

Facts & Traditions

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Mission of the Society

To assemble, preserve, and interpret the history of Southeast New Mexico and to promote a greater interest, understanding, and appreciation of the area's past.

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Oil and Gas Restoration

By: Eric Neria

All this year, events marking the Centennial Anniversary of the first production of oil and gas on State of New Mexico Trust lands have commenced. The Historical Society for Southeast New Mexico is acknowledging this milestone by dedicating a portion of its archive to the oil and gas industry. The New Mexico State trust lands are managed under the authority of the State Land Commissioner for the benefit of the schools in the state. The Flynn - Welch - Yates #3, that proved out at 200,000 barrels of oil per day, attracted major oil companies to this area including the Ohio Oil Company, Standard Oil of California, Maryland Oil and Continental Oil.



Some of the motivation for creating this archive is to honor the sacrifice made by the oilfield workers and their families that have benefited our community. Our oilfield has drawn in Southeast New Mexico families prepared to make the sacrifice to earn the higher wages the industry provides. Not only do oilfield wages pay for good homes and put food on the table, but when oilfield money is spent in the community, it fuels the entire economy.

The sacrifice begins the night before and preparation for the morning starts with a 12:30 am alarm, pulling out of the driveway at 1am, arriving at the yard in Artesia at 2am to be on location by 6am. After this, one will often be living out of hotel rooms, running 12-hour shifts for 5 to 20 days depending on the job. When manpower is in short supply, workers will stay on location 24-hours a day, taking turns catching a few hours of shut-eye.

In the past 100 years, the oil and gas industry in Southeast New Mexico has grown to pay 37% of New Mexico's income directly via the severance tax and production on state land, plus an estimated 70% of the state's income when factoring in the aggregate paid taxes by the region. It would be a great error to talk about Southeastern New Mexico without acknowledging the Oil and Gas Industry.

To create the Oil and Gas Archive, the HSSNM asks for donated photos and items to be safe guarded and put on display when the archive is exhibited. The Historical Society would like to have enough items and photos to display for an exhibition in January 2024, if possible. The HSSNM will provide donors with a certificate of receipt and a photo of the item donated to the archive. If you have a photo or item that should be included in the archive please call 575-622-8333 or 575-910-4688 to make arrangements.