

'Holocaust on Platform B'

# Marshall recounts Bay Marchand fire

 **Review**

Wood River, Illinois



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WOOD RIVER REFINERY

JANUARY 1972

**Not since 1969**

## Refinery logs 1,000,000 manhours without a disabling injury

Midnight, January 13, 1972.

While most of the Wood River refinery employees slept at home the first hour of the new day marked one million manhours of work without a disabling injury.

It was the first time the refinery has reached the mark since December, 1969. And since 1932, it marks the 38th time the refinery logged a million safe manhours.

"All employees can feel proud of this achievement. I only hope we can continue to surpass our all-time record of more than three million safe manhours. It's a magnificent way to start off the new year," Harry Rollins, manager, Safety department, said.

Others, too, took note of Wood River's achievement. Ed Ballman, refinery manager, received the following wire from G. Holzman, general manager for Shell refineries:

"Our congratulations to the Wood River refinery employees upon reaching one million manhours worked without a



Toward two million safe manhours?

disabling injury. This is a splendid achievement, and we look forward to your continuing this fine performance."

While the one million manhours mark certainly is impressive, Harry Rollins feels the more safe hours that accumulate "the easier our jobs will be this year."

In recognition of the event, a gift for all refinery employees will be given at a later date.

## 1971: Goodbye to all that

1971

*It began like all New Year's with whistles and noisemakers. Everyone made resolutions, some kept, many broken. But most people looked upon 1971 as a fresh start, the new beginning when the mistakes of the past just might be corrected this time.*

*And 1972 began the same way.*

*It's become traditional in the first few weeks of the new year to take a glance back at the year just finished. Here are some of the people and events that made 1971 memorable for many at the Wood River refinery. It's all history now.*

The environment seemed to be on everyone's mind in 1971. Shell placed full page ads in local newspapers to show its concern over the environment.

"We all breathe easier when George smiles," read the headline. And above it a huge picture of George Sample, the refinery's expert on environmental protection.

But talk is cheap. Action counts. And action there was. A top official of the Environmental Protection Agency praised Shell for its efforts in fighting pollution during the Bay Marchand tragedy.

"I don't know what more they

Certain dates in history become pockmarks in memory. Forever etched in our consciousness dates such as December 7, 1941 and November 22, 1963, lead to the inevitable question—"Where were you when . . ." For the Shell Oil Company and the men and women who lived through it, December 1, 1970 is just such a date.

On that day in Bay Marchand, 65 miles off the coast of New Orleans, Shell's offshore drilling platform B exploded into flames. Four men died and for 136 days the greatest oil well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico spat and roared flames which, at times, licked the sky 300 feet above the water.

One man, Warren Marshall, Shell's Offshore Division production manager in New Orleans, was one of the key administrative personnel during those 136 hectic days. Marshall served as the head of an emergency group especially set up to deal with the tragedy.

Speaking before more than 130 persons at a January 13 meeting of the local section of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers at the Lewis & Clark restaurant, East Alton, Marshall discussed Shell's problems in combating the emergency.

Using slides to illustrate his talk, Marshall said Shell's greatest concern, "outside safety for the people fighting the blaze" was for the environment.

"Our basic plan was to keep the fire burning to eat up as much escaping oil as possible. Then we could drill relief wells to kill the blaze," he said.

The approach worked. Pollution was kept to a minimum. But environmental protection had its price.

"Shell spent more than \$29 million for



Warren Marshall

fire fighting and pollution control. Besides environmental protection costs, the loss of Platform B tallied to more than \$5 million," he said.

Marshall went on to say that restoration of the 11 wells on Platform B began last November.

"Hopefully, all but two or three will be back in operation by this summer."

Summing up, Marshall said, "If any good can come out of a tragedy, I think this one showed that Shell does care about the environment, is willing to spend money to protect the wildlife, waterways and land near and around our sites and equipment. The tragedy also showed we have the ability and the dedication to deal effectively with emergencies."

(See related story below)

## U.S. offshore oil supply expected to decline

America's offshore oil supply is expected to level off within the next two or three years, making it necessary to look to foreign countries for other supplies, Warren Marshall, Shell's Offshore Division production manager in New Orleans, said Wednesday night, January 13, at the Lewis & Clark restaurant, East Alton.

Speaking before a meeting of a local

section of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Marshall said predictions made years ago forecast that by 1972 the nation's oil companies would not be able to find more oil in the oceans or Gulf of Mexico.

"But it hasn't happened yet, since the production curve continues to climb. But I think we can expect a downward dip," he said.

The refinery's new hydrocracker became fully operational in March. It was built to increase the refinery's gasoline yield. There were also several firsts during 1971. Among them:

--the first shipment of offshore imported crude oil was processed at the refinery.

--DU-2 had its first shutdown in more than two years of operation. "It was a real boat-rocker," one employee said.

--the MTM research laboratory logged more than nine million safe manhours, one of the best safety records in American industry.

(Continued on Page 4)



Ed Meiners looks over part of his collection of Indian artifacts. Meiners, an insulator in Engineering field, has more than 4,000 arrowheads, pieces of pottery, jewelry and other finds collected over the years. "I have no idea how much the collection is worth and I really don't care to know. I don't collect them for money but for their scientific value," he says.

## Shell expands APT program

Shell's Automotive Professional Training (APT) program, designed to help keep potential dropouts in high school by teaching them a trade, has proved to be just that: apt.

APT is working so well, in fact, 19 more schools recently started offering the course, meaning a total of 51 high schools and seven special institutions are now involved in the nationwide Shell program.

Patterned after the Dealer Management Development Course, APT is financed through funds earmarked by the Marketing Regions. It serves a twofold purpose, providing a motivating boost to a lot of previously unmotivated youths through achievement of automotive service skills, and helping alleviate a

critical manpower shortage in service stations.

According to figures compiled by Head Office Retail, the most recent APT classes graduated 882 students and 210 of them have found jobs in service stations. The 210 students represent 24 per cent of the total graduates with 85 per cent of those finding jobs going into Shell service stations.

"Of significance is the large percentage staying in high school or going on to college," the Retail Department's report says. "In the Western Marketing Region, as an example, of the 88 APT graduates, 80% are continuing their education, either in high school or college."

## Classified ads

### For Sale

Two 750 x 14 snow tires on Chevy wheels. \$11 each. Also, Voice-Of-Music tape recorder. \$23. One cord of fireplace wood. \$9. L. C. Westcott 656-2263.

Two pairs of girls' ice skates. Sizes 2½ and 4½. Excellent condition. Betty Augustine. 618-637-2382.

1955 Chevrolet Sports Coupe. Also, electric guitar and amplifier. 30 gallon used gas water heater. Jim Grizzle. 259-0268.

Girl's 20" Spyder bike-like new. Also boy's 26" bicycle. J. H. Thomas 618-466-4947.

## Bridges reports on Shell offshore exploratory drilling

Shell Oil Company has discovered commercial hydrocarbon reserves on three offshore Louisiana tracts acquired last year in the federal lease sale. President Harry Bridges said a total of 19 tests have been drilled on seven of nine tracts which were obtained for bonus payments of \$47.6 million.

Speaking at the Financial Analysts Society of Philadelphia recently, President Bridges also said results of exploratory and development drilling in Michigan and Utah have been gratifying.

Reporting on Shell's operations in northern Michigan, Bridges said that four wildcat wells this year have been

### Retirements



Fred Alisberg  
MTM research lab



Pappy Hanbaum  
Treasury

### On the Move

MARY KAY ARCHIBALD from office secretary, Lubricants, to MTM research lab as secretary.

JANE REA from Alkylation to Lubricants as office secretary.

indicated discoveries — one gas and three oil. "We have had an excellent wildcat drilling success ratio there since 1969 — 13 successes out of 22 attempts," he said. "While individual accumulations found to date appear to be small, they are highly profitable."

In the Unita Basin in Utah, Shell is following up its May, 1970, discovery with an active program of exploratory and development drilling, Bridges said.

Thirteen Shell-interest wells have been completed. Although production has been established at a number of locations along a 20-mile trend, additional drilling and testing will be required to determine

## People: the best asset

*Editor's note: This month the Shell Review begins a new feature on Shell people who live and work in the Wood River area.*

As a small boy, Ed Meiners became fascinated with four Indian arrowheads his grandmother kept in her sewing basket. More than 30 years later, that boyhood interest has grown into a collection of more than 4,000 Indian artifacts, some dating back more than 12,000 years.

In fact, Meiners, an insulator in Engineering field, takes his interest in Indian archaeology well beyond the amateur collecting stage. If 4,000 artifacts aren't proof enough, then perhaps Meiners organizational talents as chairman of the board for the Central States Archeological Societies, Inc. are.

The non-profit organization Meiners heads includes individual members from all over the world. But the group includes societies only in states in the central region of the United States. States with membership include: Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky.

But outside his official duties, Meiners

manages to have a great deal of fun hunting and collecting artifacts in the local area.

"The Wood River area is a pretty good place to find artifacts. In fact, the refinery grounds used to be an Indian settlement," he said.

Like all collectors, Meiners takes pride in a few special finds.

"One of my best was at an Indian burial site. I found five pieces of pottery, and one was a bowl made into an effigy of a fish," Meiners explained that the ancient Indians often made bowls and pottery in the likeness of the animals around the area. But a fish effigy is one of the rarest.

What's his oldest find?

"I suppose a Folsom point arrowhead. Apparently the tribe who made these arrows migrated to America across the Bering Strait about 12,000 years ago."

Come spring, if you're lucky, you might see Ed roaming around the local area searching for more artifacts. Where's the best place to look?

"I like to keep that a secret because I'd like to be the first one to find a site," he says with a grin.

GLENN HACHMAN from inspector, Engineering services to engineering foreman, Engineering field.



LAMOINE SCHOENLEBER from hourly foreman, Engineering field, to inspector Engineering services.

CHARLIE BROWN from hourly foreman, Engineering field, to inspector, Engineering services.

BILL PEASE from senior engineering assistant, Engineering services, to engineering foreman, Engineering field.



PHYLLIS MAYES from senior clerk, Purchasing to Alkylation as office secretary.

DONNA YATES from typist, Treasury, to Purchasing as a clerk.

### Service anniversaries



Ray Spahr  
Engineering field  
30 years



Jerome Juda  
Engineering field  
25 years

### Shell receives award

Shell has received a Special Meritorious Award from the Petroleum Engineer Publishing Company in recognition of its engineering innovation in the field of environmental control.

Competing against 11 other companies, Shell won the award based on its extensive marine oil spills control program. A total of 60 companies, representing 90 per cent of the petroleum-gas-pipeline industry population, entered one or more of the 12 categories in the contest.

the full importance of the discovery.

Bridges noted that Shell Oil has gone beyond the North American continent for the first time in exploratory activities through a joint venture in Colombia and is negotiating for another venture in Peru. He said the company is also looking elsewhere in Latin America and West Africa for opportunities to broaden its resource base.

Bridges said that in the past year Shell has spent nearly \$50 million in its joint venture with Shell Canada, Limited. An aggressive exploratory program of drilling and geophysics has been under way in the offshore areas of Nova Scotia for more

than a year, where 23 wildcats have been drilled and another currently being drilled.

Bridges said that in the St. Lawrence Lowlands and Gaspe Peninsula, the joint holdings of nearly 5 million acres are being evaluated by geophysical work and a drilling program started last month will continue through next year.

In Canada's Northwest Territories, where joint holdings amount to 7 million acres, additional seismic work and drilling will continue through 1972, he said. "We are encouraged by three indicated discoveries in this general area by another oil company, including one only five miles from our block," he said.

# A backward glance: Wood River in the Twenties



As you look across Illinois route 111, the Main Office road lies behind the car at the left. The houses were for the refinery manager, key staff employees and their families.



A view of the refinery parking lot in the 1920s. Can you count the Model Ts? The saying in those days had it that you could buy a Model T in any color, as long as it was black.

Of course it was the Jazz Age, the heyday of the bootlegger and the flapper. Babe Ruth was the King of Swat, and a tall, thin young man named Charles Lindbergh would become famous for his solo flight across the Atlantic. A thing called radio broadcast the "Charleston" across the country, and a young author named Ernest Hemingway was making a name for himself writing about the "Lost Generation." Calvin Coolidge snoozed in the White House while the stock market kept going up, up and still up. The 1920s were years of dizzy exuberance -- America's adolescence. Many thought it would never end.

For Shell, the Twenties marked a time of growth and expansion. In America the company expanded from relative obscurity to an organization covering the 48 states.

## First Dubbs unit

The Wood River refinery, like the rest of Shell and, indeed, the rest of industrial America, was growing and changing.

Because of the automobile, the demand for oil products greatly increased. Autos were becoming easier to start and operate, and the pockmarked country dirt roads were giving way to smooth-paved highways. Mass production dropped auto prices. Thus, the automobile was no longer "a rich man's plaything," but an efficient and economical means of transportation for the average workingman. For the first time gasoline became a highly marketable product. The Alton Evening Telegraph for January 21, 1921 advertised "...that good Roxana gasoline. No. 1 for 33 cents per gallon."

In 1921, to meet the ever-increasing need for petroleum products, the first commercial Dubbs unit began operation at the Wood River refinery. Crude intake reached a peak of 45,000 bbl/day. In those years employees numbered about 200, with an annual payroll of \$300,000. Today there are 2,000-plus employees and the annual payroll is more than \$28 million.

## A modern company

In the Twenties, not only Wood River was changing but the entire structure of the company was transformed. Next month Shell will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of a major organizational realignment.

In February, 1922, the Shell companies merged with the Union Oil properties to form the Shell Union Oil Corporation, the forerunner of today's modern Shell Oil Company. At that time, the Wood River refinery was part of the Roxana Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of the Shell Company.

With this anniversary just around the corner, it seems proper to have a nostalgic, backward glance at the refinery in the early Twenties. As social historian Frederick Lewis Allen said, it seemed like "only yesterday."

## Strictly for women

### Presenting the real hero of Women's Liberation

Who really freed women? Betty Freidan? Germaine Greer? Or was it inanimate energy?

Although inanimate energy might sound like the name of an Andy Warhol film starlet, it actually is the force that eliminates all the drudgery for women around the house.

It removes the drudgery by supplying power for automatic washers, electric irons, toasters, ranges and refrigerators. Just how much time would be devoted to household chores without these conveniences?

Today in America there are more than one billion household appliances. At present, 75 percent of the energy this country needs comes from oil and natural gas-including fuel to generate almost 40 percent of America's electricity.

Energy consumption is closely related to standard of living and America enjoys

one of the highest in the world. With less than six percent of the world's population America uses 22 percent of the world's energy.

Suppose we all woke up one morning and discovered that all paychecks had been slashed 74 percent, 19 out of every 20 cars had been junked, nine out of every ten telephones had been disconnected, two out of every ten houses had been torn down, and 30 million Americans had been transferred to farms.

This is a rather dramatic illustration of the standard of living of the Soviet Union compared to ours. Seem like a nightmare? Sure does. But, according to Rogers Morton, Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. is rapidly becoming an energy deficient nation. There is a widening gap between available domestic supplies of energy fuels and the steadily increasing demands of America's consumers.



## A 1971 highlight

The modern, new addition to the main office building was occupied by members of the Engineering services, Engineering office and Technological departments in January 1971.

(Continued from Page 1)

-Hazel Wardle and Marian Teachout, the first women to log more than 45 years of service each, retired in November.

The year 1971 also saw a new president take charge of the company, Harry Bridges, succeeded Denis Kemball-Cook who retired.

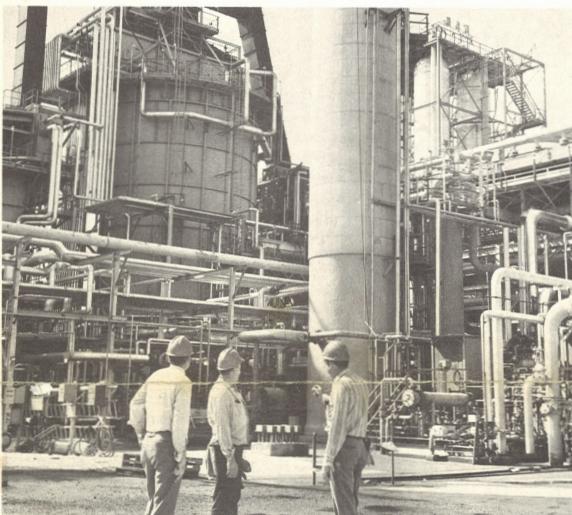
Along with a new president came new headquarters. The Company moved its offices from New York to Houston.

For some people at the refinery 1971 proved to be a lucky year indeed. Al Kocis thought so. He won \$480,000 in the Irish Sweepstakes.

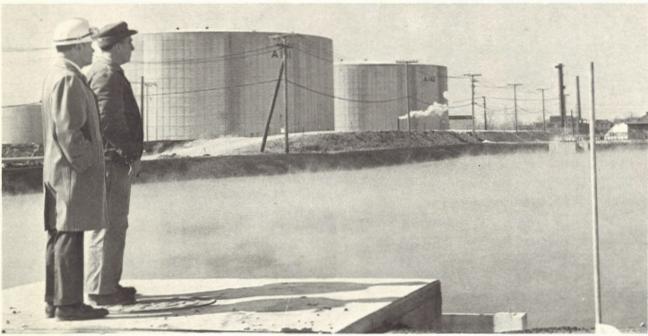
And as far as 1972, well, we'll all have to wait.



The smiling face of George Sample greeted readers of local newspapers in one of five ads Shell ran in the Alton-Wood River area. Ed Ballman examines the ad while George mirrors his smile.



Staff engineer Ivan Baumgart, operator Jim McBroom and operations foreman Manuel Lopez examine the first stage of the refinery's new hydrocracker early in 1971.



Frank Hendrickson and operator Joe Kravanya view the new detention pond. During 1971 protecting the environment became one of the prime tasks of every employee.

## 1971: *That was the year that was*



Bob (Dan'l) Boone checks out the phones on the third floor of the new main office addition as employees began moving in.



A nighttime view of the refinery in March, 1971. About 80 people a day, including men from virtually all crafts, worked night and day on two shifts through the weekends on a shutdown of catalytic reformer no. 3 in the Aromatics department.



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