

# The Pipeline

*Your Conduit for Information about Oil 150*



*Celebrating the Story—  
Progress from Petroleum*

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 9

P.O. BOX 128; OIL CITY, PA 16301-0128

February, 2009

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## Featured Events

**March 3, 2009, "Pennsylvania's Early Oil Pioneers."** Dr. William Brice, Professor Emeritus at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, will present this educational program in the East Wing Rotunda of the Capitol Complex, Harrisburg, PA. A free reception begins at 1:30 p.m. followed by the program at 2:00 p.m. Contact Will Wingo 814-677-3152, Ext. 104.

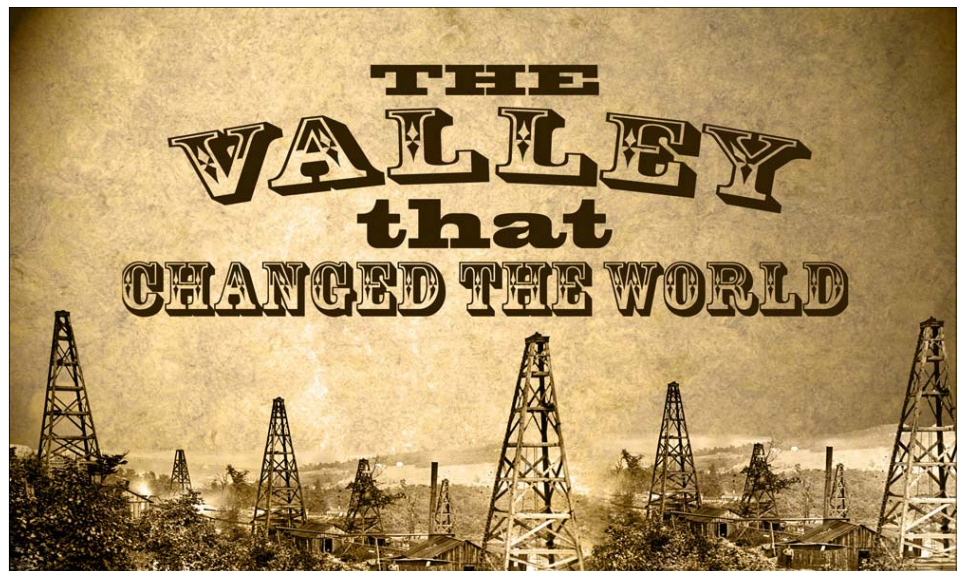
**March 13-15, 2009, The Titusville Oil Celebration Follies.** Enjoy the variety show "We Don't Have a Clue", a production based on the movie and the board game, but with historical oil figures as the characters. Sponsored by Titusville Area Senior Citizens Corporation, Titusville Leisure Services, and Titusville Winter Theater. Contact Timothy Snyder at 814-827-9134.

**March 14, 2009, Premiere of *The Valley that Changed the World*.** Join the Oil Region Alliance at the first showing of the new WQED PBS documentary celebrating 150 years of oil history. A reception will begin at 7:00 p.m. followed by the film at 7:30 p.m. Barrow-Civic Theatre, 1223 Liberty Street, Franklin, PA. Admission is \$50 per person and \$90 per couple. Contact Toni Kresinski 814-677-3152, Ext. 110.

## Oil Region Alliance To Host Premiere of New Documentary Celebrating 150 Years of Oil

*by Will Wingo*

The Oil Region Alliance, Oil 150 and WQED Multimedia will present the premiere public screening of *The Valley that Changed the World*, an hour-long documentary chronicling the development of the petroleum industry in northwest Pennsylvania – and the world. The production, by WQED Multimedia, Pittsburgh, features a wide-range of historians and personalities from both the Oil Region and beyond, including



Susan Beates, Dr. William Brice, Kathy Flaherty, Pamela Forker, Harvey Golubock, Bill Huber, Lois McElwee, Neil McElwee, Barbara Zolli and others.

*The Valley that Changed the World* is produced by Iris Samson and Pierina Morelli and was written by Iris Sampson; Pierina Morelli also edited and served as Director of Photography. Sound Mix is by Frank Caloiero and Graphics by Paula Zetter. The Executive Producer is Jocelyn Hough and Vice President of Production is Darryl Ford-Williams. Funding for this Oil 150 project has been provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the National Park Service, Dr. & Mrs. Arthur William Phillips Charitable Trust, the Edith Justus Charitable Trust, the Elizabeth S. Black Charitable Trust, the Philo and Sarah Blaisdell Foundation, the Petroleum History Institute, and Edward Jones Investments.

A reception with beverages and hors d'oeuvres will precede the screening at the Barrow-Civic Theatre, 1223 Liberty Street, Franklin, Pennsylvania on Saturday, March 14, 2009. The reception will begin at 7:00 pm and the screening at 7:30. Each attendee will also receive a personal copy of the HD DVD as soon as it is available.

Please join us for this exciting event. Guests are asked to wear formal attire or period costumes appropriate to the Oil Boom days. The admission price is \$50 per person and \$90 per couple. For reservations, please contact Toni Kresinski at the ORA at 1-800-483-6264, extension 110, [tkresinski@oilregion.org](mailto:tkresinski@oilregion.org).



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### Newsletter Editor-in-Chief

Mark Heim

## Editor's Column—Mark's Remarks Bluegrass Bands Compete in Oil Song Contest



**Mark Heim**

The Oil 150 Celebration is a series of celebrations stretching over 17 months, ending this December. So far, there have been ribbon cuttings, a kickoff, roundtable discussions of vital petroleum issues and oil history presentations. As the Pennsylvania Oil Patch emerges from winter, the real celebratory gatherings are just beginning. Witness: the Second Annual Oil Country BlueGrass Festival at Oil City, Pennsylvania's Arlington Hotel, which this year also hosted the Oil 150 Song Writing Contest. Over 30 bands attracted fans to overflowing crowds for three days. It's a problem festival promoter Ron Shoup says he's happy to have. Each band was featured in a mini concert, and jam sessions lasted well into the wee hours of the morning.

Bluegrass and string band music is uniquely American. So is the story of the oil industry with Edwin Drake and Uncle Billy Smith in Venango County, Pennsylvania near Titusville in August 1859. The music emanated from the hills and hollows of the Appalachians from Georgia to New York. The competition bands had roots in Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Seven of the bands unveiled oil-themed songs written especially for the competition portion of the Bluegrass Festival.

The songs resonated with social comment, history and family pride. *Out of the Blue* performed "Gateway to the Past." For band members, oil wells were a common sight while hunting and fishing with nary a second thought. "But it brings back a train of thought: What these people were striving to do, what they were going through and what the results would be." A rollicking tune based on oil region history.

The *Old Hats* (no one wearing old hats) introduced a heart-tugging song of the hard times in the boom and bust cycle of the oil business. People were driven to leave their babies on door steps. An attention getting vehicle featuring the dissonant sound and rhythm of the old oil pump jacks. The song is from the perspective an oil field worker with a wife and two children who loses a foot in a tragic work accident.

The *New Generation String Band*, a group where the old music meets young musicians, featured a story based on a child's wonderment at an oil sheen rainbow in a puddle of water. "Look daddy, a rainbow fell out of the sky!" "Rainbows on the Water"...Oil through the eyes of a child.



**The grand prize winning Church Street Blues band singing "Black Bubblin' Crude." (Photo by Mark Heim)**

(Continued Page 3)



Oil 150 is an educational non-partisan celebration administered by the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism (ORA). ORA is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. ORA is registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations. ORA also administers the Oil Region National Heritage Area, designated by Congress in 2004.



## (Continued from Page 2) Bluegrass Song Competition

Rich with the closely woven harmonies typifying bluegrass music, the *Church Street Blues* intone "Black Bubblin' Crude." It is simply bluegrass at its finest, and the song is based on research by band members on Col. Drake and Billy Smith, Oil City, Butler and Titusville, three of the many oil towns in the Pennsylvania Oil Region. Black Bubblin' Crude was awarded first place in the competition.

Members of the *Allegheny String Band* say their song, "Uncle Charlie" is based on a number of family members who worked the oil fields in remote Forest County, only a dozen and half miles northeast of Oil City. Uncle Charlie Nason helped drill over 100 wells there, and was awarded a medal at age 80 celebrating his being one of the oldest workers in the oil fields. A very homey song.

The *Southside Stringdings* performed "Shebang", from the oil field vernacular referring to a temporary

dwelling set up by seekers of riches in the oil fields with plans for a quick and early retirement. And while that probably didn't happen, as the song says, there were riches then and there are riches now. The *Southside Stringdings* are a home-grown Oil City band with a sound and flavor uniquely their own.

Second place in the oil theme song writing competition went to the *Mountain Harmony Band* with "Oil Set the World on Fire." A lively full-bodied Bluegrass Band with a history based song by a family with producing oil wells at home.

*Church Street Blues* went home with \$300 in prize money and the Mountain Harmony Band received \$100 in prize money. The Oil Country Blue Grass Festival was coordinated by the Oil 150 Committee affiliated with Take Pride in Oil City. The Song Writing Competition was sponsored by the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism's Oil 150 Steering Committee.

The latch string is out. The celebration is warming up. Come on to the Pennsylvania Oil Region and join the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Oil Industry! See you there!

## Check It Out!



Oil 150's Traveling History Exhibit will be on display at the following locations:

PA Welcome Center  
Greene County (I-79 North)  
March 4-29, 2009

Butler County Historical Society  
123 West Diamond Street  
Butler, PA  
March 30-April 27, 2009

The State Museum of Pennsylvania  
300 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA  
April 29-May 31, 2009



*Drake's Well at Titusville, Pennsylvania*  
by Fred Carrow

## Pennsylvania's Early Oil Pioneers

Presented by

Dr. William Brice, Professor Emeritus,  
University of Pittsburgh  
Johnstown, PA

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 2:00 P.M.  
East Wing Rotunda of the Capitol Complex  
Harrisburg, PA

A free reception will begin at 1:30 P.M.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend.

Sponsored by  
Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism  
and  
Pennsylvania Joint Legislative Air and  
Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee

For More Information:

Will Wingo, Oil 150 Director  
P.O. Box 128 Oil City, PA 16301  
(814) 677-3152, Ext. 104  
(800)-483-6264  
wwingo@oilregion.org



Celebrating the Story—  
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## Oil Region Alliance Hosts Oil History Workshop

by Melissa Mann

On February 7 and 14, 2009, the Oil Region Alliance hosted an Oil History Workshop at the Oil City Library.

Local historian Neil McElwee presented a program entitled "Celebrating Pennsylvania's Great Oil Companies." Using historic photographs, maps, old oil cans, replica oil tankers, and other visuals, McElwee weaved the story of Pennsylvania's oil companies from 1859 through the end of the twentieth century. The companies highlighted were Atlantic Refining Company, Galena Oil Company, Signal Oil, Freedom Oil Works Company, Valvoline Oil Company, Pennsylvania Refining Company, Pure Oil Company, Pennzoil, Sun Oil Company, Gulf Oil Corporation, and Quaker State Corporation, among others.

Thirty attendees enjoyed the 6-hour program, asking interesting questions and even participating in a group sing of the Atlantic Oil Company theme song.

Summaries of Mr. McElwee's company histories are found at [www.oil150.com](http://www.oil150.com) in the Essay section.



Neil McElwee presents a lesson on the oil companies of Pennsylvania.

(Photo by Melissa Mann)

## Now Available From Oil 150!



A limited number of the *People of Pithole* prints are now available at [www.oil150.com](http://www.oil150.com).  
The 12" x 24" prints include a descriptive key and are shipped flat on foam core.

In 1995, artist Daniel "Deac" Mong completed the 3' x 13' *People of Pithole* mural at the Pithole Visitor's Center. The mural, based on photographs from the Drake Well Museum archives, commemorates the men and women who contributed to the legacy of Pithole. It is a compelling portrayal of the early Pennsylvania Oil Region's human dimension.

Fine prints based on the mural were made available by The Colonel, Inc. (now Friends of Drake Well) in 1996.

*People of Pithole* prints retail for \$40 and can be ordered from the Oil 150 online store at [www.oil150.com](http://www.oil150.com) or by visiting the Oil Region Alliance sales location at 206 Seneca Street—4th Floor, Oil City, Pennsylvania.

Visit [www.oil150.com](http://www.oil150.com) to find more fine oil history prints, commemorative products, apparel, oil history books and much more.



## Please Note:

The Oil Barons Ball scheduled for March 7, 2009 at the Latonia Theatre in Oil City, PA has been cancelled.

Visit our calendar at [www.oil150.com](http://www.oil150.com) to find other exciting events in the Oil Region.



### Staff

**William Wingo, Director**  
**Melissa Mann, Deputy Director**  
**Amy Nurss, Development Specialist**

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**Randy Seitz, President/COO**  
**Marilyn Black, Vice-President for Heritage Development**

**National Transit Building**  
**206 Seneca Street, 4th Floor**  
**P.O. Box 128**  
**Oil City, PA 16301-0128**

**814-677-3152**  
**800-483-6264**  
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