THE GEORGETOWN HERALD, Wednesday Evening, January 18, 1956 PAGE 4

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FROM NUISANCE TO WONDER FUEL CINDERELLA STORY OF NATURAL GAS

The time, 1821.

The place, Fredonia, a sleepy New FARM NEWS York village 40 miles from Buffalo. The event, a mysterious flame springing directly from the ground along the banks of the Canadaway Creek!

Here is how it happened. A group of small boys playing Indian braves built a fire beside the creek. Stamp. ing and howling in their war dance, two of the more daring young braves snatched burning faggots from the fire and hurled them as far as they could - just like the nearby Seneca Indians did.

They got more than they bargained for. Instead of dying harmlessly, the faggots flared up. Frightened, the boys fled. They told their parents a mysterious flame burned from the banks of the creek, and the rumour spread - "Canadaway Creek is be-

witched." One villager, however, did not accept the mysterious flame as evidence of the supernatural. Bill Hart investigated. He found bubbles on the surface of the creek - bubbles. he guessed correctly came from natural

gas, a phenomenon he had read about. But Bill Hart was practical as well as curious. He remembered that soveral cities in Europe, and even Baltimore in the United States, used manufactured gas for street lighting. The accidental lighting of this gas proved it would burn. Why not, he reasoned, use this product for the same purp-

Bill Hart experimented. He tried to drill a hole through which more of the gas could escape but failed in his first two attempts as he struck rock. He tried again, and this time at the 17 foot level the hiss of escaping gas signalling his success. It was America's first natural gas well.

Hart drilled another 10 feet, ran a lead pipe into the hole and connected it to a crudely constructed sheet-iron measuring tank. Hollow logs joined together formed the first natural gas pipeline in America. It led to Hart's first customer, the Fredonia Inn, where the new fuel caused a sensation as a source of light. The names of Bill Hart and Fredonia, New York, became famous throughout North America and even in Europe, where the tale of the gas well was spread by travellers who had stopped at the Fredonia Inn on the stagecoach run between New York and Buffalo.

New Industry Born

Bill Hart's venture marked the birth of an industry that has become the sixth largest in the United States and a booming one in Canada. But it took the natural gas industry a quarter of a century to grow up. Not until 53 years after Hart's discovery

was natural gas used industrially. in a factory in East Liverpool, Ohio. And another 50 years went by before a large segment of the population began to benefit from the ideal fuel. It has taken the ingentaly and ef-

fort of thousands of people , drill the wells, build the pipelines and the compressor stations, design the appliances and distribute natural gas to the millions of Canadians and Americans who enjoy this premium fuel today. Only since the 1940's has the industry become a major contributor to the fuel needs of the U.S. Previously, the use of natural gas was confined to areas not too distant from the gas fields, although a few 1,000 mile or longer pipelines existed even

during the 1930's. It was during World War II, when German submarines were sinking the oil tankers on a wholesale basis off our shores, that the gas industry stepped in to fill a pressing fuel need. The demand for natural gas for home and industry has been skyrocketing

ever since. It is a long way from the crude beginning made by Bill Hart to the giant cross-country pipelines - some 30 inches and more in diameter - which bring natural gas directly from the producing fields to the local gas distribution companies throughout the country. But while man has harnessed natural gas and reaped the benefits of this wonder fuel, it was Moth-

er Nature who produced it. There are many scientific explanations, but no one knows exactly how Nature accomplished this miracle. Conceivably, decayed vegetation, buried by earth movements, decomposed to form natural gas and oil. According to less popular theory, natural gas was formed by an instantaneous underground reaction of carbon and hydrogen.

Probably the most generally accepted theory is that millions of years ago, when the earth's surface was largely covered by the sea, trillions of tiny marine plants and fish called plankton were deposited on the floor of the sea, covered with sediment that eventually became rock, and then were left as part of the land as the sea receded. As the years passed, -millions of years - intense heat, extreme pressure caused by movement of the earth's surface, and other forces of nature distilled the plankton into oil and natural gas.

Many Byproducts

People frequently think that gas and oil are found in huge subterranean caverns. On the contrary, both gas and oil lie in the minute pores of rocks such as sandstone or limestone. They are under great pressure, held captive by surrounding rock formations that are impervious to scepage until shifting of the earth's surface cracks the "cap rock" or the producer's drilling bit penetrates it

Most people are familiar with the cleanliness and efficiency of natural gas as it comes from the burner tip of the gas range. But it has other at- demand ...

Wm. Featherstone Heads Halton Jersey Breeders

the Can. Jersey Cattle Club, who in-

cidentally was the recipient of the

special awards won at the Halton Par-

ish Show last September. The presentations were made by A. B. Corless,

manager of the Milton branch of the Bank of Montreal; Harold Smellie,

manager of the Halton Coop Supplies;

and George Swann, of the Milton

Milling Co. A report of this outstand-

ing meeting would not be complete

without some mention of the very

sumptuous dinner served by the lad-

ies of the Ashgrove W.A. The appre-

ciation of the gathering was extended

to the ladies by Jack Featherstone,

Halton director on the Ontario Jersey

Club executive. Following the busi-

ness session, a film depicting scenic

highlights of the British Isles was

screened, and Art Bennett, associate

agricultural representative for Halton

and Peel counties presented a brief

but interesting report on 4-H Jersey

The election of officers for 1956

President, Wm. Featherstone, Oak-

ville; 1st vice president, Stanley Mat-

thews, Acton; 2nd vice president, Gco.

Hewer, Moffat; secretary treasurer, J.

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CONCRETE

Calf Club in Halton in 1955.

resulted as follows:

E. Whitelock, Milton.

fat and Fred Moore.

J. E. W.

Marketing of Jersey Milk was the theme of the Seventeenth Annual meeting of the Halton Jersey Club held in connection with a dinner meeting, in the Stewarttown Hall, Tuesday of last week. Mac Alexander president of the club, presided over what many considered to be one of the best annual meetings held by the Halton club in some years. J. W. Pawley, of Brampton, who was introduced by John Holtby, president of the Peel County Club, delivered a most interesting and encouraging address on the results of the special programme sponsored by Ontario Jersey Breeders in expanding the market for Jersey milk. Starting with one of the smaller dairies in London, the sales of Jersey milk by this dairy in the London market, jumped from 25,000 quarts for the month of September, 1954, to 84,000 quarts for the same month in 1955. As a result of the public demand for a low fat milk, emphasis is being placed on a 2 per cent all Jer. .. sey milk which sells at two cents per quart below the price of regular milk-Mention was also made of another dairy in the Brantford market which without any assistance from the Jersey Milk Marketing Committee were already selling 2000 quarts per day.

The month of February will see a Toronto dairy marketing 200 cans of this special 2 per cent B.F. Jersey Milk on the streets of Toronto. As a result of the activities of the special Jersey Marketing Committee, several of those present reported that sales of Jersey cattle had pepped up and the demand for Jersey milk had also im

Others who spoke briefly at this meeting included Col. Bartley Bull of Brampton; James Bremner, secretary of the Canadian Jersey Cattle Club; and M. C. Beaty, 1st vice president of

tributes as well. Natural gas is not only a perfect fuel, but a rich mixture of hydro-carbons, many of which can be separated, or "stripped" from the gas before it is sent on its long journey to the consumer. Methane is the hydro-carbon that forms the bulk of the natural gas we burn in our

The other hydro-carbons, such as propane and butane, are used for myriad purposes - as raw materials in the manufacture of plastics, fertilizers and synthetic tabries such as Orlon, or as different types of fuel such as liquid propane gas (bottle gas.)

Not all natural gas is perfect for fuel when it comes out of the ground. A small percentage contains water, sulphur, or other extraneous mater ial. But even this can be processed by the industry so that the impurities do not enter the gas pipe-

Natural gas has not always been valued so highly. It once was the stepchild of the oil industry - i's only value a nuisance value.

In ancient China thousands of years ago, natural gas was used industrially as fuel to evaporate salt brine. And it was reported by early travellers to China, that the women in certain villages cooked their food over flames which shot from holes in the ground

---- undoubtedly natural gas seepage. But in this country gas occurring with oil, as it frequently does, made life miserable for the pioneer eil

producers. The first oil well was drilled in Titusville, Pennsylvania, in 1859, by Colonel E. L. Drake a former railroad conductor. He struck oil - an initial flow of 25 barrels a day --- at 691/2 feet below the surface.

Overnight Titusville a village of 125 persons, mushroomed. The population leapt to 15,000. Hundreds of wells, some yielding as much as 3000 barrels a day, soon dotted the nearby

countryside. The Pennsylvania discovery started a vertitable "oil rush." West Virginia and Kentucky were producing oil within a year; Kansas opened up in 1860 and by 1866 "black gold" was found in Ohio and Illinois. In 1901 Spindletop in Southeast Texas, famed as one of the greatest producing fields

of all time, came in. The producers' joy was not undiluted, however. Natural gas was a bugaboo, for it frequently was found with oil. Even worse, wells drilled for oil sometimes turned out to be "gassers" producing nothing but gas. To those early oil producers a gasser was on a par with a "dry hole."

There was no way to transport natural gas to market, and almost no market for it, anyway. So untold billions of cubic feet of the miracle fuel were flared, both in Canada and the U.S. - ignited at the well head and left to burn off. But as methods for building dependable pipelines and efficient appliances were developed, and more homeowners and industries learned the value of this clean, efficient, easily controlled fuel, flaring declined. Conservation commissions in gas producing states, with the cooperation of the oil and gas industry; now are doing excellent work in conserving natural gas for the benefit of the entire country. Comparatively little commercially usable gas is flared today.

A gasser is no longer a bugaboo. Producers spend millions of dollars each year searching just for natural gas in order to fill the ever increasing

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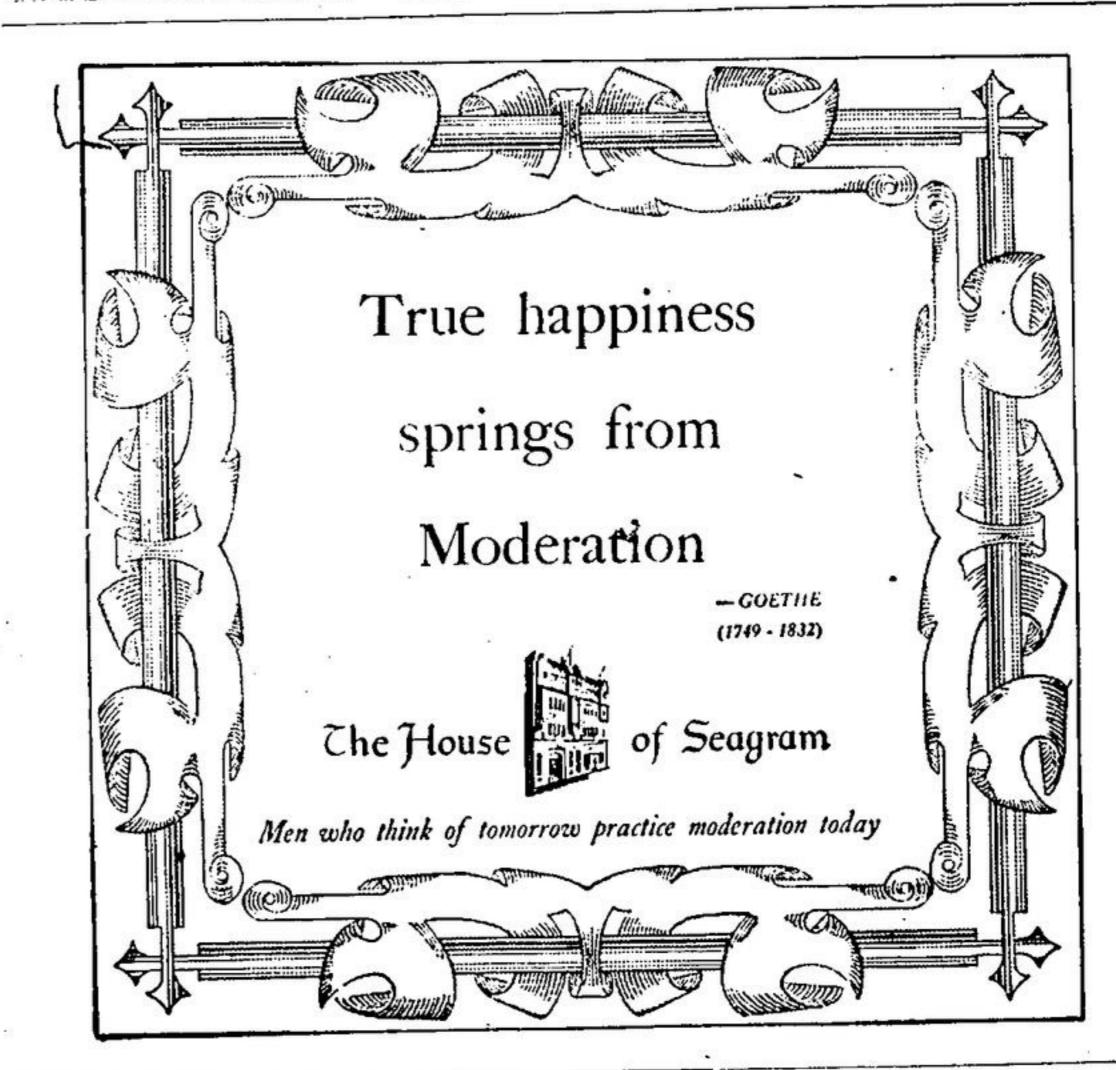
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