

BRIEF HISTORY OF LOCAL OIL DEVELOPMENT

**First Company Incorporated
Here in 1918 Before Re-
serve Was Opened to
Prospecting.**

(By FRED A. REBER)

In the year 1918 the Virgin Dome Oil company of St. George was incorporated. At that time the government lands within the bounds of petroleum reserve No. 7 were not open for prospecting. This first company to start drilling for oil here was limited to such oil rights as could be acquired from the farmers who had purchased land before the oil right

was reserved.

It is very interesting to know that even at this time the local people showed their faith in our oil possibilities. Nearly all who were called upon leased to the Virgin Dome Oil company their rights, and those who did not have oil lands bought stock in the company for cash. For nearly four years they worked and paid the price of wildcatting, only to find hard times, debt, and litigation joining hands to stop them upon the very threshold of success.

Five years later, after the government had opened the reserve to prospecting and the different permits had been sifted out and granted, when outside capital began to come in and start other test wells, these brave old stockholders settled their difficulties, paid their debts and started out to finish their well. Most of the money to do the new work is coming from the stockholders in San Jose, California. They are doing a good job and we wish

them success.

The real force behind the drilling activity in the St. George field was supplied by a group of fifteen well known, local professional and business men. Well known as individuals, but as a development organization the general public has had very little occasion to know about them. Their work was done quietly, but always with a definite idea in mind.

It was on October 18, 1926, that these fifteen men incorporated the Washington County Oil Development company for 20,000 shares of no-par stock. Each member of that group subscribed for an equal amount of this stock and none has been offered for sale to the public.

Experience at the Virgin Dome had taught these men that local capital cannot stand the strain of drilling wells, but they felt that there was plenty of capital in the world ready to do the job if the proper inducements and friendly cooperation were supplied.

The Washington County Oil Development company came into existence with one very definite thought in view: To give petroleum reserve No. 7 a test for oil. Development of the country in its largest sense was always foremost in these men's minds. They have cut straight to the line ever since then, without publicity or show. It was this company that set about to group the individual permits covering the different local structures into a single development unit. It was their group development plan that enabled the reserve permittees to establish an equity in these valuable oil lands and prevented them from being cancelled by the Hoover order.

It was the Washington County Oil Development company that encouraged the Arrowhead Petroleum Corporation to start their well by releasing the drilling right. It was they who furnished acreage and help to the California boys who organized the St. George Oil company, who are now drilling a test well on the Bee Hive dome. It was they who entered into a land division contract with the Mid-American Oil company of Ogden that started the test well on the Bloomington dome, and whose contract was later taken over by the Escalante Explorations, Inc. Their shoulders are still at the wheel. Their agents are still busy encouraging other interests to come in and share in the wonderful development.

These companies have brought to this field and spent several hundred thousand dollars in good faith. Washington County Oil De-

velopment company appreciates the efforts of all of these operating companies, and St. George as a whole, with its progressive and intelligent people do appreciate and support the drilling companies, the investors, and every one who is contributing to the development of this great potential oil field, which is designated by the government as United States petroleum reserve No. 7.