound that has risen to the roof of the boiler house and has almost buried the buildings on the lease.

MEN DRESS IN RUBBER

The great stream has passed far beyond the stages of control. Night and day an army of men has been at work endeavoring to cap it and building large storage dams to accommodate the flow. It has filled the pipe lines and still as much runs to reservoirs as a ravine the size of an irrigating ditch and several pipes can carry.

The men employed have been paid extra wages and a special offer has been made of \$5,000 to the man who can cap the geyser. Dressed in rubber from hat to boot and with glass lookouts for the eyes, the employees of the lease have struggled valiantly to curb the flow. They labor amid a rain of oil. The greatest danger comes, however, from the poisonous gas that the petroleum gives off.

Wells in the neighborhood of the gusher have been forced to shut down. Fires in cook stoves of the several eat-

ing houses about were extinguished. Everything dripped with oil—was sodden with it. It ran wide streams from the rig in such volume that the danger of losing it seemed imminent. The location of the well, however, chanced to be ideal for such conditions, for most of the fluid poured into a natural ravine, where it was quickly captured by a rough dam. Men were pressed into service at \$2 an hour to work about the rig in an endeavor to control the rushing black torrent. At the expense of \$1,000 a day corps were set to work digging sump holes and trenches. Pumps were installed, and in four days the 110,000 barrel tanks of the Producers' transportation company were filled. Every means of handling the oil were employed, still the flow continued unabated.

Thick bulkheads of heavy planking have been erected around the base of the derrick. Several times sheds have been thrown over the stream, but the planking was hurled aside and the mighty gusher poured on seemingly from a limitless fountain in the bowels of the earth.

SPECTACLE AT NIGHT

The spectacle was thus described in the Bakersfield Oil Journal by one of its contributors who observed the well in its early stages:

"Tuesday morning the spectators marveled at the wonder, but the slight was more than grand at night. The hot rocks at times caused the gusher to look like a huge fourth of July 'flower pot' sending its bright lines of fire high into the heavens. By Wednesday night the steady rain of sand and rocks completely tore the crown block away and Thursday the great stream of oil gushed through the derrick without obstruction. The flow and roar seemed to increase all the time. The height to which the oil shot increased after the crown block was removed and the solid stream went for days from three to four times as high as the derrick. The brown spray, when the air was calm, seemed to go 1,000 feet in the air, but when the wind was blowing the extremities of the liquid column were fanned, so as to resemble a huge black willow tree."

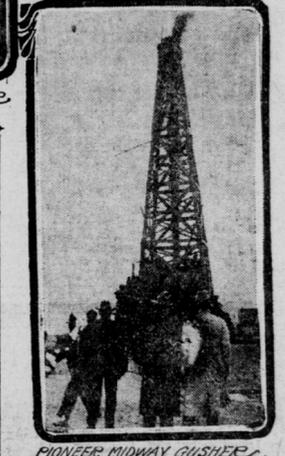
The gusher is located on section 25-12-24. It is the property of the Lakeview oil company, in which the Union holds the controlling interest. The company's greatest fear has been of fire. Every precaution has been taken. Guards have been stationed in covered lookouts all about the lease to prevent automobiles from approaching closer than 300 or 400 yards. On either side of the railroad track, which passes near by, a strip of ground has been plowed to prevent a blaze from traveling across the oil soaked soil to the well.

A remarkable feature of the petroleum geyser is the high gravity of the oil, which is said to be over 20. Wells in the country about the gusher are producing oil of gravities ranging between 14 and 15, but most of them are pumping from the first sand at a depth of 1,300 to 1,500 feet.

LAND VALUES RISE

Land in the neighborhood of the Lakeview has jumped to fabulous prices. The wells in the so called gusher belt are busy deepening in the hope that the Lakeview sand will be reached. There is speculation concerning this gusher belt or the land lying in a direct line between the Lakeview and its close second, the Mays, which created a sensation a few months ago on section 30-21-25. In the same territory is the Standard No. 2, on section 30-22-24. The Mays produced in the neighborhood of 30,000 barrels a day, the Standard No. 2 8,000 and the Lakeview, without peer, at times 50,000.

When the well first started to flow it was exactly 2,225 feet deep, with 2,220 feet of 8 1/2 inch casing, which has disappeared, being washed away by the constant wear and friction of the sand and rock.



PIONEER MIDWAY GUSHER

RICH STRIKES IN THE BIG FIELDS

Pools Tapped by Nine Companies at Almost the Same Time

The month of March, 1910, will go down in the history of the California oil fields as the era of gushers. The 31 days of the month witnessed the addition of nine spouters to the wonderful wells of the state. It has given California a collection of petroleum geysers that find no parallel in the annals of mineralogy. At the same time a dozen other gushers have continued their undiminished flow.

The gusher is the star performer of the oil fields. Its spectacular performance, its enormous output and its wealth in dollars and cents supply those features that swing the industry from commerce to romance. It has its counterpart only in the big strike in the land of gold.

Standing alone, the most sensational performer is, of course, the Lakeview gusher. It has sent a daily stream of 30,000 to 40,000 barrels high over the derrick. It has filled pipe lines, reservoirs, ditches and sump holes, and still it continues. It began its flow on March 15 and has continued without interruption.

The ownership of the Mays property is lodged in a syndicate composed of F. B. Chapin of Toronto; S. Frank and Peeral Melgus of New York; B. A. Hayden of Bakersfield; J. D. Lederman, J. M. O'Brien, H. P. Coles, A. G. Wilkes and Thomas Wilkes of San Francisco.

STANDARD'S STRIKE

Not far from the Mays the Pioneer Midway came in with a tremendous flow, which at times is said to have reached 30,000 barrels a day. Near by the Santa Fe well struck oil and tore loose with a flow that reached the same proportions. These two wells have since been brought down to steady streams and are being handled successfully.

One of the most productive of the new gushers is the Standard oil company's well, north of the Lakeview. It was brought under control very shortly after it broke forth. The oil was conducted through a small pipe which spurts a stream several feet into a reservoir where it is captured, cleared of sand and turned into the big reservoirs. This well is said to have come in at 15,000 barrels, but has steadied down to a flow that varies from 2,000 to 5,000 barrels a day.

INDEPENDENT COMPANIES REAP FORTUNES FROM LIQUID COAL

Enormous Revenues Drawn by the Successful Concerns From Modest Investments

Hand in hand with the history of oil development in California go the stories of the wonderful achievements and successes of operating companies. Since the price of oil has advanced in the past three years any conservative company with judicious management and a good production is able to make money for its stock holders. There was a time when the best of management had great difficulty in keeping a sound company above water. In that time oil investments were shied at by bankers and capitalists and proven lands in the hearts of the best districts in the state went begging for money for development.

With the rejuvenation of the price the industry has come forward with a rush that has fairly taken the commercial world off its feet. From an insignificant industry oil has advanced to a position claiming the closest attention of the financial interests of the country today. The advantages of oil as fuel and its cheapness compared with coal make possible a market that will consume every barrel that can be produced for years to come and gives a stability to the industry that guarantees a fair price and profit to operating companies properly managed.

ENGLISH MAKE MILLIONS

The largest independent companies now operating in California are the Union and the California oil fields, limited. The latter is an English corporation, owning several thousand acres of producing territory in the eastern and northern parts of the Coalinga field. The company was introduced into the California oil industry by William Graham, the Santa Barbara oilman, whose ventures have netted him many millions of dollars. At the time the foreigners were persuaded to make the purchase the territory selected was not favorably regarded by oilmen generally. However, the success of the company has been little short of phenomenal.

The total capitalization is \$2,000,000, on which, for the last four or five years, dividends ranging from 30 to 40 per cent have been paid. In addition, however, immense sums have been spent in improvements and adding to the property, while a great amount of development is continually under way.

The headquarters of the company is about 12 miles north of Coalinga, where the most complete oil camp in the world has been established. A small townsite has been laid out, the different shops and buildings of the company are situated on either side of the main thoroughfare, and on a hill overlooking the town are a bungalow for the office force, a home for the manager and the field office buildings. The company has its own machine shops, electric light and water plants. Large traction engines haul freight and materials. Married men are provided with separate houses and the unmarried men live in large and comfortable bungalows. A clubhouse has recently been completed for the use of employees during leisure hours.

PROFITS PILE HIGH

One of the most successful of the independent companies is the Pinal oil company in the Santa Maria field. The company was organized in 1903 and purchased a tract for about \$15,000. Out of a capitalization of 200,000 shares, 150,000 shares were sold to raise funds for development. The first well drilled was a gusher. The company has paid 55 dividends to date, an aggregate of \$887,101.50. A year ago its rate was 15 per cent, but the amount has been decreased to 10 per cent in order to carry on more development work. M. F. Elshler is the president and J. F. Goodwin manager. The company is one of the biggest producers in the Santa Maria field.

The four oil company paid 60 dividends amounting to \$213,000 from 20 acres in the Kern river field. John M. Wright organized the Peerless oil company, which originally owned 100 acres in the Kern river field. During the slump in prices a contract was entered into with the Standard

for the sale of 9,000,000 barrels at 24 cents per barrel. The Standard later extended the contract to 12,000,000 barrels and raised the price to 28 cents. This contract is still being filed. About three years ago the Peerless, in order to take advantage of the price in open market, purchased properties in Coalinga and Sunset, which with improvements amounted to close to \$500,000, yet this company has returned to its stock holders as dividends \$301,000, an amount equal to more than \$5,000 an acre on the entire 160 acre tract originally held.

IMPERIAL'S GREAT RECORD

The Sauer Dough, a Coalinga company, has made a wonderful record as a dividend payer. The company owns only 30 acres and is capitalized for \$200,000 and to date has paid 49 dividends amounting to \$517,303.50.

When the oil excitement in Kern river was barely making itself felt, J. J. Mack and J. M. Keith, two Bakersfield bankers, hurried to the land office of the Southern Pacific railroad company and purchased the entire section 32, 23-25 for \$2.50 an acre. They organized two companies on the 640 acres, the Imperial comprising 480 acres and the Thirty Three the 160 acres remaining in the southeast corner. Last week the Imperial paid dividend No. 68 of 40 cents per share, making \$2,000,000 it has paid its owners since organization. Its capitalization is 100,000 shares. The Thirty Three has paid 53 dividends, the last being 30 cents per share, amounting to \$98,000, and bringing the total paid to date to \$670,000. The two companies have netted their organizers more than \$4,000 an acre in dividends alone, all operating expenses having been paid on an investment of \$2.50 an acre.

BERRY'S BIG STRIKE

In the McKittrick field the C. J. oil company, headed by Clarence J. Berry, the successful Alaska gold mining man, is one of the most profitable properties in the state. It is a close corporation and the stock is not listed. It has a production of more than 50,000 barrels a month and is paying its owners more than \$25,000 a month. Berry, upon his return from Alaska, became interested in the McKittrick territory and at one time owned practically the heart of the field, selling all but about 40 acres for \$50,000. With his brother in law, Frank Keller, the C. J. oil company was organized on this piece and the returns have been enormous. Berry is now extensively interested in the Midway and in Coalinga.

The Lucile oil company of the famous section 6 at Coalinga is another company that has made a phenomenal record. Drilling for two years in the face of almost every conceivable difficulty, the stock at one time selling as low as 4 cents and the organizers of the company doing the drilling and taking their pay in shares, the company has since paid \$42,727.04 in dividends to the holders of the 24,704 outstanding shares. Fifteen dollars per share is now asked for the stock on the exchange.

U. M. Thomas, a mining and newspaperman, likewise made a fortune by selling section 6 land. He purchased at \$100 an acre and last spring sold his remaining holding, consisting of 50 acres, to the Lucile for \$1,250 an acre. An option to purchase on an additional 20 acres was given for \$2,000 an acre.

CANFIELD'S RICH RETURNS

In the north end of the Coalinga field the strike of the W. K. oil company several weeks ago caused land values to jump from \$500 an acre to \$2,000. Pete Rice, a Fresno land owner, sold a piece of property adjoining the W. K. for the former figure the day before the strike and the day following received an offer of \$2,000 an acre.

Joseph H. Canfield, for a number of years president of the Associated oil company, with C. A. Canfield discovered the Coalinga field and since that time their returns from the oil industry have been enormous.

SPREAD OF STATE'S OIL BELT SENDS LAND VALUES SKYWARD

Prospective Purchasers Rush to Bakersfield As New Petroleum Deposits Are Opened

NEW YORK broker walked into the office of C. A. Barlow in Bakersfield last week to negotiate for a 10 acre piece of oil land. It was a small strip wedged in between two gusher companies.

"What is your price?" asked the broker, after some preliminary inquiries.

"I would have to ask you a pretty good sum for it," replied Barlow.

"That's all right," answered the broker. "Let us get down to figures."

"But I am afraid you would consider the price rather high," continued the Bakersfield man.

"I realize its worth," replied the other. "You know we have some pretty good property in New York."

"Yes," answered Barlow, "but I don't think you and I could agree on the price of this strip."

"I am ready to pay anything within reason," said the broker.

"But I'm not sure that you would consider my price within reason."

"Well, what is it?"

"Twenty-five thousand dollars an acre."

The broker looked at Barlow a moment to satisfy himself that the words were seriously spoken.

"I came out here to buy a piece of the desert," he blurted out, "and you quote me Broadway prices."

The broker was advised to go out and take a look at the Lakeview gusher. He did. There he saw 10 square feet producing some \$25,000 a day. He again sought Barlow and asked for an option. He was too late. Arrangements had already been made to develop the 10 acre strip.

If the New Yorker had only come to California four or five years ago he might have obtained the tract for the asking from a generous government.

NEW RIVAL OF FAMOUS COMSTOCKS

The bleak hills, which have for long years defied the settler, have become the center of California's greatest industry. They have drawn to themselves hundreds of prospectors who, in turn, have been followed by thousands of investors, promoters and speculators. The precious fluid has turned the pioneer into a man of millions; it has created anew a store of wealth such as poured from the earth after the discovery of gold.

The Comstocks, famed as producers of wealth, have their counterpart in the oil fields of California. A new generation of millionaires has been created, their fortunes resting upon the vast petroleum deposits of the state.

The great industry finds its present focus in Bakersfield. The city is bulging with an eager population drawn from the corners of the earth by the lure of the molten wealth. Men, heavily booted, and dressed in khaki, crowd the hotel, race across the alkali in motor cars, and prospect in the barren untried hills.

The hotel lobby has been the clearing house for oil. Men gather in groups all day long, talking quietly, but there is the one incessant theme. It is oil in its infinite variety.

SPECTACULAR DEALS IN OIL BELT

Spectacular as is the industry as a builder of fortunes, just as dramatic are its other aspects. A hardy race of men hurried to the desert when the first faint rumors told of seepages of oil. There they lived through the cheerless winter and burning summer months, housed in tents or cabins, isolated, but with eyes fixed upon the blue skies of hope. It was a country without water, and a situation without that called for the same fortitude that brought the pioneers across the plains in answer to the first magic note of California.

Even as then has come the reward. The strong men who squatted and held their ground have turned their pennies into thousands. They have given to California a new era, greater than the days of gold.

For their holdings these pioneers of the new oil belt have found ready sale. One of them dropped into the hotel lobby at Bakersfield one evening ready to sell. He proved his property after two years of hard work and he wanted to turn it into coin. He entered the hotel, looked about and saw C. A.