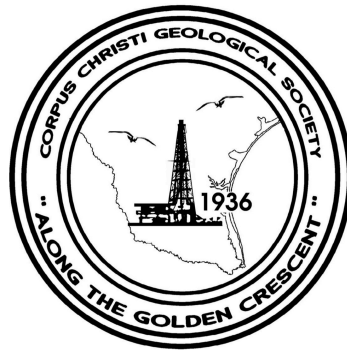


# **BULLETIN**

## **Corpus Christi Geological Society**



and

## **Coastal Bend Geophysical Society**



**February/March  
2017  
ISSN 0739 5620**

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## CORPUS CHRISTI GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 1068\* C.C. TX. 78403

2016-2017

[www.ccgeo.org](http://www.ccgeo.org)

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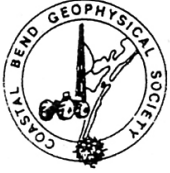
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**2016-2017**

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Scholarship Chairman	Ed Egger	361-947-8400	<a href="mailto:edegger69@gmail.com">edegger69@gmail.com</a>
Education	Dr. Robert Schneider		

---

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## CCGS/CBGS JOINT MEETING SCHEDULE 2016-2017

September 2016							October 2016							November 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3							1			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												

GCAGS Convention  
*"Explore The Future"*  
 September 18-20, 2016  
 Corpus Christi, TX.

GCAGS Post-Convention  
 Party & Society Kickoff  
 Bar-B-Q  
 Thursday, October 13  
 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

11:30am-1:00pm.  
 Speaker: Bruce Moriarty,  
 Principal Geophysical Advisor,  
 Lumina Geophysical  
 "Simultaneous Inversion of  
 Spectrally-Broadened 3D  
 Seismic Data: Case Study for  
 the Olmos Unconventional  
 Play, South Texas"

December 2016							January 2017							February 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31					26	27	28				

Combined  
 November/December for the  
 Holidays.

11:30am-1:00pm.  
 Speaker Howard Watt,  
 Director of Sales and  
 Marketing, North American  
 Land Acq. for Geokinetics, Inc.  
 "Recent Advances in Onshore  
 Seismic Data Acquisition  
 Methods and What they can  
 do for You"

## CCGS/CBGS Joint Meeting Schedule 2016-2017

March 2017							April 2017							May 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4							1		1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31			
							30													

Combined  
February/March for Spring  
Break

## Calendar of Meetings and Events

### Calendar of Area Monthly Meetings

Corpus Christi Geological/Geophysical Society.....	Third Wed.—11:30a.m.
SIPES Corpus Christi Luncheons.....	Last Tues.—11:30a.m.
South Texas Geological Society Luncheons.....	Second Wed—noon San Antonio
San Antonio Geophysical Society Meetings.....	Fourth Tuesday
Austin Geological Society.....	First Monday
Austin Chapter of SIPES.....	First Thursday
Houston Geological Society Luncheons.....	Last Wednesday
Central Texas Section of Society of Mining, Metallurgy & Exp.....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues every other month in San Antonio



## **PRESIDENT'S PAGE**

It is hard to believe that 2017 is well underway as the holiday season flew by for me. I was traveling quite a bit in December and missed the last deadline. My apologies!

In January the country welcomed a new President who understands the business community and wants the U.S. to be energy-independent. The stock market soared after Mr. Trump was elected in November, and we can hope that our country will finally have an economic rebound as it did after Ronald Reagan was elected.

It was great to see everyone at the January meeting. To catch everyone up on the latest:

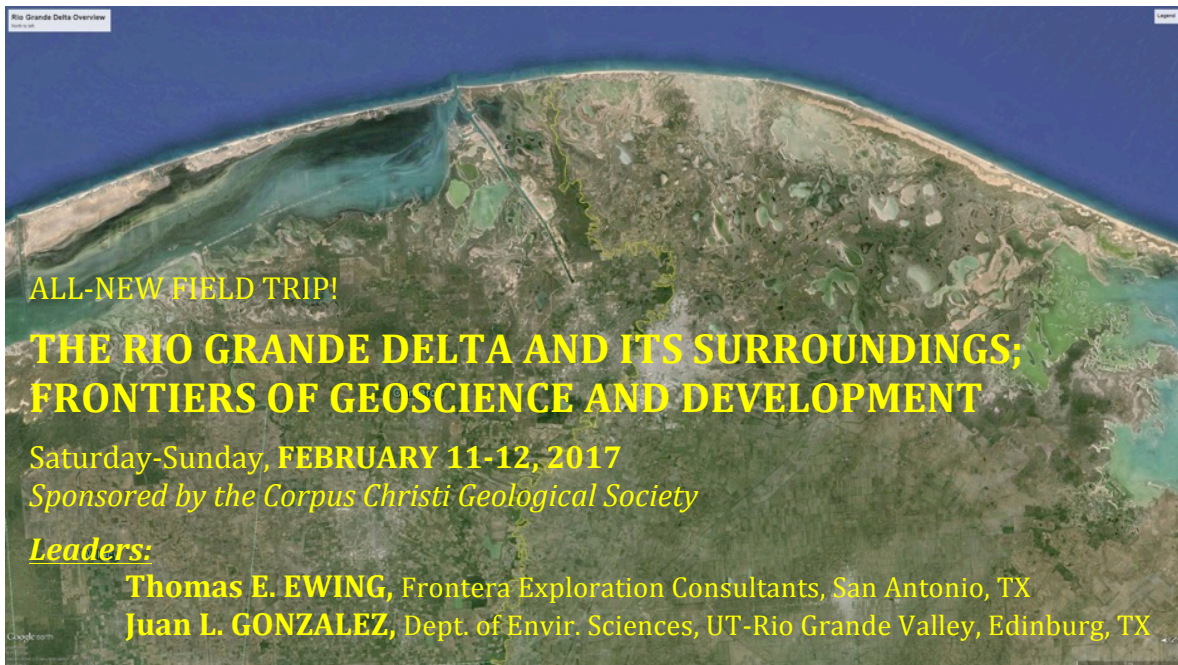
- Tom Ewing is running a field trip to the Rio Grande Delta with stops along the South Texas Sand Sheet. Travel is by bus leaving Corpus Christi on Saturday, Feb 11 at 9:00 am; overnight in South Padre Island; and returning to CC approximately 5:00 pm Sunday, Feb 12. The trip is being offered to the memberships of the South Texas and Austin Geological Societies. Anyone else who is interested is welcome to attend.
- The Scholarship Committee is offering a Beer Tasting and Pub Crawl on Saturday, Feb 18. The tour will feature three local brew pubs and will depart by bus departing at 1:30 pm.

The remaining luncheon meetings for the 2016- 17 year will be held in February, April, and May. The Executive Committee is working to finalize the Bylaws revisions so that they may be voted on during the May meeting.

Respectfully,

Barbara Beynon





Join your colleagues on a two-day exploration of the Rio Grande Delta, a unique delta-shoreline complex at the southern tip of Texas.

The Rio Grande delta is one of the major deltas of North America. Over 1,600,000 people live on the Holocene delta plain and its Pleistocene ancestors, yet geologic knowledge is limited.

The delta was formed by the sediment-rich Rio Grande/Rio Bravo during the Altithermal. The river carried huge but irregular flows into a semiarid environment. Eolian activity has extensively modified the delta plain. Human settlement and infrastructure has exploited the delta and its river, such that recovering natural conditions and values is a present challenge. Major historical developments, including Mexican War and Civil War battle sites, will be visited as well.

Combining available geologic information with global satellite photography gives a balanced view of an important delta. But a lot of work remains to be done! Come help define the problems and the ways we can resolve them.

**We will visit:**

- The South Texas eolian sand sheet and Sal del Rey, an historic salt deposit
- Lagunas, esteros and distributary channels in the Holocene floodplain
- Clay dunes and the 'hilly delta'; erosion and accretion
- Transgressive shoreline at Boca Chica and South Padre
- Thick Oligocene ash in the upper valley-side bluffs near Rio Grande City

**Logistics:** Trip departs from Corpus Christi, TX 9am Saturday (place TBA), and returns to Corpus Christi, TX about 6:30 pm Sunday. Bus, hotel on South Padre Island (double occupancy), 67-page guidebook, lunches, and water are provided. You cover: dinner, personal items.

**Cost:** \$300 (students, \$150), includes bus, overnight lodging, breakfast and lunch, and guidebook; must be received by January 27th; no refunds thereafter.

Send checks to Corpus Christi Geological Society (PO Box 1068, Corpus Christi TX 78403), or give checks or cash to trip leader (made out to CCGS). For credit card payment, contact Leighton Devine at (361) 510-8872.

**Contact:** *If you're coming, please contact the trip leaders by January 27:*

- |               |                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Thomas Ewing  | tewing@fronteraexploration.com |
| Juan Gonzalez | juan.l.gonzalez@utrgv.edu      |
| Dawn Bissell  | bissells@swbell.net            |



## CBGS President's Letter

### News -

**Contraction of the seismic service industry continues. Geotrace, another major seismic processing contractor has closed the doors. Geokinetics has acquired the Geotrace intellectual property.**

**TAMUK will offer a Kingdom Class on Tuesday evenings, 6:30-9:15 PM. This is available to the professional community as well as our students. You can sign up as a 'transient' student in order to take classes without actually enrolling in the school. If anyone in the professional community wishes to sign up for this, please contact the instructor, Robert Schneider [Robert.Schneider@tamuk.edu](mailto:Robert.Schneider@tamuk.edu)**

### CBGS Business -

**CBGS would like to do a Geophysical Technical Seminar. Looking at a date in March. Seismic Attributes has been suggested. Other suggestions are welcome**

### Education/Events -

#### **- GSH**

**Interesting Topics in Land Seismic Data Acquisition, Processing and Inversion Webinar, Houston, Feb 28-Mar3.**

**There are numerous technical luncheons if you happen to be in Houston. Check the following link: [Geophysical Society of Houston Calendar](#)**

**CBGS has a revenue sharing agreement with GSH. Mention CBGS if you register for GSH events.**

#### **- HGS**

**Mudrocks Conference, Houston, Mar 7-8, 2017**

**Carbonates Applied to Hydrocarbon Exploration Exploitation, March 13-17, Houston**

#### **- SEG**

**SEG has 450+ eLearning courses online from \$0.99 to \$150.00(most expensive I saw)**

**<http://www.seg.org/professional-development/seg-on-demand>**

**Annual SEG Convention, Houston, Sept 24-27**

#### **- AAPG**

**Deepwater and Shelf Reservoirs: New Technologies for New Understanding, Houston, Jan. 24-25. Annual AAPG Convention, Houston, April 3-5**

## Monthly Saying

“It takes two years to learn to speak and sixty to learn to keep quiet” - Ernest Hemingway

## Monthly Summary

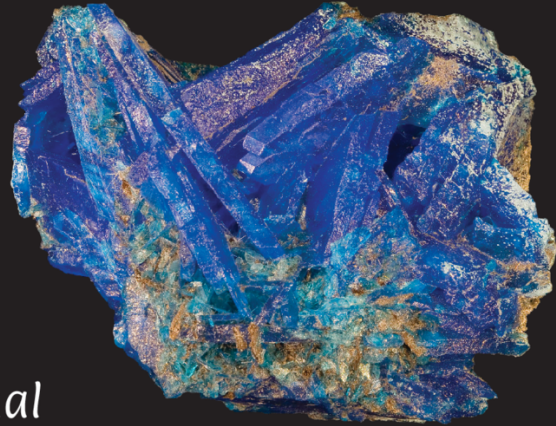
<b>Texas Oil and Gas Info</b>	<b>Current Month</b>	<b>Last Month</b>	<b>Difference</b>	
<b>Texas Production</b>	<b>MMBO/BCF</b>	<b>MMBO/BCF</b>	<b>MMBO/BCF</b>	
Oil	85.6	91.2	-5.6	Sept
Condensate	10.6	11.4	-0.8	Sept
Gas	627.3	663.6	-36.3	Sept
	<b>Current Month</b>	<b>Yr to date - 2016</b>	<b>Yr to date - 2015</b>	
<b>Texas Drilling Permits</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>8,113</b>	<b>10,549</b>	Dec
Oil wells	267	2,252	2,560	
Oil and Gas	612	4,919	6,856	
Gas wells	57	429	766	
Other	11	122	167	
<b>Total Completions</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>9,405</b>	<b>17,545</b>	Dec
Oil Completions	430	7,813	15,578	
Gas Completions	93	2,129	2,787	
New Field Discoveries	3	23	62	
Other	22	526	1,138	

Lonnie Blake—CBGS President

*Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society  
55th Gem, Mineral, Jewelry and Fossil Show*

*March 4 - 5, 2017*

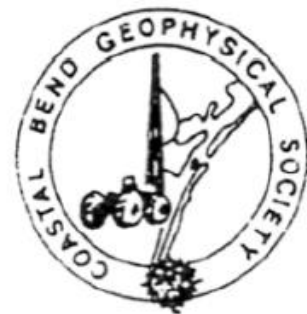
*Richard M Borchard Regional  
Fairgrounds, Exhibit Hall A  
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Robstown, TX 78380*



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CORPUS CHRISTI GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
COASTAL BEND GEOPHYSICAL SOCIETY



# LUNCHEON MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

**\*\*\* TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21st, 2017 \*\*\***

**\*\*\* CHANGED DUE TO NAPE CONFLICT \*\*\***

- 
- Location:** Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center, 402 Harbor Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78401 <http://ortizcenter.com>
- Bar Sponsor:** To be announced (*sponsors needed!*)
- Student Sponsor:** Core Laboratories and Corpus Christi Geological Society
- Time:** 11:30 am Bar, Lunch follows at 11:45 am, Speaker at 12:00 pm
- Cost:** \$25.00 (additional \$10.00 surcharge without reservation; No-shows may be billed and non-RSVP attendees cannot be guaranteed a lunch); **FREE** for students with reservation (discounted by our generous sponsors)!
- Reservations:** Please **RSVP** by 4PM on the FRIDAY before the meeting!  
E-Mail: [wes@gislerbrotherslogging.com](mailto:wes@gislerbrotherslogging.com)

*Please note that luncheon RSVPs are a commitment to the Ortiz Center and must be paid even if you can't attend the luncheon.*



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**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPONSOR PINT NIGHT OR LUNCHEON BAR, PLEASE  
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---

## ***Recent Advances in Onshore Seismic Data Acquisition Methods and What They Can Do for You***

Presented by: **Howard Watt**

### **About our Presenter:**



**Howard Watt** earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Geophysics from the University of Calgary. He has served CGGVeritas as Research and Development Deputy Manager – North America Land Acquisition, Technology Applications Manager, and Operations Manager – U.S. Land Acquisition. He presently serves as the Director of Sales and Marketing, North American Land Acquisition for Geokinetics, Inc.



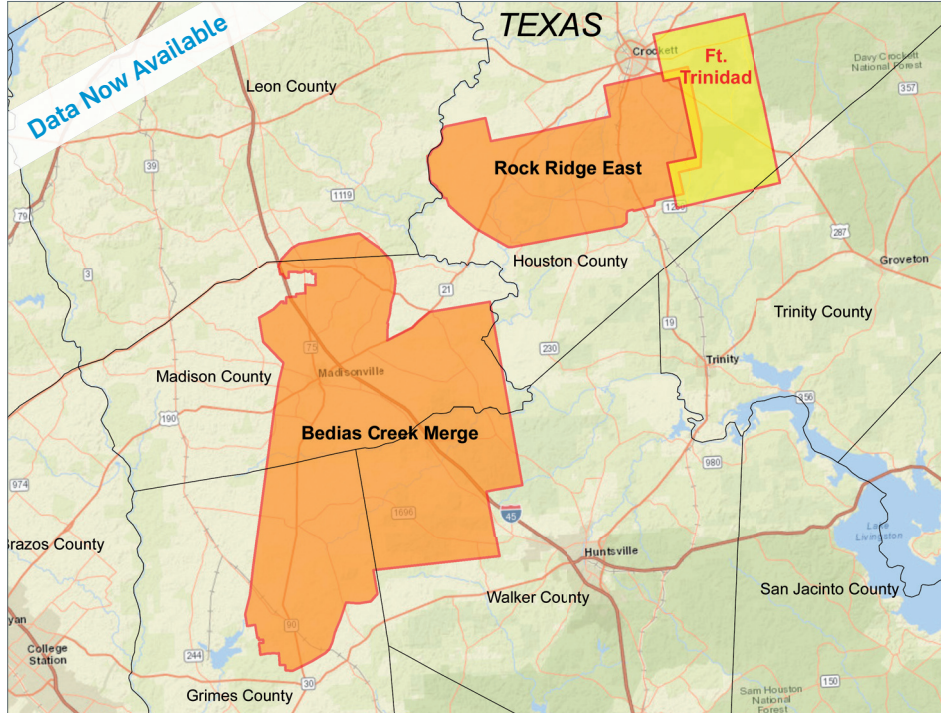
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# New Ft. Trinidad 3D Survey Houston and Trinity Counties, TX

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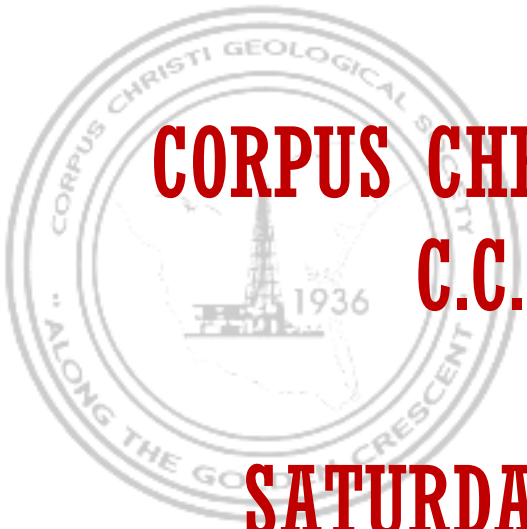
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in f t y i  
cgg.com/ROP





# **CORPUS CHRISTI GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY C.C. BREWPUB CRAWL**

## **SATURDAY - FEBRUARY 18, 2017**

### **SCHEDULE**

**1:00 PM TO 1:30 PM** – Meet at Railroad Seafood Station & Brewing Company, 1214 N. Chaparral, CC, TX 78401

**1:30 PM** – Depart for Lorelei Brewing Co.

**2:00 PM to 2:45 PM** – at Lorelei Brewing Co.

**2:45 PM** – Depart for Lazy Beach Brewing

**3:00 to 3:45 PM** – at Lazy Beach Brewing

**4:00 PM** – Depart for Rebel Toad Brewing Co.

**4:30 to 5:15 PM** – at Rebel Toad Brewing Co.

**5:30 PM** – Return to Railroad Seafood Station & Brewing Co.

**\$50.00 per person** to include transportation, one (1) pint at each venue, Lorelei, Lazy Beach and Rebel Toad, as well as a voucher code for a safe ride home from our sponsor, **TRIDE RIDESHARE!**







[www.loreleibrewing.beer](http://www.loreleibrewing.beer)



[www.lazybeachbrewing.com](http://www.lazybeachbrewing.com)



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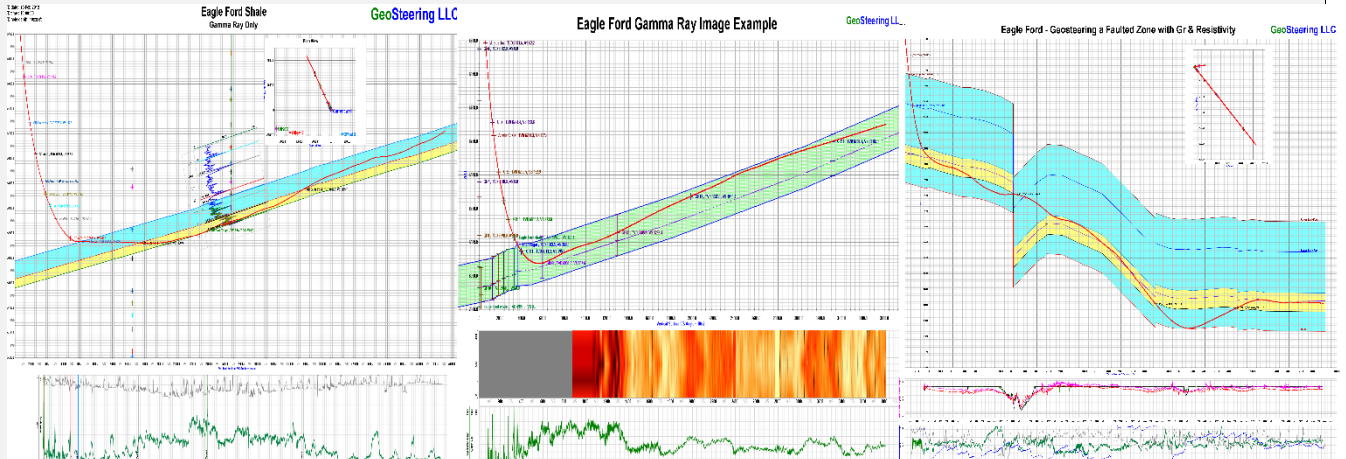
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Matt Hammer – Exploration Manager  
[mhammer@royalcctx.com](mailto:mhammer@royalcctx.com)

Telephone: 361/888-4792

Fax: 361/888-8190

## THE DRILLING OF THE WHITE POINT GASSERS, SAN PATRICIO COUNTY, TEXAS

Jeff Spencer  
675 Piney Creek Road, Bellville, TX 77418  
spencerj320@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT:** White Point Peninsula is located in San Patricio County, approximately seven miles northwest of Corpus Christi, Texas. Gas seeps on the west side of the peninsula and sulphur grains within the sediments that outcropped locally have long suggested the presence of an underlying salt dome. After the discovery of Spindletop in 1901, many explorers searched the Gulf Coast for similar surface indications of oil and gas. There are conflicting sources for the year of the first well drilled at White Point, but 1905 appears to be the most likely.

In 1914 the first of several high rate "gassers" at White Point, Texas blew in. On November 12, 1914, the White Point Oil and Gas No. 2 well encountered a gas sand at a depth of 2,255 feet. The casing was blown from the hole and the drilling rig disappeared into a large crater. The well ran wild at an estimated rate of 25-50 million cubic feet of gas per day (MMCFGD) for several weeks, eventually choking itself off.

In late 1915, the Guffey No. 2 was drilled 800 feet north of the White Point Oil and Gas No. 2 gasser. The well's estimated open flow rates were 30-125 MMCFGD. Produced sand fell in the streets of Corpus Christi, seven miles away, and when the gas was ignited the flames reached hundreds of feet into the sky and were visible for over sixty miles. At the time the well was proclaimed the "largest gas well ever developed in Texas," "one of the greatest gas wells in the world," and the "natural gas volcano." Visitors flocked to the site from all over Texas.

Many additional wells were drilled at White Point as operators continued to search for oil, which they assumed would be found deeper or downdip of the gas sands, and to produce and market the gas to the nearby towns of Taft and Corpus Christi. Many of these wells also experienced severe drilling and completion issues. By the late 1920s, successful drilling and completion of wells led to commercial gas production, and in 1930 oil was finally discovered in the field.

### INTRODUCTION

After the discovery of oil at Spindletop near Beaumont, Texas in 1901, wildcatters searched the Texas and Louisiana Gulf coast for similar surface indications of oil occurrence. The most common features looked for were topographic highs, gas or oil seeps, "sour" water in water wells, sulphur grains in surface sediments, and paraffin dirt. Many of these were indications of deeper salt domes with associated oil and gas, but these indicators could often simply point toward very shallow hydrocarbon reservoirs. White Point Peninsula is located on the north shore of Nueces Bay in San Patricio County, Texas, seven miles northwest of the city of Corpus Christi and ten miles south of the town of Sinton (Fig. 1). Gas seeps and small grains of sulphur found on the White Point peninsula attracted the attention of oil explorers.

### FIRST WELL AT WHITE POINT

Conflicting sources state that the first well drilled at White Point was in 1902, 1904, 1905, 1906, or 1907. Most of the sources do agree that this first well was drilled by a local artesian well driller, Randolph Robertson. 1902 is the earliest year claimed for the Robertson well ([http://kenprinter.com/Rachal%20Family%20History\\_doc.pdf](http://kenprinter.com/Rachal%20Family%20History_doc.pdf); Walraven and Walraven 2005, p. 62). Martyn (1930, p. 16) and Warner (1939, p. 61 and

p. 257) placed the Robertson well in 1904 and Price (1931) as "about 1907." The *Petroleum Gazette* (March, 1915) gives credit to "the Guffey company" in 1906.

A newspaper article in the April 6, 1905 edition of the *Houston Post* is perhaps the best source of information regarding the first White Point well. "The gas well has raised

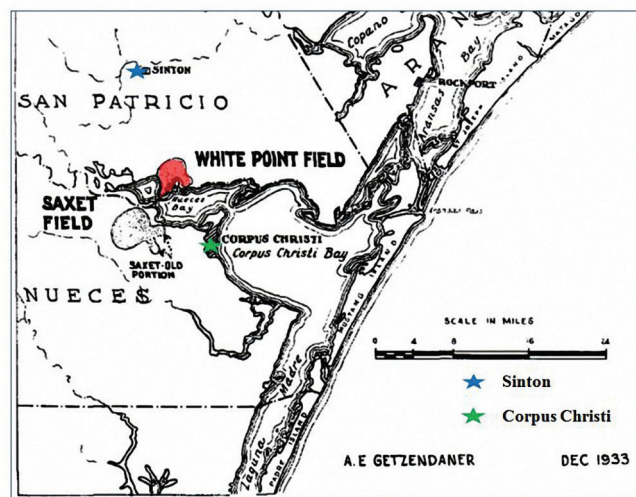



Figure 1. Location Map of the White Point Gassers field (from Getzendorfer, 1934).

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hopes in the Corpus country”, headlined an article which described the March 24th “strong gas blow-out accompanied by a big gusher of sulphur water” of the Randolph Robertson well at White Point. The drilling crew had “knocked off from their day’s work” after reaching a depth of approximately 400 feet. They were awakened from the sleep by the roar of the well. The well was “blowing out sand, blue clay, and shale” followed the next morning by water “spouting at intervals to a height from 80 to 100 feet.” The drilling equipment was moved 100 yards and a new hole started. The article does not mention what became of the wells. Robertson was optimistic that “within thirty days we expect to bring in an oil gusher and be provided against a recurrence of another gas blow-out.” The newspaper article also describes earlier visits and propositions by both Anthony Lucas and the Guffey Company: *It may be said that about three years ago Captain Lucas of Spindle Top fame, who brought in the first gusher at Beaumont, visited the locality of White Point and fully investigated conditions and inducements there, and made the owners of the land a proposition to put in a test well near where the water and gas gusher was bought in last week, but the offer was rejected. Later Mr. Griffiths of the J.M. Guffey Company visited this point several times, and he, too, investigated the field, but nothing has been done toward development of it until this spring, when Robertson and Hubbard entered into a contract about six weeks ago to bore there for oil and fully develop that field.* Price (1931) stated that the second well at White Point was drilled shortly after the Robertson well by a Lee Hager. The well reached a total depth of 1200 feet and reportedly found some gas.

#### White Point Oil and Gas Company No. 1 Well

On January 14, 1914, the White Point Oil and Gas Company of Corpus Christi incorporated in Texas with \$20,000 of capital stock. The officers were G.M. Kenedy, J.C. Walker,

and L.R. Clarkson (*Houston Post*, January 15, 1914). Within a few months the company was drilling their No. 1 well at White Point. “Expect oil near Corpus Christi” was the April 20, 1914 *Houston Post* article about the No. 1 well. The previous week, the well had tested an estimated 5-7 million cubic feet of gas per day (MMCFGD) from a depth of 1695 feet and there was the “greatest confidence that an oil gusher will be obtained in a few days.” A week later (*Houston Post*, April 27, 1914), resignation that the No. 1 well was a gas discovery was evident with the headline, “Gas well found at Sinton.” Sinton is eight miles north of White Point. The article reported an estimated flow rate of 7 MMCFGD. In June, 1914 the White Point Oil and Gas Company’s officers applied for a gas franchise to sell gas to the city of Corpus Christi at a rate of 75 cents per thousand cubic feet of gas “or even lower”. The well was reported “producing” at 5 MMCFGD (*Corpus Christi Caller*, June 28, 1914). The well’s total depth was 1830 feet (*Petroleum Gazette* 1915), but was reported abandoned after testing some gas and saltwater. The Houston and Corpus Christi newspapers did not carry any additional coverage on the White Point No. 1 activities, except that the well had blown out in June and was then capped due to the gas flow (*Corpus Christi Caller*, October 17, 1914).

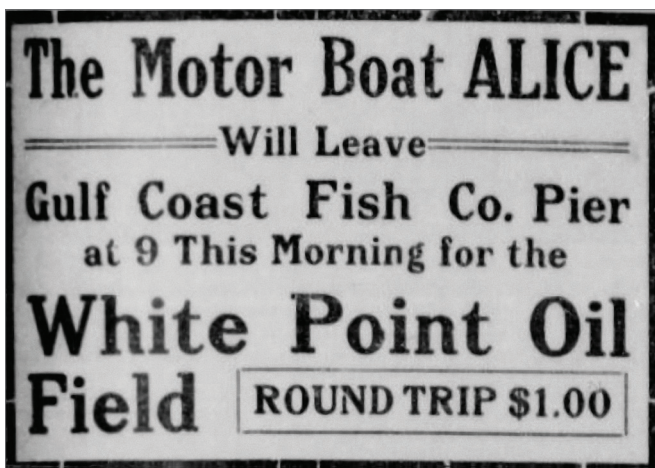


Figure 2. Advertisement for boat rides to visit the White Point No. 2 well (*Corpus Christi Caller*, November 13, 1914).



Figure 3. The Guffey No. 2 gasser (*Fuel Oil Journal* 1916a, p. 115). Caption states an estimated flow rate of 100-125 MMCFGD.

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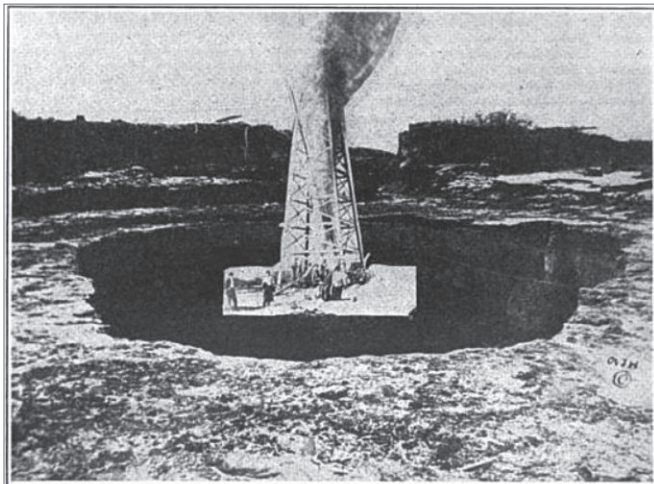
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### White Point Oil and Gas Company No. 2 Well

The location for the No. 2 well was 500 feet south of the No. 1. The spud date for the well has not been located, but by August the well had reached a depth of 2180 feet and was temporarily shut down. The White Point Oil and Gas Company announced that they had increased their capital stock from \$20,000 to \$30,000 and that drilling operations would resume the next week (*Corpus Christi Caller*, October 17, 1914). The article also reported that the well was at a depth of 2190 and that there had been some “oil seepage” into the sands. Drilling was then resumed to a total depth of 2255 feet (*Petroleum Gazette* 1915). While the drilling crew was running the drill stem after changing the bit, the well blew in (*Fuel Oil Journal* 1916a).

“Another big gas well brought in yesterday at White Point. Natural gas flow huge proportion,” headlined an article about the No. 2 gasser (*Corpus Christi Caller*, November 13, 1914). An advertisement for a boat ride to visit the “White Point oil field”, roundtrip \$1.00, also ran in this newspaper edition (Fig. 2). The flow reached an estimated 150 feet into the air, blowing out the drill stem, fourteen feet of pipe, and the crown block through the top of the derrick (Fig. 3). The drill stem was found five hundred yards from the well site. The roar of the gas could be heard in Corpus Christi. Henry Wallace of the Corpus Christi Gas Company and a representative from Magnolia Petroleum Company visited the field with L.R. Clarkson of the White Point Oil and Gas Company. The opinions were that the well was the greatest gas well in Texas history with estimated flow rates of 30-50 MMCFGD (*Corpus Christi Caller*, November 15, 1914). The *Houston Post* (November 13, 1914) reported that 800 feet of pipe was blown from the



CRATER FORMED BY GREAT GAS BLOWOUT AT WHITE POINT, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS  
Showing Derrick and Escaping Gas Before It Collapsed Into Hole

Figure 4. Composite photograph showing how the White Point Oil and Gas Company No. 2 pre-blowout derrick would look in comparison to the crater. (*The Typographical Journal*, 1915, v. 46, June, p. 960-961).

well, two men had been injured, and that the well could “be both seen and heard” from the town of Sinton, ten miles to the north. When the No. 2 well blew, some sand, mud, and clay were ejected from the No. 1 well (*Petroleum Gazette*, March, 1915, p. 10).

The November 18 and 19 editions of the *Corpus Christi Caller* reported that an 80 foot diameter crater had formed. The operator’s forward plans included drilling a No. 3 well within 500 feet of the No. 2 to help reduce the pressures. Rather than attempting to cap or control the No. 2 well, tons of concrete would be poured into the crater to encase the well. A thirty day estimate until the start of well No. 3 was due to the necessity of acquiring a new derrick and associated drilling equipment. Only the engine and boiler had been recovered from the No. 2 well. *The Typographical Journal* (1915) showed an interesting reconstructed photograph of the pre-blowout derrick blowing gas and sitting over the gaping crater (Fig. 4).

A White Point Oil and Gas Company stockholders’ meeting was announced for November 30th with the purpose of making plans for the gas field’s development (*Corpus Christi Caller*, November 22, 1914). The meeting took place and in the December 3rd edition of the newspaper, Guffey Petroleum was briefly mentioned. No details were provided about Guffey’s interests, but in the December 11th edition, the headlines mentioned that a contract between the Guffey and White Point companies was ready. The next day’s newspaper reported that J.C. McDowell of Guffey Petroleum, and others, had visited the gas field and McDowell had estimated the flow at 25-30 MMCFGD and was of the opinion that a “great oil pool” could be associated with the gas discovery. McDowell also predicted that the gas well would eventually choke itself off (*Corpus Christi Caller*, December 12, 1914).

The December 20th edition of the *Corpus Christi Caller* and the December 23rd edition of the *Houston Post* reported that the deal had been closed between the two companies and drilling of a new well would begin within 90 days. The terms of the contract would include a payment from Guffey of \$60,000 for the 2000 acres owned by White Point Oil and Gas Company and an additional later payment of \$40,000 out of revenue from gas produced. White Point Oil and Gas Company would retain a one eighth bonus and a one quarter working interest in the remaining seven eighths. Interestingly, weeks earlier in the December 2nd edition of the *Houston Post*, some of the terms of the deal between Guffey Petroleum and White Point Oil and Gas were reported with a commitment to begin a well within 60 days. Also, in addition to the 2000 acres acquitted in the transaction, Guffey reportedly had leased an additional 2000 acres in the area. The December 28th edition of the *Houston Post* reported that additional companies were organizing to drill wells in the White Point area.

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### Guffey Petroleum Company at White Point

Late January, 1915 saw Guffey Petroleum preparing for the drilling of their first well at White Point. The well's location was 1700 feet north of the White Point Oil and Gas No. 2 well (Hazlett 1915). Twelve train cars of derrick lumber, well drilling machinery, and pipe arrived near Corpus Christi (*Houston Post*, January 31, 1915). A contract drilling start date of February 16th is also stated.

The *Fuel Oil Journal* (1915) listed many well-known Texas oil men and companies actively leasing in the White Point area. These included Ernest Cockrell, R.S. Sterling, R.L. Blaffer, and D.R. Beatty. Oil companies that were represented included Magnolia Petroleum, Higgins Oil and Fuel Company, Sun Company, Producers Oil Company, and Farmers Petroleum Company. To this list, Hazlett (1915) added Pioneer Oil Company, Gulf Coast Oil and Gas Company, Nueces Oil Company, Corpus Christi Oil and Development Company, Corpus Christi Gas Company, and Corsicana Petroleum Company.

Hazlett (1915) also reported that the White Point gasser had been burning since January 23rd when it “was fired as

a precautionary measure.” The author speculated that a decreased gas flow might be due to caving. He described the crater as a “seething mass of mud and water” with a diameter of 200 feet, shaped like a frying pan, an opening into the bay as its handle. This opening was estimated at 15 feet deep and 40 feet long. Gas was also burning from “two of the old holes” and from openings “down under the bluff.” Gas was escaping into the bay where the water was “bubbling like in a kettle.” The article ends with the observation that “for a considerable distance around the blowout, at night it is almost as light as day and spring vegetation several hundred feet away from the fire is a month ahead of time.”

In late 1914, J.W. Young encountered an “oil showing and a small pocket of gas” at a depth of 1492 feet in a well near Sinton, Texas, just north of White Point (*Victoria Advocate*, 12/17/1914). Young brought in a University of Texas geology professor to evaluate his well and while in the area, the professor also visited the White Point Oil and Gas No. 2 gas well. “The tremendous gas gusher struck there about a month ago is still as strong as it was directly after the blowout.” Muddy water and gas were still blowing 16 feet into the air and the resulting crater was 120 feet in diameter and 15 feet deep. The professor predicted that White Point gas field would “prove



Figure 5. Real Photo Postcard (RPPC) No. 3960 taken by well-known local photographer Karl Swafford, of the Guffey gasser. *Moonlight view of Great burning gas well at White Point, Texas. Photo taken 3 a.m. Jan. 23, 1916 at Aransas Pass, 28 miles from the well.* Swafford Photo copyright. Reverse: Made and printed by Swafford, the Photo Man, Aransas Pass, Texas. Retail for 5 cts. Send for List. Note on reverse dated 2/27/16 (~ 1 month after photo taken). “Friend Tom, Just a card of the big gasser taken at night from the top of Post Office building in A. Pass.” Postmarked 2/28/16. Mailed to Pittsburgh, PA (J. Spencer collection).



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### The Guffey No. 1 White Point Well

The spud date for the Guffey No. 1 White Point has not been precisely known, but by early March 1915 the well was drilling at a depth of approximately 1000 feet (*Corpus Christi Caller*, March 3, 1915). The *Houston Post* (April 12, 1915) reported a drilling depth of approximately 2000 feet and that the “other” Guffey well was setting casing. This second well was the Guffey No. 1 Briggs-Sterling. In some newspaper articles this well is referred to as the Guffey No. 2 well, causing some confusion. In June, 1915, the Guffey No. 1 White Point was stuck at a depth of 2142 feet. Speculation was that the well would be abandoned (Hazlett 1915). During June of 1915, nine wells were “under way” at White Point (Hazlett 1915). These included the J.M Guffey Company No. 1 White Point and their No. 1 Briggs-Sterling on “submerged land” in Nueces Bay. The other seven active operators were Sun Co., Nueces Oil Co., Gulf Coast Oil Co., Wee-See Oil Co., Gladys Oil Co., Corsicana Petroleum Co, and Humble Oil Company.

In the July 3rd edition of the *Houston Post* the Briggs-Sterling well was mentioned as having set casing at 2150 feet,

while the Guffey No. 1 White Point was fishing at a depth of approximately 2200 feet. Other wells being drilled at White Point in this well scouting report included the Gulf Coast Oil No. 1 Kirk “shut down” at 100 feet, the Nueces Oil Company No. 2 Drummond fishing at 2000 feet, the Sun Company No. 1 Montor (or Mantor) “shut down” at 1000 feet, the Wee-See Oil Company No. 1 Odem drilling at 2300 feet, and the Gladys No. 1 Turner drilling at 2500 feet. The August 11, 1915 edition of the *Houston Post* reported that a Witherspoon well at White Point had come in at a depth of 2050 feet, testing 10 MMCFGD. The report stated that “within another 24 hours it can be controlled without difficulty.” The location of the well is described as three miles from the discovery well of the past November, which was “the biggest gas well in America.” Warner (1939, p. 258) stated that the Gulf Coast Oil Kirk well was completed as a 5 MMCFGD well in August, 1915.

Guffey attempted to recover the stuck drill pipe in the No. 1 White Point well for two additional months, finally announcing the abandonment of the well in September. The *Corpus Christi Caller* (September 1, 1915) ran the headline, “Guffey Company has abandoned well one in White Point field.” The article described a “series of accidents and misfortunes” that were “met and overcome” in the several months of operation on the well. After spending \$30,000 more than expected, the decision was made to abandon the well and move the derrick

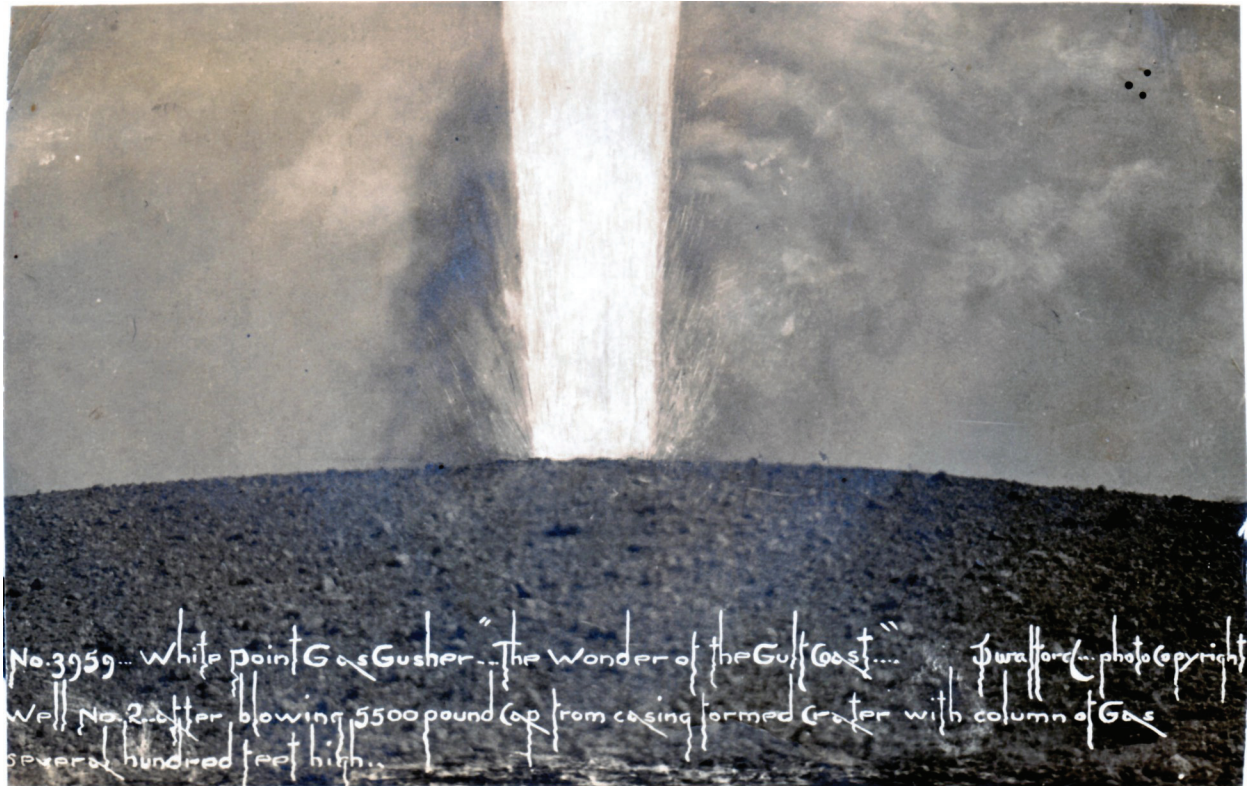
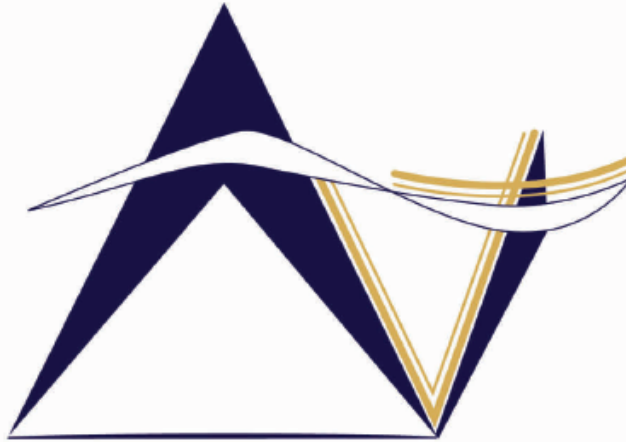


Figure 6. Real Photo Postcard (RPPC) No. 3959. White Point gas gusher. The Wonder of the Gulf Coast. Well No. 2 after blowing 5500 pound cap from casing formed crater with column of gas several hundred feet high. Swafford Photo. (J. Spencer collection).

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100 feet north to make another attempt; the Guffey No. 2 well. The operator planned to spud the well the following week.

### The Guffey No. 2 White Point Well

The *Corpus Christi Caller* (September 8, 1915) reported that the rig was on location for the No. 2 well. The well was spud on September 13th (*Fuel Oil Journal*, 1916a). Wolf (1922) reported that the Guffey No. 2 was drilled 800 feet north of the White Point Oil & Gas No. 2 gasser. A headline in the *Corpus Christi Caller* for January 1st, 1916 read, “Guffey Company gets another big gas well” and reported that the gas was blowing 200 feet above the 110 foot derrick. The well had blown in, while the drillers were baling the well, on the last day of 1915 with an estimated rate of 30 MMCFGD and “not a drop of saltwater.” The January 9, 1916 *Houston Post* reported an estimated flow rate of greater than 50 MMCFGD and that the well had been successfully capped. Four days later, the newspaper reported that the 6000 pound cap had been blown off (*Houston Post*, January 13, 1916). “Hope is not abandoned” was a headline in the January 16, 1916 *Corpus Christi Caller*, but two lengths of casing had been blown from the well and a crater was beginning to form.

The *Corpus Christi Caller* (January 19, 1916) reported on the well:

*The greatest gas well in the world is on fire. The gasser that mocked the efforts of human ingenuity to harness and control last night was lighted and throughout the night the gasser appeared as a giant torch throwing its light miles around and with fiery darts shooting into the skies and breaking into flames as rockets. It was an awe inspiring sight that caused hundreds of Corpus Christians to go the roof of the Nueces Hotel for a perfect view of the beautiful sight, while thousands of others viewed the fire from the North Beach Addition. The gasser afire was first noticed about ten o'clock. All efforts to get in to communication with the field, which is seven miles away, proved futile, the telephone company reporting that the one phone at the nearest ranch house was out of order. It is possible that the firing of the well was purposed, as was the firing of the first well during the latter part of 1914, though confirmation of the surmise was not possible last night. The gasser was brought in on last December 31 and all efforts to cap it proved unavailing. Last Friday all*



Figure 7. Real Photo Postcard (RPPC) No. 3965. *White Point, Texas. Burning Gas Well. Guffey Gas Gusher No. 2. At night light from these flames can be seen fifty miles.* Swafford Photo. (J. Spencer collection)



# SABALO ENERGY



*control of the well was lost and until the fire of last night it had been spouting huge quantities of gas, mud, and sand. A crater about ten feet across has formed at the top.*

The January 23, 1916 edition of the *Houston Post* reported that the fire had gone out on its own, but now the well “belched” boulders, sand, mud, and gas hundreds of feet in the air. The gas then caught fire again later that evening. The *Fuel Oil Journal* (1916a) reported that the well first caught fire on January 17th and then for a second time, had extinguished itself on the 25th and then reignited on the 26th. The January 23rd edition of the *San Antonio Express* stated that hundreds of people from all over the state had visited the “monster gas well.” One visitor to the well site, a W.J. Doyle, was knocked unconscious by a rock ejected by the well (*The Musical Messenger* 1916). The January 23rd edition of the *Corpus Christi Caller* reported that the well “furnished many, many thrills to the thousands who viewed its antics.” Walraven and Walraven (2005, p. 52) show a photograph of cars lined up and crowds of people viewing the burning well.

Open flow rates of 100-125 MMCFGD were estimated for this well (*Fuel Oil Journal* 1916a). “Sand fell in the streets of Corpus Christi, six miles away, and later, when the gas became ignited, flames leaped over 200 feet into the air (Wolf 1922).” At the time, the well was called the largest gas well ever developed in Texas and the “natural gas volcano.” “Volcano well quiet” was a headline from the February 14, 1916 *Houston Post*. The article stated that the well had “caved in” after burning for 22 days. As with the White Point No. 2 well a year earlier, the Guffey No. 2 eventually bridged over on its own.

Brogan (1919) claimed that the well was one of the biggest gas wells in the world and compared the crater to a smoldering volcano. Several interesting theories for the source and trapping of the gas are also discussed by Brogan (1919). He also stated that just over 50 wells had been drilled, or located for drilling, between San Antonio and the Texas Gulf Coast providing very sparse data for regional geological studies. When Wolf (1922) visited the crater, presumably in late 1921 or early 1922, he found a crater 300-400 feet across and 75-100 feet deep to the water level and some gas was still bubbling up through the water.

#### KARL SWAFFORD - PHOTOGRAPHER

Karl Swafford (1887-1952) began his photographic career in Aransas Pass, Texas, later moving to nearby Corpus Christi. He photographed landscapes, cityscapes, coastal scenes, army encampments, and the devastation caused by a 1916 hurricane in the area. He produced an estimated 3000 different real

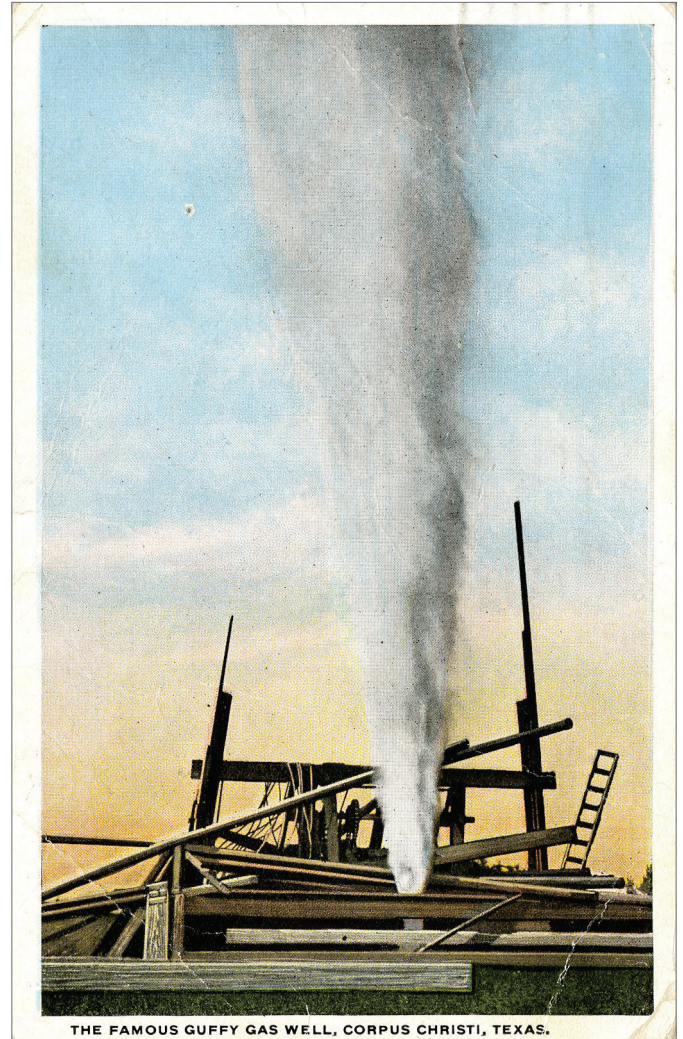


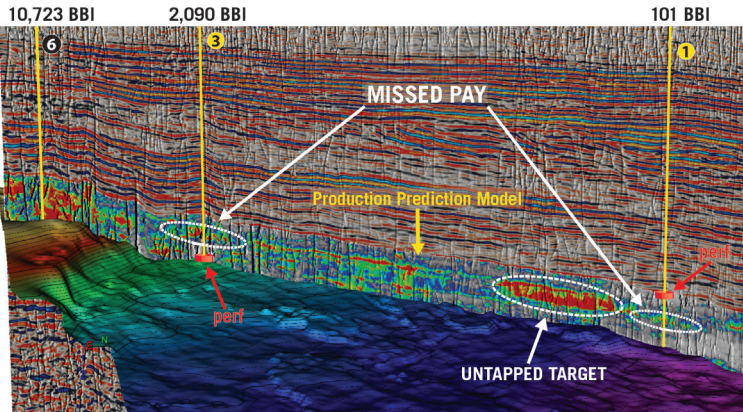
Figure 8. Linen postcard of *The Famous Guffy [Guffey] Gas Well*, Corpus Christi, Texas. (courtesy: Dan Gilmore Papers Special Collections & Archives, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi, Bell Library)

photo postcards (RPPCs) during his career. He began producing postcards as early as 1915. Printed on the reverse of some of these early postcards is “made and printed by Swafford, the Photo Man, Aransas Pass, Texas.” After relocating to Corpus Christi, he formed the Karl Swafford Company (<http://texas.weebly.com/swafford1.html> and <http://genforum.genealogy.com/cgi-bin/print.cgi?swafford::1171.html>). Swafford photographed and created several real photo postcards of the Guffey gassers and craters (Figs. 5-7) (Spencer 2013a, p. 55-56). Figure 8 is colorized linen postcard of a Guffey gasser at White Point.

#### Additional Drilling – Post Guffey No. 2

Additional wells were drilled at White Point after the Guffey No. 2. Operators continued to search for oil, which

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they assumed would be found in deeper sands or downdip of the gas sands, and to produce and market the gas to the nearby towns of Taft and Corpus Christi. Many of these wells also experienced severe drilling and completion issues. One well encountered a strong flow of hot salt water and later supplied water to “an improvised bath house” (Brogan 1919; Wolf 1922).

Guffey, as an operator, became the Gulf Production Company in most articles and newspaper reports for post-No. 2 wells at White Point. The Gulf Oil Corporation was formed in 1907 with the combination or merger of the Gulf Pipeline Company, the Gulf Refining Company of Texas, and the Guffey Petroleum Company. Apparently, Guffey either reorganized after the merger as a new company or retained some of their properties, as Guffey certainly operated in Texas after 1907. The company must have maintained a working relationship with Gulf Production Company, as that company took over the White Point operations sometime in 1916. On August 18th, a storm destroyed most of the derricks at White Point, including the Gulf No. 2 Briggs-Sterling, which had been drilling at a depth of 600 feet. The derrick was being rebuilt with plans to resume drilling within ten days. Another well, the Gulf No. 4 White Point, was to spud within a month (*Fuel Oil Journal*, 1916b). The July 6, 1916 *Corpus Christi Caller* reported on a Gulf No. 3 White Point, but the August 9th edition referred to the Guffey No. 3 providing some gas for the drilling of the Guffey No. 2 Brigg-Sterling well. Getzender (1934) credited this Gulf No. 3 well as the first commercial gas well at White Point. On October 25th, the No. 2 Briggs-Sterling blew out, destroying the derrick. Plans were made to cover the well with 1500 sacks of dirt and the prospect of saving the well was “extremely doubtful” (*Fuel Oil Journal*, 1916c). The January 25, 1917 *Corpus Christi Caller* reported that Gulf had suspended all operations at White Point to concentrate on their drilling and completion activities at the Goose Creek oil field where the company was having great success (Spencer 2013b), but by July the company was back at White Point drilling the No. 5 well. Some testing was done on the No. 5, the well was deepened, and then tested again (*Corpus Christi Caller*, July 11 and 25, 1917). In September, the company was drilling their No. 6 well (*Corpus Christi Caller*, September 9, 1917).

Frustration with the lack of commercial results at White Point was evident in several industry journal articles. For instance: *While several companies are still drilling in the Corpus Christi district, the Gulf Production Co. has abandoned its No. 5 White Point at 3988 feet and may permanently withdraw from the district. The company has been drilling continuously in the territory since early in 1915 and has one gas well to show for an expenditure of close to a quarter million dollars* (*Oil Trade Journal*, 1918). Price (1931) reported that Gulf drilled seven wells at White Point. White Point Oil

and Gas Company purchased and “salvaged” one of the Gulf wells. Over one billion cubic feet of gas from this well was sold to the town of Taft.

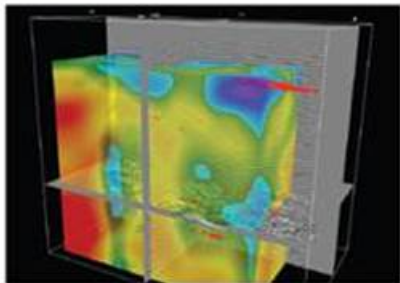
The “Lerew interests” obtained the leases at White Point in 1919 with plans to drill several wells. Like previous White Point operators, the new owners were convinced that oil was present. *I am operating on the theory that there is an immense pool of oil at the Point and perhaps for many miles around it. I am after oil, not gas. I believe the center of pressure is at White Point and that if we get down of the ridge, we will get a well that eventually will blow itself with oil. It is my belief that the big gas well which is now running wild, will someday blow oil* (Mr. Lerew in Brogan 1919, p 25). Based on articles and company advertisements in the *Corpus Christi Caller*, M. Lerew, the president of Corpus Christi Oil and Gas Company, spent a great deal of May through August of 1919 attempting to raise funds for drilling operations at White Point. Many of these newspaper issues included forms to be mailed in to receive investment information regarding the company. Several of the advertisements encouraged local residents to invest so that not just “outsiders” would “reap the profits” of bringing gas to Corpus Christi. In the May 22, 1919 edition of the *Corpus Christi Caller*, a headline read, “Operation at White Point to start soon. Oil and Gas Company head sees brilliant future for the city.” The article ends: *There are few Corpus Christians who are not familiar with White Point gas wells and of immense craters made by the presence of the natural gas, and who have not wondered why such a wonderful opportunity has been neglected.* One company advertisement went as far as to claim that White Point was the largest gas field in Texas and the largest prospective oil field in the world (*Corpus Christi Caller*, August 26, 1919).

A hurricane made landfall in the area on September 14, 1919. The town of Port Aransas was destroyed and many bodies were found at White Point. A historical marker at White Point describes the hundreds of deaths resulting from the hurricane and a mass grave for some of the victims at White Point. The newspapers did not cover White Point oil and gas activities or White Point investment advertisements for the remainder of 1919. In 1922, the sentiment had not changed: *Large sums have been expended in trying to drill past the terrific gas at White Point to seek oil below it, the Guffeys and others having given over the job after their wells cratered from the gas* (*Oil Trade Journal*, 1922a). *Numerous wells at White Point in bygone days blew out around 1800 ft., destroying the rigs and forcing the crews to run for their lives* (*Oil Trade Journal*, 1922b).

During 1917-1925, there was little drilling activity at White Point. Activity increased during the years 1926-1929 during which twenty-five gas wells were completed and two pipelines were constructed (Martyn 1930, p. 17). By the end

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of 1927, 40 MMCFGD was being transported to Houston by these two pipelines (Price 1931).

**“TEX” THORNTON AND THE RACHAL NO. 7 WELL**

Ward A. “Tex” Thornton (1891-1949) began his oilfield career in 1913 with a torpedo company in Ohio. He moved on to Artesia, New Mexico and then Electra, Texas working as a well driller and shooter. By the early 1920s he had formed his own company, the Tex Thornton Torpedo Company nine miles outside of Amarillo, Texas. Perhaps overshadowed by contemporary oilfield fire fighter, Myron M. Kinley (1898-1978), and later by Paul “Red” Adair (1915-2004), Thornton and his company were very active throughout Texas fighting oil field fires, including within the giant East Texas oilfield (Spencer 2013a, p. 124).

On January, 16, 1928, the Saxet Company’s Rachal No. 7 well at White Point blew out at an estimated rate of 40 MMCFGD. Two days later the gas ignited (Fig. 9). The com-

pany contracted with Thornton to travel to White Point and extinguish the fire. Thornton battled the gas well fire for two weeks. On January 26 Thornton rescued Harry Diehl, a San Antonio photographer, who had been overcome by the heat and gases of the well, after approaching the burning well in a borrowed Thornton asbestos suit (*Amarillo Globe-Times*, February 7, 1928; *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, January 27, 1928; *Lufkin Line* 1928).

On February 7th, with support from a 10-inch stream of water, Thornton dressed in an asbestos suite (Fig. 10) extinguished the burning well using 10,000 barrels of water, steam from six boilers, and 5 shots of nitroglycerin; four shots of 50 quarts and one shot of 90 quarts, at five minute intervals (*Amarillo Globe-Times*, February 7, 1928).

Thornton’s wife, Sarah, left Amarillo on January 28th and drove over 700 miles, arriving at White Point on January 30th with an additional 210 quarts of nitroglycerin (*Lufkin Line* 1928). The *Miami (OK) Daily News Record* (March 8, 1928) reported that Sarah delivered 1500 quarts of nitroglycerin



Figure 9. Photograph (original: 5” x 7”) of the No. 7 Rachal well fire. Typed and written on the reverse: “The Saxet gas well Rachal No. 7 that was costing its owners \$2400 per day.” Stamped on the reverse: “The Swafford Co., Corpus Christi, Tex.” and “Vance Griffith, Corpus Christi, Texas.” The reverse of the photo also bears a “referred” date of 3-17-28. (J. Spencer collection).

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and that Sarah had to change five flat tires during the trip. She downplayed her role in her husband's work. *My work is just colorless routine...Tex has all the fun and I envy him. His work is really dangerous and he accomplishes something. My bit is incidental and anybody could do it* (Miami (OK) *Daily News Record*, March 8, 1928). It is unclear whether this March, 1928 article refers to the same trip from Amarillo to White Point, or perhaps a second trip when the well reignited.

The well reignited on February 11th and Thornton returned to battle the well (*Amarillo Globe-Times*, February 23, 1928). In the April 10th *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, the gas well was still burning as the chief of the oil and gas division of the Texas State Railroad Commission planned a visit to the well. Salt water from the bay was being pumped into the burning crater with no results (*Galveston Daily News*, April 20, 1928).



Figure 10. Real photo postcard of Tex Thornton in his asbestos firefighting suit. Photo taken by well-known oilfield photographer Jack Nolan, circa 1928-1932 (Spencer, 2011).

The April 27, 1928 *Amarillo Globe-Times* reported that the well was still flowing, with no mention of fire, and the well was expected to be “killed” that day or the next. The *Galveston Daily News* (May 22, 1928) reported that the well had been “successfully capped a few weeks ago” and a new string of casing had been run with plans to “bring the well back in.” The article stated that the well had run wild for 100 days at rates as high as 70 MMCFGD.

## CONCLUSION

Early 20th century drilling at White Point gas field in Texas proved extremely challenging for companies trying to develop the gas resources and explore for oil. Operators in this field, and in nearby fields, learned much about dealing with formation pressures and developing drilling and casing programs to successfully drill and complete south Texas gas wells. Production from several productive sands from 1900-2500 feet resulted in cumulative gas production through 1929 of approximately 10 billion cubic feet of gas (BCFG) (Martyn 1930, p. 18).

After searching for oil for 25 years at White Point, the first oil well was finally completed in November, 1930. The Rachal No. 17, and another well completed soon after, produced oil from a deeper sand at approximately 4800 feet. By the end of September, 1933, these two wells had produced 47,133 barrels of oil (Getzendaner 1934; Price 1931). Drilling continued at White Point through the years. Through 2014, cumulative production for the field was 24 billion cubic feet of gas and 165 thousand barrels of oil from depths of 2500-11,500 feet. These cumulative producing gas numbers certainly do not include the large volumes of gas lost during the uncontrolled flow of the many White Point gassers. Topographic and Google Earth maps show that at least one of the White Point craters still exists, one hundred years after these great gassers (Fig. 11).

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Figure 11. Google Earth Map showing one of the White Point gas craters (accessed 7/31/2015; 11/22/2014 imagery).

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Hinde

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Rincon

Rincon, North

Ross

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Marcado Creek

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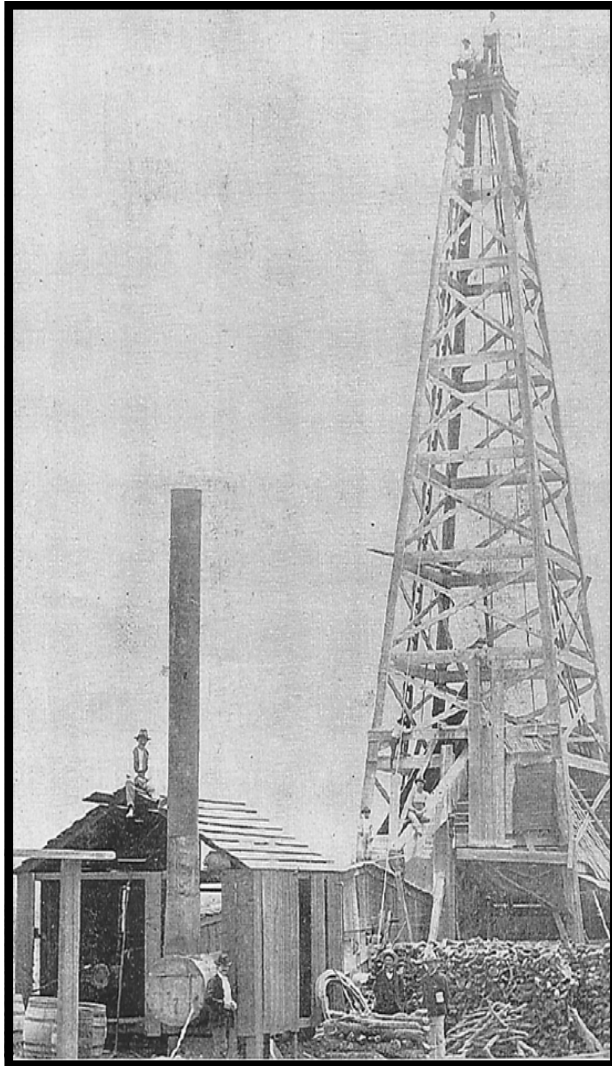
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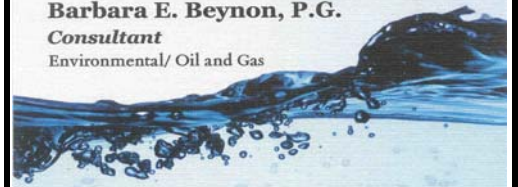
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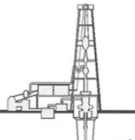
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