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Remnants of the aerial ropeway at the Aucanquilcha volcano mining camp in the Antofagasta Region of northern Chile. Considered the world's highest-altitude mine between 1913 and 1993, it is the subject of the interdisciplinary Alto Cielo Archaeological Project (see page 16; photo Rodrigo Lorca)

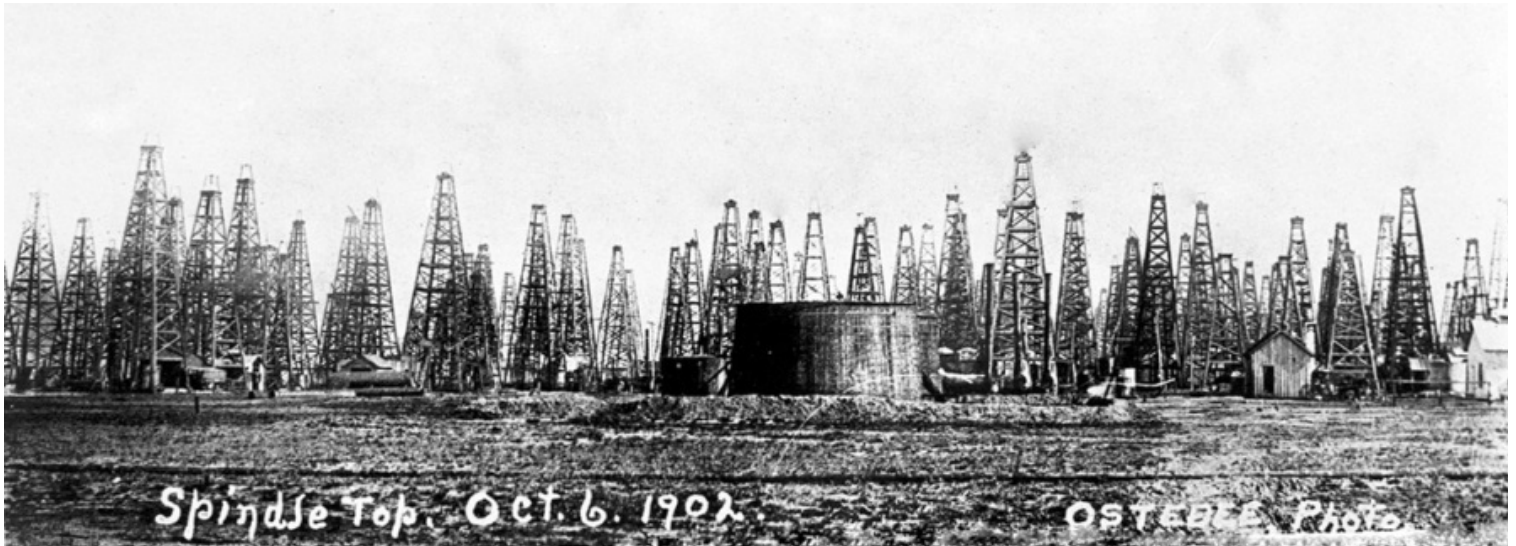
## MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

### INSPIRATIONAL INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE – IN PRAISE OF POLAND

*Miles Oglethorpe, TICCIH President*

Welcome to issue number 101 of the TICCIH Bulletin and to the latest message from your President! As I write, my brain is still pulsating with memories and images of an astonishing visit to Poland a few weeks ago. I was very honoured and fortunate to be invited to participate in an extraordinary event – an industrial heritage congress which, for three of its four days, was held hundreds of meters underground in re-purposed mineworkings. Apart from being a highly professional, hugely enjoyable event, it proved to be a brilliant networking opportunity during which I learned about amazing mining-related heritage and education projects across the world and made some incredibly useful new contacts.

The first half of the event occurred in the Wieliczka Salt Mine near Krakow. It wasn't my first visit to the mine, but this time I saw far more of it than before, met many of the amazing staff (including our hosts Jan Godłowski and Monika Dziobek-Motyka), and also took the opportunity to reflect on Wieliczka's flagship role in putting industrial heritage on the world stage. There is no better example of what mining heritage can deliver, and the fact that it was the first industrial site to be inscribed



Spindletop Oil Fields, Jefferson County, Texas. 1902. Lamar University Archives.

## USA

### OIL HERITAGE IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE. SPINDLETOP-GLADYS CITY BOOMTOWN

By Zachary S. Casey and Asma Mehan, *Huckabee College of Architecture, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, U.S.*

#### Spindletop Oil Fields

In the heart of Southeast Texas, an industrial powerhouse often termed the 'Golden Triangle', the oil refineries and petrochemical plants stand as stalwart testaments to the region's economic evolution. Interestingly, before the discovery of oil at Spindletop, the lumber and cattle industries powered this region's economy. A profound shift occurred when the Lucas Gusher, a fountain of oil spurting hundreds of feet into the air, struck the lands of Spindletop Hill on January 10, 1901.

This remarkable discovery of the Spindletop oilfield on a salt dome formation south of **Beaumont, Texas** marked the birth of the modern petroleum industry and fundamentally transformed the region's geo-political, economic, and cultural landscapes. People from all over the country relocated to Gladys City and Beaumont in search of work and new opportunities, creating a boomtown as the town's **population swelled from 10,000 to 50,000**. The newfound urbanization brought by the oil industry transformed the town and the surrounding areas, creating a ripple effect across the region that would be felt for generations to come.

The surge in oil-driven economic activity transmuted the region into a

vibrant nexus of commerce, with the oil industry emerging as a critical architect of growth and advancement. This newfound affluence incited by the petroleum sector ushered in an era of economic diversification, laying the groundwork for industrialization's further evolution.

The Spindletop Oil Fields not only underscored the United States' ascent as the foremost petroleum-producing nation but also signaled the nation's initiation into the Petroleum Age. It was Spindletop that solidified its position as America's first significant oil field, becoming an enduring symbol of its industrial might. By 1985, over **153,000,000 barrels of oil had been produced** had been extracted from the Spindletop oil fields, underscoring the magnitude of this extraordinary resource

#### Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum

Emerging south of Beaumont, Texas, in 1892, Gladys City conceived with the ambition of becoming an exemplar of **industrial excellence**. The city was to feature factories, schools, churches, homes, parks, and business for industry workers of the nearby Spindletop Hill. The city was meticulously designed, with provisions for factories, schools, churches, homes, parks, and businesses tailored to cater to the industry workers of the nearby Spindletop Hill. This industrious vision, however, underwent an unprecedented transformation with the eruption of the Lucas Gusher in 1901, leading to Gladys City's metamorphosis into a booming epicenter of oil production.

With the sudden onset of the oil boom, Gladys City expanded at an astonishing rate, with new clapboard buildings mushrooming across the landscape to accommodate the influx of oilfield workers and their families. Unfortunately, by the early 1970s, much of the original Gladys City had been razed, succumbing to the march of progress and the passage of time.





Gladys City Boomtown. 1902. Lamar University Archives.

Recognizing the need to preserve the region's rich industrial heritage and the historical significance of Spindletop, Lucas Gusher, and Gladys City, a meticulous reconstruction of the city was undertaken. Visitors to this reimagined cityscape are transported back to the heady boomtown days. They can witness the awe-inspiring spectacle of Lucas Gusher's discovery on January 10, 1901, re-enacted with a functioning replica that shoots water skyward at the same pace as the original oil gusher.

The Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum serves as an immersive historical tableau, allowing visitors to engage with artifacts and memorabilia that echo the hopes and aspirations of the early prospectors. The museum provides a window into the complex process of drilling for oil during the dawn of the 20th century, commemorating the gusher that forever altered the trajectory of Texas. Vestiges of this dynamic industrial past are scattered throughout Southeast Texas, from the meticulously reconstructed Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum to the insightful Texas Energy Museum and the countless oil derricks punctuating the landscape. These landmarks are enduring reminders of the transformative power of the Spindletop oil discovery and its pivotal role in shaping the state's — and indeed, the nation's — economic and industrial landscapes.

### The Golden Triangle

The Spindletop revelation charted a transformative course in American history and reshaped the country's landscape. It ushered in a rush of investment as stakeholders staked billions of dollars, hoping to unearth the next significant petroleum reserve. Spindletop became the breeding ground for major American oil companies and catalyzed their significant corporate stature. These corporations include The Texas Com-

pany (later **Texaco**), **Gulf Oil Corporation**, **Sun Oil Company**, **Magnolia Petroleum Company**, and **Humble** (later **Exxon Company, U.S.A.**).

These corporations' relentless pursuits yielded enormous volumes of inexpensive fuel, revolutionizing the American transportation sector, and reshaping the economic contours of the time. Spindletop's discovery's ripple effect permeated beyond Gladys City and Beaumont. It catalyzed transformative changes across neighboring counties, inducing regional economic and demographic shifts and bolstering growth and urban development.

This monumental industrial activity drastically redefined these cities, leaving a lasting imprint on their urban identities. The cities of Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange have become known as the industrial "**Golden Triangle**," an area of intense economic activity centered around the oil, petroleum, and petrochemical industries.

This industrial cornucopia houses a chain of significant refineries, most notably in Beaumont and Port Arthur. Among these stands **Motiva**, the United States' most significant oil and petroleum refinery. Beaumont, Port Arthur, Sabine Pass, and Orange, all nestled around Spindletop, became hosts to expansive storage facilities, pipeline networks, and critical refining units, further solidifying the Golden Triangle's stature as a focal point in the nation's industrial landscape.

In conclusion, the transformation catalyzed by Spindletop—from a regional economy based on lumber and cattle to a globally significant petroleum hub—signifies its substantial impact on America's development. Nevertheless, one must not overlook the environmental toll this industrial revolution took, as increased factories, refineries, and storage units also led to pollution spikes.



Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. 10 Jan. 2023. Lamar University Archives.

Today, amidst growing concerns about climate change, it is critical to reassess the long-term viability of petroleum-dependent economies. Spindletop's legacy underscores our historical reliance on fossil fuels, necessitating a reflection on our shift toward renewable energy sources.

Ultimately, the history of the Golden Triangle is a testament to the interplay between human ambition, technological innovation, economic development, and environmental consequences. It underscores the urgent need for a more sustainable and balanced approach in our ongoing energy transition and in the way we consume energy.

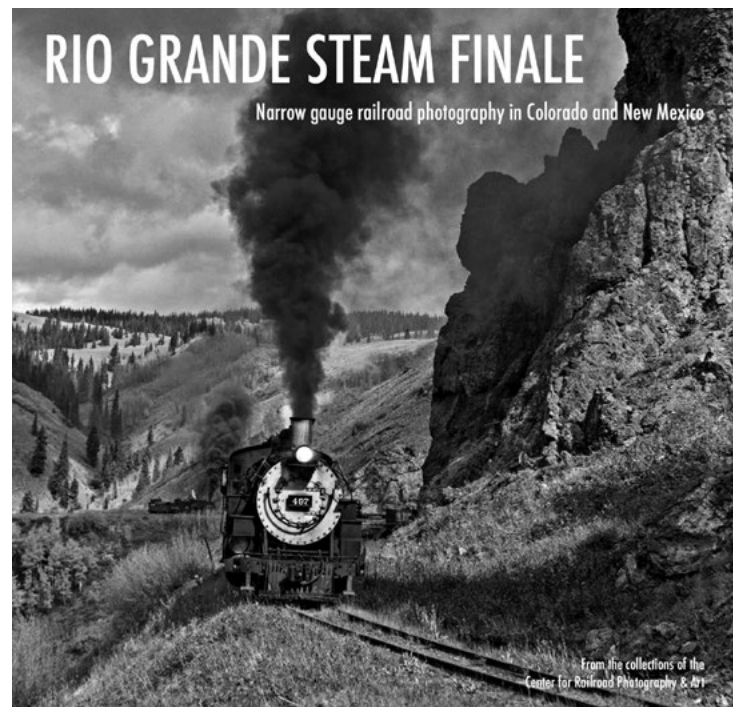
## BOOK REVIEW

### *RIO GRANDE STEAM FINALE: NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHY IN COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO*

Scott Lothes and Elrond Lawrence, editors, with essays by Don L. Hofsommer and Karl Zimmerman. Madison, WI: Center for Railroad Photography & Art, 2023. 228 pages, Hardcover, 200 color and b&w illustrations. (ISBN 978-1-734 5635-2-8) \$60.00.

*Reviewed by Betsy Fahlman, professor of Art History, Arizona State University*

The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad's San Juan Extension operated in the remote and rugged country along the Colorado-New Mexico border. As Scott Lothes observes in his "Foreword," in the rich annals of American railroad history, "perhaps no other lines have received attention in such great disproportion to their size than the narrow-gauge railways of southern Colorado." (6) The collections of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art comprise the work of nearly 100 artists and nearly a million images and the narrow-gauge is amply represented in most of the CRP&A collections. The D&RGW's San Juan Extension, which began oper-



ations in 1881, is a fascinating chronicle of mountain railroading. Its end began in the 1950's, during which it kept running, but without new investment its days were numbered.



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