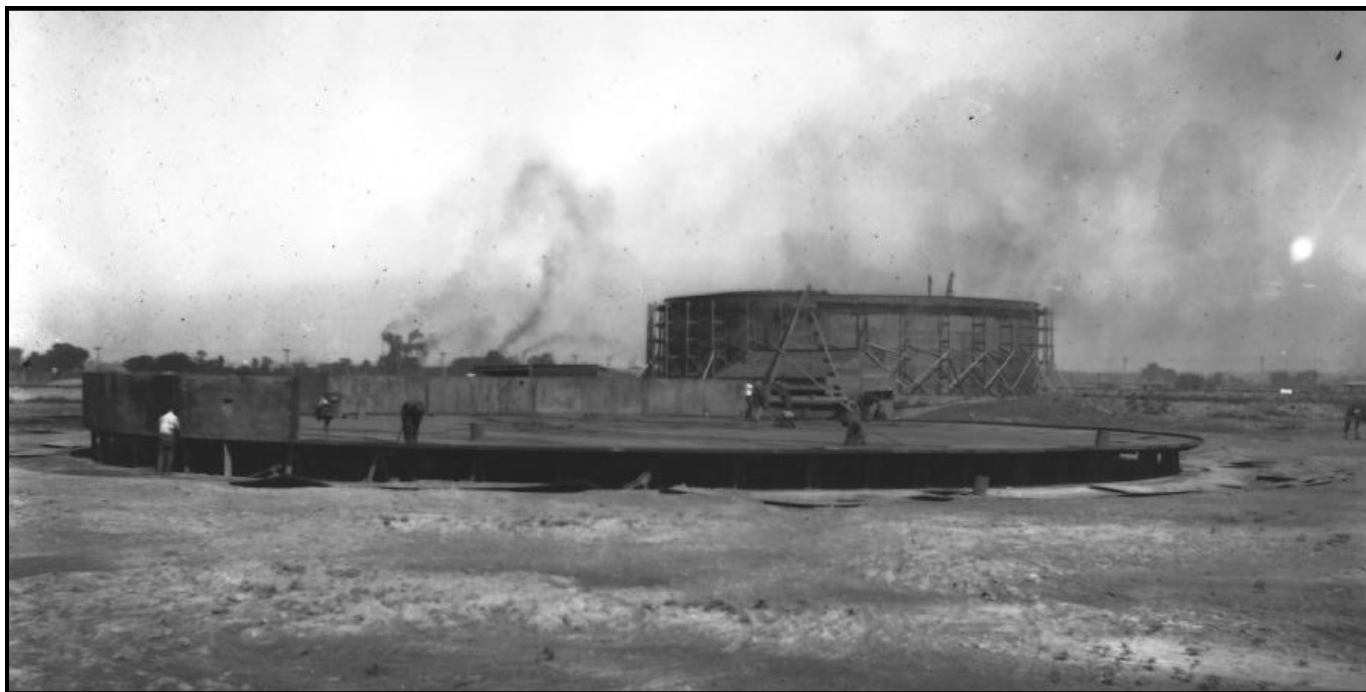


100 Years at the Wood River Refinery

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE
WOOD RIVER REFINERY HISTORY MUSEUM



Storage Tank Construction

CONSTRUCTION DELAYED

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While the Wood River Refinery was basically a duplication of the Cushing Refinery, this refinery would take nearly three times as long to complete. In addition to the wartime shortages of material, increasing railroad freight congestion by late 1917 was making it more difficult to obtain anything, even if it was essentially available.

Along with these difficulties, the average family was beginning to have problems on the home front as the cost of food,

clothing, and other material needs was increasing significantly due to the war effort. The labor field began a legitimate drive for increased wages.

By early September 1917, labor shortages were beginning to develop at the Wood River Refinery construction site. It was reported that the construction of the tank farms was affected as the carpenters and mechanics refused to work. Negotiations established a solution, work resumed, and

the workers returned to the job site. However, soon after, the bricklayers stopped work on the Boiler House.

By late September, P.A. Engelbregt, the refinery construction manager, was reporting the new refinery would not be ready by the time the pipeline was scheduled for completion in late February 1918. He reported that more likely, the refinery would be ready in April or May.

(cont. on Page 2)

CONSTRUCTION DELAYED (CONT.)

Even with these difficulties, refinery construction was still moving, slowly but surely. Hundreds of workers were making progress on the Boiler House, Trumble Units, the Stills Units, numerous storage tanks, inter-connecting piping, and six other structures known as the Executive Homes.

Transportation to this "remote" location in 1917 could be difficult even on good

days. Therefore, the various department managers for the refinery were provided with homes so they could be available for refinery problems at any hour of the day.

The Executive Homes were located along the Alton-Edwardsville Road, which is often referred to as the Frontage Road today. The area where the first homes stood is now the lower front lawn to the

right of Main Office Road as you enter the refinery.

There were three two-story homes and three single story homes of varying sizes and design. The largest home next to the road was officially known as Home #1. It was also known as the home of the refinery manager.

No floor plans or interior photographs of the homes are

known to exist. Preserved plot plans show the locations of the homes, and there are some photographs of the exterior of the homes also available. Several years later, four additional homes were built behind the original homes along with a garage and a tennis court.



Trumble Unit 2



Rerun Stills



Executive Homes (House #1 on the right)



Executive Homes

August Trivia Question

Q. Where was the very first service station located?

A. St. Louis, MO or Pittsburgh, PA

Drawing Winners: Bob Heiens and Mark Greenemay

The location of the first service station depends on the definition of a "service station." The terms "service station" and "filling station" were used interchangeably from the very beginning. Later the phrase "gas station" became popular.

The very first place for the early automobile owner to purchase gasoline was to drop by almost any general store, hardware store, or even a blacksmith or pharmacy. The driver would take a bucket or other container into the building to have the clerk "fill 'er up." The owner would then

return to his vehicle and usually using a funnel, pour the gasoline into his automobile.

In some towns, salesmen would push carts around with gasoline tanks mounted on them, dispensing the fuel through a hose into the customer's bucket. For the most part, dispensing of gasoline was accomplished with buckets and funnels. Metering happened mostly by "eyeballing it." Real metering did not begin to appear until after 1911.

The first gas station or filling station built specifically for the delivery of gasoline was con-

structed in 1905 at 420 S. Theresa Avenue in St. Louis, MO. The driver still had to go into the building, and the gasoline was delivered by the "bucket method."

The first drive-in service station was constructed by the Gulf Refining Company and was in Pittsburgh, PA. The main feature was an attendant who would come to the driver to dispense the fuel, thus the "service." It opened on December 1, 1913.

This station was also the first architect-designed station and was the first to distribute road

maps. On the first day of operation, the station sold 30 gallons of gasoline at 27 cents a gallon. That would be about \$3.78 per gallon in today's economy.

In 2012, there were 114,474 filling stations in the USA according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This number is about 4,000 less than 10 years earlier.

Drawing winners should contact Megan Allen to claim their prize.

Trivia Question

What was germ oil?

Answer the trivia question by sending your response to WRR.Community.Relations@p66.com. Next month, we'll reveal the answer and select one lucky winner to receive a 100th Anniversary trinket!

CONTINENTAL OIL COMPANY

As we continue looking back at our history, our story intertwines with the stories of the companies that owned this refinery, both past and present. We invite you to learn more about a previous parent company, Continental Oil Company or Conoco.

In January 1869, the Denver Rocky Mountain News ran an advertisement announcing that coal oil was selling at a cost between eighty cents and one dollar per gallon. Coal oil was considered a luxury, refined from petroleum for a new type of lamp that was beginning to illuminate homes in the Rocky Mountain area.

Until this time, most residents depended on whale oil, tallow (animal fat), or candles for illumination. Among the candle users was a young man named Isaac Elder Blake. Blake, one of eleven children, was born in 1844 in Canada. The family later moved to Pennsylvania. His father was a reverend with the Methodist Episcopal Church and was serving as a chaplain during the Civil War when he died.

Blake tried to join the U.S. Cavalry, but with a height of six feet, one inch and a weight of over 200 pounds, he was unable to meet the rigid requirements. Blake, like many from that era, was an entrepreneur who at the age of 25, was making \$1,000 a day selling crude oil in Pennsylvania. One year, he made \$100,000 after expenses. However, all was not always so rosy, and a few years later, he lost everything

when a speculative crude oil purchase fell through placing him deeply in debt.

Blake then decided to leave Pennsylvania and head west, settling in Utah after a short visit to California. By the age of 30, after being married for seven years and becoming a father, Blake began to appreciate the desires of a consumer. He decided success in the oil

pany near the Union Pacific Railroad Freight Depot. The company they proposed was simply referred to as the Continental Oil Company.

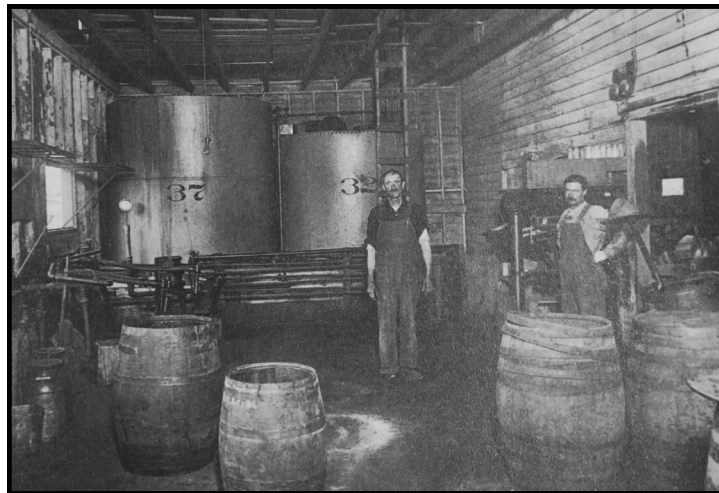
For reasons not fully explained, the city council rejected the proposal, and the petition was shelved on April 30, 1875. Blake, unsatisfied with the outcome, persisted in his efforts, and on November 25, 1875, The

and in all its products of every kind."

Blake's product line consisted of coal oil, kerosene, candles, bulk wax, axle grease, and a few non-petroleum products such as lard and ready-mixed paints. Blake was constantly annoyed at the wholesale prices which he felt should be much lower. He knew that the costs were inflated because of confusion and waste that existed in the early 1870s oil industry. As an example, some children, known as "oil dippers," used to frequent oil fields and scoop up oil from the surfaces of streams and ponds. By selling this run-off product, some "dippers" could make \$20 to \$30 a day.

Oil rigs were often abandoned before all the recoverable oil had been removed because the operators felt they could do better by starting new wells. Producers at this time knew little about management and operations, improvising as they went along. The early refineries were scenes of frequent explosions, fires, and other accidents. There were no manufacturing standards, no safety departments, and little to no semblance or standardization from refinery to refinery.

(cont. on Page 5)



Early Compound House

industry lay in marketing and exploration. Blake, along with several others, developed a plan to establish a company.

In 1875, Blake (whose title was trustee and superintendent), the director Mr. Richmond, and three associates prepared a petition for the council of Ogden, UT to establish a depot to receive oil and distribute it to the territories of Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Nevada. Blake and Richmond proposed constructing a suitable building to be owned by the com-

Continental Oil and Transportation Company was established.

The company was incorporated in the state of Iowa with an authorized capital of \$700,000 divided into shares of \$100 each. Blake was, of course, the primary shareholder at 2,440 shares. The articles of incorporation, specifying the company's objectives, present and future, stated "...in the main, the producing, purchasing, refining, transportation, selling, delivering, and dealing in petroleum,

CONTINENTAL OIL COMPANY (CONT.)

Isaac Blake was involved early on in the marketing of gasoline which was sold as a fuel for stoves and was also used for cleaning purposes. Later he offered products such as hard oil, which was used for lubrication for bearings on farm machinery, harness oil for leather goods, hoof oil for horses, household lubricating oil, liquid paraffin, and cartridge oil.

Denver, CO had become Continental's marketing center early in the company's history. Shortly after the founding of the company, Blake and his associates went to Denver to consider potential marketing in Colorado and plans for offices.

In the spring of 1877, Blake ventured to San Francisco having heard about some oil ventures opening up. Blake was instrumental in the founding of the Pacific Coast Oil Company which became the first drilling company in California.

Blake's imagination as an oil pioneer also impacted his ability as an entrepreneur. One innovation was the introduction of a railroad "tank car" which consisted of two large storage tanks at the end of a box car with a storage area for dry freight in the center. Other innovations included special steel barrels encased in wooden staves (strips of wood that form the side of a barrel) and a Continental five-gallon oil can that was attached to a rocker (like a rocking chair) to allow a person to pour the product from the can without

lifting it.

The Continental Oil and Transportation Company of California incorporated in November of 1877 with the vision to provide "transportation in tank cars or in any mode now in use or which may be in use, petroleum products, all kinds of oil, and any fluids susceptible to transportation ..." The incorporation also allowed the manufacturing of cans and cases for exporting petroleum products

an Islands.

In these early years, there was a need for many petroleum products, but the distribution channels were weak. Continental was successful selling products that were well-known and in demand, including oil for lamps, candles, and certain types of waxes. But the company faced difficulties when introducing new products such as axle grease, lubrication for mining equipment, and oils for

substitute fuel oil. He worked closely with gas companies that already offered an attractive market. Blake was always looking beyond the present into the future. He was even looking at the possibility of using fuel oil to power locomotives.

In these days petroleum products were loaded into large barrels and shipped to the distributor. The distributor could only order "by the barrel." When the barrel was empty, it had to be picked up and replaced with a full barrel. The major drawback to this process was it often affected sales since there would be a length of time the distributor would be without product to sell to the customers.

Blake solved this problem by developing the horse-drawn tank wagon delivery system. The driver would simply open the spigot of the tank wagon,

drawing off only the amount the distributor needed to refill his barrel. This method also allowed routine delivery schedules to be established so that a distributor would never run out of product. This horse-drawn tank wagon method was used from the late 1870s to the early 1900s.

Also during this time, a new player had entered the petroleum game. His name was John D. Rockefeller.



as well as local distribution.

In 1878, the company built four new manufacturing facilities and expanded marketing. Besides selling products in the United States, Blake also had his eye on international marketing, and within a few months, he expanded into Mexico, Canada, and the Pacific markets, even though marketing by ship was limited. By the end of 1878, Blake and his organization had begun shipments to the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, and the Samo-

use on harnesses and other similar gear.

Continental was also becoming a pioneer in the development of pipelines stretching not only over land but also across small rivers and streams. In 1883, Blake and his oil company laid out plans for the first of these in California.

Also during this period, California's population was becoming dissatisfied with coal as the primary fuel for their homes. Blake developed an idea to

100th Anniversary Community Birthday Party Fun in Roxana

Celebrating



100 Years!



**100th Anniversary
Float in
Roxana
Homecoming
Parade**



**100th Anniversary Soapbox Derby Car
in East Alton Soapbox Derby Race
(Thank you to Mick Cope for
designing and building!)**



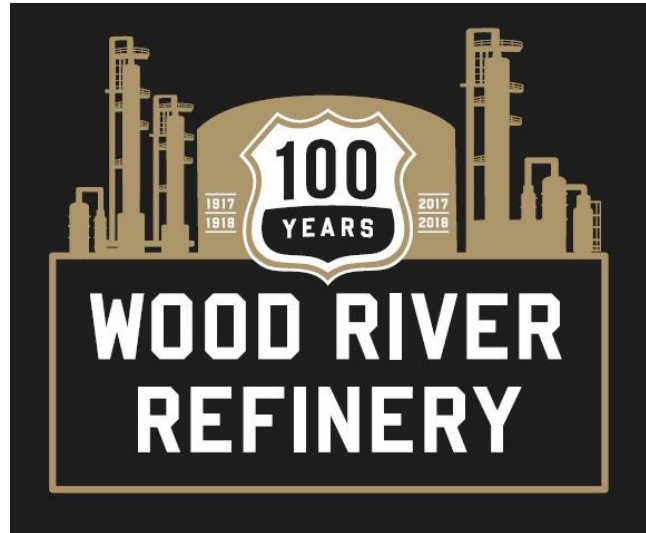
Comments or Suggestions?

Contact:

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E-mail: megan.allen@p66.com



Roxana Homecoming Parade Volunteers