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**SHAMROCK**

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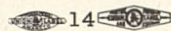
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### THE COVER

The smiling lad pictured on the front cover is almost buried in a mountain of freshly picked cotton—leading farm crop of Hall County, Texas. Although most of us are inclined to think of the Deep South as the domain of King Cotton, an important frontier of this fluffy, white empire reaches up into the lower Panhandle of Texas. Memphis, Texas, featured in this issue of the Shamrock, is county seat of Hall County and the center of an extensive cotton-producing region. Last year Hall County farmers produced a 93,000 acre cotton crop.

## In This Issue

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This month, the Shamrock pays tribute to the forward-looking citizens of Memphis, Texas, and surrounding community. Through planned programs of community improvement, the residents of this section of the Panhandle of Texas can point out many achievements in the steady development of their agricultural and industrial activities. Located in Hall County, Memphis is the center of an area that has long been an important cattle and cotton producing region.

### Spindletop—A Texas Titan . . . . . 11

January 10, 1951, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery by Captain Anthony F. Lucas of the first well in the famous Spindletop field near Beaumont, Texas. Although men had been producing oil from wells ever since the Drake discovery in Pennsylvania in 1895, the Lucas well was the granddaddy of all big wells, the like of which had never been seen before. For nine days before it was capped, Spindletop blew oil and gas 200 feet into the air at the rate of 75,000 to 100,000 barrels per day. To formulate plans for a year-long observance of the Spindletop anniversary, the Governor of Texas has appointed a Spindletop 50th Anniversary Commission. The Commission's slogan for the anniversary celebration is, "Spindletop—Where Oil Became an Industry."

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** — *Photographs illustrating the article about Memphis, Texas, and surrounding community were used through the courtesy of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Hall County Development Board. The Spindletop article, together with accompanying photographs, was provided by the American Petroleum Institute. Statistical data and other information used in the preparation of the article about Memphis and vicinity was provided by Clifford Farmer, Secretary of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce; W. B. Hoosier, County Extension Agent; and Lynn McKown, County Administration Officer of the Production Marketing Administration. Cover photo, courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation.*



# Cattle, Cotton, and Progress

SOUTHWEST COLLECTION  
Texas Tech University  
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79409

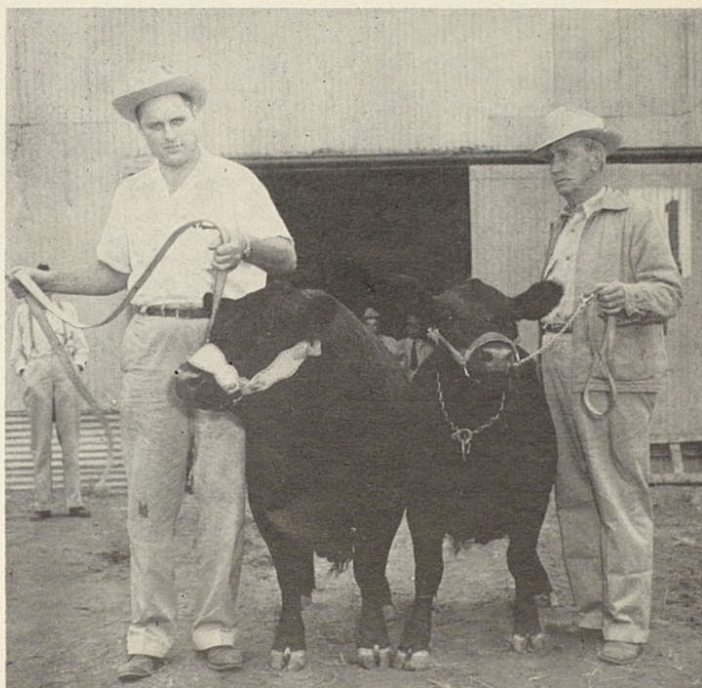


Cotton, cattle and progress . . . these are the principal benefits brought about by the far-sighted planning and constructive cooperation of the citizens of Memphis, Texas, and surrounding community.

Located 86 miles southeast of Amarillo, in the fabulous Panhandle of Texas, Memphis is the county seat of Hall County and the center of a community that has for years produced fine herds of white-faced beef cattle and abundant crops of cotton, wheat, alfalfa, and other farm produce. In 1949 alone, the income from cotton production in Hall County amounted to approximately \$7,000,000. And this income was produced by less than one-third of the total farm and ranch land in the county. Actually two-thirds of the county's 900,000 acres is devoted to the production of range-fed cattle.

The first white settlers in the area around the present town of Memphis were ranchers and cowboys who found that the hardy grass

Above—Hall County farmers wait in line to have their cotton processed at one of the 19 cotton gins in the county. Below Wendell Harrison and A. C. Rapp show off their championship Angus, winners in the 1950 Hall County Livestock Show.





The old Shoe Bar Ranch House, 10 miles west of Memphis, is pictured at the right as it appears today. First house in Hall County, the building was once the headquarters of a 250,000-acre ranch and was meeting place of a group of community leaders who met May 4, 1890, to organize Hall County.



covering the rich plains were ideal for fattening their herds of Longhorn cattle. By the close of the 19th century, vast herds of beef were shipped from the sparsely populated Panhandle. From the beginning of its development, that part of the Panhandle which now makes up Hall County contributed its share to the beef production of the entire region. At one time the two Hall County towns of Estelline and Giles were the largest cattle shipping points on the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad between the cities of Fort Worth and Denver.

Although cattle grazing was the first important commercial enterprise in the region that is now Hall County, the value of the rich soil for the production of cotton and other farm crops was recognized fairly soon after the first white settlers made their appearance. When the county was organized in 1890, cotton production was an important agricultural activity. The town of Memphis was founded soon afterwards. Since its founding, Memphis has played an important role in providing services and supplies to the farmers and ranchers of the surrounding community.

Today, Memphis is a modern small city with a population of 3,806. Population of Hall County is 10,882. The progressive little prairie city is proud of its wide, well improved streets, its fine churches, its well-equipped schools, and its growing number of new homes and business

buildings. But most of all, the citizens of Memphis are proud of the achievements they and their rural neighbors have made in developing the productive resources of their community.

Foremost among the economic resources of Hall County are those resulting directly and indirectly from agricultural activities—farming and ranching. And in the development of these activities, the cooperative and progressive spirit exhibited by the farmers, ranchers, business and civic leaders, and many others in the community has been and continues to be an important factor.

A significant example of the manner in which business men, farmers, civic leaders and others work together for the benefit of the community is a carefully planned program for livestock improvement. This program was started in 1945 by the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Hall County Development Board in cooperation with the County Extension Service. The need for livestock development became apparent shortly after the close of World War II. During the war, many farmers had either reduced or disposed of altogether their livestock herds—especially dairy herds—because of wartime labor shortages and the emergency demands for grain and cotton. After the war, community leaders believed that it was necessary to rebuild these livestock herds in order to cushion the effects of failures of cash crops as well as



to encourage greater use of soil-building hay and pasture plants.

To get the county livestock program started, the First National Bank of Memphis and the First State Bank of Memphis each bought a registered Jersey Bull. At the same time, a carload of registered Jersey heifers were shipped in from Canada and sold to local farmers who had signed up to participate in the program. Farmers drew lots for the right to buy individual animals. Since the program was started in 1945, several additional carloads of registered animals have been purchased from Canadian breeders. Altogether, 53 heifers have been purchased by farmers taking part in the program. Through a carefully planned breeding program, the total number of registered heifers from the original stock has increased to 165.

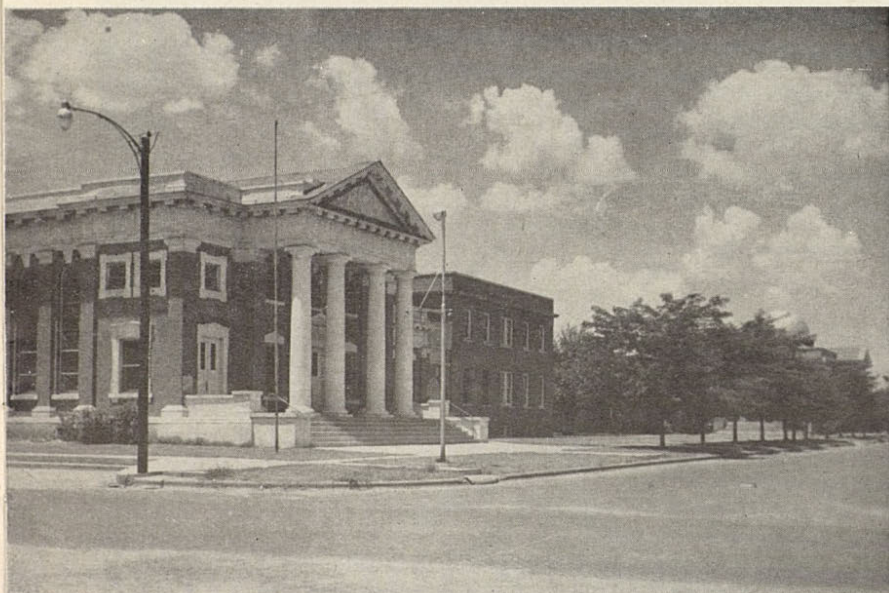
Proof of the success of the livestock program to date is evidenced by the number of awards these fine Jersey cattle have won in the various fairs and shows in which they have been entered. At practically every show in which Hall County entered a county dairy herd, including the 1950 Amarillo Fat Stock Show, these registered Jerseys have won the top award for Best County Herd. Individual animals from this stock have also won championship ribbons in shows all over the Southwest.

Most recent phase of Hall County's livestock improvement program is the introduction into the county of a foundation herd of regis-

tered Aberdeen Angus beef cattle. Like the Jerseys, these cattle were purchased from Canadian breeders. Although a number of Hall County livestock producers have been raising fine cattle of this type for some time, the acquisition last year of 10 additional heifers and two bulls will give more farmers an opportunity to build up their herds. To help promote this phase of the county's livestock development, local producers recently organized the Lower Panhandle Angus Association.

Another example of this civic-minded spirit displayed in the promotion of agricultural activities is the assistance local business men give to various 4-H Club projects. Each year, after the annual 4-H Club Calf Show, local business men bid for the animals entered in the show. The boys and girls who own and exhibit the calves still have the privilege of showing their prize animals in other and larger shows if they so desire. They may also sell them at a higher price following a subsequent showing. But in any event, they are assured of receiving at least as much as the local bidders have offered for the animals, which in all cases will be more than the current market price. Local business men also aid 4-H Clubbers by providing a number of registered hogs and one registered Jersey heifer each year as prizes in an annual essay contest. Subject of the essay contest is "The Advantages of Diversified Farming."

Hall County's 4-H Club program is in itself



Memphis has many beautiful churches. The picture at the left shows the First Baptist Church in the foreground. The First Methodist church can be seen in the background. The equally attractive First Presbyterian Church, although not visible in the photograph, is located one block south.



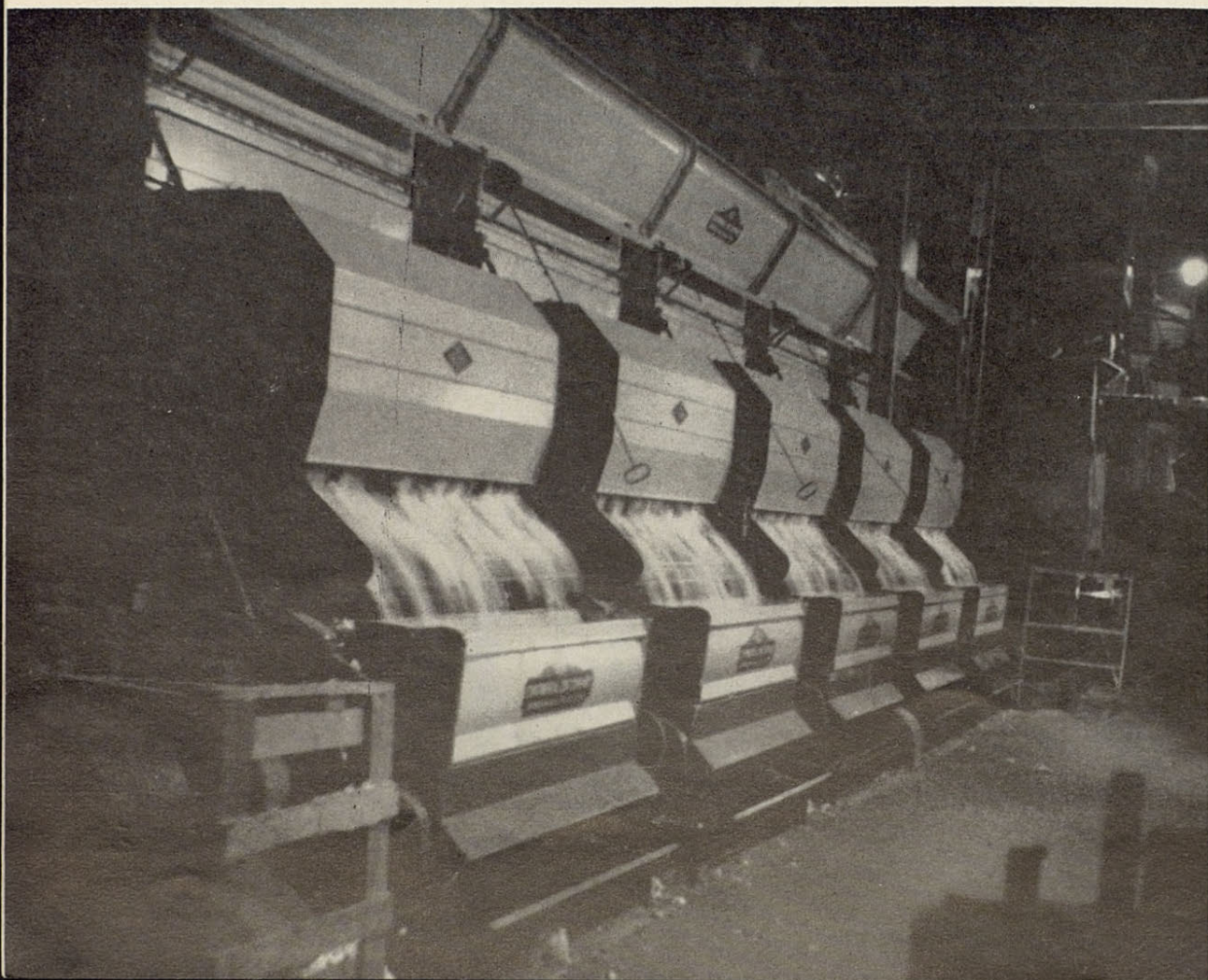
evidence of the widespread community interest in the improvement and development of agricultural activities. More than 450 boys and girls participate in 4-H Club activities in the county. In the past six years, Hall County has had five national winners and one sectional winner in various phases of 4-H Club competition. In state competition, Hall County has provided more winners than any other county in the United States during the past eight years.

In the production of farm crops, the problem of building and conserving the soil for future generations is an important community responsibility. In this respect, the citizens of Memphis and Hall County have taken an active interest for a number of years. A terracing program was started in the county during the 1930's with the aid of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The most of this kind of conservation work, however, has been done in the past five

years. Since 1945, about 1,500 miles of new terraces have been constructed in the county each year. The terracing system used in Hall County is one that was developed by local conservation leaders. Called spreader-type terracing, this system not only holds the water, but also diverts it to areas where it is needed most. Last year, the Production Marketing Administration adopted this unique terracing system as standard for the State of Texas.

In operation, a terracing program aids in conservation both of water and soil. It is estimated that terracing a typical farm in Hall County increases production from 25 to 50 per cent. The increased production is the immediate result of better utilization of the available rainfall. More important, however, by preventing the water from draining off the fields too rapidly, terraces aid tremendously in holding valuable top soil in place. Once gone, this top soil is almost irreplaceable. Indirectly, terrac-

Interior of Farmers Coop Gin at Lakeview





ing also helps to prevent wind erosion of top soil by reducing the risks of crop failures. Ground that has a poor crop is less likely to blow than bare ground.

During the past year, Hall County farmers have been experimenting with the technique of "deep plowing" as an aid to soil conservation. This method of plowing is performed with a special type of heavy plow that can break the ground to a depth of 36 inches, virtually turning the topsoil over. The purpose of deep plowing is to turn under sandy, badly depleted surface soil, replacing it with the heavier richer soil beneath. In most areas that have been planted to cotton or wheat for a number of years, this practice of deep plowing not only increases productivity of the land, but also aids in combatting wind erosion by replacing light sandy soil with heavier soil that is less susceptible to blowing.

As in the terracing program, the Production Marketing Administration cooperates with individual farmers in the deep plowing program. The \$10 per acre cost of the deep plowing operation is shared equally by the farmer and the PMA. Because of the expense of the equipment (about \$26,000 per unit), all deep plowing projects in the county have been performed by contractors equipped for the job. So far, approximately 3,500 acres in Hall County have been plowed in this manner.

Although Hall County agriculture is primarily dry land farming, substantial crops of alfalfa are produced in the area. While alfalfa customarily requires more moisture than the county's average rainfall of less than 22 inches, this crop is produced in the area without benefit of surface irrigation. The secret of the success of the alfalfa production in the county is that the underground water table lies but a few feet

Modern Plant of Western Cotton Oil Company







Registered Angus cattle on Harrison-Farmer ranch north of Memphis

beneath much of the area. This shallow water table—from four to six feet in many places—is present beneath about 32,000 acres in the county and makes it possible for farmers to raise alfalfa by sub-irrigation because of the fact that the tap root of the plant will reach down several feet to obtain moisture. Last year, Hall County farmers planted nearly 14,000 acres to sub-irrigated alfalfa.

Industrial activity in Memphis and other parts of Hall County is closely related to the county's extensive agricultural operations. Cotton production accounts for a large part of this industry. In Hall County there are 19 cotton gins, five of which are in Memphis. A cotton oil plant, operated by the Western Cotton Oil Company, is also located in Memphis and is one of the most modern in the state. Still another Memphis industry engaged in the processing of cotton is the Memphis Compress. Last year, this firm handled more than 135,000 bales of cotton.

The growing interest in dairy farming,

partly stimulated by the previously mentioned livestock improvement program, has given rise to the development of a healthy dairy industry.

Within the county there are eight Grade-A dairies, an increase of six during the past five years. There is also a modern milk plant at Memphis engaged in processing much of the production from these Grade-A dairies.

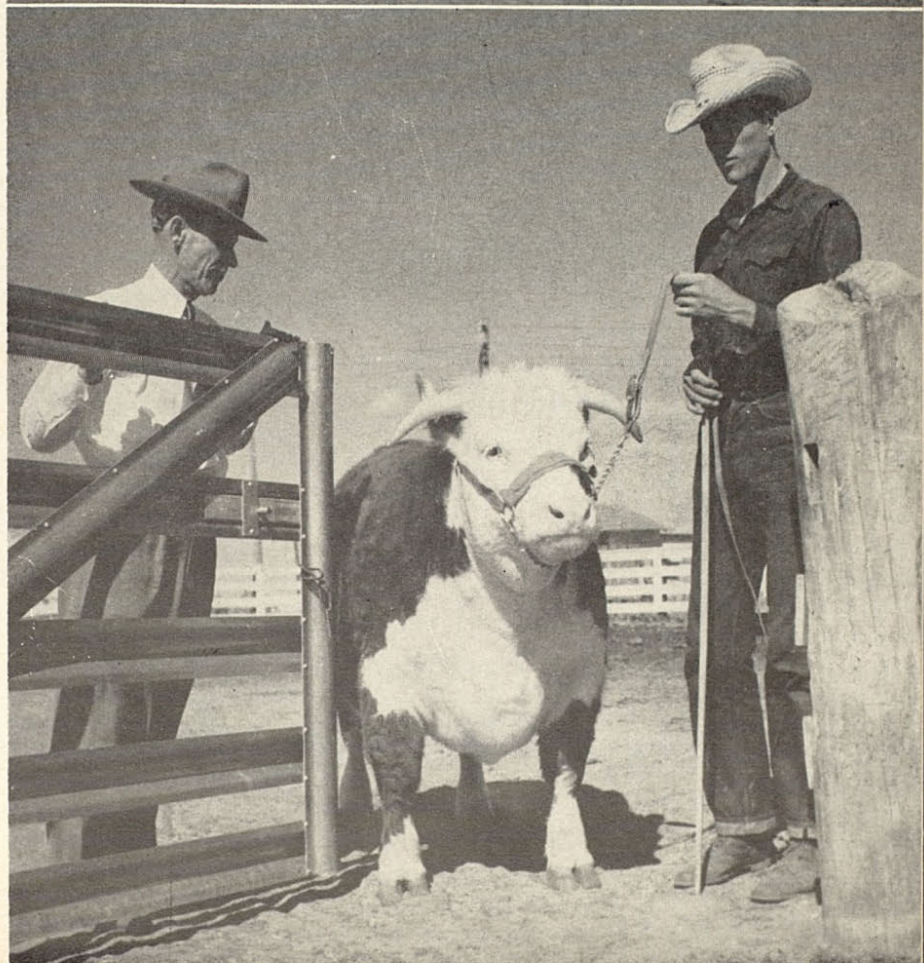
Memphis and Hall County residents have made outstanding achievements in developing the industry and agriculture of their community. The fertile fields and good pasture lands have for years produced abundantly for the entire area. To keep these fields and pastures producing good crops and fat cattle, the citizens of the community have displayed a spirit of co-operation that has steadily resulted in substantial soil conservation achievements, better diversification of crops, higher soil productivity, and improved strains of livestock. In addition, the development of a healthy industry—closely tied into the agricultural economy—has kept pace with these agricultural accomplishments.



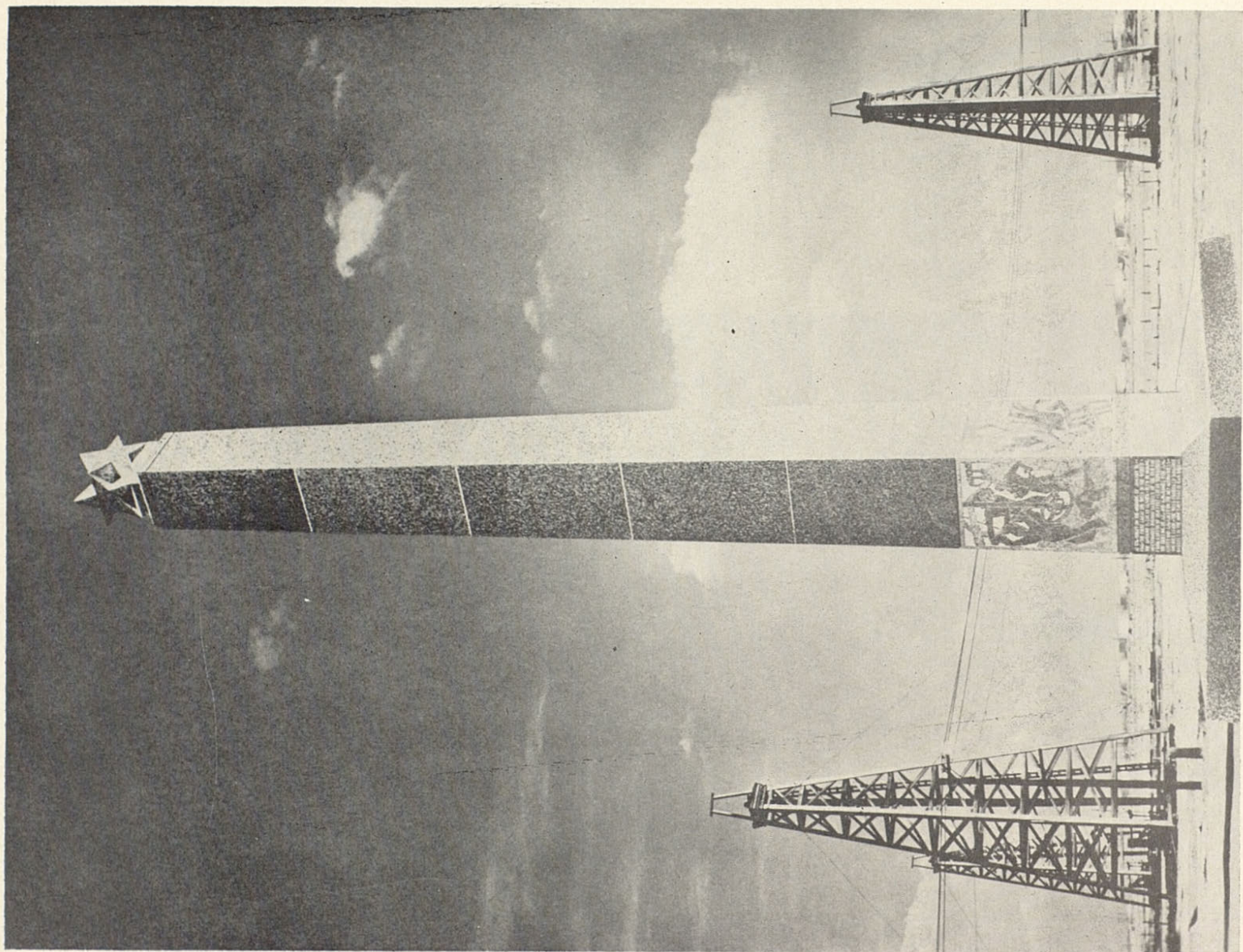
The line-up of the two-year-old heifer class in the Hall County Dairy Show. These fine Jerseys were shipped from Canada and constitute a part of an organized livestock improvement program, sponsored by the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Hall County Board of Development in cooperation with the County Extension Service.



In addition to participation in an organized livestock improvement program, many Hall County farmers have long been active in individual livestock development projects. Pictured at the right are Tommie M. Potts and nephew, James Potts, with one of the prize-winning Herefords produced on the Potts farm near Memphis.



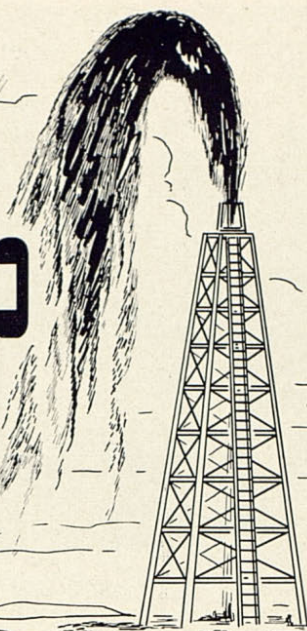






# Spindletop

## *A Texas Titan*



EDITOR'S NOTE—*The following article was reprinted from a brochure published by the American Petroleum Institute commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the famous Spindletop discovery.*

They grow 'em big in Texas, as any Texan will be happy to tell you at the drop of a ten-gallon hat, but not even Texas was prepared for the giant well that roared into being—and history—at 10:30 a.m., January 10, 1901. For this was the Lucas well at Spindletop, and its like never had been seen in the world before.

Not that oil was new in 1901, far from it. In the 41 years since the Drake well, oil had been found in many parts of western Pennsylvania and southwestern New York; it was a thriving industry in California, West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky; and considerable production was under way in Kansas and Oklahoma. Texas had a flourishing field and a refinery at Corsicana, and small production at other points. These were, with some notable exceptions, small wells, and there was no precedent in

oil history for the tremendous gas pressure and volume of oil that blew 200-odd feet into the air and poured an estimated 75,000 barrels to 100,000 barrels a day onto the ground surrounding this grandfather of big wells.

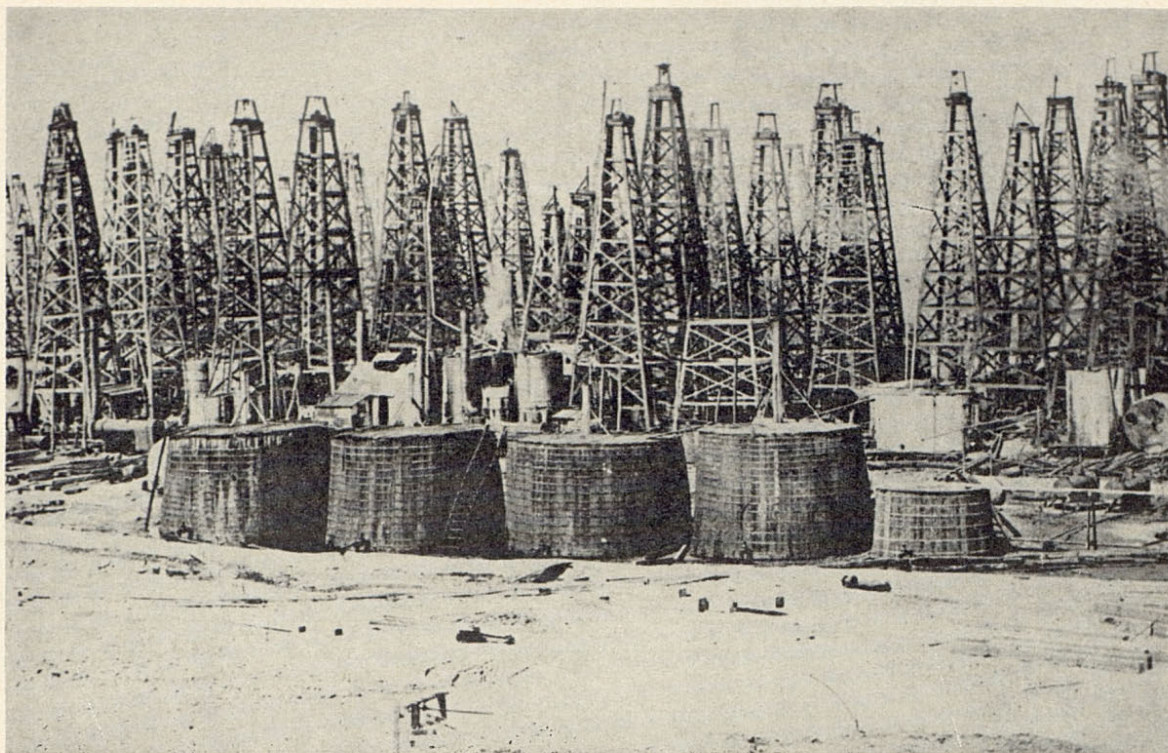
The news electrified the nation; 50,000 people descended upon Beaumont, 4 miles away, and swamped its 9,000 population. This was the Klondike, "California or bust," the Oklahoma land rush, and the Florida boom rolled into a small package and compressed into one small town. People slept on pool tables and on the ground, and didn't care particularly whether they slept or not. They ate, dreamed and breathed oil; and for a time it was debatable which was more desirable, a producing well or a two-color printing press which could turn out handsome stock certificates.

This phase was shortlived, however. A year later, there were 138 producing wells at Spindletop. Beaumont had settled down into the forerunner of the busy, beautiful city it is today, and the great Texas oil industry, the marvel of the world, was well under way.

As is usually the case in history, a handful of men were responsible for this new development. Patillo Higgins of Beaumont had an unvarying faith that there was oil at Spindletop, based on nothing more than a few surface seep-

← Spindletop Monument, erected by Spindletop pioneers in July, 1941, marks the spot where the famed Lucas well came in on January 10, 1901.





Within two years of the Lucas discovery, wells in the Spindletop area were spaced like trees in a forest. Modern conservation methods prohibit such spacing practices in fields of today.

ages. He convinced some of his fellow-townsmen, and formed the Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing Co., which was unsuccessful in attempting to drill a number of times in the area. His efforts finally came to the attention of Captain Anthony Francis Lucas, who was engaged at the time in operating a salt-mining company in southern Louisiana, owned by Joseph Jefferson, the actor.

Captain Lucas' studies of the salt domes had convinced him that they were distinct geological phenomena, and were natural oil reservoirs. He entered into a lease with the Gladys City Co., and started a well. At 575 feet of difficult drilling, due principally to quicksand, Captain Lucas ran out of funds, and the well was abandoned. He sought financial help, and finally found it from the well-known Pittsburgh partnership of James M. Guffey and John H. Galey. The second well was started October 27, 1900, with the Hamill Brothers of Corsicana, Texas, as drillers. They moved a rotary rig down from Corsicana, and started to work.

Drilling of the well was anything but a picnic. The crew consisted of A. W. Hamill, his brother, Curt; Henry McLeod and Peck Byrd. J. G. Hamill stayed in Corsicana to look after the firm's affairs there. But let's let Al Hamill tell the story. After all, he was there.

"Drilling progressed nicely until we reached about 160 feet, when circulation was lost. We tried repeatedly to overcome this, but failed. Our decision then was to rotate and wash in all the 8 inch pipe we could. After that, we put in the 4 inch drill pipe for wash pipe and rigged up a heavy drive block to work around the 4 inch with a heavy drive head for the 8 inch. We used the drive block on the order of a pile driver, from the cathead on the drawworks. This was done by hand by pulling the cathead line and then giving it a quick slip in order to give the hardest blow possible. We took turns on this man-killing job, and every little while we would run the circulation pump to wash out the sand from below the bottom of the 8 inch pipe. This method was continued until the Gumbo formation was reached at 445 feet,



making 285 feet that we mauled down with cathead and drive block."

After an experience with a gas pocket early in December, the crew decided they would have to keep the pumps circulating at night and the drill pipe rotating slowly to prevent the pipe from sticking. As there were only three of them (McLeod having left during the arduous drive block period), each man worked an 18-hour shift every third day. And now Mr. Hamill takes up the story again:

"On December 9 it was my turn to get up at midnight for my 18-hour shift. As usual, I tried to make all the hole I could. The evening before, we had put up an additional joint of drill pipe. At about 3 o'clock in the morning I noticed the pump working more freely and the rotary turning very easily, so I began to let the pipe down, and soon had most of it down. As daylight began to appear, I could detect oil on ditch and slush pit. When Curt

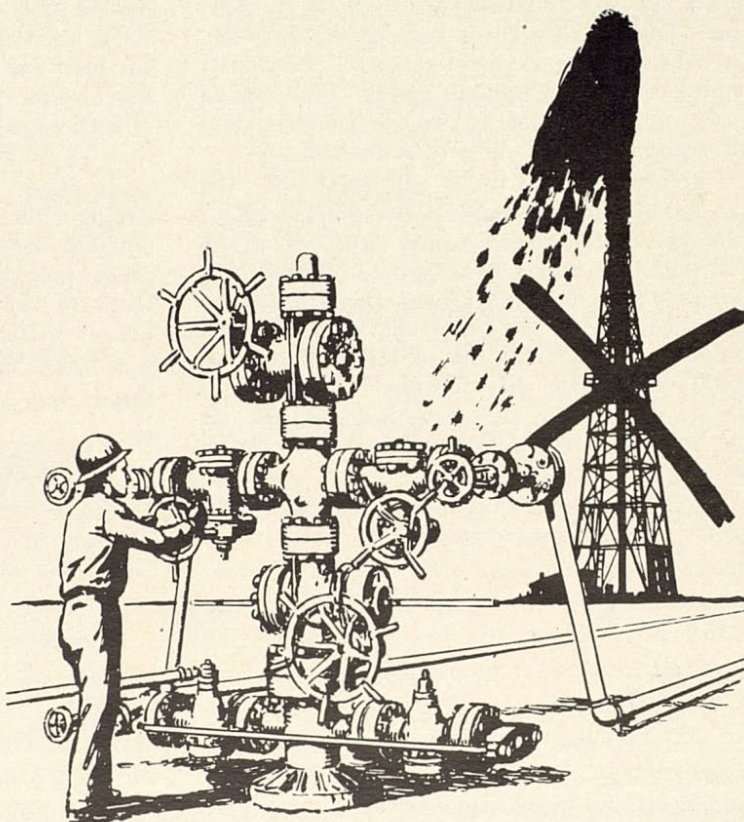
and Byrd appeared with my little bit of breakfast, the slush pit had a big showing of oil on it. We at once sent Byrd for Captain Lucas, who lived about a mile and a half from where we were drilling.

"On his arrival, he showed some excitement and asked how much of a well I thought it would make. The only experience any of us had was in drilling small wells in the Corsicana Field, but I thought it would easily make 50 barrels a day. Captain Lucas asked us to put up another joint of drill pipe to see how much oil formation there was. After making about 35 feet through the soft sand, we struck hard going at about 880 feet."

Captain Lucas then wired for Mr. Gale, who stayed a week and decided to drill down another 300 feet with 6 inch pipe. He sent the drillers home for Christmas for a week's holiday. Again quoting Mr. Hamill:

"January 1, 1901, we were back on the job.

After the discovery of the Spindletop field, gushers soon became a symbol of the industry. But petroleum producers were quick to realize that this symbol also represented unnecessary waste. Today, gushers have been virtually eliminated by engineering methods which control oil flow and prevent loss from the moment a well is completed.





In the following 7 days we made 140 feet of hole making a total of 1,020 feet. There we seemed to hit a crevice. In letting pipe down in one place it would go at least 6 inches farther than it would by giving the pipe a quarter turn. In rotating, our pipe would hang up and jerk the rotary chain to pieces. We kept grinding away without making any headway. On the 9th, I wired my brother, Jim, to express a new fishtail bit with the hope of getting better results. I met the train at Beaumont the morning of the 10th, got the bit, and drove back to the well. We put the new bit on, and had about 700 feet of the drill pipe back in the hole when the rotary mud began flowing up through the rotary table. It came so fast and with such force that Curt, who was up on the double boards, was drenched with mud and water and had a hard time getting out of danger.

"Soon the 4 inch drill pipe started up through the top of the derrick, breaking off in lengths of several joints at a time as it shot skyward.

"After the mud, water, and pipe were blown out, gas followed, but only for a short time. Then the well was very quiet. We ventured back, after our wild scramble for safety, to find things in a terrible mess. There was at least 6 inches of mud on the derrick floor, and our equipment had suffered some damage.

"Naturally, we were all disgusted. We started shoveling the mud away—when without warning, a lot of heavy mud shot out of the well with the report of a cannon. It was followed for a short time with gas, then oil showed up in head flows. In a very short time oil was going up through the top of the derrick, and rocks were being shot hundreds of feet into the air. Within a very few minutes, the oil was holding a steady flow at more than twice the height of the derrick.

"As soon as I pulled myself together, Peck Byrd was again started on the run for Captain Lucas. It was not long until we saw Captain Lucas coming over the small hill with his horse at full run. About this time he decided his horse was too slow, so he jumped from the buggy, picked himself up, and ran up to me shouting: 'Al! Al! What is it?' When I told him 'oil,' he exclaimed: 'Thank God,' and grabbed me and hugged me good and hard.

"By this time farmers, who had heard the roar and could see the oil flowing, began to show up. In a very short time people began to come by horseback, buggy, and on foot. Then we began to think of the fire hazard, and at once engaged watchmen from the crowd to see that no smoking be allowed. Some time that day, Captain Lucas again wired Mr. Galey.

"During the night, the captain located me, and said Mrs. Lucas insisted that he take me home with him so I could get a little sleep and have some breakfast. While we were having breakfast, the first oil men arrived at his house on the way to see the big well. They were J. S. Cullinan, S. M. ('Golden Rule') Jones, and T. J. Wood from Corsicana. My brother Jim came the following day.

"In the meantime, hundreds were arriving, excitement was running high, and propositions were being made to shut in the huge gusher. Some estimates ran as high as \$10,000. Mr. Galey asked Jim what he thought about our shutting it in. Jim assured him that he felt we could do the job. Mr. Galey said we had drilled the well and should have the chance to do the rest. After working in a rain of oil for four days, all fittings were in place. Then my brother rushed in through the downpour of oil and closed the valve."

The well was capped, and a great mound of earth placed around and over it, because of the danger of fire from the great lake of oil, some 800,000 barrels which surrounded it. Despite every precaution — and Captain Lucas tried them all—sparks from a passing locomotive set the oil on fire on March 3, and the great shallow "lake" burned up in a tower of smoke and flame that reached thousands of feet into the air.

Spindletop was born, however. Derricks dotted the horizon in every direction. Exploration spread rapidly in other parts of the Gulf Coast, and refineries sprang up throughout the area. Texas was on its way!

Little did Rancher Charley Ingalls know how far his words were going to travel when he rode into Beaumont that January morning to complain bitterly that "they got a wild oil well out at Spindletop, and the blame thing is ruinin' my land."



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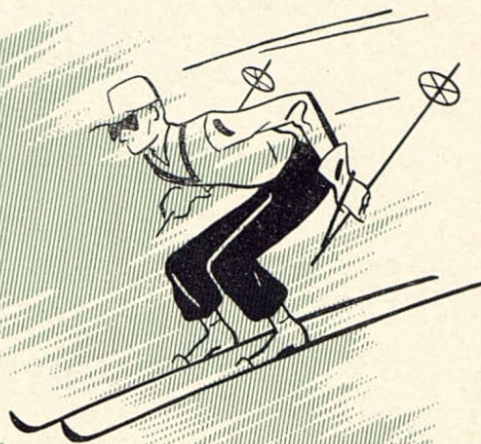
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