

TO SPUD IN LABOR DAY

Drillers of Test Near Hot Springs Advertise With Parade.

Special to the Gazette.

Hot Springs, Aug. 31.—A large parade of motor trucks up Central avenue and out to the Dodson farm was notice to residents and visitors that the test for oil at that place will be under way soon. The trucks were loaded with drilling machinery.

The test will be made under the direction of Gaume & Maxwell. The hole will be drilled to a depth of 4,000 feet, if necessary. The company plans to spud in 'on Labor Day, when a big barbecue will be held. A standard rig will be used and a 185-foot derrick has been erected.

IF IT'S MEDITATION YOU WANT

Hot Springs
Sentinel-Record

By L. R. CAULFIELD

3/9/30

Should the visitor at this great national health and pleasure resort become surfeited or cloyed by the mad medley of delights and distractions of the Hot Springs winter season—be it bathing, golfing, dancing, necking or any other certified way of speeding, "the golden hours on angel's wings" (Bobbie Burns), and should care to turn for variety from the superficial to the inner and deeper things—here's his chance:

Nine miles northeast of this city,

150 feet south of the Little Rock-Hot Springs highway on the NE quarter of the SW quarter of Sec. 33, Twp. 1 south, Range 18 W., there is something "inner and deeper" that, of its kind, can't be beat on the North American continent this side of the region of the St. Lawrence river! Want to bet?

The spot we have indicated marks the sepulchre of blasted hopes and the ashes of \$75,000, dedicated heroically, though fruitlessly, to a "noble experiment." If all this has ex-

cited your curiosity enough to put you in an inquiring mood, and you go to see for yourself, you'll find the end of a length of 14-inch well casing projecting above the ground, surrounded by the ruins of a derrick and drilling rig. Now stand uncovered! You're treading on holy ground—the site of the historic "Dodson Well," that, between the years 1921-1925, in a quest for oil, cut the sedimentary rocks of the earth's crust to greater geological depths than has ever been attained in oil well drilling in the United States except, perhaps, on our extreme northeastern borders, and reached a physical depth of 4,400 feet, breaking the then existing records in the Mid-Continent area.

Since then—1924—deeper wells have been drilled in the southern and western fields; that is, physically deeper wells; but the Dodson well still holds supremacy for geological depth and is likely to have no contenders—at least not while

the winter visitor will use it as a nice quiet retreat where he can muse on the inner and deeper things and forget his promise to "Give me a ring, dearie!" (diamond preferred.)

Four years, marked by intermittent periods of rest; were devoted to drilling operations, and one driller, "Hank" Manahan, manned the walking beam through the whole campaign.

No field in oildom ever yielded a more typical oil driller than Hank, or a truer "rock-cannibal"—a gentle imputation that, should you pass him a stone for bread, he'd keep on chewing right along. Born on a derrick platform, you can smell crude oil wherever you find him—just as an Esquimaux always smells of seal blubber.

To be identified with an epic like the Dodson well puts Hank in the calendar of oily saints. Nevertheless, his name is written into engineering history.

Identity of Formations.

Geologically identified, the rock at the surface of the well-site belongs to the "Womble-Shale" formation of the Lower Ordovician system of Paleozoic rocks, composed of clay-shale in alternating black and gray strata, with occasional bands of graphitic shale, and lenses of bluish black limestone, interbedded with sandstone.

Progress of the Drill.

Through the Womble shale formation the bit cut with monotonous rotation of the constituent strata described, for approximately 1,000 feet, as shown by Hank's log. Yes, Hank kept a log of the well to its last level, ticking-off the formation foot by foot, with conscientious precision, and making such a voluminous document that, if we tried to write it into this article, The Sentinel-Record would have to build a "lean-to" to its Sunday supplement. Reaching the Blakely sandstone below the Womble shale, at the approximate level indicated, the bit traveled through alternating thin beds of shale, lime and sandstone, for perhaps 500 feet; then down, down, down through the last two series of lower Ordovician system in descending order, the Mazarn shale, and Crystal mountain sandstone, the bit worked for perhaps 1,850 feet through the same monotony of recurring lime shale and sand, with occasional lenses of dark chert, and chert pebbles, still lower.

At this level, 3,850 feet, we assume that the well had reached the base of the lower Ordovician system that normally rests on rocks of Cambrian age. These estimates are necessarily approximated; we can only base such calculations on the known thickness of these beds at points quite remote from the well, where they are exposed, and their extent can be determined. In the area of the well the state and United States Geological survey have identified the surface rocks, and have assigned them their definite

geological place, by means of fossil evidences, and correlations of the strata; but if any fossils came from the well in "baling," they promptly went into the "slush-pit" and were lost to science, for, though Hank kept a snappy log of the well, he is eminently a gentleman of "up-to-the-minute" tendencies, and is not worrying about what forms of life prevailed on earth in the dead long ago; he is a forgiving soul, always willing to "let by-gones be by-gones," particularly when it comes to fossils.

Downward from the 3,850-foot-level, if our estimates be right, the drill entered the Collier shale formation of the Upper Cambrian system, and drilled through 550 feet of alternating layers of graphitic shale, and blue and black limestone, intercalated with thin layers of dark chert—and here the drill rested at 4,400 feet, March 29, 1924.

Why did Hank quit drilling?

Cause of Shut Down.

Listen! In the afternoon of that fateful March 29, 1924, Hank sat on his "throne" on the derrick platform and while the walking beam rocked overhead, he fell perhaps into the languor of memory and retrospect, as he felt the earth's heart-throbs over the stethoscope of the drilling-line when the bit rose and fell, nearly a mile beneath his feet; perhaps, too, his eyes turned dreamily toward the distant horizon, to the conflagration of the sunset, and the banner of the clouds, and then things began to happen. We never like to dwell on harrowing topics but when it was all over, the rig lay a tangled wreck; yes, that's it—a cyclone. The crown-block, weighing a ton, lay where Hank's "throne" had stood. Yes, Hank is still sticking around. All of which explains why the "Dodson" well never went below 4,400 feet.

The "Dodson" well stands out as a unique achievement. It has won honors as a breaker of records, of which its sponsors may be justly proud. It is the deepest well in Arkansas. It has reached greater geological depths than any well in Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas. Geological depth, as distinguished from physical depth, means not depth from the surface, but is reckoned by the age of the rock penetrated; thus a well drilled 100 feet into rocks of Ordovician age would have greater geological depth than a well drilled 2,000 feet in Cretaceous rocks, which are of later origin.

The "Dodson" well penetrated the last two potential oil horizons in the earth's crust, in descending order, the Ordovician and Cambrian, below which oil has never been found.

Also it gave Hank a fling at fame, and he made good.

You'll Need It.

The accompanying excellent picture of the "Dodson" well, from a graphic photograph by the De Luxe studio, shows the drilling-rig and equipment at a time when hope sprang eternal in the breasts of the "angels" back of the enterprise—for oil has its "angels" as well as show girls—and before the cyclone tried to "get" Hank.

You'll not find the superficial or external aspect of things quite so pretty now when you make your call; but remember that "true happiness comes from within," and that all that is inner and deeper of the "Dodson" well still survives to inspire the meditation that will refresh your spirit to re-enter the rapturous vortex of the Hot Springs winter season and to give dearie that ring (diamond preferred.)

Lonsdale Enthusiastic Over Prospect for Oil

Hot Springs—Interest is high in Lonsdale, 18 miles east of Hot Springs, in the test well for oil, being sunk on the J. D. Houpt farm, just outside the city limits. The well is being drilled by Judge E. Carlson and associate. They declared signs so far are favorable, but drilling has been carried on only one week.

However, Lonsdale, smallest incorporated town in the United States, is hoping it may soon have some further claims to distinction.