

BULLETIN

HOUSTON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 23 Number 7



HGS MARCH CALENDAR

March 9, 1981 (Dinner Meeting, Joint with GSH) Galleria Plaza Hotel

Ray Holifield

Ray Holifield & Associates, Dallas

"Giddings-Austin Chalk Field, Upper Gulf Coast, Texas"

Social Period-5:30 PM, Dinner and Meeting-6:30 PM

Advance Ticket Sales Only—See Notice Inside

(No tickets sold after noon Friday, March 6.)

March 19-20, 1981 (Continuing Education)

Exxon Auditorium

"Atlantic Margin of North America Symposium"

March 25, 1981 (Luncheon Meeting)

Marriott West Loop (1750 West Loop South)

Vincent Matthews III

Amoco Production Company-Western Division, Denver

"The Wyoming-Utah Thrust Belt—A Major New Petroleum Province".

Social Period—11:30 AM, Luncheon and Meeting—12 Noon

Reservations (telephone only, 771-8315) must be made or

cancelled by noon Monday, March 23, 1981.

HOUSTON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY 6916 ASHCROFT HOUSTON, TEXAS 77081 771-8315

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AAPG ANNUAL MEETING

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

MAY 31 - JUNE 3, 1981

Group Space has been reserved for HGS Members planning to fly from Houston to the 1981 AAPG Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California.

The Current Roundtrip Coach Airfare is \$594.00. The Current Group fare is \$416.00. Independent returns are permitted. These fares are quoted as of December 29, 1980 and are subject to change by the Airlines. It is important to note that your airfare will be guaranteed from the date you are ticketed as long as your originating flight does not change.

Additionally, a POST CONVENTION GEOLOGICAL FIELD TRIP is planned to the Islands of Kauai and Hawaii leaving San Francisco June 4 and returning June 11, 1981. Since flight schedules and airfares are not firm as of this date, the final cost will be published as soon as available. THERE WILL BE A SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS USING A HAWAIIAN AIRFARE THAT PERMITS A STOPOVER IN SAN FRANCISCO.

If you are interested in Group Flights to San Francisco and/or the Post Convention Field Trip, please indicate on the attached coupons, and send them as soon as possible to:

CONNIE BURKE AAPG TRAVEL UNLIMITED, INC. P. O. BOX 25187 HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL CONNIE AT (713) 526-3161

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I am interested in your Gro Please indicate dates and a HOUSTON TO SAN FRA May 29 May 30	pproximate times desired NCISCO	below:	SAN FRANCISCO.	Evening	Departure
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June 3 June 4	Other	l prefer Morn	ing Noon	Evening	Departure
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Address	City	<i>y</i>	State	Zip	
Phone (with area code):	Business		Home		
I would like to be ticketed e	early to avoid fare increase	e Please o	contact me with exac	ct airfare	
*******	********	********	*******	******	******
I am interested in the AAP	G POST CONVENTION GE	OLOGICAL FIELD TRI	P	•	
Name(s)					
Address	City	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	State	Zip	
Phone (with area code):	Business		Home		
I would like to go to San Fr	ancisco				
May 29 May 30	May 31	I prefer Morn	ing Noon	Evening	Departure
Please send complete deta	ils as soon as they are ava	ailable			
Home City if other than Ho	uston				

* * SEE NEXT PAGE * *

A A P G POST CONVENTION GEOLOGICAL FIELD TRIP

JUNE 4 - 11, 1981

HAWAII

DEPART SAN FRANCISCO ON JUNE 4 TO HONOLULU WHERE A DIRECT CONNECTION WILL BE MADE TO THE "BIG ISLAND" OF HAWAII. TRANSFER TO THE KONA SURF HOTEL. REMAINDER OF THE DAY AT LEISURE. JUNE 5 DEPART KONA SURF HOTEL AT 8:30 AM. FULL DAY "CIRCLE ISLAND TOUR" OF HAWAII INCLUDING THE VOLCANOES, LUNCH NOT INCLUDED, JUNE 6 FULL DAY AT LEISURE, JUNE 7 DEPART FOR THE ISLAND OF KAUAI WHERE YOU WILL BE MET AND TRANSFERRED TO THE KAUAI SURF HOTEL. REMAINDER OF THE DAY IS FREE. JUNE 8 DEPART AT 8:30 AM FOR A TOUR OF WAIAMEA CANYON AND THE GARDENS, LUNCH NOT INCLUDED. RETURN TO THE HOTEL ABOUT 2:30 PM, REMAINDER OF THE DAY FREE. JUNE 9 DAY AT LEISURE UNTIL 7:00 PM WHEN YOU WILL HAVE A FAREWELL LUAU WITH A POLYNESIAN SHOW AND INCLUDING ONE MAI TAI PER PERSON. JUNE 10, DAY AT LEISURE UNTIL TIME TO DEPART FOR THE AIRPORT FOR YOUR FLIGHT TO HONOLULU CONNECTING TO YOUR RETURN FLIGHTS HOME.

LAND PACKAGE,	EXCLUDING	AIRFARE
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DOUBLE	PER PERSON, INCLUDING INTERISLAND FLIGHTS (2)	\$380.00
SINGLE	PER PERSON, INCLUDING INTERISLAND FLIGHTS (2)	\$570.00
TRIPLE	PER PERSON, INCLUDING INTERISLAND FLIGHTS (2)	\$330.00

INCLUDES:

KONA SURF, 3 NIGHTS * KAUAI SURF, 3 NIGHTS * ROUND TRIP TRANSFERS KONA AND KAUAI AIRPORT TO HOTELS AND RETURN * BAGGAGE HANDLING AT BOTH AIRPORTS * TIPS TO BELLMEN IN BOTH HOTELS * CIRCLE ISLAND TOUR OF HAWAII INCLUDING VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK * WAIAMEA CANYON AND GARDEN TOUR OF KAUAI * LEI GRETTING ON ARRIVAL IN HONOLULU * FAREWELL LUAU ON KAUAI INCLUDING POLYNESIAN SHOW AND 1 MAI TAI PER PERSON * ALL TAXES AND GRATUITIES ON INCLUDED ITEMS * FLIGHT FROM HONOLULU TO KONA * FLIGHT FROM KONA TO LIHUE, KAUAI * THE CONNECTING FLIGHT TO HONOLULU FOR RETURN TO THE MAINLAND.

DOES NOT INCLUDE: AIRFARE FROM HOME CITY TO HAWAII. THIS WILL BE QUOTED SEPARATELY AS SOON AS JOINT AIRFARES HAVE BEEN APPROVED. THIS AIRFARE WILL INCLUDE THE STOPOVER IN SAN FRANCISCO FOR THE AAPG CONVENTION * GRATUITIES TO BUS DRIVERS ON TOURS....THIS IS AT YOUR DISCRETION * LUNCHES ON TOURS * MEALS OTHER THAN THOSE SPECIFIED IN THE PACKAGE * DRINKS OTHER THAN THE 1 MAI TAI AT THE LUAU * TOURS OTHER THAN THOSE INCLUDED * ITEMS OF A PERSONAL NATURE * PHONE CALLS * LAUNDRY * ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS IF ITINERARY IS ALTERED.

IMPORTANT:

IF YOU WISH TO REMAIN LONGER, THIS CAN BE ARRANGED.

DEPOSITS:

A DEPOSIT OF \$100.00 PER PERSON IS REQUIRED TO CONFIRM YOUR RESERVATION. THIS DEPOSIT IS NOT REFUNDABLE UNLESS CANCELLATION IS RECEIVED IN WRITING BEFORE MARCH 21, 1981.

FINAL PAYMENT:

IS DUE NO LATER THAN APRIL 20, 1981. IF FINAL PAYMENT IS NOT RECEIVED, RESERVATIONS WILL BE CANCELLED AND \$100.00 DEPOSIT

PER PERSON WILL BE RETAINED UNLESS SPACE CAN BE

RESOLD.

PLEASE SEND DEPOSITS AND FINAL PAYMENTS TO:

CONNIE BURKE - POST CONVENTION

TRAVEL UNLIMITED, INC.

P. O. BOX 25187

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: TRAVEL UNLIMITED

FLIGHT INFORMATION AND AIRFARE WILL BE PUBLISHED AS SOON AS IT IS AVAILABLE.

HOUSTON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONTINUING EDUCATION **Pre-registration Application** ATLANTIC SYMPOSIUM

, n	Marcii 19-20, 1961	exxon building Auditorium	1-5 pm/ 8:30-12 am	
Name				_
Company			Phone	
Address				
Preregistration	Registration	at door:	MAIL CHECK TO:	

Members \$25.00

Members \$30.00

Houston Geological Society 6916 Ashcroft Houston, Texas 77081

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The Executive Board of the Houston Geological Society, at its January meeting, approved the establishment of two ad hoc committees. One committee is to research and write amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Society which will:

- 1. Create the office of President-Elect
- 2. Redefine the qualifications for membership for "active" and "associate" members.
- 3. Give the Executive Board authority to increase dues up to "X" dollars without having to go to the membership for approval.

The Committee was also asked to give the Executive Board its thoughts on the advisability of establishing "student" and "emeritus" membership categories.

Dr. Anthony Reso, a Past President of the Society, agreed to chair this Committee and Jack O. Colle and W. Dean Grafton, also Past Presidents of the Society, agreed to serve on the Committee. Their thoughts on the subjects are to be presented to the Executive Board of the Society at its February meeting with the final results being presented to the membership for your approval in April.

As presently set up, the Society votes in April, the ballots are counted about the middle of May and the new administration takes over July 1. This gives the incoming President about one and one-half months to get his/her act together. The Houston Geological Society has become, for some time now, a Society whose members' professional interests encompass far more than Texas Railroad Commission Districts 2 and 3. This, plus the increasing size of the Society, makes it imperative that the incoming President have more than one and one-half months to think about what he/she would like to accomplish and the methods by which to do so. It is not fair to the incoming President and certainly is not to the benefit of the Society and its members.

It has become apparent in recent Executive Board meetings that our qualifications for membership need further definition. My experience on screening boards for various organizations shows that the biggest problem always seems to be with the qualifications for "associate" members, and this Society is no different. We are hopeful we can clarify the issue.

With Item 3, we are trying to give future administrations more control over their own destinies. The membership voted last year to raise dues. This year's administration is still projected to have a budget surplus at year-end. Just as surely as the sun rises in the east, we can already project less of a surplus, if any, for next year's administration and the administration following that may need another dues increase. If we felt this year that next year's administration needed a dues increase to cover the Society's business, we would have to have made our decision to ask the membership for it by the middle of February, some 4½ months before the next administration takes office with that much time left on the present administration's charge. If approved, the incoming administration could decide in June if a dues increase was needed and still have time to get the new amount included for the new dues notices that go out in August and early September. The present roller coaster budget effect would be eliminated and the chances of leaving an incoming administration in a monetary situation in which they could not accomplish what they felt necessary would be diminished.

A number of the larger local geological societies (RMAG, WTGS, Lafayette) have already established the office of President Elect. The membership of the RMAG, several years ago, gave its Executive Board approval to raise dues an incremental amount without having to ask their approval.

If you can recall way back to the first paragraph, I told you we had created two ad hoc committees. The second one, equally important, is to study an area in which the Executive Board believes the Society has the beginnings of a problem. The result of the Committee's work should tell us if we, indeed, do have a problem and hopefully, how to approach solving it.

For the past several years the membership of the Houston Geological Society has been growing by several hundred each year so that membership by year's end will approach 3800. Attendance at our meetings is holding steady at levels established several years ago. Since the level of speakers and the subjects of their talks have remained generally high, the Board feels that the stagnant nature of the attendance (really a decline in percentage of members attending) probably reflects the dispersal of members throughout the metropolitan area. the time involved in getting around the metropolitan area, and the few places that can adequately handle a large crowd. For whatever reason, the Board feels that possibly the Society is not meeting its goals as stated in the Constitution, i.e., (1) to disseminate and facilitate discussion of geological information, and (2) to enhance professional interrelationships between geologists in the area.

Satellite groups of geologists are already established west of West Belt and in the Greenspoint-Woodlands area. We have asked this Committee, chaired by Ben Sorrell, a Past President. to try to determine how many geologists are out there and how the Society can help meet their professional needs. The Committee has been requested to present their recommendations to the Executive Board by June 1. It was the opinion of the Board that this Committee should be large, with representatives from all sections of the area and of all age groups. If you feel you have ideas on this, please contact Ben.

Chet Baird President

SOCIETY CALENDAR FOR APRIL

April 13, 1981 **HGS Evening Meeting**

Location to be announced John H. Oehler

Conoco Exploration - Research & **Development "Carbonate Source** Rocks in the Jurassic Smackover Trend of Mississippi, Alabama

and Florida"

April 29, 1981 **HGS Luncheon Meeting**

Location to be announced Christopher Kendall

Gulf Research & Development "Tepee Structures"

PRICE SCHEDULE—HGS MEETINGS

Galleria Plaza Hotel	
Dinner	\$20.00
Marriott West Loop (1750 West Loop South)	
Luncheon	\$13.00
RESERVATIONS (771-8315)	

NOTICE: Advance tickets are required for the March 9 evening meeting. Tickets for this joint meeting with the Geophysical Society of Houston are \$20.00. Deadline for purchasing tickets is noon Friday, March 6.

You may purchase tickets at the February 25 HGS meeting or by sending your order with a check and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

> Houston Geological Society 6916 Ashcroft Houston, TX 77081

Please make reservations for the Wednesday noon meeting by noon Monday, March 23.

NOON MEETING—MARCH 25, 1981

VINCENT MATTHEWS III—Biographical Sketch



Vince Matthews is Exploration Manager of Amoco Production Company's Western Division—an area including 16½ western States—with headquarters in Denver.

Matthews first joined Amoco Production in 1967 in New Orleans as a geologist following the awarding of BS and MS degrees in geology from the University of Georgia. Two years later, in 1969, he resigned to pursue graduate

studies at the University of California, where he was a Danforth Fellow and Lecturer. His PhD-dissertation research was on the movement history of the San Andreas fault.

For 5½ years he taught geology at the University of Northern Colorado, where he was an Associate Professor of Geology and Environmental Studies and was also President of the Faculty Senate.

Matthews rejoined Amoco Production in Denver in 1977 as a staff geologist working in the Overthrust Belt. In 1979 he was transferred to the Production Company's General Office in Chicago. Just prior to his present assignment, he was in charge of Amoco's preparation for the Beaufort Sea OCS sale north of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

Dr. Matthews is the author of 17 professional papers in geology. He is editor of the Memoir on Laramide Folding Associated with Basement Block Faulting in the Western U.S., which was published by the Geological Society of America. He has been a geological consultant to the Bureau of Land Management and the Governor's Task Force on the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant in Colorado. He is also a Fellow in the GSA and a member of AAPG.

THE WYOMING-UTAH THRUST BELT—A MAJOR NEW PETROLEUM PROVINCE (Abstract)

Prior to 1976, most companies did not consider the Utah-Wyoming thrust belt to be a promising area for exploration. Much of this pessimism was the result of a misconception about the time of migration of hydrocarbons and concerns about the ability to decipher the complex structures. However, within the past 5 years, the Wyoming-Utah thrust belt has developed into a major petroleum province. Advances in seismic technology have led to the discovery of 9.5 trillion cuft of gas and over 900 million bbl of oil thus far. The opportunities for expanding this play into other parts of the thrust belt are extremely exciting—yet may not necessarily be fruitful.

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS:

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS may be sent to Mrs. Virginia Lee Bick, 2534 Yorktown, Suite 156, Houston, 77056 for publication in the HGS Bulletin. All news to be published in the May issue should be sent to Virginia by March 25th. These items may also be phoned to her at 840-0406.

Ken Cox joins Home Petroleum Corp., 2600 N. Loop W., Ste. 400, Houston, 77092, (686-7444) as SR. Exploration Specialist for South Louisiana. Mr. Cox has previously been employed by Tenneco Coal Co.

Bobby Evers; formerly District Geophysicist, S.E. Region for Texas Oil and Gas Corp., has opened his own geophysical consulting firm at 11060 Timberline, Houston, 77043, (465-7586).

M. E. "Gene" Mathis, Jr. has left Fairfield Industries to join Petty-Ray where he is currently working with High Resolution 3-D Marine Data and Finegrain Velocity Analysis.

Worldwide Energy Corporation is opening a regional exploration office in Midland, Texas. The Southwest Regional Office is located at 3415 West Illinois, Suite One, Midland, Texas 79703. Telephone: 915/686-0233. Manager of the new office is **Dennis L. Bell.**

CPC Exploration, Inc. of Corpus Christi, Texas, announces the opening of exploration offices in the Ben Franklin Savings Building at 5444 Westheimer and the appointment of **George T. Karabatsos** as Vice-President of Exploration. Mr. Karabatsos was formerly with Sanchez-O'Brien Minerals Corporation.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS / GEOPHYSICIST

Applications are invited for a permanent faculty position commencing August, 1981, in exploration geophysics. The Ph.D. or equivalent experience is required.

Appointee will be expected to teach graduate and undergraduate courses in geophysics and general geology, conduct a program of research, supervise theses and oversee a program in geophysics. The position will be at the assistant professor level or higher depending on background. Applications are encouraged from individuals with industrial experience, including recent retirees.

Applicants should send a letter outlining interest in position, complete resume, and three letters of recommendation to Dr. Gordon Frey, Department of Earth Sciences, Lake Front, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70122.

UNO is an equal-opportunity/affirmative action employer. Applications from minority groups are specifically invited.

1981 AAPG SOUTHWEST SECTION MEETING

From April 5-7 the San Angelo Geological Society will host the 1981 AAPG Southwest Section meeting. Headquartered at the San Angelo Convention Center and the nearby Holiday Inn and Holidome, this early spring meeting will explore "Trapping Mechanisms In West Texas Basins".

CONFERENCE: APRIL 28-29, 1981 GEOLOGY OF ALABAMA

The Alabama Geological Society, The Geological Survey of Alabama and State Oil and Gas Board of Alabama, and the School of Mines and Energy Development of the University of Alabama will host the conference.

The program includes a general session, Coastal Plains session, Black Warrior Basin session, Appalachian Thrust Belt session and core workshop. In addition two pre-conference one-day field trips on April 27 will be given to the Appalachian Thrust Belt and to the Alabama Coastal Plain. A post-conference one-day field trip will be conducted April 30 to the Black Warrior Basin. Registration deadline is March 31, 1981. Registration fee is \$60 (student \$20) with the field trips an additional \$50 each. Write Ernest A. Mancini, Geology and Geography Department, University of Alabama, University, Alabama 35486 for additional information.

EVENING MEETING—MARCH 9, 1981

RAY HOLIFIELD—Biographical Sketch

Ray Holifield is President of Ray Holifield & Associates, Dallas, Texas, a geological consulting firm. Mr. Holifield received B.S. and M.A. degrees from the University of Missouri. From 1964 to 1970, he was employed by Tenneco Gulf Coast. From 1970 to 1975 he worked for D. R. McCord, primarily in the Middle East, and from 1975 to 1979 he worked on domestic projects for LaRue Moore & Schafer. Mr. Holifield established his own firm in 1979.

GIDDINGS—AUSTIN CHALK FIELD, UPPER GULF COAST, TEXAS (Abstract)

Ray Holifield & Associates is providing geological consulting services for drilling programs of approximately \$250 million during 1981 in the Austin Chalk trend.

Application of seismic techniques coupled with innovations in well completions and price increases for oil and gas create the opportunity for profitable, yet low-risk, drilling programs.

Discussion will focus on the origin of gas and oil in the Austin Chalk, reserves, exploration, and drilling and completion techniques.

LOWER TERTIARY OF THE BRAZOS VALLEY, GUIDEBOOK

DAVID G. KERSEY, Editor Published by the Houston Geological Society, 1979, 126 p. \$10 postpaid

The guidebook was prepared by the faculty and graduate students of the Center for Sedimentology at Texas A&M University. The publication is divided into two sections.

The first section is a collection of eight papers. The first five discuss the regional structure, stratigraphy, depositional environments and micropaleontological biostratigraphy of the Claiborne Group. Two papers deal with lignite deposits in the Manning Formation and Middle Yegua Formation. The eighth paper is entitled "Uranium in Lignites of Texas Gulf Coast Plain".

The second part of the guidebook contains four road logs, discussions of field trip stops and field trip localities. An appendix includes a description of geologic units seen at the various stops. A bibliography containing over 175 references is also included. Figures in the text range from regional sand maps to well log correlation sections, and from graphs showing distribution and amount of uranium in lignites to measured sections and petrographic composition diagrams.

The discussion of each stop and locality includes a general description of the outcrop and supporting evidence for the interpretation of depositional environment. A measured section accompanies the discussions.

The guidebook is a useful reference book that will help geologists have a better regional undferstanding of the sediments of the Claiborne Group, as well as remind us of the relationship between those SP log deflections and the rocks at the outcrops. The extensive bibliography itself should be a useful reference, especially for those involved in compiling company reports.

Walter S. Light, Jr.

In addition to earthquakes due to natural causes, earthquakes can be triggered by a variety of man's activities, including reservoir impoundment, fluid injection, fluid withdrawal, quarrying, and the detonation of large underground explosions.

HGS SYMPOSIUM

The Continuing Education Committee of the HGS will sponsor a symposium on the Atlantic Margin of North America from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. on Thursday, March 19 and 8:30 A.M. to Noon on Friday, March 20 in the Exxon Building Auditorium. Speakers from government and industry will provide an overview of current studies and activity along the margin.

Speakers and their topics will include:

- W. P. Dillon of the USGS on the continental margin south of Cape Hatteras.
- C. W. Poag of the USGS on the stratigraphy and depositional history of sedimentary basins of the U.S. Atlantic margin.
- K. D. Klitgord of the USGS on the tectonic structure of the U.S. Atlantic margin.
- L. F. Jansa of the Geological Survey of Canada on the Mesozoic carbonate platforms of the eastern North American margin.
- A. S. Kinder of Cities Service Co. on the current and future industry activity on the U.S. Atlantic margin.

PASSAGES

James D. Glynn died September 17, 1980 in Onalaska, Texas. Mr. Glynn was an independent petroleum geologist.

Richard H. Schweers died September 16, 1980, he was retired from Texaco.

John F. Weinzierl, 80 died September 29, 1980. Mr. Weinzierl was a consulting geologist and geophysicist.

Don W. Bishop, 66, died October 1, 1980. Mr. Bishop was retired from Dresser Atlas.

James M. Bridges, 60, died October 20, 1980. Mr. Bridges was a geologist with Southern Natural Gas Co.

Dr. J. Brian Eby, 83, died December 1, 1980. Dr. Eby was a consulting geologist.

HGS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Society's Memorial Scholarship Fund recently received contributions in the following categories:

Mr. G. C. Hardin, Jr. PATRON

204 Arborway

Houston, Texas 77057

Mr. James I. Riddle DONOR

Southern National Bank Bldg.

Suite 1708

Houston, Texas 77002

Mr. R. R. Rieke DONOR

5634 Meadow Lake

Houston, Texas 77056

Mr. James W. Roach DONOR

10039 Del Monte Dr.

Houston, Texas 77042

Mrs. Carleton D. Speed, Jr. DONOR

606 River Oaks Bank & Trust Tower

2001 Kirby Drive

Houston, Texas 77019

Houston Geological Auxiliary DONOR

c/o Mrs. A. Bacho, President

38 Charleston North

Sugarland, Texas 77478

Mr. & Mrs. W. Dean Grafton CONTRIBUTOR

12531 Shepherd's Ridge

Houston, Texas 77077

Carl E. Norman

TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF OIL-FINDING

Wallace E. Pratt

As a geologist long engaged in the search for oil, I have witnessed the development over the last 40 years of an amazingly effective art of prospecting based on the science of geology, vastly aided since the middle 1920's by geophysics. I share the satisfaction of the geological profession in this splendid achievement. We have gone far beyond the utmost that seemed possible to me at the beginning of my work in petroleum geology.

Nevertheless, my experience has forced me to the conclusion that even the most finished art of prospecting by itself, is not adequate to the task of finding the earth's oil. There are other factors which constitute barriers to success in oil-finding of such a nature that no perfection of methods and techniques of search can remove or surmount them. These factors are fundamental; they are innate in our very habits of thought. They are greatly re-enforced by the existing social order in many countries. Their nature and the way in which they operate to defeat the oil-finder are revealed in two incidents - familiar to all of us - which are typical of the activities of the oil-producing industry. These incidents may be briefly recited.

In May, 1920, when the total past production of this country amounted to only 5 billion barrels, David White, the competent and highly respected chief geologist of the United States Geological Survey, predicted that "the production of natural petroleum in the United States must pass its peak at an early date, probably within five years and possibly within three years, due to the exhuastion of our reserves." "Our domestic production," he continued, "is not likely ever to exceed 450 million barrels" annually. If we did produce so much we would "exhaust the estimated 7 billion barrels of natural petroleum remaining available in the ground in the United States in 18 years."

Today, 30 years after this prediction was made, we are producing at roughly five times the rate David White set as the maximum we could ever attain, and over the intervening years we have produced five times as much as the total he estimated as remaining available in the ground. Yet we still have a proved reserve four times larger than David White's estimate of total remaining resource in 1920, to say nothing of an additional undiscovered resource of unknown volume.

It is clear in retrospect, therefore, that David White's prediction was absurdly pessimistic. He was firmly convinced that there was very little oil in the United States. His opinion was based on his knowledge of the occurrence of oil and he was unusually well informed on this subject. Most of us agreed with him at the time. In 1921, this society, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, joined with him and his colleagues in the United States Geological Survey in the preparation of a similarly pessimistic estimate of the remaining petroleum resources of the United States.

There are many instances where our knowledge, supported in some cases by elaborate and detailed studies, directed specifically to the question at issue, has convinced us that no petroleum resources were present in areas which subsequently became sites of important oil fields. The second incident here to be recited, is a case in point.

Over a period of 15 years preceding its discovery in 1937, the largest known oil field in the world-Kuwait, in the Middle East-was offered for a nominal consideration to a number of the larger units in the petroleum industry, including the three

leading oil companies-British, Dutch, and American-in the world; and all these companies, in turn, declined the offer. Not one of them thought it worthwhile even to undertake to explore an area which, once it was explored, proved to be the site of an oil field larger-far larger-than any previous known. In other words, at the end of 90 years of virgorous search for oil over the earth and of intensive sudy of the occurrence of oil in the crust of the earth, the best minds in the oil-finding industry failed to recognize the earth's greatest oil field (to date) before it was proved by drilling: worse than that, they were convinced that it was no oil field at all!

Why do we so completely misjudge the potentialities of oil-bearing rocks? It is not that this incredible error arose out of unfamiliarity with the occurrence of oil in the region in question. The Middle East has been famous for its seeps of oil and gas for hundreds of years. Kuwait itself boasts profile oil seeps. In adjacent Iran, great oil fields had already been producing for more than 20 years. Moreover, these adjacent Iranian oil fields had been developed and were currently administered by one of the very companies which insisted that Kuwait was not worth exploring. Two of the other leading companies had for years been participants in large oil-producing operations in Iraq, on the other side of Kuwait.

These companies knew more than anybody else about oil in the Middle East. They commanded the services of the best geologists in the world. They had carried out special investigations-long and painstaking geologic research on the occurrence of oil in the Middle East. They were not deterred from exploiting Kuwait by any feeling that they knew too little about the occurrence of oil there to justify the risk of loss the venture would involve. On the contrary, they were deterred by their conviction, based on long experience and extensive surveys in the Middle East, that there was no chance of success in Kuwait. They knew, in short, that "there is no oil in Arabia."

Before I leave this incident, I should complete the record by recalling to you that the company which finally had the courage to take up the concession on Kuwait, ten years after it had first been offered to the leading oil producers of the world, was Gulf Oil Corporation. At the same time Gulf Oil Corporation acquired also a concession on the neighboring island of Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf, which it later sold to Standard Oil of California. The California company promptly initiated drilling operations on Bahrein Island and, in 1932, discovered a major oil field. This discovery made it abundantly clear to everyone that there is oil in Arabia, after all, and one of the three great companies which had spurned the Kuwait concession a few years earlier, now re-entered the field and finally (1934) secured a half interest with Gulf Oil Corporation in the Kuwait concession.

It would be consoling to us as geologists and oil-finders if we could convince ourselves that our experience at Kuwait constitutes merely an isolated mistake in judgment, out of keeping with our general and normal performance. But this solace is denied us. If we examine the record, we find that Kuwait is only one more instance in a long series of similar misjudgments. And these errors are frequently the errors of our best informed authorities.

Each of the incidents just recited illustrates a mental attitude which becomes a formidable barrier to oil-finding. The first is an example of the natural conservatism of the trained scientific mind-a trait which, it has been said, has grievously impeded the quest for truth, everywhere. It has impeded the search for oil. David White was conservative. He dealt with

facts-so far as they were known; and he would not venture beyond the known. Because so much was unknown to him, and therefore ignored by him, David White erred. We all erred with him. Consistently, from the birth of the industry to the inception of the Second World War, the scientist has grossly underestimated the petroleum resources of the United States. This conviction of our best minds that little or no oil remained to be found has continuously handicapped the search for oil. Unless men can believe that there is more oil to be discovered, they will not drill for oil.

The second incident illustrates an even more pernicious habit of mind. Joseph Pogue has emphasized this singular trait in a recent unpublished discussion of estimates of petroleum reserves. That which becomes known to us in a particular field, he says, however small our knowledge may be, tends often, not only to color, but actually to obscure what remains unknown to us in the same field. A "little learning" about our proved reserves, for example, makes it impossible for us to measure our total resources by any other yardstick. If the part we know is small the unknown extension of it must also be small. What we learn, instead of illuminating what we have still to learn, sometimes casts a mental shadow over it, rendering it less discernible and impelling us to ignore it.

Those who are trained and experienced in the art of oilfinding appear to be particularly susceptible to this blindness which comes with the acquisition of a little knowledge. Oilfinders, of necessity, are guided by their observation of the facts-their knowledge of the occurrence of oil in the area they have to explore. But the oil-finder can almost never know all the factors with which he has to deal-the actual conditions at depth beneath the surface of an unexplored, or incompletely explored, segment of the earth's crust. For him, the disparity between the known and the unknown is unusually large. For him, the need to be always alert to the potentialities of what he does not know is paramount. He must maintain a constant awareness that he does not know everything that may enter into his problem. To assume that our knowledge of an area is complete when it is not, may be to conclude that there is no oil where there is oil. So it is that we conclude from an inadequate knowledge of the facts that "there is no oil in Arabia".

The record demonstrates that, as oil-finders, we have persistently underestimated the amount of oil and gas that have been stored up in the earth's crust. We have been too conservative always. Despite all our mistakes, however, we have already found in the United States far more oil than our knowledge of the occurrence of oil permitted us to anticipate. Our discoveries since 1920 are already almost 9 times greater than David White's estimate of the total remaining resource; and we know there are still new oil fields to be discovered.

We have produced in the United States nearly two-thirds of all the oil the world has consumed in the past. This means a past production in this country nearly 10 times as great per unit of area of earth's crust favorable for the occurrence of oil, as the rest of the world.

It was long held that our ability to find and produce oil more rapidly and more abundantly than the rest of the world arose from an exceptionally rich endowment of natural resources in oil. But it is clear today that oil resources far richer and larger than ours exist elsewhere over the earth.

How, then, does it come about that we have been able to produce so much more oil in the past than the rest of the world? And how have we surmounted or circumvented the mental barrier which, as we have noted, stand in the way of mankind's search for oil?

Since the very inception of the industry, the finding and producing of oil in the United States have been carried on by literally thousands of independent enterprises; thousands of individuals, each an oil-finder in his own right; each free to put to the practical test of the drill his own ideas and theories of where oil might be found; and each spurred on to the drilling of exploratory wells by the assurance that if he made a discovery, he would reap a reward commensurate with its value to society.

Under these circumstances, hundreds of thousands-more than a million-wells have been drilled in the United States in search for oil. And many thousands of them have been drilled at places which were believed by everyone except the driller, to be unfavorable for the occurrence of oil. Yet, time after time, these wells at unfavorable locations discovered major oil fields. This is the way we have found oil in the United Statesthe drilling of many exploratory wells all over the land. By this procedure more oil fields have been discovered than anybody had dreamed were possible.

Under these circumstances, also, the mental barriers that normally stand in the way of the oil-finder were dissipated. The conservatism of the trained scientist was nullified by the action of the untrained oil-finder, unhampered by "a little learning." If one man said there is no oil in Arabia (or West Texas) another man promptly drilled a well there to see-and often he found oil.

The freedom of every citizen to explore by drilling wells for oil and the assurance to every citizen of a generous reward for success in finding oil have accrued to us out of our social and political envornment. These are advantages which have contributed more to our achievement in oil-finding than the perfection of the art of prospecting. The citizens of few other countries possess these advantages. To their lack is due, in large part, the relatively poor showing in the search for oil over much of the earth. Oil-finding is at once the task of the individual and of the community at large. If the action of either is inappropriate, the search languishes.

One indispensable attribute of the successful oil-finder is vision. Levorsen has said "until a discovery well has been drilled the undiscovered oil or gas field exists at best only as an idea in the mind of the geologist." If it is in the mind of geologist, or the oil-finder, that new fields first take form, then discovery must wait on our mental visualization-our imagination.

Where oil is first found, in the final analysis, is in the minds of men. The undiscovered oil field exists only as an idea in the mind of some oil-finder. When no man any longer believes more oil is left to be found, no more oil fields will be discovered, but so long as a single oil-finder remains with a mental vision of a new oil field to cherish, along with freedom and incentive to explore, just so long new oil fields may continue to be discovered.

Editor's Note:

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THE PETROLEUM GEOLOGIST'S ROLE: 2000-2025 A.D.

ALEX H. MASSAD, President Exploration & Producing Division, Mobil Oil Corporation

I believe areas currently in the early stages of development of their oil and gas reserves such as the OPEC countries, Alaska, and the People's Republic of China will have the greatest need for petroleum geologists in the early part of the twenty-first century. However, the role the petroleum geologist will play during this period will depend upon the way the energy industry develops.

In making predictions on this subject, I will assume the continuation of current industry trends and discount unforseen political events which may in fact radically change the orderly progress of events. Keeping this in mind I would like first to call your attention to the current state of the geological profession and the manner in which it reflects the current state of the oil and gas industries.

The most recent figures available from the U.S. Department of Labor, for 1978, state there were 17,653 professional geologists in the U.S. The Department of Labor predicts by 1990 this number will increase to about 25,000; an increase of about 42%.

Meanwhile, last year the U.S. active rig rate rose about 40%. It is now at an all time high.

Although the active rig rate is not the sole factor determining employment opportunities for geologists, and although it may not continue to increase at this rate, the fact remains it has increased in *one year* about as fast as the number of geologists is expected to increase over the next *ten years*. This at least partly explains the current shortages of experienced petroleum geologists and indicates this shortage will probably grow more acute if the active rig rate continues to climb. How did this situation develop?

The Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978 eased or lifted price controls from certain categories of natural gas which flow in interstate commerce. This has resulted in a higher price for producers who discover gas at 15,000 feet or below. Also, as predicted, President Carter's decision to decontrol oil prices has spurred drilling activity, although the growth rate might have been even higher if the 30% windfall tax hadn't been levied on new discoveries. Nevertheless the *Oil and Gas Journal* predicted a record of 59,000 or more U.S. oil and gas wells would be completed in 1980. Also, in some areas, like the Anadarko Basin, there has been a surge in deep drilling.

The current increase in price as well as drilling activity is a result of the shortage of oil in the U.S. which, given the current evidence, should increase well into the twenty-first century. In the U.S. 1979 was the best year for addition to our proven reserves since 1970, when the large Prudhoe Bay discovery was made in Alaska. And except for the year Prudhoe Bay was discovered, 1979 was the best year in this regard in twenty-five years. Nevertheless, even in 1979 the U.S. replaced, through exploration and development, only 75 percent of the oil produced during the year. The decline in reserves has slowed considerably from 1976, when new reserves added were only 38 percent of the total oil produced, however, we are still falling behind.

We find ourselves moving as fast as we can, drilling more and more, yet falling behind, and our reserves continue to shrink. The chain of events we are observing stems initially from a shortage of supply. This, in turn has led to an increase in the price of energy, which has given us incentive to drill more. The increase in the drilling rate has resulted in a tightness in

the rig-rental market, with some fees doubling almost overnight.

The increases in drilling activity and costs have resulted in a greater demand by exploration companies for experienced petroleum geologists. Expert geological advice is essential to success, since correct location of oil and gas prospects prevents unnecessary drilling.

Because oil and gas are non-renewable resources, the more oil and gas we locate and produce, the fewer areas available for exploration remain, and thus, the more difficult it becomes to locate undiscovered reserves. Even in proven areas we are drilling deeper and conducting more reservoir studies to produce the last possible economical bbl or MCF.

In the onshore U.S., which is the most extensively explored area of comparable size in the world, this means we will have to work harder to find less. Certainly, technological improvements have facilitated our ability to interpret geological data. Improvements in seismic and computer mapping techniques have made the explorationist's job easier in some ways and changed ways of doing things. Seismic surveys are being used to probe the deeper horizons of oil areas, and improved mapping techniques have made stratigraphic traps more attractive as prospects.

Nevertheless, in the U.S. our unexplored onshore reserves base continues to decline. Yet, because of increasing prices it has become more profitable for U.S. exploration companies to focus more attention on smaller accumulations in older exploration areas. The increase in price has made marginal stripper wells profitable and is helping pay for the added expenses of secondary and tertiary recovery.

If the economics of the current situation remain the same, the more intense geological work that these areas require will continue to be attractive as long as sufficient amounts of hydrocarbons can be produced. The political stability of the U.S. makes it an attractive source of oil and gas; nevertheless as our production continues to decline during the next twenty or more years or so, we will have to look at other areas, as well as other forms of energy such as coal and nuclear.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, oil and gas will still account for 50% of the world's energy supplies. Because of this, as supplies of oil and gas from newer — largely foreign — producing areas begin to decline, the oil and gas companies will have to apply more concentrated geological efforts. We will have to apply the same technological methods of reworking older prospects and concentrating more attention on smaller prospects which we are now doing domestically. Thus, during the first twenty-five years of the twenty-first century, geologists will be in greatest demand outside of the continental U.S. (Lower 48 states).

During this period it is likely the newer geological horizons will be in areas we are just now beginning to look at, such as Alaska, West Africa, and North and South Atlantic American Coastal areas and the People's Republic of China. Also, offshore, we will be drilling in deeper waters and in even more hostile climates.

The importance of astute geological work is pointed up by recent statistics on reserves added per well drilled. Among the 15 companies surveyed, the most successful added five times more reserves per well drilled than the least successful. Since Mobil was one of the top-rated companies in the survey, I can tell you our decisions are based on the most modern and sophisticated interpretation of geophysical and geological data. The successful companies will continue to strive to use the most advanced methods and tools in the search for oil and gas.

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COVER PHOTO

The White Mine, Uvalde County, Texas, world's largest Rock Asphalt Mine, approximately 12 miles west of Uvalde, Texas. This was the secne of the first part of the October 1980 HGS Field Trip led by Feather Wilson. You're looking at an Upper Cretaceous (Taylor) carbonate beach deposit (Anacacho Lime). An unconformable surface provided the trap. Subtle differences in porosity and permeability are visible within the walls of the mine. On hot days, asphalt seeps out of the walls of the mine. Photo courtesy of Chet Baird.

The increasing sophistication of petroleum geological science has had its affect both on success and manpower requirements. For example, 20 years ago few geologists were engaged in thermal maturation studies of source beds or in plate tectonic work. Today no frontier exploration effort of magnitude can ignore the implications of one or both of these disciplines. Compared to 20 years ago additional hundreds of geologists are engaged today in computer geology, seismic stratigraphic studies and sophisticated well logging analysis. As hydrocarbon-finding becomes more difficult and petroleum geology expands, the requirements for ever more complex and detailed geological studies will increase. I see the numbers of geologists increasing well into the 21st century.

This is why I believe geologists will still be at the forefront of the industry's exploration efforts in the year 2025. As our resource base continues to shrink and drilling costs rise sound geological advice will become more and more valuable.

BIOGRAPHY

Alex H. Massad is a Director of Mobil Corporation, and a Director and Executive Vice President of Mobil Oil Corporation. He is also President of the Exploration and Producing Division.

Mr. Massad was born on July 10, 1923, in Drumright, Oklahoma, and received a B.S. degree in Petroleum Engineering from Oklahoma University in 1944. During World War II, Mr. Massad served as an engineering officer in the United States Navy.

He joined Mobil in 1946, as a Rotary Floorman in a drilling crew in the Southwest. Subsequently, he worked in various field activities and held numerous engineering and managerial positions.

In 1964, he joined the Middle East Affairs Department on a special assignment related to the Persian Gulf. Returning in 1965, he was assigned to the Midland, Texas, Exploration and Producing Division, and later became General Manager of the division. Following other assignments in the Southwest, he became Executive Vice President for Exploration and Producing of the North American Division in 1968, moving to a similar position in the International Division two years later.

He was elected Senior Vice President of Mobil Oil and Executive Vice President of the newly-formed Exploration and Producing Division in October, 1975. In August, 1976, he was named a Director of Mobil Oil Corporation. He was elected to the Board of Mobil Corporation effective May 5, 1977.

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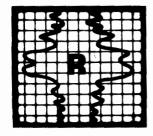
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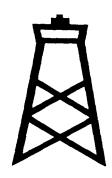
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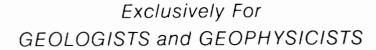
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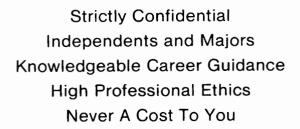
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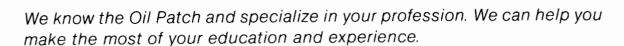
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