



Pioneer Oil Museum of New York, Inc.

Volume 5, Issue 1
Spring 2006

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

Museum Display Draws National Attention

Over the past two years the Pioneer Oil Museum has been privileged to have Bruce Wells, executive director of the American Oil & Gas Historical Society (AOGHS), visit the museum twice. The AOGHS, dedicated to preserving the history of the oil and natural gas exploration and production industry, is based in Washington, DC. This organization's website is located at www.aoghs.org and is filled with many interesting articles about oil and gas museums around the country. Occasionally it is possible to find articles about the Pioneer Oil Museum or the Penn-Brad Oil Museum located outside Bradford.

While on his most recent trip, Wells

became interested in a window-front display at the Pioneer Oil Museum. His interest piqued, he wrote an article about the museum which was published in the December 2005 edition of "*The Petroleum Age*," which can be found at the AOGHS website.

This museum display includes drawings and articles written by local fifth grade students at Bolivar-Richburg Central School. While in class the students watch two videos of wells being shot, one from the 1930's and a more recent video from 2001 showing newer innovations in the industry. Next is a discussion of nitroglycerin, boom towns, and other aspects of the early days of the local oil industry. After that the students draw and color pictures or write short articles.

This classroom activity is designed to commemorate the local boom, which struck on April 27, 1881. Sometime in the spring the students' work is hung in the front windows of the museum where it remains during Pioneer Oil Days in June and throughout the summer. During the last week of school these students take a field trip to the museum where they have guided tours led by the museum's docents.

A copy of the AOGHS article is enclosed with this newsletter.



Fifth grade research and artwork found in the museum's front windows; the work commemorates the local oil boom which struck April 27, 1881

Preserving the
Oil Heritage of
Southwestern
New York and
Northwestern
Pennsylvania

Museum Receives State Grant

Last year at this time the museum lamented the fact that it still had not received final receipt of grant monies that had been awarded by the state the previous year. Approved funds were not received due to state regulations and red-tape. Fortunately, the museum has received these funds, and all state-required paperwork is completed!

The late State Senator Pat McGee was instrumental in awarding the preliminary grant, as well as helping change the grant designation, so that the museum could still receive the grant funds. This money was re-designated for operating expenses and equipment purchases. With these finances the museum purchased several large fire-proof cabinets and safes to store irreplaceable documents and photographs.

Also improved was new security with the installation of new locks as well as new doors on the back of the building. In order to comply with fire regulations, smoke detectors and emergency exit signs and lights were purchased. The exterior of this irreplaceable building (built in 1851) was painted. A number of other jobs were completed and items purchased.

Hours of Operation

Memorial Day – Labor Day
Monday – Friday 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Saturdays and Sundays by appointment only.
Call Dick Fitch (585-928-2587), Ray Payne (585-928-1344) or Barb Webb (585-928-2377) to schedule a tour. We love to entertain groups of people as long as we have some advance notice!

Pioneer Oil Days: June 21-25, 2006

Wine & Cheese Tasting a Hit

Once again this year during Pioneer Oil Days the Pioneer Oil Museum will work with the Bolivar Lioness Club to sponsor a wine-and-cheese tasting gala on Friday, June 23. Last year the initial wine-and-cheese event attracted approximately 140 people. A wonderful time was had that night (in spite of the oppressive heat and humidity). This year several new varieties of wines from New York State vineyards will be highlighted. Revised ticket pricing will also be in effect. The Bolivar Free Library will again contribute as a limited sponsor for the night.

Several wineries, with a variety of their products available for sampling, will be represented at this event. Many kinds of cheeses will be found to enjoy with your favorite wines. Other treats will be provided by members of the Lioness Club and Board of Directors of the museum.



The New York State Oil Producers' Association second annual "Wall of Fame" induction ceremony will be held at 6:00 just prior to the wine-and-cheese tasting event. The public is invited to attend the induction ceremonies for the "Wall of Fame," stay to tour the museum, and enjoy the wine-and-cheese tasting gala. (More information on the Wall of Fame can be found on page 6.)

Tickets, which will become available June 1, can be purchased by returning the form found on the last page of this newsletter. The public is invited to attend this night of good food and drink, while at the same time exploring the rich history of the local petroleum industry.



Mystery of the Dynamite Wagon Solved

For the past few years the Pioneer Oil Museum has been trying to solve the mystery of the so-called "dynamite-making wagon." This contraption was donated to the museum many years ago by former resident and dynamite-maker, Sherm Lyons. Since that time, information about its function and design was almost impossible to come by. Members of the local oil and gas industry were asked, but were unable to provide any help. Inquiries were sent to experts in Delaware and Colorado, but they also had no information about such a device.



Last summer life-long Bolivar resident, Donald "Ducky" Stives, happened to stop by the museum for a visit, at which time he mentioned that he used a similar apparatus while working for the Eldred Powder Company in the 1960's. He was very familiar with this wagon, although the museum's wagon is thought to be much older than those with which Mr. Stives worked.



This picture of the dynamite wagon shows the wagon with a cover that was not original to the wagon. It was added for protection when it sat outside the museum for many years.

He explained many of the inner-workings of the machine. One part was a shuttle which held the tubes of dynamite shells. These shuttles would be replaced quite often as the tubes quickly became filled with black powder. Various-sized shells could be filled

on this machine. The shells were packed with powder by wooden cylinders of the same size diameter as the shells. At that point they were transported to the crimper to pack the powder down. The bottoms of the shells were pre-crimped and stamped. Later they were shipped out to other areas of the plant to dip into wax. Stives explained how the hopper held the powder which was gravity-fed until the end of day, at which time it was shoveled from the hopper by workers.



On the top of the wagon were latches that snapped into place to prevent excess powder from traveling from the hopper to

the shells once full.

At the end of the day the entire area had to be carefully brushed down to clean excess powder. A whisk broom was used on all the parts of the dynamite wagon and floor, and then water was used to finish the job. A thorough cleaning was necessary because black powder from one day couldn't be mixed with powder from other days as this could form a volatile combination.



The shells were moved from one wooden building to another in very small cars like those found in amusement parks today. The powder was wheeled in small carts. Stives also noted that working with nitroglycerine gave a terrible headache, so bad that the only remedy was to eat lots of ice cream.

The Museum Wants You!

As always, the museum is looking for "a few good men" (or women) to help stay open for our visitors. Each volunteer works just one three-hour block of time per week. We are only open weekdays (unless someone would like to open up on the weekend) from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. That means volunteers work the "early shift" from 10:00-1:00 or the "graveyard shift" from 1:00-4:00.

No advanced degree in petroleum engineering is required! You just need to have a key to open the front door, so that visitors can be amazed by what life was like years ago in a "Pioneer Oil Town." If you have any knowledge of or experience in the local fields, so much the better. If you relate to people and just want to talk to them as they wander the museum, that too can be arranged.

Please call Ray Payne at 585-928-1344 or Dick Fitch at 585-928-2587 if you are interested.

Memorials 2005

In memory of William Hogan

by Veryl Manning

by Otis Eastern

by Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Brinnier

In memory of Herbert Rhoades

by Diane Glintz

In memory of Bruno Codispoti family

by James Codispoti

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph W. Bucher

by Joseph J. Bucher

In memory of Gayle Root

by Pat Lounsberry, Kelly & Lois Lounsberry,

Kris & Rick Gould, Will Burdick

In memory of Vernon Field

by Roxanne Robinson &

Joseph Yehl

In memory of George Moyer

by Barb & Lou Schiralli

In memory of Robert Murphy Jr.

by Coletta Yehl

by John & Virginia Swain

In memory of Robert Jordan

by Marguerite Jordan

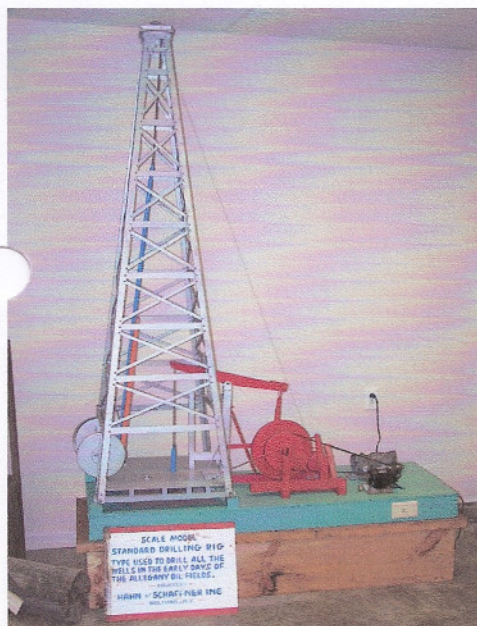
In memory of Dale Davison

by Don & Cindy Amidon

In memory of Frank X. Thorwart

by Anne Thorwart

A donation to the museum is a wonderful way to preserve the memory of a loved one, especially one with ties to the community or the local oil fields.



This scale model of an oil rig was donated to the museum by Hahn & Schaffner. After several months of arduous work by Ray Payne and Dick Fitch, the model is now in working condition. The colors of orange and blue on the bailer and stem were the actual company colors used by National Supply (blue), Oil Well Supply, and Spang (both orange). These oil well supply companies at one time all had offices and shops in Bolivar.

Back in Time with Dick Fitch

My father had a small company called Fitch and Smith with a partner named T.B. Smith. This was a small company with two strings of tools, so they could drill two wells at a time, but only one was running. I was about 16-17 years old, and I had my working papers, so I asked dad if I could work with him on the lease up off Beers Hollow. He let me, but warned that I would get the dirtiest, toughest jobs to be found on a lease. Boy, was he right!

The first thing we did was tear down the derrick and move it to a new location and build it up again and drill a new well. My dad hired a rig builder named Dusty Rhoades. A couple of guys would build a section or two of the rig, and they would just finger-tighten all the bolts. Then I was supposed to climb up below them and tighten everything with alligator wrenches.

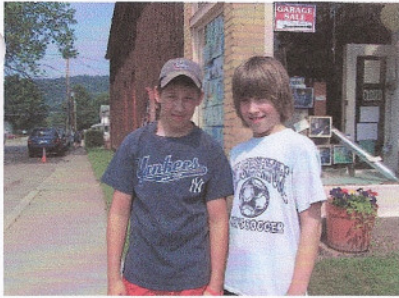
Before I started climbing way up on the derrick, Dusty and I sat down on the walking beam. He asked, "You've never worked on something high like this before, have you?"

After I told him that I hadn't, he told me, "Here's what you do. You don't look up, and you don't look down. Keep lookin' straight out or look at whatever you're doin'. If you look up at those fluffy, white clouds, you'll think you're falling or you'll start leaning and you will fall off."

It didn't take long for the rig-builders to finish a rig, so I had to climb up there and finish tightening all those bolts on the entire thing, which was about 75-80 feet tall. I really had to hustle to get my job finished.

Another time I remember I was up on the lease about daylight, and the valley was full of fog, which climbed halfway up the derrick. I climbed up the derrick all the way to the top to take a look. I got up to the top and just sat there, gazing out. It was a gorgeous view, just like the whole valley was full of cotton. It was just beautiful - the sun was coming out bright. So it wasn't all hard work on the lease, but most of it was hard.

2005 in Pictures



Former Bolivar-Richburg Central School fifth-grade students whose work was displayed in front windows of museum, as shown in background



Inductions for the 2005 NYSOPA Wall of Fame; top - NYSOPA President Paul Plants honors family of William "Jack" Plants; below - honoring family of Tom Hungerford

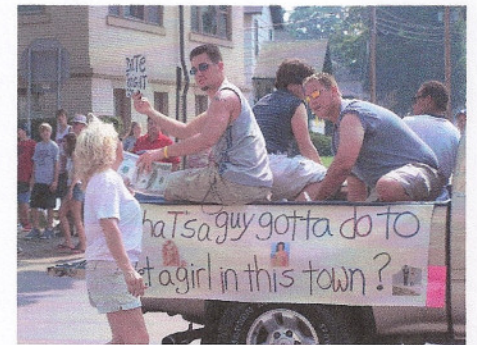


Josh Sexton's contraption with 20-some working belts



Below- Kellner Well Service; above - antique boiler from Dempsey Pipe in Bolivar; below right- Bolivar Cub Scout pack

2005 Pioneer Oil Days parade highlights - a great day with fantastic weather for a super parade



Below - parade entry from Bob's Auto Body in Bolivar; center- painting in museum window by Angel Hardy



WINE-AND-CHEESE TASTING TICKETS

Friday, June 23, 2006
6:30-8:00

\$10 - Single Ticket

\$25 - Two tickets and designation as Bronze Patron

\$50 - Four tickets; Silver Patron

\$100 - **Eight tickets**; Gold Patron

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

Changes from last year underlined and in bold

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

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

Tickets available June 1

Checks can be made payable to:

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

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

Wall of Fame to Honor Second Class of Inductees

Again this year the New York State Oil Producers' Association (NYSOPA) will induct several new members into its newly-formed "Wall of Fame." This Wall of Fame is located in the new addition to the Pioneer Oil Museum. (As of the publication of this newsletter, the new class of inductees had not yet been selected.)

Each man is honored for his contributions to the local oil and natural gas industry with a plaque in his honor. This plaque includes a photo, biographical data, and contributions to the local business.



Induction ceremonies will

take place on Friday, June 23, at 6:00 immediately before the wine-and-cheese tasting that is noted elsewhere in this newsletter.

Those in attendance for the Wall of Fame induction ceremony are invited to stay and participate in the Wine-and-Cheese Tasting as well as tour the



NYSOPA President Paul Plants honors family of Gordie Hahn

museum. Spend the evening touring the museum to learn about the history of the local oil fields as well as to enjoy some delicious foods and wonderful wines from the vineyards of New York State.

Last year's initial class of inductees featured Gordon Hahn, Tom Hungerford, and William "Jack" Plants.

Fund Drive 2006

Once again we ask for your help. Please donate to our annual fund-drive and make us part of your yearly donations. Many people and groups ask for contributions, and we realize that in these difficult economic times, every dollar counts. Please make the Pioneer Oil Museum one of your priorities when making donations. Keeping your hard-earned money in the museum guarantees that it will be spent locally on projects that enhance our community and industry treasure.

We have made many improvements to the museum the past few years and have received many compliments and accolades. At this time we are attempting to expand our horizons by publicizing the museum both locally and further away from this immediate area. In doing so we are spreading the history of our local heritage beyond the museum's doors, and we hope that our annual newsletter has shown proof of our having done so. These attempts to take the museum to the next level require money.

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

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

Checks can be made payable to:

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

All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Amount of Donation: _____