

Upcoming Events

Photography Class

April 10 | 10 am – 2 pm

Jazz and Wine

April 23 | 6 pm – 8 pm

Jazz and Wine

June 18 | 6 pm – 8 pm

Beaumont Amateur Radio Club Field Day

June 26-27

Opening of Historical Southeast Texas Art Show

July 17

DRILL BITS

Letter from Director Troy Gray

We have been busy since the last newsletter from February. Repairs have been done on some buildings to fix problems caused by Hurricanes Laura and Delta. Many of you may know that after the February freeze, our gusher stopped working. We have contacted people to help us to get it going again, but for the time being, we are raising funds for gusher repairs. Not all is bad news, though, as you will read in the next few pages of this newsletter what we have done in the past few months and what will happen in the next few months.



Waiting for customers in the Dry Goods Store

Gladys City Live

Our annual Gladys City Live was a success. One story from this event, which occurred and put smiles on our faces: We had a family of new members that was so happy to try out their new membership and received free admission and free 1901 money. The day brought great weather, great interactions with characters in the buildings, and buying of coffee, taffy, ice cream, root beer, stock certificates, bandanas, and hair pins. Fun day overall!

Save the Date

Every other Sunday in
September, October,
November

Open Mic/Family Picnics

All of December evenings
Christmas in Boomtown
Light Display

January 8, 2022
121st Spindletop
Anniversary

April 9-10, 2022
Country Life Festival

June 11, 2022
Black Gold Bash

More info to come!

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 5 and June 12 will be class days in photography and kids blacksmithing, respectively. These are our most popular classes. Each costs \$100, with a \$50 deposit to ensure your place. Call the museum today.

On June 18, we will have our 2nd Jazz and Wine at 6 pm. The featured musician is Seth Wade Melancon, who is known for his music composition/production work. We will also have the War Wagon Cigar Lounge and TAB Typewriter Key Jewelry on hand so bring extra money. Admission is \$10 for non-museum members and free for museum members.



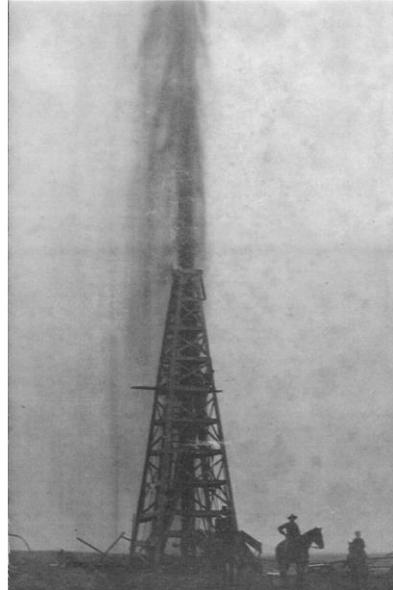
On June 26 and 27, we will be hosting the Beaumont Amateur Radio Club as they participate in their annual field day. Starting at noon on June 26, the members will host a 24 hour ham radio event, which is happening all through the United States on the same weekend. Please come and learn not only about the history of Spindletop, but about ham radios and what the club is all about!

In July, August and September, we have joined the Artists of Southeast Texas to bring you the first Historical Southeast Texas Art Show. This will take place in our Caroline Room and will feature area artists' work. There are also opportunities for sponsorships as well. Call Director Troy Gray at 409-880-1762 for more information.

We are planning great events for this fall and next spring already. These include open mic/picnic nights, Spindletop Spookfest, Big Red's Ride Car Show, Christmas in Boomtown Light Show, 121st Spindletop Anniversary, Country Life Festival, and the Black Gold Bash. You will hear more about these in a later newsletter but there are always chances to participate, become a sponsor, or volunteer.



History Corner



The Lucas Gusher, photographed by Beaumont photographer A.L. Clark. The horsemen are Charles and Will Roberts of Galveston.

By now, it's common knowledge that on January 10, 1901, an Austrian mining engineer named Anthony Lucas brought in an oil well on the crest of Spindletop Hill, a few miles south of Beaumont. But it's only with the benefit of hindsight that we can understand the worldwide significance of that event. On that cold January day, when the well's exhausted crew, operating from a handmade wooden derrick with tools and methods they themselves had invented, pushed their drill bit through the last layer of caprock on Spindletop Hill, they unleashed a torrent of 70,000 to 100,000 barrels of heavy green crude oil a day, soaring almost two hundred feet in the air and drenching the prairie below. Folks around christened the well the "Lucas Gusher."

No one on the planet was prepared for such a phenomenon. In fact, no one in the US had ever witnessed a spouting oil well, although, from time to time, brief newspaper accounts had mentioned big producers in Russian oil fields. When the Lucas Gusher came in, no means of storing or transporting the oil yet existed in Southeast Texas, where American geologists had already declared there to be no oil. For a time after the well came in, chaos reigned supreme. Oil men, investors, gamblers, and charlatans looking to make a quick buck poured into Beaumont and crowded its muddy streets, and Spindletop Hill soon bristled with wells, some so close together that derrick floors had to be cut out to accommodate those of neighboring rigs.

What was so important about the Lucas Gusher, which ran amok for nine days before its driller, Al Hamill, and his crew invented a way to cap it?

Gusherometer

Our rise to \$300,000.

We have collected \$55,111

We need \$244,889.

Spindletop Gladys City

Boomtown Museum

5550 Jimmy Simmons

Blvd.

Beaumont, TX 77705

(409) 880-1750

gladyscityinfo@gmail.com

spindletop.org

Almost none of the gusher's oil was ever marketed, because no one knew what to do with it. The well never even made enough to pay for itself, and was soon outproduced by even greater gushers in the Spindletop field and in neighboring fields. In the drilling frenzy that followed, its actual location was lost for many years. And the Spindletop field itself was over-drilled and by 1903 had become a pumper field. As Anthony Lucas remarked, "The cow was milked too hard, and...she was not milked intelligently." The Spindletop field was eventually outperformed by the hill itself, when the second Spindletop field was brought in on its flanks in 1925.

But the importance of the Lucas Gusher, and Spindletop, lay in the sheer, previously unimagined quantity of oil produced by the well. Before the Gusher, a large well in the US Eastern Oil Regions and in Corsicana, the only significant field in Texas, produced only 50 barrels a day, but the Lucas Gusher produced twice as much oil per day as all the other fields in the world put together.

New fields spread from Spindletop, redefining Texas in Big Oil and taking leadership in production from Russia and giving it to America. Four major oil companies—Texaco, Gulf, Humble, and Sun—saw their genesis at Spindletop. Within a year, Spindletop oil was being shipped all over the world as industry converted coal-burning furnaces to liquid fuel, paving the way for new inventions, gasoline-burning engines such as those used in automobiles and airplanes. In 1911, only a decade after the advent of the Lucas Gusher, then-British Home Secretary Winston Churchill committed the British Navy to using oil-based fuel, and the driving force was Texas oil.

That moment on January 10, 1901, opened up a vast new horizon for human imagination and spurred innovations that would alter the course of world history. One historian has called the twentieth century "the Century of Oil." And it all began in that one benchmark moment January 10, 1901, when that column of oil burst through the last bit of caprock and spewed forth more riches than the world had yet imagined—and, for good or ill, heralded a new era.

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