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COLUMBUS MARION "DAD" JOINER AND THE EAST TEXAS OIL BOOM

JOE L. WHITE

Whatever the story history records for the East Texas Oil Field, it will surely be one written around the figure of Columbus Marion "Dad" Joiner, seventy-year-old wildcatter, whose discovery of oil in Rusk County, Texas, in 1930 marked the opening of the world's largest oil field.¹ As Christopher Columbus had discovered a new world but received little financial reward for his deed, so it was that Columbus Joiner opened a new world whose wealth was to be acquired by others. Like countless other wildcatters before him, Joiner never realized great wealth from his efforts. It is the purpose of this article to tell of the trials and tribulations which "Dad" Joiner endured, as he followed a dream that became only a partial reality.

Columbus Marion Joiner, son of James and Lucy Joiner, was born near Center Star, Lauderdale County, Alabama, on March 12, 1860. Known by all in his later life as "Dad," Joiner was reared in humble surroundings during the midst of the Civil War, and was said to have had only seven weeks of formal schooling.² Self-taught, Joiner as a young man, tried the mercantile business in Center Star for a brief period, but soon grew tired of tending store. As a man on the move—a trait that Joiner would often exhibit in his later career—he crossed the nearby boundary into Tennessee, where he established a law practice in 1883. Little is known of Joiner's career as an attorney; however, he evidently gained enough recognition to be elected to the Tennessee legislature in 1889, where he served for one term.³

In 1897, Joiner moved to Ardmore, Indian Territory, just on the eve of the search of oil in what was to later become, southern Oklahoma.⁴ Soon after his arrival there, Joiner was promoting his first oil well, near Earlsboro, in what would later become the Seminole Field. However, Joiner's first attempt at wildcatting ended in failure, when he was forced to abandon the hole at a depth of 150 feet. The failure was attributed to a lack of finances, a problem that would plague Joiner the rest of his life as a wildcatter.⁵

"Dad" Joiner was not the first to suspect that there was oil beneath the sandy loam of Rusk County, Texas. Exploration for oil in the county began as early as 1911, when O. P. Boynton, an experienced oil man, became interested in the area. Boynton successfully aroused an interest among local residents, and organized the Millville Oil Company with 189 shareholders. When adequate funds were raised, the county's first oil well was drilled, located about nine miles northeast of Henderson, near the community of Millville. After drilling to a considerable depth to no avail, the well was abandoned. With the aid of local residents, Boynton was able to start a second well near the first site, but like the first, it also proved to be a *duster*.⁶ Other wells were later drilled near the community of Pine Hill, about ten miles east of Henderson, but these too proved to be failures.⁷

It was not until 1915 that efforts were renewed in the search for oil in Rusk County, when a well was drilled west of Overton, in western Rusk County. The well proved to be dry, as did a second attempt drilled a few months later.⁸

In 1919, three Oklahoma City oil men named McFarland, Smith and Glover, acquired mineral leases on twenty thousand acres in the western part of Rusk County. It appears, however, that the activity of these men was purely promotional, as most of the leases were taken to Oklahoma City and sold for a profit. Some of these leases were sold to Columbus Marion Joiner, a resident of Ardmore, Oklahoma. Joiner was a well known figure in Oklahoma oil circles, after his Oklahoma Star Oil Company had brought in the first oil well for the Cement Field in 1917.⁹

There is no record that Joiner had ever been in East Texas before. When he bought the leases from McFarland and his associates in 1919, he knew little about them except their location, the bulk of which were in north-western Rusk County, between Henderson and Overton. Soon after his purchase, Joiner came to Rusk County to take a first hand look at his newly acquired leases. His interest was so great that he began leasing additional acreage in the area, and his activity did not go unnoticed. Local residents, aroused by the thought of an oil well, agreed to help Joiner finance the drilling of a test well. The necessary timber for the derrick platform was cut, but the logs were to go unused as the well was never started. Joiner, for reasons unknown, had returned to Oklahoma and would not return to the area until 1925.¹⁰

The return of Joiner to East Texas is a stirring story of drama and suspense. Writers in the field of oil history have been confronted with numerous tales of oil being discovered in a certain place due to directions received in a dream. Most of these accounts have been dismissed as folklore. However, Samuel W. Tait has stated in his book, *The Wildcatters*, that "an occasional phenomena in oil finding that eludes scientific explanation have been the coincidences where productive wells have been located according to directions received in dreams." Mody C. Boatwright admits in his book, *Folklore of the Oil Industry*, that "apparently oil has been found as a result of dreams. . . ."¹¹

According to one person who knew "Dad" Joiner, a dream was to play a vital role in his search for oil in Rusk County. Matt H. Barton, well known Henderson attorney, recalls a story that Joiner "told on a number of occasions." As Barton recalls, Joiner became despondent during a visit to Galveston in early 1926. As Joiner walked along the seawall and watched the surf pound on the rocks below, he thought about ending his life and troubles by throwing himself onto the jagged rocks and drowning himself. Exhausted from travel, Joiner lay down to rest under a full moon and fell asleep listening to the water below. While he slept, Joiner dreamed that he would discover "a big oil field in East Texas!" Joiner's dream was "so vivid" that after awakening, he was able to sketch the details on a sheet of paper. Joiner then returned to East Texas on foot to search for the place that fit

his dream. Traversing the area with sketch in hand, Joiner searched for the gently rolling hills covered with timber and the small stream depicted in his dream. He found the object of his search on the farm of Mrs. Daisy Bradford, located about seven miles west of Henderson. As Mr. Barton recalls, Joiner came into the Overton drug store one evening and said, "Boys, I have found the place!" Joiner took a room at the Walter Tucker home in Overton, and then set out to secure backing for an oil well.¹² By August, 1927, Joiner, then sixty-seven years old, had acquired mineral leases on ten thousand acres of land in the Juan Ximine survey, including the 970 acre farm of Mrs. Daisy Bradford.¹³

Although "Dad" Joiner was a wildcatter, he was not above using the advice of a professional geologist. It was only fitting that he should call on his old friend, Dr. A. D. Lloyd, who was then residing in Fort Worth, Texas. This friendship is said to have dated back to 1917, when Joiner had hired Lloyd to assist him in staking the location for what proved to be the discovery well for the Cement Pool in Caddo County, Oklahoma.¹⁴

After conferring with Dr. Lloyd, Joiner decided to drill his first well on the Bradford farm, two miles from the site which the geologist had suggested. Whether the geologist approved of Joiner's decision is unknown.¹⁵



From left to right: Laseter, the driller,
Daisy Bradford, "Dad" Joiner

The eyes of Rusk County were on the Bradford farm, as interested citizens gathered to watch this "Shakespeare-quoting" wildcatter drill an oil well! Many of the old-timers, recalling the past failures, calmly predicted that Joiner's test would be just another *duster* for the area. This leasing had been going on for a decade or more, and nothing ever seemed to come of it. It probably appeared to many that the much talked about oil existed only in the imagination of wildcatters like Joiner. Their pessimism was not wholly unfounded, when one considers that many of them had lived in this area all their lives, under conditions of near poverty. As a complacent, rural folk, they earned a living off the soil, raising their crops of cotton, corn and sweet "tators." When asked about the yield of his corn crop, a farmer might answer that he "figured twenty jugs to the acre."¹⁶

As Joiner prepared to drill the first well, he was confronted with a number of problems. There was the problem of financing the drilling operations, as many prospective investors were dubious of Joiner's venture. Their doubts were caused, indirectly at least, by the reports of oil company geologists and government experts, which had concluded that there was no oil in the area of Joiner's leases.¹⁷

By August, 1927, Joiner had sold enough interests in the block and shares in the well to allow him to start drilling operations. Most of the money came from those who could least afford the risk, but who had resolute faith in Joiner. As Matt H. Barton recalls, "those who could have afforded to back Joiner, refused."¹⁸ Equipped with a wooden derrick, a second-hand rotary outfit, and two mis-mated boilers, the old wildcatter began drilling his first well. Six months after the first well was started, the drill bit jammed and Joiner was forced to abandon the hole at a depth of 1,098 feet. Tom Jones of Henderson, who worked for Joiner on the first well, gave the following account:

Most of the drillers were county boys. I was to drill the well and Joiner was to raise the money by selling leases. I did not have enough money of my own to finish the well, but I met the payroll for a time. Joiner never could raise any money so I would sell leases and run the well for a while. For a time we lived in tents and paid the crews in leases.

. . . It was always the same old thing—not enough money. We were all broke. All. Times were hard and South America was the only place I knew to get money. I borrowed money to get out of town and with my Super-Six Hudson went to New Orleans.¹⁹

Although disgruntled and dismayed, "Dad" Joiner was not to be denied his dream. After conferring with his geologist, Dr. Lloyd, Joiner decided to skid the rig a hundred feet northwest of the first well site and start a second well. Financial problems delayed the drilling of the second well, as Joiner had trouble finding enough people interested in buying leases or units in his well. Even those people who felt there might be oil on Joiner's leases, were said to have had serious doubts that Joiner would ever reach it with his antiquated equipment.²⁰

Drilling operations on the second well were started in April, 1928, and after eleven months of intermittent drilling, Joiner's crew had only reached a depth of 2,518 feet. At that depth drilling operations were again shut down, while Joiner went to Houston to purchase needed equipment and hire, if possible, a professional driller. At a Houston supply house, Joiner was advised to contact E. C. Laseter, who had recently completed several gas wells in the Houston area. Joiner met and persuaded Laseter to work on the Bradford well, at a salary of six dollars a day in cash and four dollars a day in lease interests. When the new driller arrived at the well site, he examined the equipment and advised Joiner to abandon the hole and make a fresh start. Joiner argued that it would be impossible, as he did not have the money necessary to start a third well, but Laseter finally won out, and the Bradford No. 2 was abandoned like its predecessor.²¹

At the point where lesser men would have succumbed to the pressures and thrown up their hands in despair, Joiner continued to sink every cent he could acquire into a third well. The story of Joiner's third well is somewhat of a tragedy and may be illustrated by pointing out that he had comparatively little interest in either his original ten thousand acre block or the well, as he had sold these in order to finance the drilling operations.²²

On May 7, 1929, Joiner along with his geologist, Dr. Lloyd, and his newly acquired driller, E. H. Laseter and the crew put skids under the wooden derrick and moved it downhill about three hundred feet northwest of the original well.²³ The story is told that the widow Bradford refused to allow Joiner to drill on the site selected by Dr. Lloyd, for it was too close to her garden site. It appears that Dr. Lloyd was unhappy with the intervention of Mrs. Bradford, for he left Joiner and the well, and returned to Fort Worth, where he remained until the oil sand had been reached.²⁴

It was with extreme difficulty that Joiner, now approaching seventy, started his third well. Driving his "new" second-hand Model A Ford, Joiner continued to scour the southwest for additional backing.²⁵ He had been operating on "faith and cuss words" for three years now, wrestling with inadequate funds and makeshift equipment, and it seemed that his wildcatting days in Rusk County were numbered. Joiner's back was to the wall but he was still determined. There were so many shutdowns on the third well that an oil company scout, who visited the well twenty times, claimed that he never once found the crew drilling.²⁶

Joiner's third well attracted little publicity outside the area of Rusk County, but local residents came to watch as the well was spudded in on May 8, 1929. They came in wagons and old Ford cars, which lined the narrow dirt road that passed in front of the Bradford farm.²⁷ As the drilling operations on the third well got underway, it appeared that the well would be drilled in record speed. On May 11, the *Henderson Times* carried a story praising the work of Laseter and his crew, for having drilled over twelve hundred feet the first two days.²⁸ But as usual, the work then began to progress more slowly. Due to a lack of operating capital, work on the well was carried on by a single crew, working the day shift. Financial difficulties

delayed the progress on the third well, as Joiner could not find enough people interested in buying leases or units in his well. Harry Hotchkin, a journalist with the *Saturday Evening Post*, captured one local resident's contempt of Joiner's wildcatting venture. The old timer talked with Hotchkin as they stood a few feet from the well site. Hotchkin later quoted him as saying:

Can't see why a guy like Joiner, drilling wildcats all his life and broke, should pick this East Texas graveyard with all its dry holes. He may get oil, but he hasn't after trying four years . . . only a little sand. Joiner is getting his *pecan gap* (groceries) out of the natives. He's drilling for a meal ticket that's all. Seen it done before. Can't fool me; I am going back home.²⁹



Figure on extreme left is Dan Tanner the Negro roustabout.
Standing second from right is Laseter the driller.

As Joiner's finances continued to dwindle, it became increasingly difficult for him to pay his creditors or his crew, and he continued exchanging stock for labor and supplies. The exchange of leases for labor sometimes created a problem, as the men who had less faith in the well than Joiner, usually preferred their money on Saturday night to promises of an interest in the well, *if* and *when* the well came in. Although the crews changed often, a few of the workers stuck with Joiner, working without pay. Dan Tanner, the Negro roustabout, worked with Joiner on all three wells and continued to haul wood without pay. Besides Tanner, others included Mr. and Mrs. Walter Tucker and Allen Pilgreen. Tucker, cashier of the First State Bank at Overton, worked on the rig in the afternoon after the bank closed. Mrs. Tucker often cooked for the crew under a tent set up close to the well site.²⁰



Photograph showing Laseter (third from right)
with members of his crew.

By January, 1930, the well was at a depth of only 1,530 feet. Bad weather and mechanical problems kept the drilling shut down until April, when drilling operations were resumed. By the first of September, 1930, the drill was pushing 3,500 feet and still no sign of the oil that Joiner knew was there. Things were beginning to look gloomy for the No. 3 Daisy Bradford, as the well was already at the depth that Dr. Lloyd had predicted the oil sand would be tapped.³¹ Joiner, in Dallas trying to secure additional financing for the operation, instructed Laseter to continue drilling. The wildcatter's faith paid off. On Friday, September 5, the drill bit pierced the Woodbine formation and the core came up with a show of oil. The hole at this point was logged at 3,536 feet; when it reached the depth of 3,592 feet, Laseter prepared to make a drill stem test.³²



Typical scene at the No. 3 Daisy Bradford well site.

It was reported that an estimated crowd of one thousand people gathered to watch the test, which was made at nine o'clock Friday night. The on-lookers were not disappointed, as they watched the stream of oil shoot over the top of the ninety foot derrick.³³ Upon hearing of the successful drill stem test, Dr. Lloyd returned to the well site from Fort Worth, to assist in completing the well. Lloyd, posing with Joiner for newspaper photographers, was quoted as saying: "Boys, this is the fourth time Joiner has found pay sand upon my recommendation, and we're not going to let it get away from him this time."³⁴

Joiner was not able to bring the well in until the necessary casing could be obtained and lowered. Meanwhile, Laseter obtained a modern rig from nearby Lindale, Texas.³⁵ Joiner's long sought dream was quickly materializing after months of mental anxiety. News of Joiner's success spread rapidly and folks from miles around quickly converged on the Bradford farm to await

the big moment. On Friday night, October 3, the No. 3 Daisy Bradford came in, sending a stream of oil over the crown block, while several thousand spectators looked on.²⁶

Mrs. Jimmy Harris of Henderson has given an eye witness account of the well as it "blew in" on that fateful October evening.

I was there when the well came in. Mr. Tom Arnold took me up to the well only a few minutes before the well blew over the top. Mr. Laseter allowed me to place my handkerchief over the hole, and the gas rising from below caused the handkerchief to billow up. All of a sudden we heard a low rumble from beneath us. Mr. Arnold told me, 'we better get off the platform.' We had hardly gotten off the platform when oil began to gush out of the hole. Suddenly oil blew over the top. Mr. Rade Kangerga, standing next to me, turned and asked: 'Is it really oil?' Then someone began to yell: 'Put out your cigarettes! Put out your cigarettes!' It was a miracle that we were not all blown up.²⁷

It was a tense moment for all who watched as the well blew in, throwing a spray of gas and oil over the top of the derrick. Joiner was "pale with excitement as he leaned for support against the derrick."²⁸ The watching crowd roared its approval of the man responsible for it all.

E. H. Laseter, driller of the third well, gave a descriptive account of the difficulties he faced:

I don't know how we ever got the well down. This was the hardest well I ever drilled—the machinery was almost impossible and yet I had good luck at all times with the hole. Only one or two minor fishing jobs; the hole didn't cave in. I was expecting it to cave on me at any time, for we had no money to buy casing with.

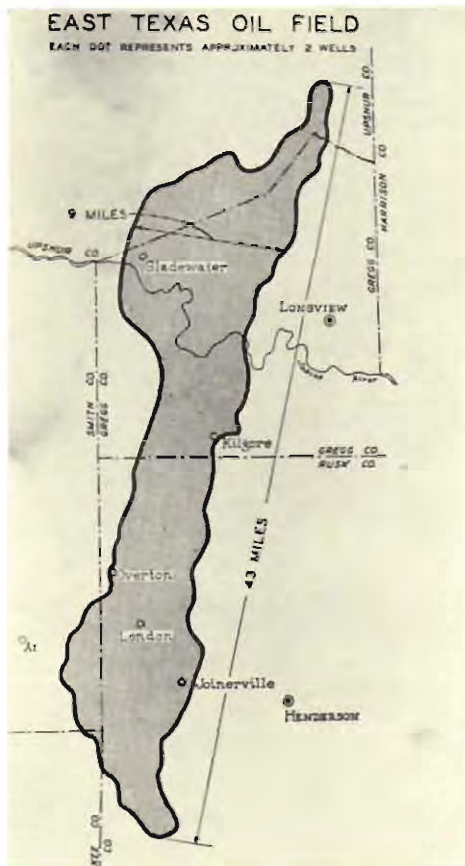
I got no salary for months and months at a time. When I did get paid I put it right back in the well, paying for repairs and other things. For this, Joiner, who is, I think, a mighty fine man, just as sincere as anyone I have ever known, gave me a 40-acre lease a little over a quarter of a mile from the well but a royalty interest, a one-fourth interest, in 100 acres close to the well.²⁹

On October 4, 1930, the newly organized *Henderson Daily News* published its first edition with the headline—Joiner's Wildcat A Gusher. A front-page article predicted the Joiner discovery would be a "headline for the Associated Press and other news agencies for days."³⁰ The *Dallas Morning News* of October 4, carried the story of Joiner's discovery well on the front page, but it was not treated as the major news story. On October 5, the *Dallas Morning News* relegated the Joiner story to the Sports Section.³¹

As the fever continued to mount, newspapers helped to spread the excitement by carrying daily accounts of the events of Rusk County. Three days after the well came in, the *Dallas Morning News* described the activity as follows:

By the following Saturday people from all sections rushed to the new field. Experienced writers sought futilely to describe this human avalanche. A Henderson observer told of seeing a string of automobiles miles long on the Henderson-Tyler highway. The entire distance from Henderson to the new well, almost seven miles, was crowded to such an extent that cars could only make four to six miles an hour.⁴²

News of the Joiner discovery spread across the nation like a prairie fire swept by a brisk March wind. Within a week, Henderson, county seat of Rusk County, was transformed into a typical "boom" town, as oil men from all sections rushed into the area. Wanting to get in on the oil play, oilmen moved their machinery into the area from adjacent Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma oil fields. The depression which had caused much fear and poverty was almost forgotten, as the East Texas area suddenly awoke like a sleeping giant.⁴³



The East Texas Oil Field

Miss Myrtis Watkins, a Henderson school teacher, was away on a vacation in the summer of 1930. Upon her return to Henderson a few days after the Joiner well was completed, she was startled by the activity taking place in Henderson. She recalls, "We could not drive through the square due to all of the cars and people milling about."⁴⁴ Henderson was indeed a scene of pandemonium, as a newspaper clipping at the time reveals:

This whole section is seething with oil excitement. The town is intoxicated. The short cotton crop and the shorter prices are forgotten. The drouth hasn't been mentioned in a week.⁴⁵

October, usually the time for harvesting cotton crops, saw the local farmers let their crops go untouched.

Farmers who owned the cotton were too busy seeking better and better prices for leases and royalties on their poor farm lands. . . . The cotton went unpicked, but few worried. 'Good-bye hard times!' was the slogan among farmers, as many figuratively thumbed their noses at the stunted cotton stalks feebly beckoning them . . .

Speculators, traders and those who had no money with which either to speculate or trade, thronged the streets of Henderson, making every day look like Circus Day. The Oil Exchange was a scene of confusion and frenzied activity from early morning until well into the night. Traders with check books under one arm and a map under the other, thronged the streets, button-holing each other and farmers who still had leases and royalty to sell.⁴⁶

There was brisk trading in leases and royalties. Properties that could have been bought earlier for as little as ten dollars per acre were now selling for eight hundred to one thousand dollars per acre. Leases that Joiner had sold to local farmers for ten dollars per acre in 1929, were now selling for \$10,000, with the leasee keeping an interest in any well drilled on the tract.⁴⁷

Soon after the No. 3 Daisy Bradford was completed, "Dad" Joiner decided to sell a part of his remaining leases. On November 30, 1930, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that Joiner sold four thousand acres of his leases in Rusk County to L. H. (sic) Hunt of El Dorado, Arkansas, for more than \$1,250,000. Associated with Hunt in this purchase were several Dallas businessmen, including A. V. Lane, F. S. Davis, J. T. Cook, and J. H. Shelton.⁴⁸

A man who was ever on the move, Joiner left Rusk County to carry his wildcatting efforts into neighboring Van Zandt County. With a portion of the money acquired from the Hunt transaction, he bought the mineral leases on a three thousand acre tract near Grand Saline, Texas. It was reported in June, 1931, that "Dad" Joiner was again drilling a well, located on the T. B. Meeks farm, seven miles west of Grand Saline.⁴⁹

Joiner's sale to Hunt would appear to have made him a wealthy man. However, the Oklahoma wildcatter was soon beset with legal problems which would keep him in the courts until 1940. It will be recalled that

Joiner had often paid his crew and creditors with certificates of interest, when he had been unable to meet the payroll while drilling the discovery well. John C. Tips, a friend of Joiner's, said that Joiner gave so many of these certificates of interest, and assignments that it was doubtful if Joiner knew just what he owed or what he had signed away.⁵⁰ In 1934, Joiner said more than 150 lawsuits had been filed against him.⁵¹ In his court battles, Joiner sued, and was sued by the driller of the discovery well, E. C. Laseter. Riches also brought to a close the friendship between Joiner and his geologist, Dr. A. D. Lloyd. When success was finally attained, instead of cementing their friendship, they went into court over their respective rights.⁵²

Leaving the East Texas Oil Field, Joiner moved to Dallas, Texas, to live out the remaining years of his life in relative obscurity. Death came to the legendary wildcatter on March 27, 1947, after an extended illness of several months. On March 29, Joiner was buried at the Hillcrest Mausoleum in Dallas.⁵³

NOTES

¹When the East Texas Oil Field was fully developed, it proved to be the largest single reservoir in the world at that time. Extending over parts of five counties, the Field measured 43 miles in length and varied from 4 to 9 miles in width, encompassing approximately 135,000 acres. The Field has produced 3,792,000,000 barrels of crude oil from its discovery to January 1, 1967. (Records of the Texas Railroad Commission, Kilgore, Texas).

²At the time of his death, Joiner was said to have read some ten thousand books. *Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 1947, p. 3, c. 5.

³Dorman H. Winfrey, "Columbus Marvin (sic) Joiner," *The Handbook of Texas*. (2 Vols; Austin, 1952), I, 921.

⁴Samuel W. Tait, *The Wildcatters, An Informal History of Oil-Hunting in America*. (Princeton, 1946), 142.

⁵*Ibid*; Carl Coke Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest*. (Norman, 1949), 193.

⁶Mrs. Jimmy Harris with the writer, Henderson, Texas, March 27, 1967; *Dallas Morning News*, August 30, 1936, s. 1, p. 12, c. 1.

⁷*Ibid*.

⁸It was later found that these two wells were about a quarter-mile west of the field's edge. Cecil Richey, "A History of Rusk County, Texas." (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas, 1951), 123.

⁹Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest*, 193; Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 142.

¹⁰Harry Harter, *East Texas Oil Parade*. (San Antonio, 1934), 47.

¹¹Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 73-74; Mody C. Boatright, *Folklore of the Oil Industry*. (Dallas, 1963), 11.

¹²Matt H. Barton with the writer, Henderson, Texas, March 29, 1967.

¹³H. E. Minor and Marcus A. Hanna, "East Texas Oil Field," *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*, XVII, No. 7, (July,

1933), 757, as cited in Dorman H. Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*. (Waco, 1961), 89.

¹⁴*Henderson Daily News*, October 4, 1930, p. 1. c. 1.

¹⁵One writer states that Joiner had agreed to drill the first well on Mrs. Bradford's farm in order to obtain a lease from her. Boatright, *Folklore of the Oil Industry*, 89; see also Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest*, 307.

¹⁶Floyd M. Neill with the writer, Henderson, Texas, March 30, 1967.

¹⁷According to C. M. Langford, former Texas Railroad Commission Engineer, the Texas Company had drilled a test well a few miles southwest of Henderson in 1925. The well was drilled to a depth of about 5,600 feet without finding the Woodbine formation. C. M. Langford with the writer, Mt. Enterprise, Texas, April 11, 1968; see also *New York Times*, July 5, 1931, s. 8, p. 11, c. 1.

¹⁸Matt H. Barton with the writer, March 29, 1967.

¹⁹Tom Jones to D. H. Winfrey, February 22, 1951, as cited in Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*, 90.

²⁰Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 144.

²¹Ruel McDaniel, *Some Ran Hot*. (Dallas, 1939), 2; Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 144; Minor and Hanna, "East Texas Oil Field," 759, as cited in Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*, 90.

²²Joiner's financial ability was remarkable, as he organized three syndicates, each of which had an interest in the well. He then sold leases to local investors at the rate of \$25.00 for a one-acre interest in the syndicate holdings, with a pro-rata share in the third well, valued at \$75,000. See Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest*, 309; Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 145; *Dallas Morning News*, September 7, 1930, p. 5, c. 8. (Editorial Section).

²³There is considerable disagreement among the writers as to the location of the third well. See Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*, 90; Boatright, *Folklore of the Oil Industry*, 60; McDaniel, *Some Ran Hot*, 1. It appears to this writer that C. M. Langford is correct in that Joiner's third well was located approximately three hundred feet northwest of the second well.

²⁴"Black Gold and Red Ink," *Reader's Digest* (New York, December, 1931), as cited in Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*, 90, fn.

²⁵Joiner bought the automobile from Mr. A. L. Low, vice-president of the First National Bank of San Augustine, Texas, in exchange for two fifteen-acre leases. Later, M. Low sold one of these leases for \$1,500. *Henderson Times*, February 6, 1931, p. 1, c. 4.

²⁶Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 145.

²⁷Matt H. Barton with the writer, March 29, 1967.

²⁸*Henderson Times*, May 11, 1929, p. 1, c. 1.

²⁹Harry Hotchkin, "Hitting the Shoreline," *The Saturday Evening Post*. (July 18, 1931), 46.

³⁰Matt H. Barton with the writer, March 29, 1967.

³¹*Ibid*; McDaniel, *Some Ran Hot*, 9.

³²Dr. Lloyd's hunch proved correct when he had concluded that the Woodbine formation would be tapped at about 3,500 feet and that oil would be

found. On the basis of the earlier studies made by the Texas Company geologists, the major companies felt that Joiner would not find oil on his leases. According to a report from a Dallas paleontologist, Joiner's third well would hit the Woodbine at about 5,100 feet, but would find only salt water. McDaniel, *Some Ran Hot*, 8; Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 144; *Dallas Morning News*, August 30, 1936, s. 1, p. 12, c. 1.

³⁰*Dallas Morning News*, September 7, 1930, p. 5, c. 8. (Editorial Section).

³¹*Henderson Daily Times*, September 23, 1930, as cited in Boatright, *Folklore of the Oil Industry*, 89.

³²McDaniel, *Some Ran Hot*, 18; *Dallas Morning News*, October 5, 1930, p. 13, c. 3.

³³*Henderson Daily News*, October 4, 1930, p. 1.; *Dallas Morning News*, October 5, 1930, s. 1, p. 8, c. 2.

³⁴Mrs. Jimmy Harris with the writer, March 27, 1967.

³⁵Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest*, 309.

³⁶*Dallas Morning News*, September 14, 1930, as cited in Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*, 91. It was reported on September 14 that "one driller sold a forty-acre lease near the well for \$16,000." *Dallas Morning News*, September 14, 1930, s. 4, p. 5, c. 6.

³⁷*Henderson Daily News*, October 4, 1930, p. 1.

³⁸The paper reported that the Joiner well was capable of an estimated production of 5,600 barrels, *Dallas Morning News*, October 4, 1930, p. 1.; Another source states that the well flowed only 226 barrels in 24 hours; *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*, Vol. XV (January-December, 1931), Part II, 843, as cited in Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest*, 310, fn.

³⁹*Dallas Morning News*, October 6, 1930, s. 1, p. 8, c. 2.

⁴⁰Matt H. Barton with the writer, March 29, 1967.

⁴¹Miss Myrtis Watkins with the writer, Henderson, Texas, March 27, 1967.

⁴²Undated clippings in Mrs. J. E. Watkin's scrapbooks on Rusk County, cited in Winfrey, *A History of Rusk County, Texas*, 92.

⁴³McDaniel, *Some Ran Hot*, 28-29.

⁴⁴*Henderson Daily News*, October 4, 1930; p. 1; Tait, *The Wildcatters*, 145.

⁴⁵According to the *Dallas Morning News* article, Joiner retained "two-4,000 acre blocks, one south and one northeast of the discovery well." See *Dallas Morning News*, November 30, 1930, p. 5, c. 6, (Editorial Section). It appears to this writer that the above account is misleading. The general consensus of those persons who were living in the area at the time of the Joiner discovery is that he controlled very little of his original 10,000 acre-block of leases.

⁴⁶*Dallas Morning News*, June 14, 1931, s. 4, p. 6, c. 6.

⁴⁷*Houston Chronicle*, September 14, 1930, as cited in Richey, "A History of Rusk County, Texas," p. 125.

⁴⁸*Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 1947, s. 1, p. 3, c. 4.

⁴⁹*Henderson Times*, June 1, 1950, cited in Richey, "A History of Rusk County, Texas," 140.

⁵⁰*Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 1947, s. 1, p. 3, c. 4.