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## FROM NUISANCE TO WONDER FUEL CINDERELLA STORY OF NATURAL GAS

The time, 1821.  
The place, Fredonia, a sleepy New 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. Stamping 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 bewitched."

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 several 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 purpose?

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 ingenuity and effort of thousands of people to 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 Mother 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 seepage 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-

### FARM NEWS

#### Wm. Featherstone Heads Halton Jersey Breeders

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 in 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 Jersey 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 picked up and the demand for Jersey milk had also improved.

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

the Can. Jersey Cattle Club, who incidentally was the recipient of the special awards won at the Halton Parish 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 outstanding meeting would not be complete without some mention of the very sumptuous dinner served by the ladies of the Ashgrove W.A. The appreciation of the gathering was extended to the ladies by Jack Featherstone, Halton director on the Ontario Jersey Club executive. Following the business 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 Calf Club in Halton in 1955.

The election of officers for 1956 resulted as follows:  
President, Wm. Featherstone, Oakville; 1st vice president, Stanley Matthews, Acton; 2nd vice president, Geo. Hewer, Moffat; secretary treasurer, J. E. Whitehead, Milton.  
Directors: Mac Alexander M. C. Beaty, W. H. Devlin, Ernest Davies, Ken Ella, G. R. Graham, Duncan Moffat and Fred Moore.

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