

100 Years at the Wood River Refinery

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WOOD RIVER REFINERY HISTORY MUSEUM

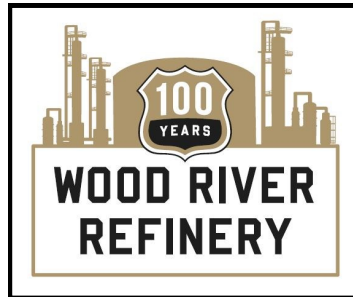
100 YEARS STRONG

The Wood River Refinery—an institution that is well-known by those of us who walk in and out of its gates each and every day. But what we tend to take for granted as we swipe our badge and head to work is that this place, this Wood River Refinery, has seen a lot over the years.

It's seen towns sprout up around its perimeters. It's seen generations of workers come and go. It's seen industrial booms, world wars, natural disasters, technological innovations, market highs and lows, and legendary accomplishments.

The Wood River Refinery is 100 years strong.

As we enter 2017, we will begin to celebrate our centennial birthday. The celebration



will last for about a year and a half, allowing us to highlight important milestones spanning our construction start date through the first day we brought oil into the plant. This extended celebration will also allow us to recognize all of the important people who have

made the refinery what it is today—our community, our local government leaders, our retirees, and our employees.

As we begin this period of celebration, we hope you'll take the time to think back on those early days and imagine what it must have been like to bring this refinery to life.

Each month, we will publish an e-mail newsletter with historical information about our origin as well as other important events and accomplishments that make up our history.

Please join us in celebrating 100 Years at the Wood River Refinery.

What was it like to bring this refinery to life?

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IN THE BEGINNING

The Wood River Refinery provided an important foundation for the success of the Shell Oil Company in the United States from the very beginning. The company can trace its roots to 1912 when two small bands of entrepreneurial European oilmen who were dispatched

by the parent company, Royal Dutch Shell, set out to establish a toe-hold in America and to take on the industry giant, Standard Oil.

One group set up shop on the west coast as the American Gasoline Company, marketing

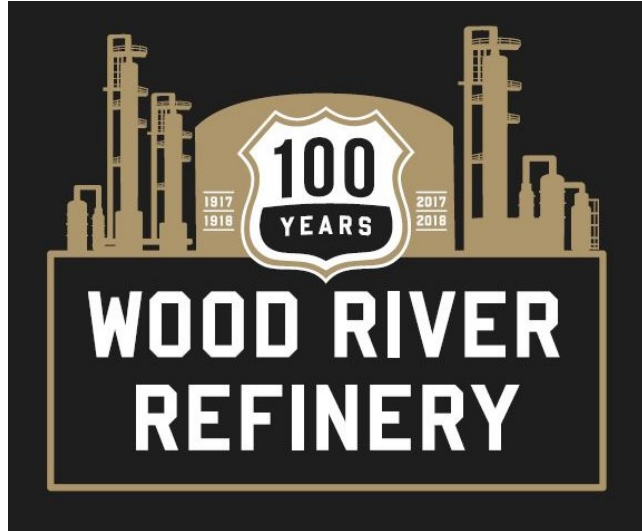
the gasoline it imported from Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies. The second group traveled to oil-rich Oklahoma where under the direction of Royal Dutch Shell, it was to start a new crude oil-producing company to be known as Roxana Petroleum Company.



Comments or Suggestions?

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I N T H E B E G I N N I N G (C O N T .)

The company's name was chosen by the wife of the company's first business manager, Marcus S. Abrahams. It appears she picked "Roxana" for no reason other than it was the name of the wife of Alexander the Great. The name "Roxana" means "dawn," "bright," or "little star."



1920s Shell Motor Road Guide

The fledging Roxana Petroleum Company's first few years in business were spent acquiring oil rights and producing crude throughout Oklahoma. However, by 1916, the management of Royal Dutch Shell had determined that Roxana's role should be expanded – that it should become a fully

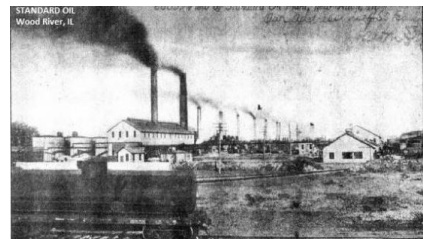
integrated oil company involved in producing, transporting, refining, and selling petroleum products throughout the mid-continent region of the United States.

This decision would give the Wood River Refinery its start, and within two years, a new refinery to the north of St. Louis on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River would go "on stream," giving the company its first permanent manufacturing base east of the Rockies.

Meanwhile, Standard Oil had established its presence in this region when the company constructed a refinery in an area that would become Wood River. The area was largely an empty valley except for a few far-flung farm houses.

The arrival of Standard Oil in 1907 began a transformation of the area. As workers began to flood into the region, a local entrepreneur, A.E. Benbow, founded Benbow City along the western side of the site of the new refinery. Benbow City was a town of saloons, gambling, and "other adventures."

Workers mostly stayed in Alton (est. 1837), the only "nearby" town with a hotel, or in East Alton (est. 1893), renting a spot to live. Both towns were just a few miles away traveling by rail or "best way possible" to the Standard Oil work site. The City of Wood River was incorporated in 1908. Benbow City was annexed to Wood River in 1917.



Standard Oil Refinery in Wood River

It was the presence of Standard Oil that would eventually draw the fledging Roxana Petroleum Oil Company, later known as Shell Oil Company, to the area. And thus our story begins.