

Early Texas Oilfield Photographers*

Jeff Spencer¹

Search and Discovery Article #70161 (2014)**

Posted July 14, 2014

*Adapted from oral presentation at AAPG Annual Convention and Exhibition, Houston, Texas, April 6-9, 2014

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Abstract

Commercial photographers captured many great views of early Texas oil booms. Common scenes included oil gushers, oilfield fires, fields of wooden derricks, and boomtowns. These photographs were produced and sold, often as real photo postcards (RPPCs). Port Arthur, Texas, photographer Frank Trost (1868-1944) had the good fortune to photograph early scenes of the Spindletop oilfield (discovered in 1901), including perhaps the most famous photograph of the Lucas Gusher. Trost sold over 45,000 prints of this photograph in just a few months. His other Spindletop views include dozens of derricks so close together they appear to be touching, the field's first oilfield fire, and several views of early gushers. Postcards were also made from Trost photographs. Benjamin Harrison Loden (1871?-1926) was the founder and owner of Loden's Studio in the North Texas town of Electra. His work appears to be limited to scenes from the town and the Electra oil field (discovered in 1911). His postcards include oilfield fires, derricks, gushers, and a missionary group ready to venture into the oilfield. Frank J. Schlueter (1874-1972) and his wife, Lois, opened a photography studio in Houston in 1907 or 1908. Schlueter captured scenes in many Texas Gulf Coast oil fields, including Goose Creek, Humble, Orange, Sugarland, Pierce Junction, Hull, West Columbia, Damon Mound, Barbers Hill, Markham, Thompson, Rabb's Ridge, Manvel, Blue Ridge, South Houston, and Vinton (Louisiana). Though perhaps best known for his oilfield photography, Schlueter also documented the growth of Houston and the surrounding area's industries and agriculture until his retirement in 1964 at the age of 90. Much of Schlueter's work is preserved at the Houston Public Library as the Schlueter Photographic Collection. Two additional Texas oilfield photographers were F. (Frank) G. Allen (1881-1921) and L. (Lester) L. Allen (1875-1949). Whether these two contemporaries were related is still being researched. Frank, formerly a New York newspaper photographer, photographed scenes in Goose Creek, West Columbia, and Pierce Junction oil fields, including the destruction at Goose Creek caused by a May 24, 1919 "cyclone". L.L. Allen captured images in the 1920s of Raccoon Bend, Orange, and Spindletop (second boom) oil fields. On the back of some of L.L. Allen's postcards, the cities of Houston, Galveston, or Texas City are stamped. He maintained a studio in Houston, at least in 1912. Census records list him living in the Texas cities of Houston (1910), West Columbia (1920), and Orange (1930). Jack Nolan (1889-1972) was a pioneer Texas photographer and newspaperman who documented the East Texas oil boom of the early 1930s. Nolan's real photo postcards are highly collectible and capture the hustle and bustle of the boom towns and oilfield camps, as well as spectacular images of oil gushers and oilfield fires. He also documented the enforcement of martial law in the oilfields by the Texas National Guard. Nolan photographed some of the early gushers and boomtowns of West Texas before venturing to East Texas. Jack's postcards are also known for their highly descriptive captions.

Early Texas Oilfield Photographers (1901-1932)

Jeff Spencer


Petroleum History Institute (www.petroleumhistory.org)



Camera: "Korona Panoramic View" Gundlach-Manhattan Optical Company, Rochester, NY
Museum of the Gulf Coast, Port Arthur, Texas (introduced ~1914)



The 3A Folding Pocket Kodak, Eastman Kodak's first postcard format camera, was introduced in 1903 and sold until 1915. Kodak produced seven models of the 3A Folding Pocket Kodak (www.vintagephoto.tv)
3 1/4" x 5 1/2" photographs – "RPPCs"




\$20.00

*The Top Notch in
Pocket Photography*

**The 3A Folding
POCKET
KODAK**

Every detail has been worked out with the utmost care—in design, material and workmanship, in lens and in shutter, a perfect camera of wide capabilities. Yet it retains the Kodak simplicity—and "Kodak," you know, means photography with the bother left out.

The pictures are
3 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches.
Price, \$20.00.



**EASTMAN
KODAK CO.**
Rochester, N. Y.,
The Kodak City.

Catalog free at the
dealers or by mail.

"The Texas Six"

**Francis (Frank) John Trost (1868-1944) "The Gusher
Photographer"**

**Frank J. Schlueter (1874-1972) "Schlueter Advertising &
Souvenir Photographs" - 73 year career**

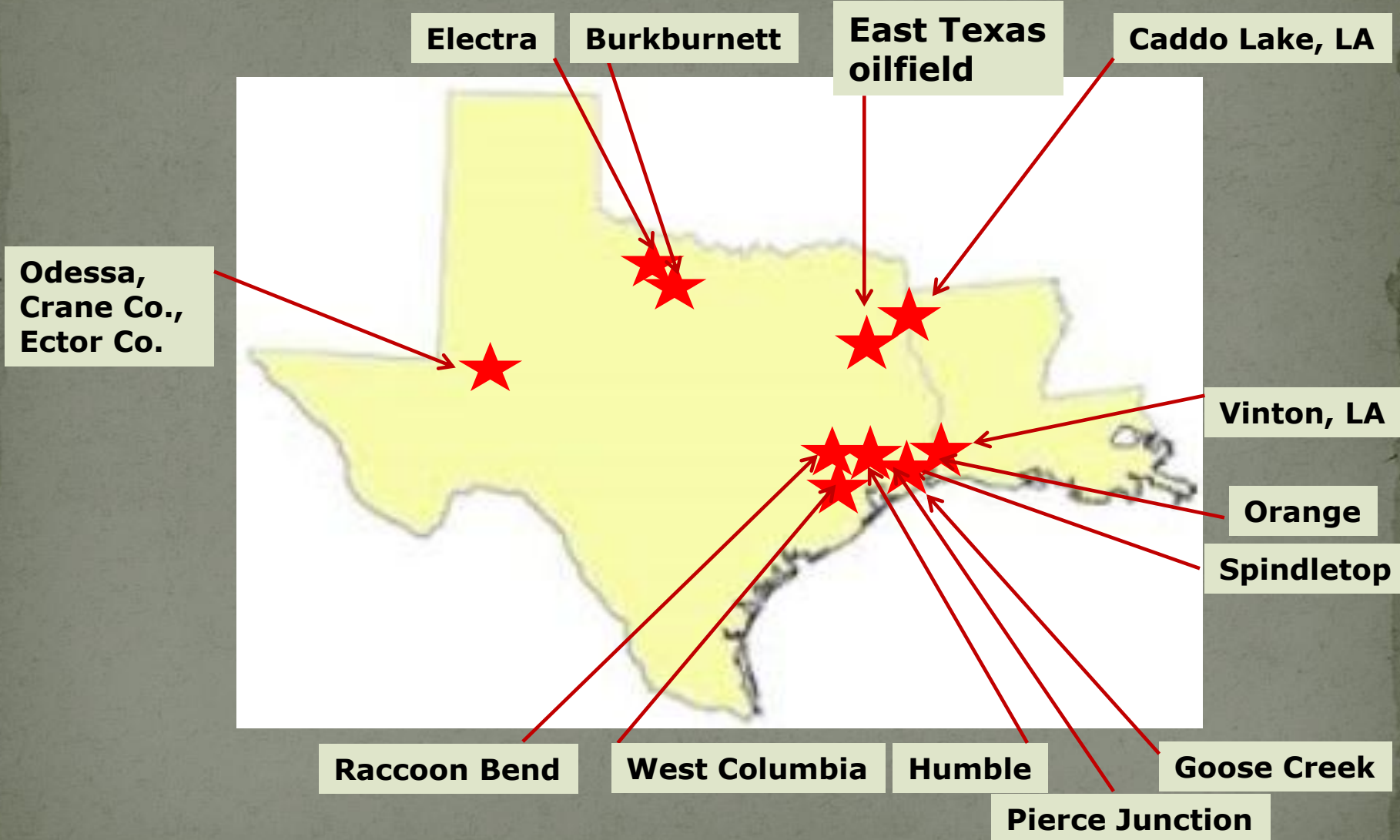
**F. (Frank)G. Allen (1881-1921) "F.G. Allen, The Oil Field
Photographer"**

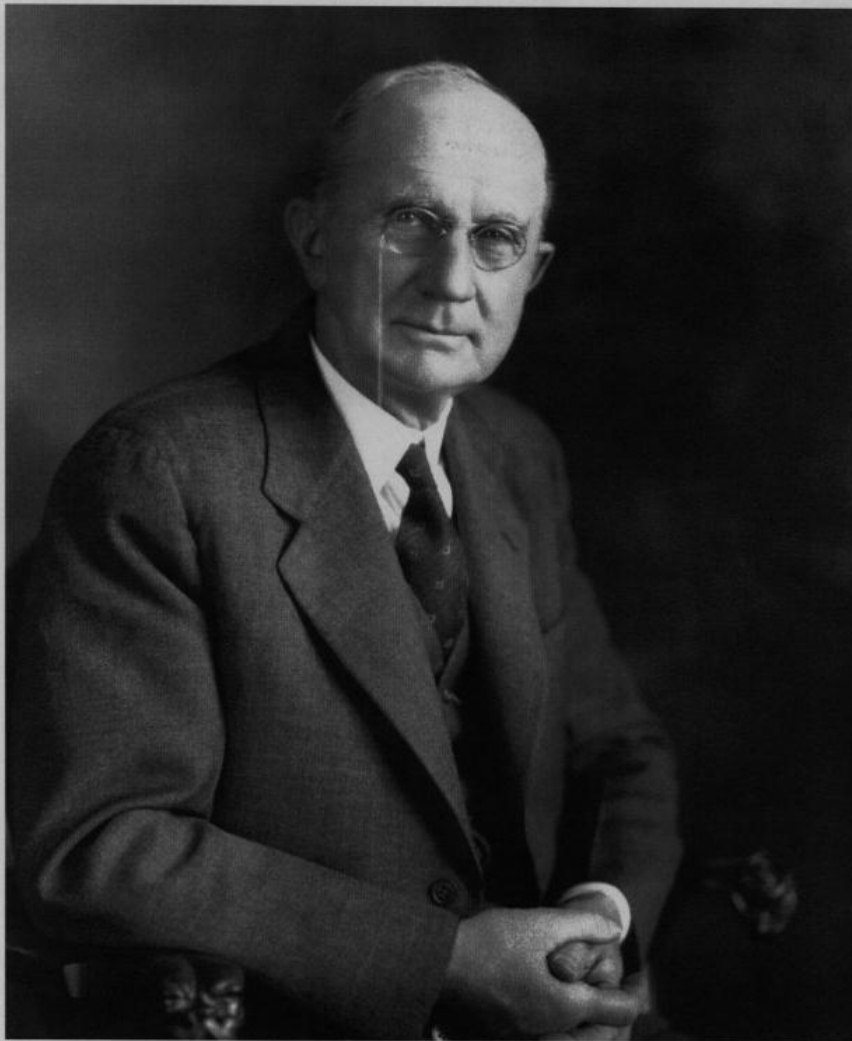
L. (Lester)L. Allen (1875-1949)

Benjamin Harrison Loden (1871?-1926) – Electra, Texas

**Jack Nolan (1889-1972) "Jack Nolan, Oil Field Photographer"
& "Permian Basin's leading photographer"
(Runnels, 1982)**

Texas and Louisiana oil fields photographed by "The Texas Six" in this presentation





PA fire chief 1899-1919

Frank Trost

Photographer

University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Port Arthur Public Library, Port Arthur, Texas.

Francis (Frank) John Trost (1868 - 1944)

1868 – Born in Reading, PA

Settled in Kansas City, MO and joins a camera club to pursue his hobby

1898 – Moves to Port Arthur, TX after taking an excursion train to Port Arthur which was part of effort by the Kansas City Southern Railroad to promote the area. Opens a photographic studio with his brother Phillip.

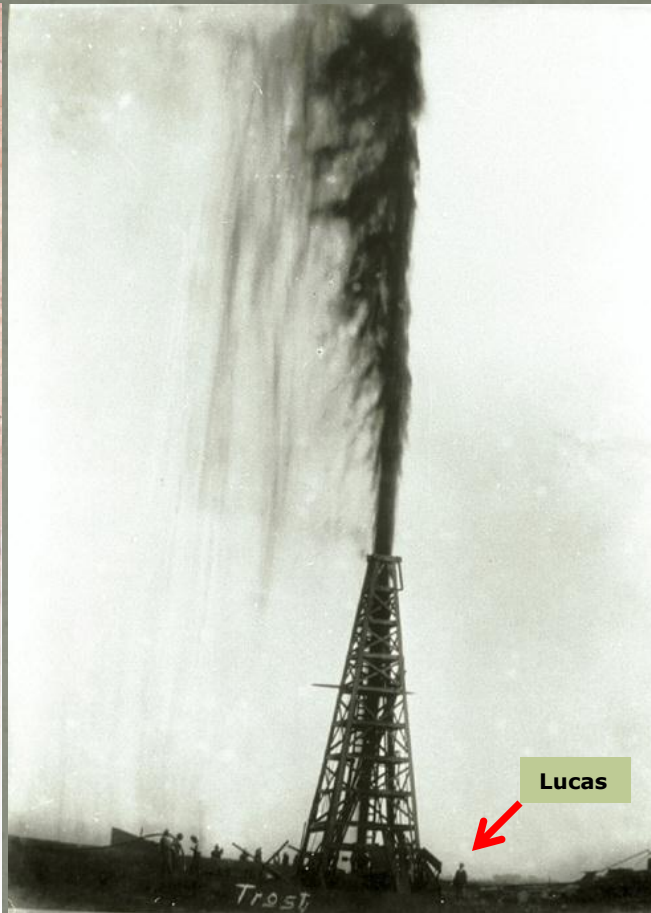


Trost w/camera.
Port Arthur News
(1941)

Lucas Gusher – Spindletop



Postcard of the Trost photograph. "Lucas Gusher – Gushing 270 feet, 70,000 BBL. DAILY". (J. Spencer collection)



Frank Trost - Famous photograph of the Spindletop gusher (Spindletop, Texas - January 10, 1901). This photograph appeared in newspapers all over the United States and even in some foreign papers. Trost sold: 45,000 copies of this photograph at fifty cents apiece - \$22,500 (Spellman, 2001) **or** 20,628 copies; over \$15,000. (*Camera Magazine*, Nov. 1949).

"I was making prints at the rate of 250 a day – as fast as I could get the supplies from all over the country. And the pictures were selling as fast as my brother and I could make them" Frank Trost – *Port Arthur News* (1941)

Lucas Gusher (1-10-1901)

"All hells done busted loose out there at that oil well we been-borin' for Captain Lucas" (horse rider yelled to Trost).

"I secured a horse and buggy at the livery stable" and w/60 lbs. of camera equipment, headed for the well (~15 miles). Trost

"It took a change of horses but I got there pretty quickly. It was raining, but I set up my camera and was back in Port Arthur by 6 pm. By 10 pm I was turning out prints as fast as I could make them". Trost

Trost made duplicate plates and copyrighted the image. He sent copies to the *Kansas City Star*, *St. Louis Republican*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *New York Times*. The *Tribune* at first said they were not interested and if Trost wanted his photograph back, he would have to pay for the return postage. Within hours they changed their mind and sent him a telegram asking for the right to use the photograph and he said, "Yes, for \$10" (*Camera Magazine*, 1949; *Port Arthur News*, 1-7-2001)

A few years later....

Oilfield fire @Spindletop. Explosion of a oil tank knocked Trost backwards and a runaway horse team knocked over his camera and his exposed plate. He later said that this might have been his greatest photograph, had it survived.

1907 – Hired by the Texas Company (TEXACO) to follow & photograph the progress of building a pipeline from Tulsa, Indian Territory (OK) to Port Arthur, TX (several week contract).

Served as one of the Port Arthur's first weathermen, first fire chief (1899-1908 & 1909-1919), city alderman, and city commissioner.

Photographed the flooding from a 1915 hurricane.

Trost postcards – “Gusher Burning” & “Oil Gusher”

GREETINGS FROM BEAUMONT, TEX.



TOM JONES PUB. CO.,
5, SPRING STATIONERS, BEAUMONT, TEX.

BEAUMONT TEXAS.

MAY 25-05.

DEAR WALTER,
THIS IS ONE
OF THE LARGEST
OIL FIELDS
IN THE WORLD.
LOTS OF LOVE
TO ALL OF YOU.

PAPA.

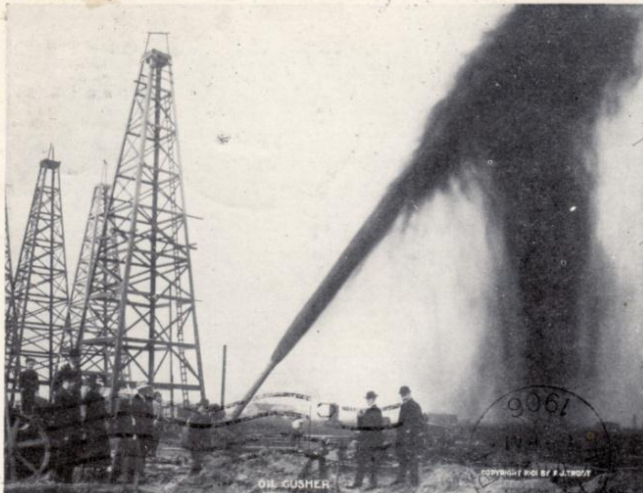
Texas Flora Oil Co. - First well to burn at Spindletop – 9/12/1902. The fire destroyed 20 wells, several oil storage tanks, and an oil pumping station. Postmarked 5/25/1905 Beaumont, TX

Undivided back postcards. From 12/24/1901 to 3/1/1907, **by law**, only the mailing address was allowed on the reverse of the postcards.

Side Gusher

4/23/1906 “Had an awful time today. Drove 7 miles to the oil fields & saw the sights although nothing like the picture. Produce 25000 bbls (barrels) a day, more than all other Texas fields combined”. Mentions Jennings, LA. Postcard sent to Reading, PA.

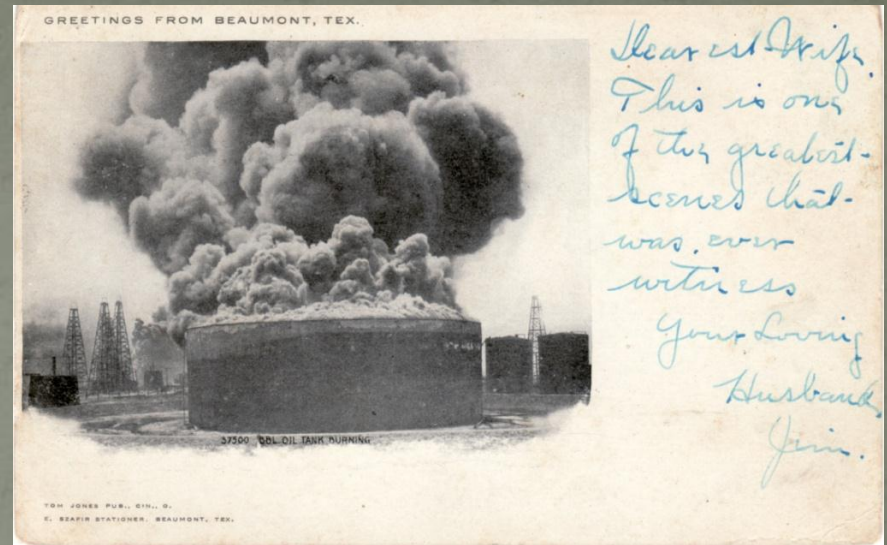
BEAUMONT, TEX.



TOM JONES PUB. CO.,
“SPRING” STATIONERS, BEAUMONT, TEX.

4/23/06
Had an awful
time today.
Drove 7 miles
to the oil fields
& saw the sights
although nothing
like the picture.
Produce 25000 bbls
a day, more than
all other Texas
fields combined.
Reached here tonight.
Dave

More Trost



Greetings from Beaumont, Tex. 37,500 BBL Oil Tank Burning. "This is one of the greatest scenes that was ever witness [sp]" 9/11/1904 (J. Spencer collection).



Keith Ward district at Spindletop. 1902

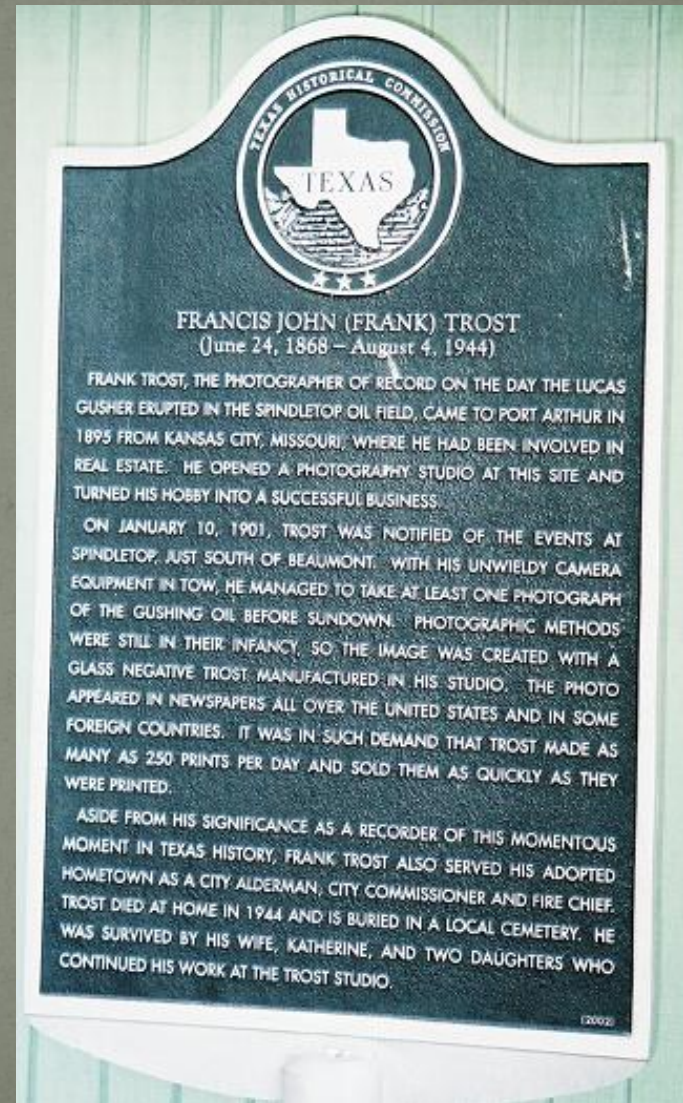
<http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/photos/article/Views-of-Spindletop-726742.php>

Trost Studio (2011) & Historic Marker 747 Proctor Street, Port Arthur, Texas



Family business closed in mid-70s

Photographs by Jeff Spencer 5/2011



Dedicated: 2002

Frank J. Schlueter (1874-1972)



Oilfields photographed:

Goose Creek
Humble
Hull
Sugar Land
Damon Mound
West Columbia
Barbers Hill
Markham
Rabbs Ridge/Thompson
Orange
Blue Ridge
South Houston
Pierce Junction
Manvel
Vinton/Ged (LA)

Born in Westphalia, Germany. Immigrated to United States at age of 11. Started as tent photographer with his father and brother-in-law in Flatonia, TX in 1891 (age 17). Moved to Quanah, TX in 1892 and opened a studio. Back to central Texas ca 1893-94: Heiman & Schlueter Studio, Granger, TX. In 1908, with his wife, Lois, opened a studio in Houston. He used many types of cameras during his 73 year career, including a Cirkut camera for panoramic photos. Schlueter retired in 1964 at the age of 90. Died on December 7, 1972 at the age of 98. (Frank J. Schlueter, Bank of the Southwest Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston, TX digital.houstonlibrary.org).

Gusher Makes \$33 a Minute

In Famous Goose Creek, Texas, Oil Field

THE IMPERIAL PETROLEUM COMPANY is drilling two wells at Goose Creek, which is not only the greatest oil field in the Southwest, but bids fair to become the largest producing field in the United States. A few days ago a gusher was brought in with initial estimated production of 35,000 barrels daily—said to have been the largest gusher in the United States. Oil is selling in this field at \$1.35 a barrel and the big well would make about \$33 a minute at this rate. Many wells at Goose Creek have come in making 5,000 to 10,000 barrels. One well is reliably reported to have made \$150,000 worth of oil a month the first three months after completion.

Pittsburgh Gazette Times August 19, 1917

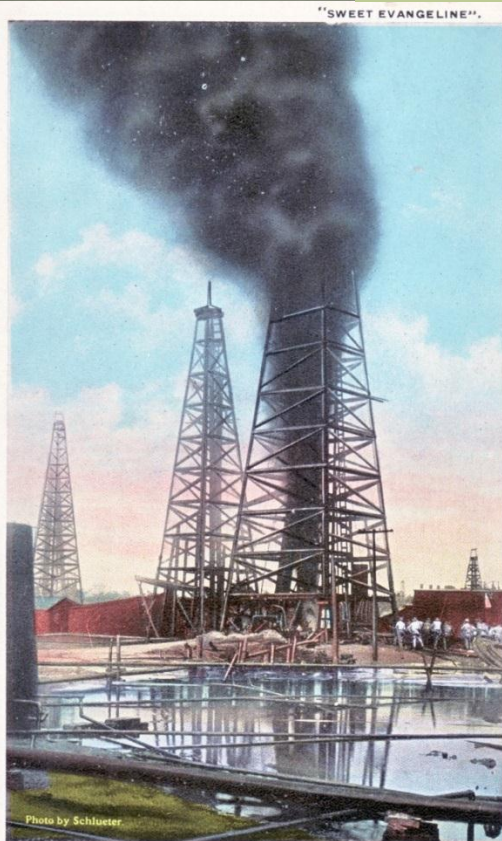
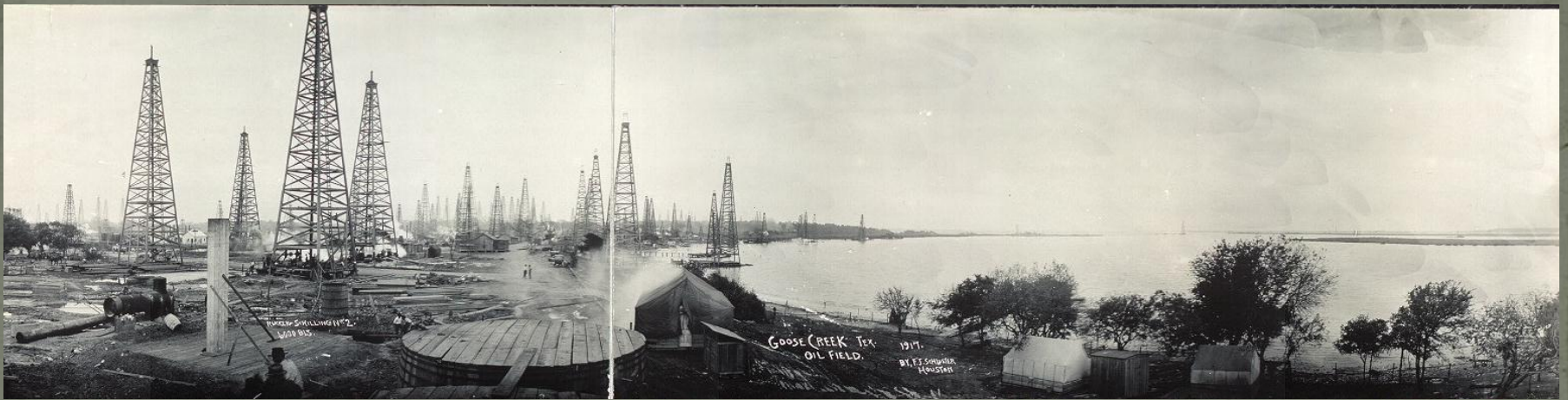


Photo by Schlueter

GOOSE CREEK, NEAR HOUSTON, TEXAS. 35,000 BBLs. PER DAY.

Frank J. Schlueter took the original photograph of Goose Creek's "Sweet Evangeline" 35,000 barrel of oil per day gusher. Well-known for his oilfield photographs, he also chronicled other industries and events in the Houston and Texas City areas. This well is probably the Simms-Sinclair No. 11 Sweet, completed on August 4, 1917. (J. Spencer collection)

Panoramic views – Goose Creek F.J. Schlueter



Photographs by F.J. Schlueter (c 1917). Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/loc/pictures>)

Goose Creek oilfield, Harris County – 1st offshore drilling in Texas – 1918

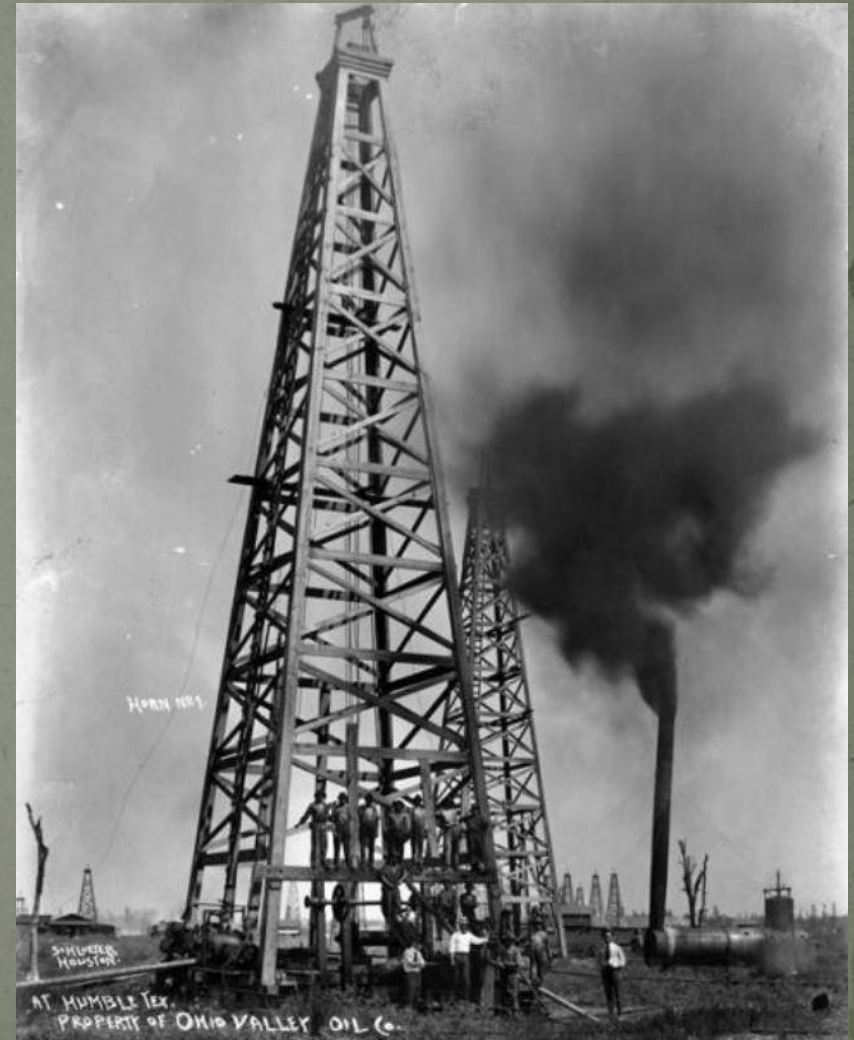
Schlueter

Humble Oil Field, Harris County

Discovered 1904 (gas); 1905 (oil)



Frank J. Schlueter. Bank of the Southwest Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston, TX (digital.houstonlibrary.org)

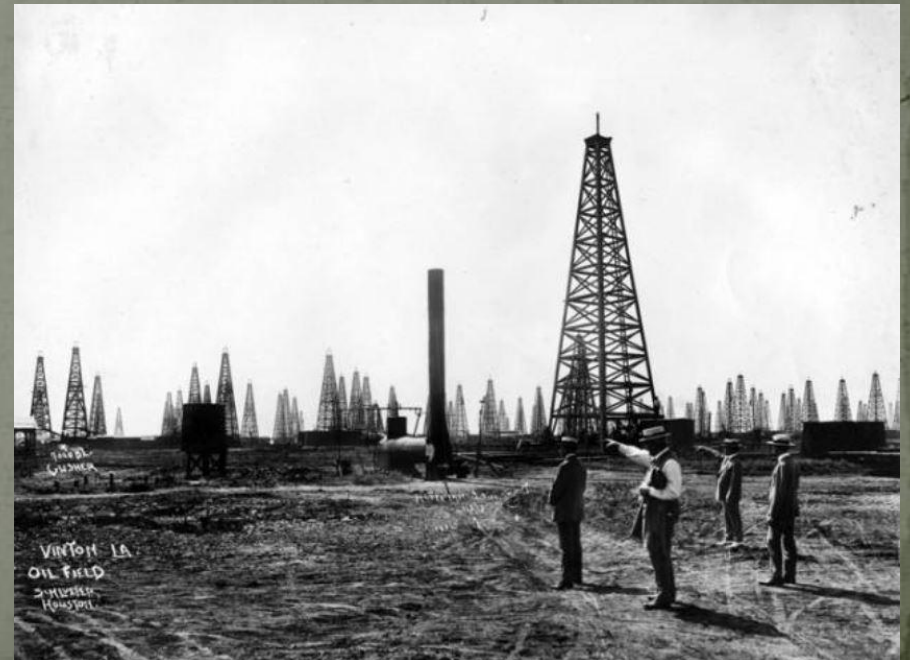


**Schlueter in Louisiana
Vinton Oil Field, Calcasieu Parish
First drilled: 1901; Field discovered: 1910**



63 derricks

Frank J. Schlueter. Bank of the Southwest Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston, TX
(digital.houstonlibrary.org)



F. (Frank)G. Allen (1881-1921)

Oilfield photos ~1917-1921

Former New York newspaper
photographer

Photographed Texas Gulf Coast
oilfields:

Goose Creek, West Columbia,
Pierce Junction, Damon Mound,
Hull, Blue Ridge

Photographed North Louisiana oilfields:

Caddo Lake, Homer

Lived at and advertised studio as:
514 Prince Theater Building,
Houston



Prince Theater Building (1908-?)
corner of Fannin and Preston

F. G. Allen
"The Oil Field Photographer"



Goose Creek 8/4/1917
(same gusher as Schluter)



"Drilling in Caddo Lake" postcard
"Photo by F.G. Allen The Oil Field Photographer
Houston Tex. & Shreveport LA."
(J. Spencer collection)

F.G. Allen panoramic - May, 1919 Storm –Goose Creek

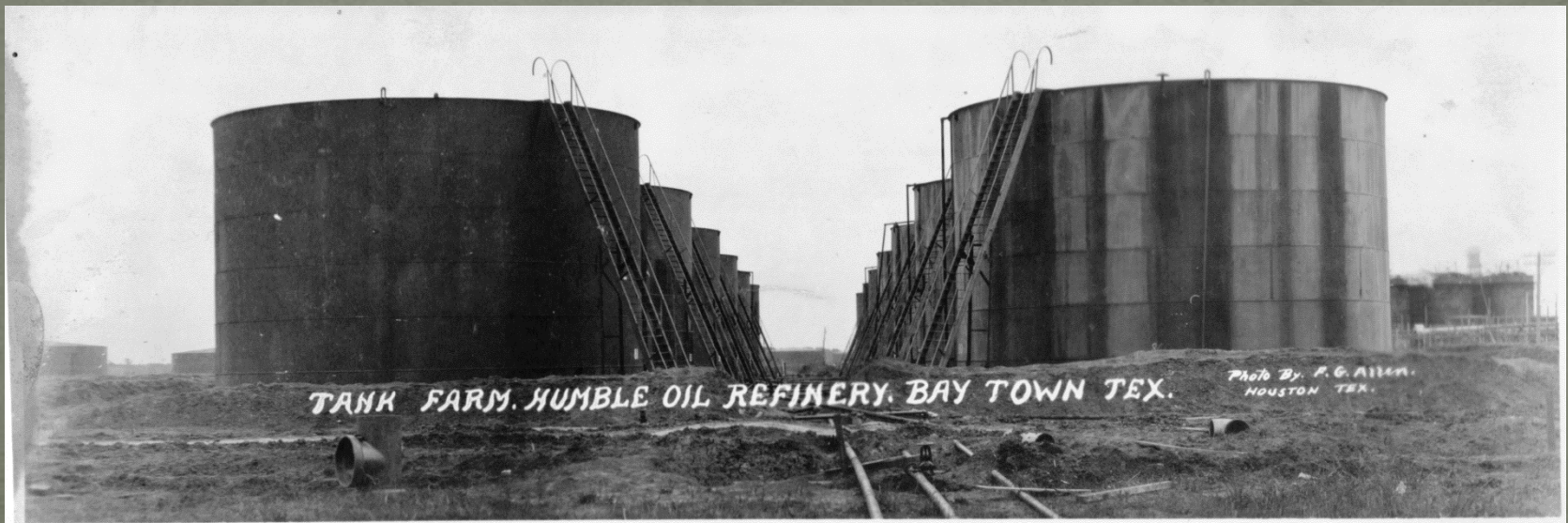
"When a cyclone storm hit Baytown, Texas, on May 24, 1919, the Goose Creek Oil Field suffered tremendous property damage. According to some accounts, the relatively mild 39-mile-per-hour winds destroyed more than 1,450 oil derricks. Although many people were injured, only one was killed. Goose Creek residents did not allow the storm to prevent them from voting in the local election; the polls remained open that day".

"After the Cyclone Hit" F.G. Allen

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/panoramic_photo/pncyc.html#bay



Panoramic postcards - F.G. Allen Goose Creek & Baytown



Panoramic postcards - F.G. Allen West Columbia & Pierce Junction



West Columbia oil field, Brazoria Co. Discovered 1917 (Texas Energy Museum, Beaumont, TX)



Gulf Oil camp - Pierce Junction oil field, Harris Co. Discovered 1921. (Jeff Spencer collection)

L.(Lester) L. Allen

(1875-1949)

Oilfield photos ~1925-1930?

Photographed Texas Gulf Coast oilfields:

Raccoon Bend, Orange, West Columbia,
Spindletop's second boom (mid-20s).

Gulf, Texas sulphur wells

Louisiana: Hackberry

Other:

Camp Logan (near Houston) 1917-19.
Clear Lake, LaPorte, Seabrook,
Friendswood, Texas City, Galveston,
Kemah.

Spindletop "Second Boom"(1925-1930) L.L. Allen

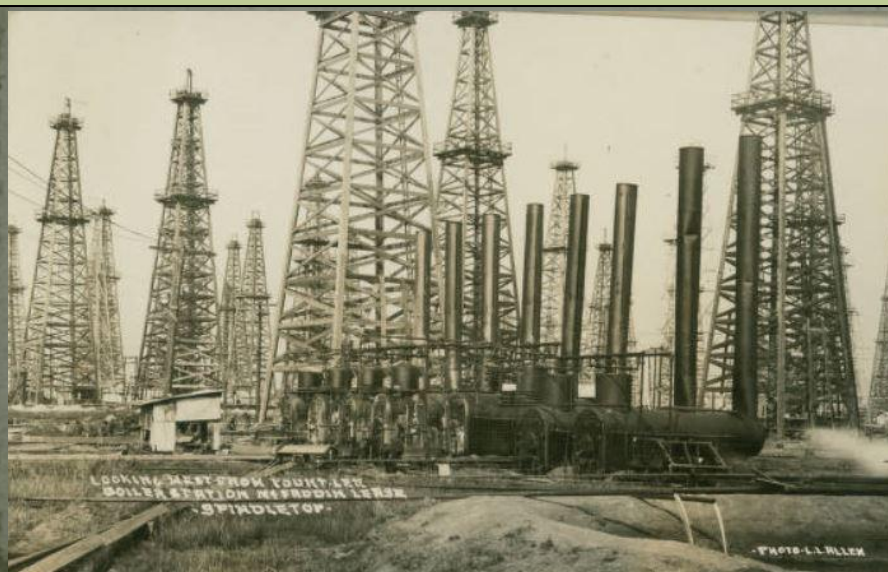


(above) Reverse of the postcard: "Spindletop oil field in 1927. Geo. McCray – driller with his crew of roughnecks." (Texas Energy Museum, Beaumont, TX)



The Yount-Lee Oil Company drilled many wells at Spindletop in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The wreck of the No. 29 McFaddin on May 5, 1927, shows men inspecting the remains of the derrick and the twisted pipe. (Texas Energy Museum, Beaumont, TX)

1927 field production
~21 MMBO – peak year in field's history



"Looking west from Yount-Lee boiler station McFaddin lease" (digitalcollections.smu.edu)
Note name on board

Spindletop 1926 Storm L.L. Allen



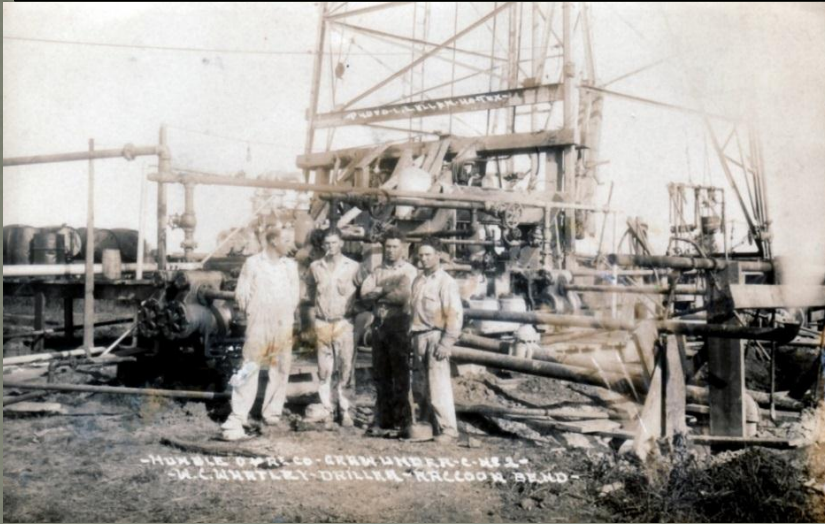
**"Looking across the Rio Bravo lease
after the storm. Sept. 10th 1926"**
(digitalcollections.smu.edu)
Note name on board



**"The after-effects of a slight
atmospheric disturbance
Spindletop Sept. 10th 1926"** (Jeff
Spencer collection)
Note name on board

Raccoon Bend & Orange oilfields

L.L. Allen postcards



(above) Driller W.C. Whatley and his crew pose in front of the Humble Oil & Refining Co. C-2 Grawunder well, drilled on the west flank of Raccoon Bend field (Austin Co.) in 1929. (J. Spencer collection)



The Brownie-Babette Oil Company filed its Orange, Texas-based company charter between the years of 1912-1914. The company completed five oil wells in the Orange oilfield between 1922 and 1935. Their No. 8 McLean, whose wreckage is shown here with a "blowout" date of 9-5-1922, was eventually completed as a 350 barrel a day oil well in May of 1923. (J. Spencer collection)



(left) Humble O. & Rf. Co. Raccoon Bend – Tex. Machine & Blacksmith Shop – B.J. Festervan Forman. (courtesy of Bonnie Jean Smith-Rohde)

Benjamin Harrison Loden (1871? - 1926)

Loden photographed scenes from the north Texas town of Electra (Wichita county). *Electra News* obituary: was a "pioneer photographer" and "the proprietor of the only studio in the city."

The town of **Electra** is located fifteen miles northwest of Wichita Falls. The Waggoner family began ranching in Wichita County in the 1850s. When the railroad arrived in the area in the 1880s the Waggoners convinced the railroad to build a switch at a location originally called Waggoner, and later renamed Beaver or Beaver Switch. Businesses, a school, and a post office soon followed and in 1902 the residents petitioned to change the town's name to "Electra" in honor of W.T. Waggoner's daughter.

Electra oil field discovered 1/17/1911

HELLO! |EIGHTY?

Let's phone Loden and have him
come and make a photo of the family
while we are all together.

—•••—

DON'T FORGET
PHONE 80

Loden's Studio

-Where Quality Counts-

North Main St. d 09tf Electra, Texas.
Private Dressing Rooms

Electra News 12/27/1913

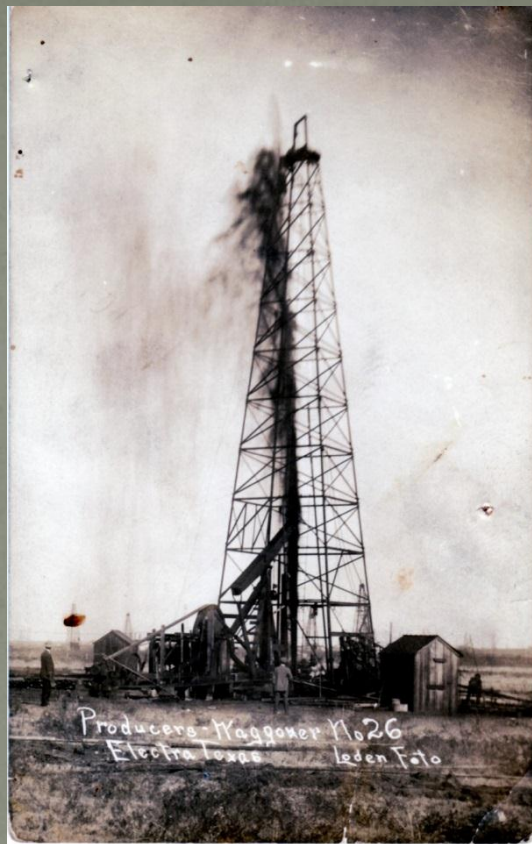
"We own our own house and business in Electra and it is not on wheels. We will be here making photographs when cheap John photographers and hot air merchants have put themselves out of business."

"Post Cards for 50 cents the dozen"
Electra News 9/29/1914

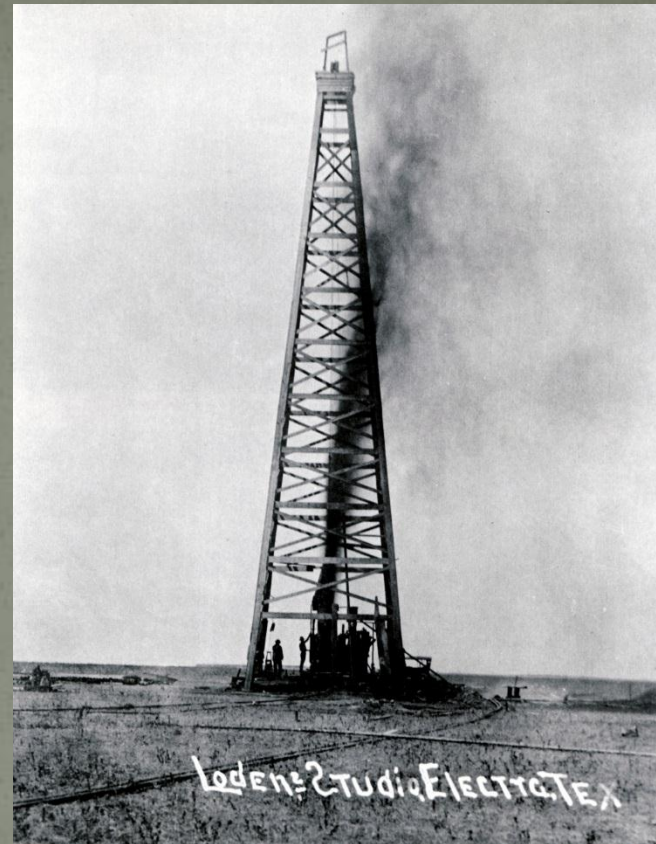
Electra Gushers - Loden



J. Spencer collection



J. Spencer collection



From Rundell (1977)

The Producers Oil Company drilled many wells on the Waggoner (3D) ranch. This No. 26 Waggoner well (center) was probably drilled in 1911 or 1912. By early 1915, the company had drilled seventy-six wells on the ranch, by 1916 over a hundred wells, and by 1917 at least one hundred and thirty wells. Their geologists, as well as those from other companies, mapped a long east-west running structural arch, the "Electra Arch", one of several geologic structures in the area. The discovery of oil near Electra set off exploration in the area, leading to several additional oil fields in the geologic area known as the Red River Uplift.

more Loden @ Electra



Note
attire!

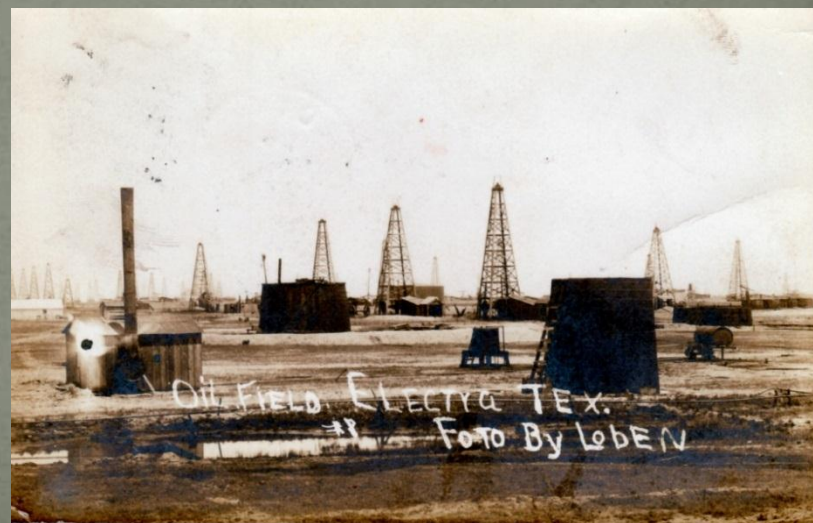


"C.P. Co. Honaker 3700 bbl." well on fire.

"Baptist Oil Field Mission" The note on the reverse of this 1913 postcard mentions one of the early concerns....lack of good water. "Everybody here have to buy every drop of water they use. Get it from Vernon. Ship it in." The town of Vernon is 23 miles from Electra.



Wooden oil derricks with associated water tanks and boilers dotted the county's landscape. This Loden image shows a shack with a "Prod. Oil Co. Stringer 24" sign. The message on the reverse of this 1913 postmarked card describes some of the dangers working in the oil field: "I got my head cut up so it had to be sewed up and my ear."



All from Jeff Spencer collection

more Loden @ Electra



Pierce-Fordyce Co. oil tank fire 8/5/1912; Probable Loden, based on lettering – earliest Loden? **



Texas Co. oil tank fire 5/2/1914; J. Spencer collection



Other three images from: SMU Central University Library, Digital Collections



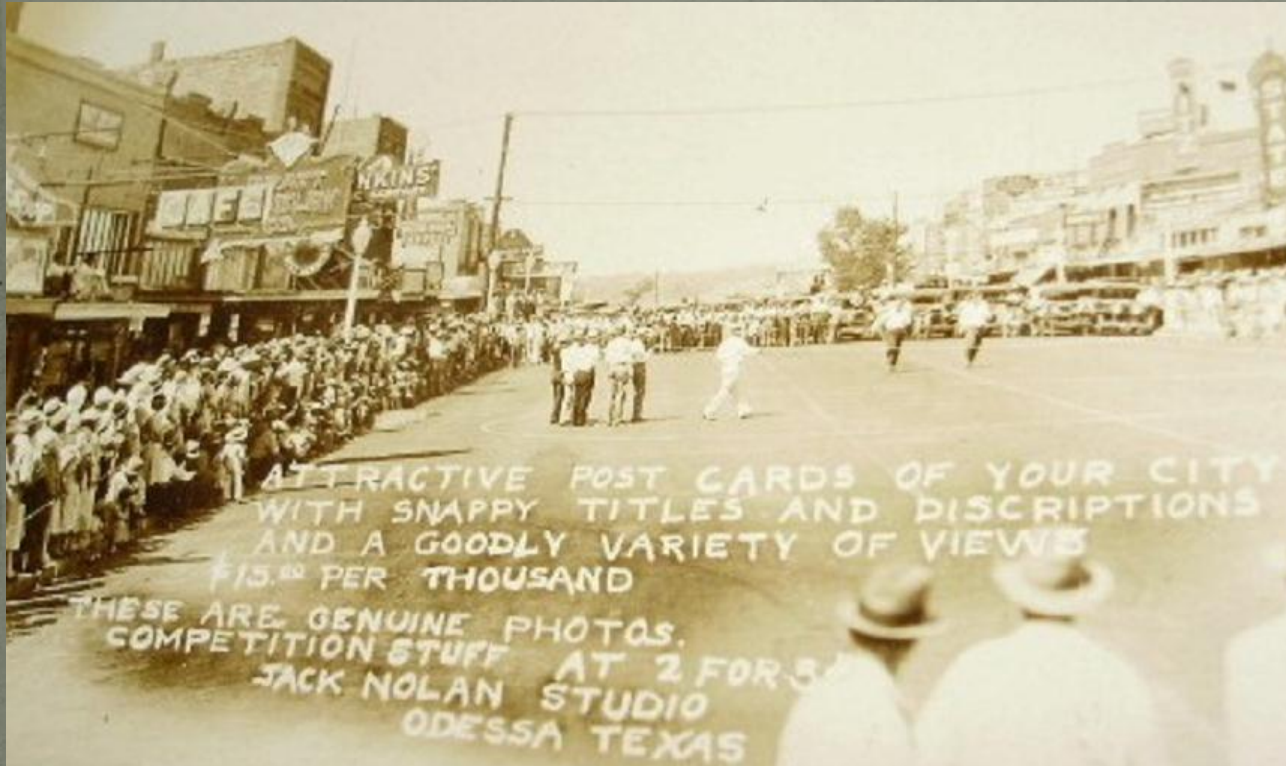
Sunshine Hill oil field. Northeast of Electra. Shallow oil discovery and associated boom 1918-1919

**Loden @ Burkburnett
Earliest Loden oilfield photograph?**



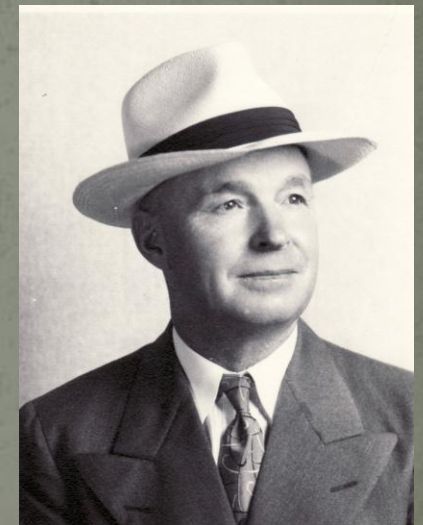
**Crew of
Burkburnett oil
field's discovery
well – Corsicana
Petroleum #1
Schmoker. Dated
July 1, 1912,
several days
before the well
was completed.
(Runnels, 1977).**

Jack Nolan (1889 - 1972)



"Attractive post cards of your city with snappy titles and discriptions [sp] and a goodly variety of views. \$15.00 per thousand."

**"These are genuine photos. Competition stuff"
Jack Nolan Studio Odessa, Texas**



**Jack Nolan, circa 1927.
Photographs courtesy of
Sara Easley**

Jack Nolan

Pioneer Texas photographer & newspaperman

Early career:

gold prospecting in Alaska at age 18

cub reporter & photographer in Seattle

Moved to Odessa, Texas, in 1925 & opened a photography studio the following year – initially specializing in baby portraits

Began photographing West Texas oil towns and oil field scenes in 1926/27. 16 West Texas RPPCs (none numbered); both oil field and promoting Odessa. More West Texas RPPCs in the Permian Basin Petroleum Museum.

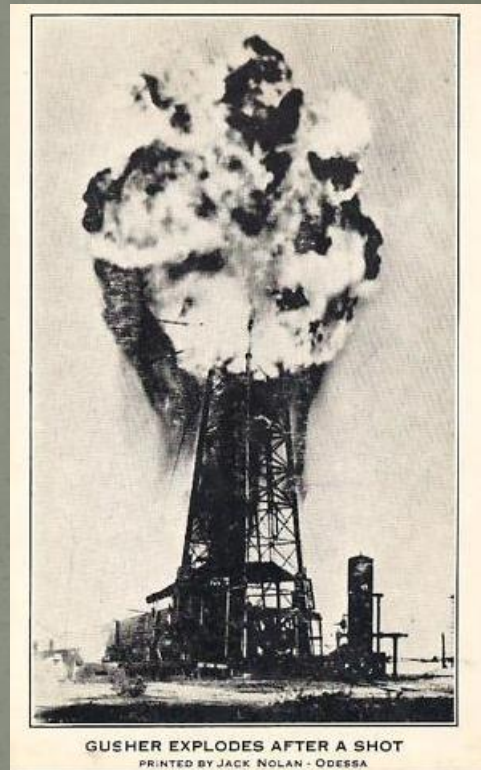
Soon known as “Jack Nolan, Oil Field Photographer”

Photographed in the East Texas oil field & boomtowns from 1931-32. 86 East Texas RPPCs known; numbering system suggests many more.

Back to Odessa in 1932 where he married.

Started Odessa’s first daily newspaper, *The Daily Bulletin*, in 1936.

Probably Nolan's best known oilfield photograph

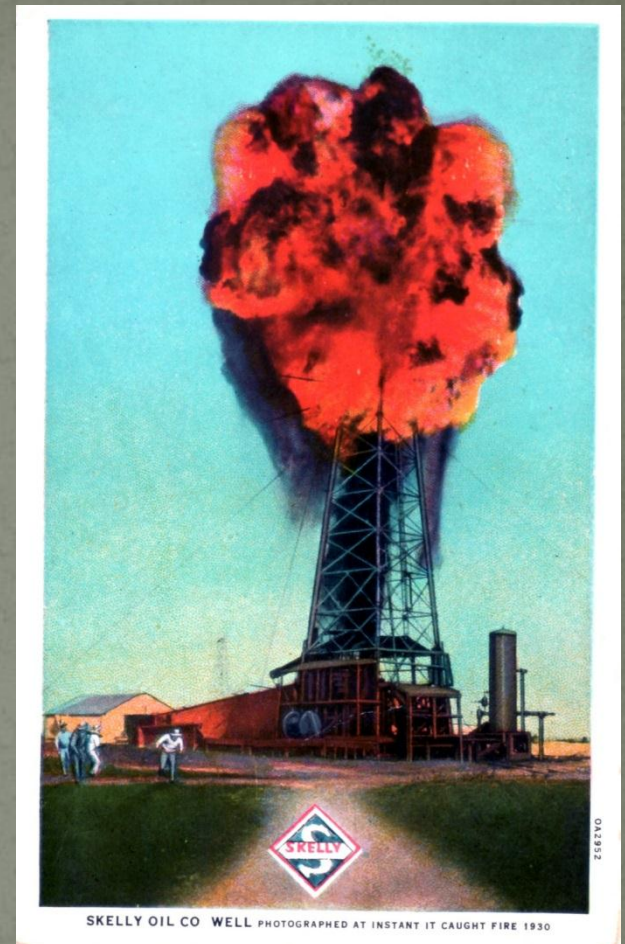
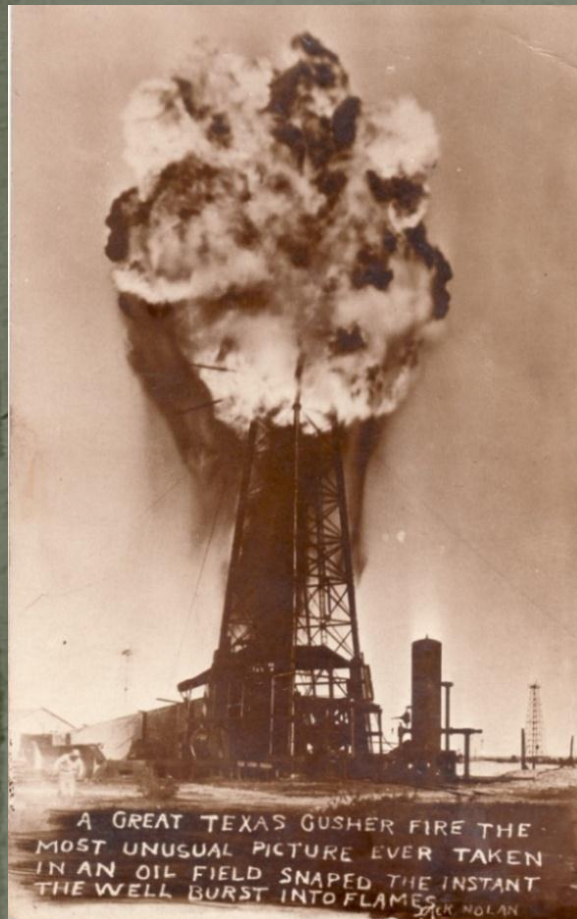


"Skelly – Amarada [sp] Univ. No. 1 Ector County. Photo taken the instant the well burst into flames" (left) (J. Spencer collection)

"Nolan's Studio. Let our experienced [sp] oil field photographers serve you when you need publicity & sales. Aid pictures. Satisfaction guaranteed. Call us. Phone 3963 413-A N. Grant" (right) (Runnels, 1982)

A view of an oil gusher fire near Penwell in Ector County, Texas on April 27, 1930, after a 360-quart nitro shot (Runnels, 1982; Baker, 2005).

More.....

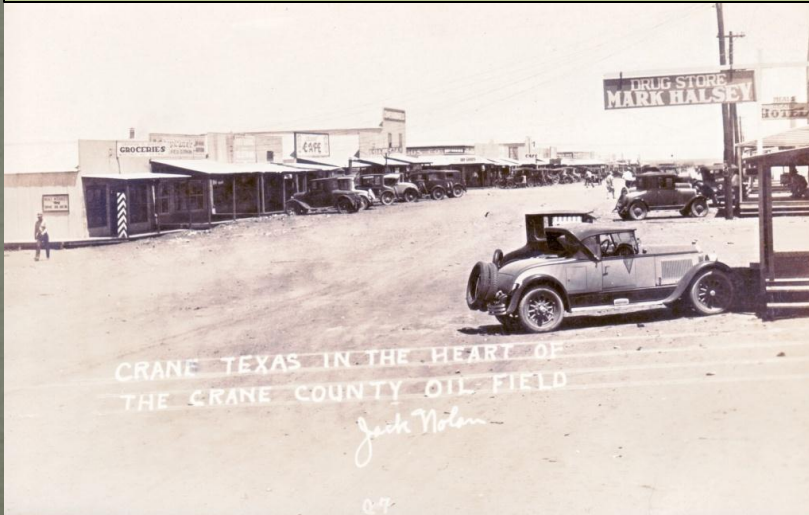


RPPC caption (left): "A great Texas gusher fire the most unusual picture ever taken in an oil field snapped [sp] the instant the well burst into flames." This Jack Nolan real photo postcard morphed into the very common generic linen postcard (middle) titled, "Instead of a gusher – Fire! Oil well explosion in West Texas". Skelly Oil used this to advertise (right). On the reverse is stamped: *I have attended the 7th Annual International Petroleum Exhibition at Tulsa and visited the Skelly Oil Company Booth.* (Jeff Spencer collection)

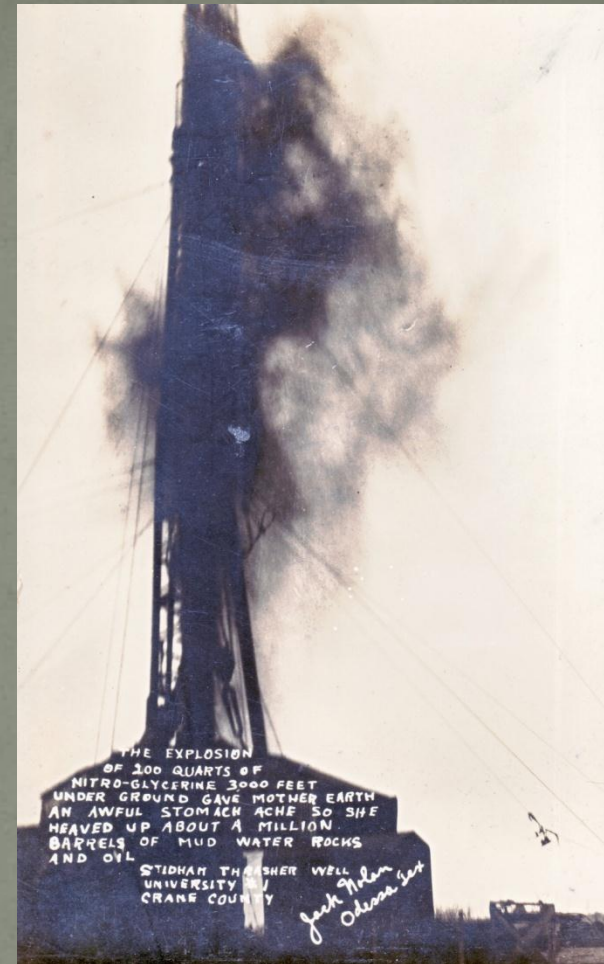
West Texas Nolan oilfield scenes (1926-1930)



"Winkler County oil field. Small ranches and lots of owners will tend to make fast development in this field. Jan. 12-27" (Jeff Spencer collection)



"Crane Texas in the heart of the Crane County oil field" (Jeff Spencer collection)



"The explosion of 200 quarts of nitro-glycerine 3000 feet under ground gave mother earth an awful stomach ache so she heaved up about a million barrels of mud water rocks and oil. Stidham Thrasher well University #1 Crane County." (Jeff Spencer collection).

East Texas Oil Field

Discovery well: Daisy Bradford #3 – 10/3/1930

-gushed over the crown block 112' above the derrick floor

Texas National Guard sent to the field in late 1931 to enforce proration

By the end of 1932, 5,652 producing wells

Field has produced over 5 billion barrels of oil

Field is ~ 45 miles long and ~ 5 miles wide.



"Whoopee! Dad Struck Oil in East Texas" (Doubleday – famous rodeo photographer)

East Texas oil field fires - Nolan



"Hell's Half Acre is an expression that can be truly applied to this greatest of Texas oil well fires. Sinclair No. 1 Cole took its tole of 14 lives when it came in unexpectedly and burst into flames from some unknown cause. (#169). (Susan Svec collection).



"The fire picture of a hundred faces. Could these mysterious and hideous faces in the death well flames mean something which is beyond human understanding. Three men were burned to death." (#356). (Jeff Spencer collection).

East Texas oil field fires - Nolan



Stained red version of #245. (Susan Svec collection).



"Over one thousand barrels of oil per hour going up in smoke. Kilgore, Tex." (#245). Postmarked in Gladewater, TX 8/4/31. (Jeff Spencer collection).



"Find the faces. The double headed fire monster. Master of its kind consumes a thousand barrels of oil per hour. The greatest of East Texas oil fires at Kilgore." (#349). (Susan Svec collection).



"The Paul Vitex #2 on fire near Overton, Tex. Three men were burned to death." (#351). Postmarked in Seminole, OK 9/11/36. (Jeff Spencer collection).

Nolan views in and around Kilgore, Texas



"Section of the south side of town looking east. Kilgore, Tex." (#140) (Jeff Spencer collection).



"Looking across the tracks from the south side to the north side. Kilgore, Tex." (#104) (Jeff Spencer collection).



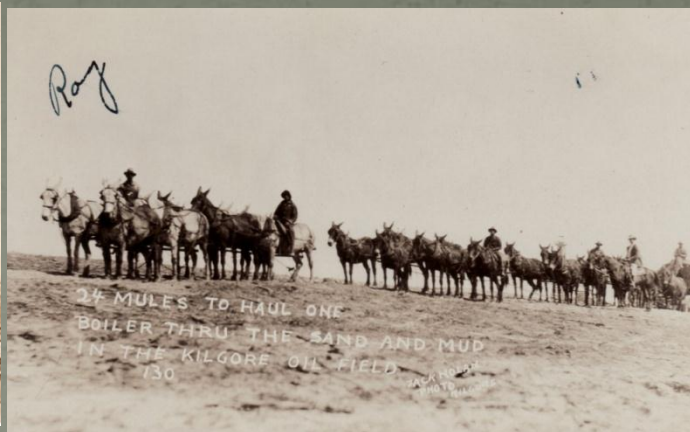
"Going to Kilgore, Tex." (#140) (Jeff Spencer collection).



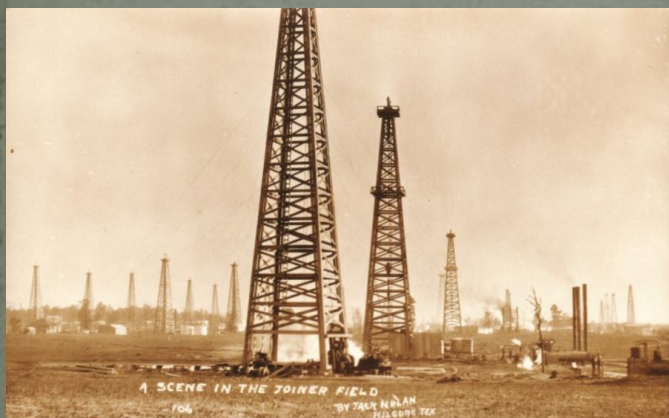
"Humble camp from the hill top. Kilgore, Tex." (#140) (Jeff Spencer collection).



"Oil derricks like these every few miles in East Texas". (#119) Message on reverse: "We have three derricks in town." Postmarked in Kilgore, TX 3/25/31. (Jeff Spencer collection).



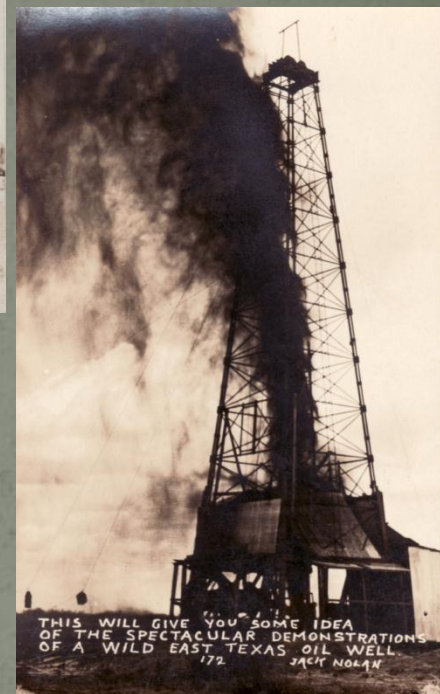
"24 mules to haul one boiler thru the sand and mud in the Kilgore oil field." (#130) (Jeff Spencer collection).



"A scene in the Joiner Field." (#106) (Jeff Spencer collection).



"Thousands of cars of oil are being shipped from the East Texas oil fields". Postmarked 2-24-32 in Gilmer, TX. Note on the reverse: "3485 ft. deep. Should complete in a week." (#237) (Jeff Spencer collection).

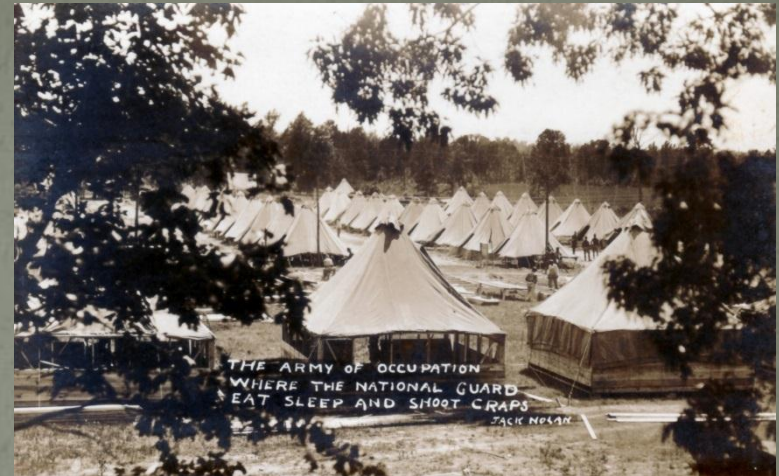


"This will give you some idea of the spectacular demonstrations of a wild east Texas oil well." (#172) (Susan Svec collection).

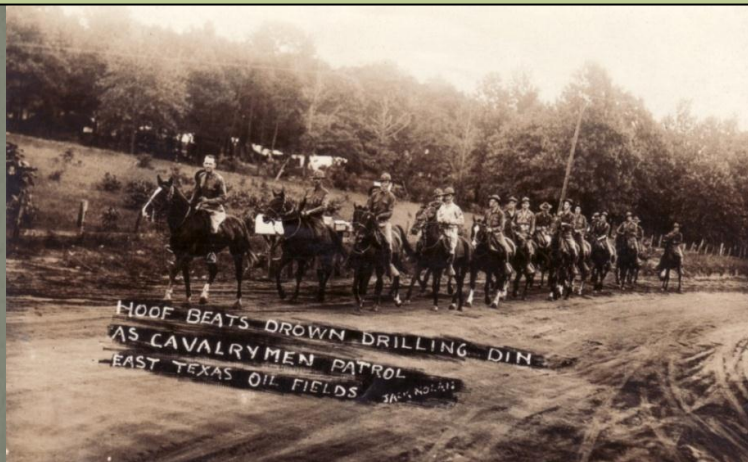
Martial Law in the East Texas oilfield – Jack Nolan



On August 15, 1931, Texas governor Ross Sterling ordered the East Texas oil field shut down to stop illegal production and to prevent waste. These mounted "petroleum petrolmen" were returning from inspecting 1,600 wells under martial law.



In September, 1931, the Texas National Guard set up camp near Kilgore, nicknamed "Proration Hill" (Jeff Spencer collection).



"Hoof beats drown the drilling din as cavalrymen patrol East Texas oil fields." One of several Nolan postcards documenting the Texas National guard policing the East Texas oil fields. Postmarked in Henderson, TX 10-22-31 and mailed to Argentina. (Jeff Spencer collection).



Harry Sinclair, an early producer in the East Texas field, produced 4.5 million barrels of oil in 1931. "Not Harry Sinclair's racehorses but cavalrymen inspecting a Sinclair well in East Texas" is a play off of his racehorse stables. Postmarked in Tyler, TX 12-14-31 (Jeff Spencer collection).

Acknowledgements

Susan Svec – Boling, TX - fellow oil field historian

Sara Easley – Jack Nolan's niece

Yvonne Sutherlin – Historic Preservation Officer, Port Arthur, Texas

Museum of the Gulf Coast – Port Arthur, TX

Ryan Smith – Texas Energy Museum, Beaumont, TX

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Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/loc/pictures>)