

Oil Well Fire Thrills Thousands

Torrance Herald



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Standard To Drill Weston Ranch

Blazing Derrick, Fed By Gas Flow, Threatens Field

Torrance Firemen Brave Intense Heat to Prevent Huge Tank Explosion During Spectacular Night Fire

Selby and Root's Torrance No. 2 was totally destroyed and the forest of derricks that flank the old Redondo road west of Arlington were threatened with destruction last night when a column of gas and oil gushing to the crown block of the Selby and Root well ignited and burst into flames.

Close to the roaring derrick Torrance volunteer firemen scorched their clothes and faces in order to shoot a stream of water against two 3000-barrel tanks which stood hard by the flaming well. Selby and Root field representatives declared last night that the work of the firemen prevented explosion of the tanks, which were three-quarters full of oil.

The crew on Selby and Root No. 2 was bailing for production and oil was spouting to the crown block, over a lively gas pressure, when the column of oil and gas ignited with a roar that was heard all over Torrance and Lomita. Ray Handy and A. H. Miller, members of the crew, were the only men on the floor of the derrick when the oil and gas burst into flames. They leaped from the derrick and escaped injury.

Immediately the whole oil field was brilliantly lighted with the flames that enveloped the rig and hissed toward the sky.

Torrance firemen answered an alarm and ran hose in record time. A stream was played on the neighboring tanks, there being no reason for attempting to fight the fire proper until the derrick fell.

The fire started at 9:10, but it was not until well after 9:30 that the derrick fell with a crash to the ground.

Stacks of tubing in the derrick held up the burning timbers until they were almost entirely consumed. When the rig fell it crumpled and fell almost straight downward, instead of describing a wide arc. Had the derrick fallen sooner it might have proved disastrous to the entire section.

Thousands of residents of Torrance and Lomita watched the gas-fed flames consume the derrick. Crews on wells blocks distant were guarding sunpoles against the rain of sparks that were carried far from the fire by the breeze.

The Selby and Root well was covered by \$6000 insurance, which will cover the cost of the rig, exclusive of casing, liner and tubing.

The history of this well has been one of tough luck. It was the first well to drill through the oil formation and into the bottom salt water. Plugged back from 3840 feet, it was placed on production, but soon sanded up. When the Johnson well across the street burned down, the Selby and Root derrick was endangered. About a week ago it sanded up again. The sand was drilled through and the well was again being tested for production when the derrick burned down.

The Selby and Root fire is the third dangerous oil well fire in the field. Superior's Torrance 15 on the Joughlin was the first, and the Johnson well on the old Redondo road near Arlington street the second.

Last night's fire was the first night fire in the history of the field.

Local Women Guests Of Wilbur's Sister

Mrs. John A. Young attended recently an at home in honor of Mrs. Theresa Wilbur Talst, a sister of Judge Wilbur, newly appointed secretary of the navy.

The affair, held at the home of Mrs. Charles Kerr in Los Angeles, was a Stanford class reunion.

Mrs. Joe Stone accompanied Mrs. Young, who is a Stanford graduate.

CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Wolfe of Cota avenue celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary recently with a dinner at the Coconut Grove at the Ambassador hotel, Los Angeles. Covers were laid for Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Mac-Aroy of Andree avenue and Sam Levy of Sartori street and the host and hostess.

Observations

The Muddle in Politics—Persia and Sinclair—Al Jennings Will Understand Oil Lobbyists—Airing Our Scandal

By W. HAROLD KINGSLEY

POLITICS is in a strange muddle. President Coolidge won over Senator Robert M. La Follette and Hiram Johnson in the North Dakota primaries. North Dakota is recognized as a radical state. In congress La Follette controls the North Dakota delegation.

Down south in Georgia, where Senator Oscar Underwood's chances were deemed to be best, William Gibbs McAdoo was returned victor in the primary election.

Now come La Follette champions with the inspired declaration that the Wisconsin senator will head a third-party ticket if the Republicans nominate President Coolidge.

It is just about certain that the President will be nominated at Cleveland.

If La Follette then forms a third party, the results will be interesting to watch.

Coolidge will carry the conservative east. The Democratic candidate will carry the south. The result of the election then will depend on the west, where La Follette might possibly attract enough Republican votes from Coolidge to assure victory for the Democratic candidate.

Another result is possible. In a three-cornered race it is not impossible for a deadlock to occur in the electoral college. The winning candidate in the electoral college must have a majority.

In the event of a failure of any candidate to receive more than 50 per cent of the electoral votes, congress then selects the President. Under the constitution governing such an election by congress, each state delegation would have one vote. In congress there are now 22 states with Republican majorities on their delegations, against 21 in which Democrats hold the whip. Five states are tied.

With La Follette controlling the North Dakota and Wisconsin delegations the Democratic advantage would be increased, if the Democratic delegations stood pat. There would be a pretty campaign of political trading for the vote of the states whose delegations are tied.

The political situation is pregnant with possibilities. Nothing is certain.

PERSIA, you know, is one of the biggest battlegrounds in the world fight for oil. The Shah has kept the country on its financial feet by granting concessions in great provinces to British and Dutch companies and to Harry Sinclair, albeit he recently withdrew the Sinclair concessions and handed them over to the Shell combine. Now Persia is about to become a republic. The Persians say the Shah has spent too much of his time outside the country. His health, like Sinclair's, is said to be good. Perhaps, like Sinclair again, he was ordered abroad, not by his doctor, but by his attorney.

AL JENNINGS, reformed train robber, has left Long Beach to testify in Washington. One day Al was the terror of the United States mail service. He held up a lot of them, looting the sacks of registered mail and making his escape. Then he reformed. Maybe he heard about how the oil company lobbyists work things at Washington and, ashamed of his own methods of robbing the government, quit because he didn't want to be a piker. As a witness in Washington Mr. Jennings will probably wonder why the oil men at the capital don't ride on horses.

FROM Washington comes the news that a severe storm last Friday left plenty of slush under foot on all the streets. But it is an easy matter for Washington to clean up after such an event. The many slush funds are large.

(Continued on Last Page)

Southern Outpost Of Field Located On Weston Street

Big Company Builds Derrick At Location On Direct Line South From Big Marble Ranch Producers

Outstanding in today's oil news is the location of a new southern outpost by the Standard Oil company on the Weston ranch, just south of Weston street in Lomita, and the success of the Shell Oil company in bringing in a clean producer in the eastern extension from 3904 feet.

Standard's new location has aroused considerable interest in the field. The well, for which lumber and boilers are on the ground, is staked out for a location directly south of the big 27-gravity producers on the Standard and Doherty properties. It is about a mile east and about a quarter of a mile south of the Union Oil company's Weston No. 1, recently abandoned.

Field representatives of the Standard assert that the terms of the Weston lease stipulate that the company must be drilling by April 12.

It is interesting, however, to note that in staking out the location Standard placed the well on a line with its big producers further north.

While many operators are not overly sanguine as to the big company's success on the Weston ranch, the recent developments on the Marble property, directly north, leads others to believe that the axis which starts at Carson street and runs to the Marble property may continue south a considerable distance.

What production is obtained from Standard's Marble lease wells will indicate with some degree of definiteness whether the axis tends to fade out to the south. A big producer in either Marble Fee No. 6 or Marble Lease No. 6 will mean much to owners of property still further south.

Marble Lease No. 3, now down 3810 feet, will also serve as an indicator when it is brought in.

Shell contributed its weekly modicum of satisfaction to operators on the east side when March 1a was completed at 3904 feet. The well flowed gingerly when first brought in—at an estimated rate of 1500 barrels a day.

The Ladies' Council of the Christian church will hold a cooked food sale at Foss' grocery on Saturday, March 29. Everything in the pastry line will be available.—Adv.

rels a day. It was then beamed down and turned into the tanks. It is now producing close to 900 barrels.

The success of Shell was offset slightly by the failure of E. J. Miley with his Torrance No. 2, which is making water. This well was drilled to 3912 feet, but because it is about a quarter of a mile east of Shell's March 1a, where slightly deeper drilling is to be expected, operators believe that the water is not coming from the bottom. The Miley well was completed when the bit struck a hard shell formation. It is possible that the drill cracked this shell and let salt water through. The company believes, however, that the water is entering through a leak in the shoe.

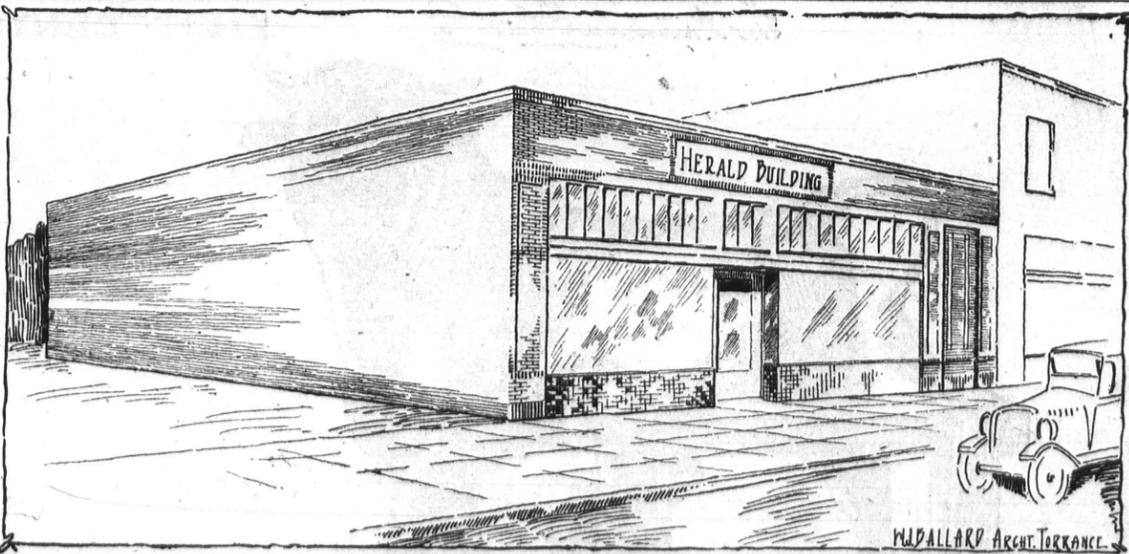
While Shell was giving "east-siders" a thrill with its success from below 3900 feet, the Pan American and Superior were staging a bit of a show themselves. Pan American completed Knape No. 1 in the district for a production of 1000 barrels. This completion was made at 3890 feet.

At the same time the Superior Oil company brought in Torrance No. 17 from 3886 feet for 600 barrels. The well came in without swabbing. Cutting 10 per cent for mud and sand, it is expected to be about a 900-barrel well when it cleans out.

Bush and Voorhis brought in two new producers in East Lomita. Washburn No. 1, completed at 3780 feet, had a flush production of about 900 barrels a day. It is at the corner of Eshelman and Acacia streets. Fee No. 1 of the same company was completed at 3775 for an estimated yield of 500 barrels. Having failed to induce owners of wells in the neighborhood to share the cost of the deep test, Bush and Voorhis completed Fee No. 1 without taking advantage of the state's permit to drill a 5000-foot well.

Standard has evidently decided to drain the Marble Fee property as rapidly as wells can be drilled. The company has located six second-tier wells on the property, along the eastern boundary, about 300 feet west of the first tier. They are Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

HERE IS THE HERALD'S NEW HOME ON MARCELINA STREET



Above is the architect's sketch of the new home of The Torrance Herald, now under construction on Marcelina street, immediately west of the Edison building.

The Herald will be in its new home early in May.

The rapid growth of Torrance and the city's increasing demands on our newspaper and job printing departments have made it necessary for us to seek more centrally located and more spacious quarters.

The increased space which will be available in The Herald's new home will enable us to arrange machinery and equipment in the mechanical department in a manner that will greatly increase internal efficiency and

provide improved facilities for service to the public.

The Herald newspaper and job printing department offices will be located in the front of the building.

The linotype, newspaper composition, automatic job printing, bindery, stereotyping and other mechanical departments will be in the rear three-quarters of the building.

When the building is completed The Herald will move without interrupting service.

The building was designed by W. J. Ballard, Torrance architect. Building materials were purchased in Torrance. The brick was made in Torrance by the Torrance Brick company.

Naturalist Will Address Woman's Club on Thursday

Thursday, March 27, the Woman's club will meet at 2:30 in the music room of the high school. Mrs. William Raymond Meyers, a very charming woman and a brilliant talker, will talk on "The Birds and Wild Flowers of California."

There will be an interesting report from the building committee. Other important business will come before the club at this meeting. Please be present.

Union Tool Girls Will Give Charity Dance March 31st

An enjoyable time is promised at the charity dance for the benefit of the Children's hospital, which the Union Tool Girls' club is giving next Monday evening, March 31.

The 50 cents admission will be deemed small indeed when one remembers the dandy floor of the Redondo Beach dance pavilion and learns that Herb Wiedoeft's orchestra will furnish the music.

Remember—next Monday night, 8 p.m., at the Redondo Beach dance pavilion.

WILL VISIT STUDIOS

The Woman's club of Torrance will take advantage of Open Studio Week, and members and friends are invited on a trip Friday, March 28, to visit art studios in Los Angeles.

Cars will be provided and will leave the residence of the president, Mrs. John A. Young, 1691 Susana avenue, at 9:30 a.m. Bring along a picnic lunch.

If interested, call Mrs. Willis Brooks, 83-W; Mrs. W. J. Neelands, 113-W, or Mrs. Fred Hanson, 115-W.