

ON THE LAZY BENCH

Penn Brad Oil Museum strives to preserve the history of the Bradford Oil Field and the unique culture that developed along with it. The Museum also honors the people and their families whose lives contributed to making Bradford the "Highgrade Oil Metropolis of the World."

A Quarterly Newsletter

Vol. 9 – No. 4 – Autumn 2023

Museum Racing to Preserve Oilfield History

by Sara Furlong, The Bradford Era

With a little bit of forethought two years ago, Penn Brad Oil Museum saved space for (still more) of the region's history.

While work was underway in 2021 to replace the museum's iconic rig with the current Willard M. Cline Memorial Drilling Rig, representatives realized turning the structure 90 degrees from the position previous rigs held would create new possibilities at its 901 South Ave. location.

"This opened a large infield area that could accommodate a new addition to the museum," explained Museum Manager Fran Bottone, "an area approximately 70 by 70 feet for an exhibition hall."



equipment sensitive to the elements are too large to fit in the museum's existing and already crowded buildings.

"These rare local artifacts are in danger of being lost forever," Bottone said. "The need for this addition is very time sensitive."

Local collectors of oilfield history with items to contribute have agreed to do so only on the condition that they are kept in a secure, indoor space.

Museum officials estimate the new building will cost upward of \$200,000 and, while some funds have been raised, they "still have a long way to go."

Museum board member Bill Pantuso said of the effort, "Our membership keeps the lights on and the museum has a handful of donors it can always count on, but this is bigger than that."

Bottone agreed, stating, "It isn't enough to get a project like this off the ground. We are now hoping for some significant financial assis-

tance from the community to assist us with our mission to preserve Bradford's rich oil heritage for another 52 years and beyond."

He explained sponsorships are available for large, period-correct signs around the new hall's interior and added that officials would also consider commemoration in name.

"Other regional museums have managed to build similar structures," Bottone said, "and now time is of the essence for Penn Brad to do the same."

Anyone interested in contributing a tax-deductible donation, "or anything else that could help us move this project forward," can contact the museum at the e-mail or phone number listed below.

PENN BRAD OIL MUSEUM

901 South Avenue - Bradford, PA 16701

Email: pennbrad.oilmuseum@yahoo.com

Website: penn-bradoilmuseum.org

Phone: 814-362-1955



Open:

Thurs. & Friday
9 AM to 4 PM

Saturday
9 AM to 2 PM

Admission Cost:

Adults - \$5.00

Seniors - \$4.50

Children (under 12) - Free
Active Military / Family - Free

Narrow Gauge Railroads that Served the Bradford Oil Fields

by Fran Bottone, Museum Manager

After serving the past several years as the museum's manager, and curator of sorts, I realized that one area of early oil history that was neglected here was the story of our unique oil field narrow gauge railroads.

Many of Bradford's movers and shakers of the day realized that the Bradford oil fields could be greatly expanded if there was a way to get heavy drilling equipment up into the remote hills and isolated areas. Some of these men already had holdings in these areas. The big mainline railroads such as the Erie and the Pennsylvania RR also liked the idea of getting in on some of the revenues from hauling the boilers, steam engines, lumber for the rigs, and even the people out to these areas.



The answer was to build a series of narrow gauge railroads that could negotiate the mountainous terrain and tight curves. Narrow gauge railroads were also perceived to be cheaper to build. These railroads were organized by the visionaries among local oil men, but were loosely connected with competing main line railroads as well.

The first of these to be completed was the Olean Bradford and Warren, which connected Bradford and Olean up and over the steepest grades of Rock City hill and down into Olean, and while it was originally slated to go to Warren, it never really got there.

Next came the Bradford Bordell and Kinzua, probably the most well known of these narrow gauges and the one that reached almost everywhere in the

county, and then some. It also lasted the longest.

The Kendall and Eldred, which left Tarport, made its way up over Summit City and down through Rixford on its way to Eldred.



Eventually, the Bradford Railway and its sister the Kinzua Railway were built up through Toad Hollow and up through Marshburg and on to Morrison, Kinzua, and a planned connection via a third rail to Warren on its parent railroad the Pennsylvania. Our area was unique in this respect, with the exception being that the K&E and the BB&K eventually extended their lines into the lucrative oil fields of Bolivar, Richburg, and Wellsville areas.

Honorable mention goes to Bradford's own short-lived Bradford and Foster Brook railroad (AKA the Peg Leg Railroad), one of the country's first commercially successful monorails. It had a short run from 1877 to 1879 that ended with a fatal boiler explosion. It ran from Bradford to Derrick City, but was originally surveyed to go to Olean. The Peg Leg was rumored to have raced against the OB&W trains which ran a parallel route.



There is so much history among these railroads, but unfortunately not room here to tell a fraction of it. One interesting fact was that some of the conductors on these lines lived far above their railroad pay, from being slipped a few bucks here and there by oil men who wanted a tool or fitting dropped off along the route somewhere to save them a trip into town over often impassible roads. These railroads ran from the late 1870s up to 1906 for the BB&K.

A large display board was recently constructed here at the museum with the centerpiece being a detailed area topographic map showing all of these railroad routes overlaid in great detail with all of the stops and stations along the way. Many early photos of these little railroads winding through the tanks, derricks, and related buildings of the local oil fields are depicted as well.



This display would not have been possible in its current detail without the hard work of Gary Robertson (son of late Bradford historian Dick Robertson), who spent many hours last winter up in chilly New Hampshire working with us to get this map perfect.

Many thanks go to several other local railroad historians, including Scott Morgan, Terry Mott (who runs a prolific local railroad page on social media), and the Bradford Landmark Society. Thank you, everyone.

We do have a limited number of these maps available for sale here at the museum. They can also be purchased at the Bradford Landmark and the Smethport Historical Society located in the old jail.



Holiday Hours & Gift Ideas

Although the museum is closed for the regular season, special open hours till Christmas are Saturdays from 9 to 2pm up to and including December 23rd. One of the items we have for sale in the museum are these large narrow gauge railroad maps (mentioned in the previous article) created by Gary Robertson (in photo).



We have limited quantities and they are \$40 each.

We have recently restocked our crew neck sweat-shirts and we have a limited number of hoodies left. There is also a new round metal refrigerator magnet available that features the museum's derrick logo. All would make great gifts!

Omission - We regrettably forgot to mention long-time Bradford area oil man and museum supporter Paul Phillips in our Emery Engine Recovery article in the Summer 2023 newsletter. He was responsible for transporting the engine from Toad Hollow to Denny Greisbaum's workshop on Garlock Hollow. Many thanks to Paul!

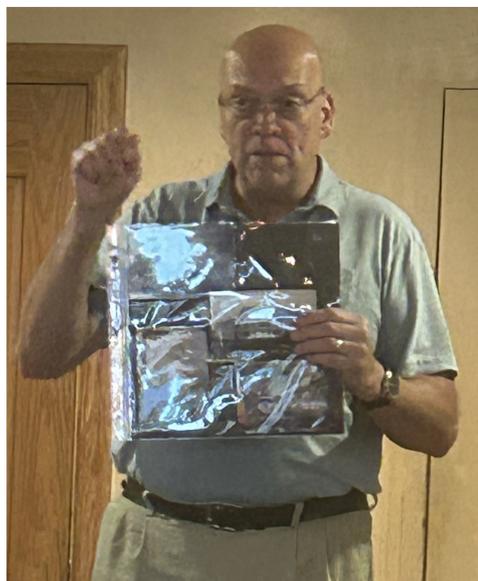
Oilfield Jargon

Yellow Dog : a teapot-shaped oil lamp with 1 or 2 spouts and wicks used for light on oil leases. Some legends say the name came from the flames looking like a dog's eyes when burning lanterns hung in oil rigs. Others say they produced only enough light to see a yellow dog at night or that the lamp made a strange dog head shadow on the rig floor.

Fireside Pumpers Talks in September, October & November

by Isabelle Champlin & Joyce Cline

The Fireside Pumpers speaker for September was Steve Teachman, president of the Olean Historical Society in Olean, NY, who talked about “Olean’s Historic Treasures”, especially museum displays, photos and memorabilia about the Olean trolley system, the Genesee Valley Canal (which connected the Erie Canal to the Allegany River), the historical Olean House hotel, and the Cloud Nine amusement park.



He described some of the routes and buildings of the Underground Railroad, the Olean Fairgrounds and racetrack where the traveling circuses performed, the Palace and Haven Theaters, and the Castle Restaurant. To the amusement of the audience, a menu from 1962 was passed around that listed ‘jumbo shrimp cocktail’ for 80 cents and ‘broiled filet mignon aux champignons’ for only \$3.95.

Famous visitors to, or residents of, Olean include Bobby Kennedy, Jackie Robinson, baseballers Babe Ruth and John McGraw, and back

when Olean was “Little Chicago”, the gangster Al Capone.

Current plans of the historical society are to restore the Gov. Higgins’ Carriage House, all that remains of the large mansion of New York State’s 35th governor.

You can visit the society’s Olean Point Museum, behind the Bartlett House at 302 Laurens Street on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-4. The sponsor for this program was Rock City Park, which also displays historic items such as a chandelier from the Castle restaurant, on Route 16 between Olean and Bradford.

Local attorney, historian and oil producer Stanley Pecora, Jr. spoke at the October Fireside Pumpers breakfast. He reviewed the book **Empire Oil** by John P. Herrick. Some of the highlights:

- The first record of oil in New York State was in 1627 when an oil seepage was found near Cuba. The native Indians used it for various purposes.

- The first successful well drilled in the state was the Job Moses #1 in 1865 to the Bradford 3rd sand, a depth of 1000 to 1200’. He was the first to go to this depth. A location marker for this well can be seen on Limestone Run Road.

- In the 1860s-70s, some thought that oil sands followed “creekolology” -the sands followed the same paths as streams.

- Seneca Oil Co. leased land in 1890 and recovered 75,695 barrels of crude oil from the Chipmunk sands.

- Much of Forest Dorn’s success came from production in Alle-

gany County. Forest Oil Co. recovered 4 million barrels, valued at \$10 million, using the secondary recovery method called waterflooding.

- Waterflooding was instrumental in the 100-year history of the Chipmunk Valley sands.

- Reclamation Supply Corporation was formed to supply water for secondary recovery operations. A pipeline was laid and continued throughout the Bradford Field, the line being 24” when it left the station in Allegany. Lateral lines were added to serve operators.



Pecora discussed oil ventures in the areas of Rock City and the Four-Mile. He also recalled the various recovery methods used, including nitroglycerin and waterflooding. He added some color with stories of his own ventures as a producer.

Over time, the Olean / Rixford area stored over 10 million barrels of oil in huge tanks, some still visible in Rixford. Standard Oil

built a pipeline from there to a refinery in Bayonne, N.J. At its peak, 50,000 bbls / day were shipped from Rixford.

E&M Engineers & Surveyors, PC, and the law firm of Pecora & Graffius were thanked for sponsoring this breakfast.

Treasures sponsored by Rock City Park; “Review of Empire Oil” sponsored by Pecora & Graffius, Attorneys and E&M Engineering & Surveyors.

Fran also highlighted updates and upgrades made at the museum, both inside and on the exterior, and the plans for an additional display building.

American Refining Group was the sponsor of this breakfast.

winner, Ben McCracken, who graciously donated his proceeds back to the museum.



Robin Palmer and daughter Alexis Quick



Museum Manager Fran Bottone presented the November program at the final Fireside Pumpers breakfast for 2023. Using Power Point, Fran reviewed the events sponsored by the museum in 2023, including the St. Patrick’s Day Dinner in March, the Ice Cream Social in May, the Chicken BBQ and Derrick Day in July, and the first annual Dan Palmer Golf Scramble in September.

Fran reviewed the talks at the Fireside Pumpers Breakfasts, including “Invasive Species” sponsored by MSL Oil & Gas; “Music Mountain” sponsored by McCracken Energy Services; “Eldred WWII Museum” sponsored by Worth W. Smith Co.; “The Zippo Museum” sponsored by Treadle Treasurers; “Elk Hunting & the Elk County Viewing Center” sponsored by Howard Drilling, Inc.; “Olean Historic

Dan Palmer Memorial Golf Scramble

by Isabelle Champlin

Our fundraiser golf scramble finally took place on a beautiful September Sunday after being postponed due to rain. The inaugural 18-hole Dan Palmer Memorial Golf Scramble at Pine Acres Country Club began at 9 am, with 11 teams registered! The registration fee included greens fees, cart, lunch on the course, and pizza & wings afterwards (catered by the Model T).



Gerry Pehonsky, Monte Behan, Dave Faller, and Bret Degolier

Skills competitions included Casino Hole, Closest to the Pin, Longest Drive, 100 Yard Shootout, and Skins. Robin Palmer, Dan Palmer’s widow, drew the winning 50/50 ticket and announced the

The golf scramble Event Sponsor was American Refining Group. Dan Palmer was a former employee of ARG and a dedicated advocate of the oil industry. ARG was honored to step forward and be the main sponsor of this inaugural event in honor of their former employee and friend.



A huge THANK YOU goes out to this year’s Hole Sponsors - McCracken Energy Services, Derrick City Diner, Dallas Energy, E&M Engineers & Surveyors, Giardini Bros Construction, Fred Fesemyer, Howard Drilling, State Line Supply, Northwest Bank, Worth W. Smith Co, and PureTech. The Cart Sponsors were BV Mobile Shredding, McCracken Energy Services and Derrick City Diner.

BACA Bus Tour

by Fran Bottone, photos provided by BACA

In early October, we had the privilege of hosting a tour for grades pre-K through 8th of the Bradford Area Christian Academy, for a total of 53 teachers and students. And they all came on one bus!



These kids were well-behaved and very interested in all we had to show them. Board President Tom Miller took the younger kids, while I took the older classes. Board Treasurer Joyce Cline and Secretary Susan Gould also came to help.

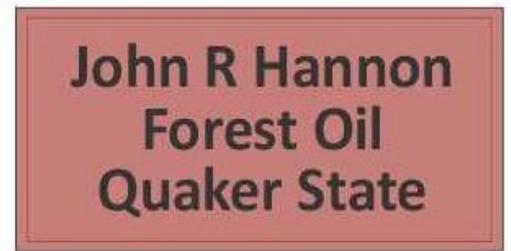
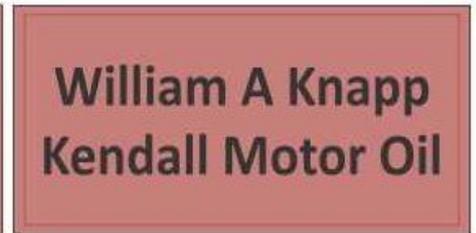
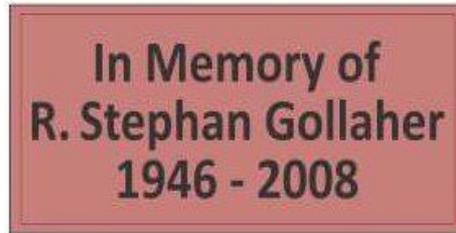


It is interesting to hear the kid's viewpoint on different aspects of the museum displays and local oil history. We would love to have them back anytime.

Board Of Directors

The Penn Brad Oil Museum Board of Directors is as follows:

- Thomas Miller, President
- Fred Fesenmyer, Vice President
- Susan Gould, Secretary
- Joyce Cline, Treasurer
- Isabelle Champlin, Corresponding Secretary
- Jeff Brewer
- Meredith Fesenmyer
- Brenda Fish
- Matt Kropf
- Chip McCracken
- Marsha McCracken
- William Pantuso
- Stanley Pecora
- Paul Phillips
- Sherri Schulze
- Dennis Stromberg
- Dale Smith



Memorial & Honoring Gifts

In Memory Of: _____ **Given By:** _____
 Art Slike, Jr. Mike Fuoco
 Jim Bogdan Tom & Pat Miller



Memorial & Honoring Bricks

In Memory Of: _____ **Placed By** _____
 John R Hannon Martha Hannon Haskins
 Terry T Snow Mary Snow
 William A Knapp Sue Thomas
 R Stephan Gollaher Joan Gollaher

Engraved personalized paving bricks can be purchased to surround the base of the new flag pole. The bricks can honor people who have been involved in the oil industry or be used as a memorial to a deceased person. Bricks can also be purchased personally to show your support for the museum.

Remember or Honor a Loved One with a Gift to the Penn Brad Oil Museum

Memorials received after November 21 will appear in the next newsletter.

Memorials are available by calling 814-368-6824, or by mailing the coupon below to: Penn Brad Oil Museum, P.O. Box 163, Bradford, PA 16701. If ordering a brick, please call the number for more details or print out the order form available on our website. A notice will be sent to the recipient.

Penn Brad Oil Museum is a 501(c)(3) entity and all donations are tax deductible. **Clip and Mail Coupon**

<p>Memorial/Honoring Gifts</p> <p>Amount Enclosed \$ _____</p> <p>Donor's name _____</p> <p>Donor's address _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Check one: In Memory of _____ To Honor _____</p> <p>Send acknowledgment to:</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>_____</p>
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New Retaining Wall

by Fran Bottone



We had been doing some landscaping around the museum recently and noticed some subsidence of the bank below our new entrance walkway. We decided to

proactively take some action and have a retaining wall installed. Jim Kallenborn (green shirt) and crew of Pine Valley Landscaping in Port Allegany came over on short notice and did an amazing job putting in a wall without disturbing what was there. Thank you, Jim!

[Visit our Facebook page for more articles, photos, and updates. User name: Penn Brad Oil Museum.](#)