

Denver Law Review

Volume 29 | Issue 5

Article 2

January 1952

Special Oil and Gas Issue

Dicta Editorial Board

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Recommended Citation

Special Oil and Gas Issue, 29 Dicta 159 (1952).

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SPECIAL OIL AND GAS ISSUE

The increased activity of the oil and gas industry in this area is posing many new problems for Colorado lawyers. The work of the industry in this state may still be classified as exploratory. As exploration continues and development becomes more widespread through better marketing facilities, legal problems are expected to multiply greatly. Familiarity with this field of law is increasingly important to lawyers and, to meet this need, the Weld County Bar Association recently sponsored an Institute on Oil and Gas. Because of the excellence and popularity of this Institute and a general demand for more information on the subject, the speakers were asked to prepare their remarks for publication. The product is here printed in the following five articles.—EDITOR.

OIL GEOLOGY AND THE DENVER BASIN

M. J. BOREING*

It is doubtful if a Geologist has ever been asked to preach a sermon, but if so, his Scripture reference certainly would have been Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." About one billion years later the geologist came along and began explaining this first week's work; it was probably a pretty full week, and the Creator doubtless got in some overtime. In any event, the earth was created as a round mass of basic material surrounded by a gaseous envelope which we call the atmosphere. Without the atmosphere it might have remained a barren ball, but the atmosphere furnished changes of climate—rain, snow, ice, and wind—all great erosion agents; it made possible the glaciers, rivers, lakes, and oceans, including a warm body of water, somewhere, where a spark of life first appeared. Basic rocks were being cut down by erosion and were being deposited in seas and lakes in the form of shales and sandstones, while plants and animals were living and dying, leaving their remains as organic material in the deposits—in the form of coal, oil, and gas. When the conditions on earth were such as to allow the lush development of plant life, similar to our present jungles, the dead plants formed a mass of material, which later was subjected to pressure, heat, and plenty of time, to become our present coal beds.

Elsewhere on earth, plants and animals, mostly microscopic, were living and dying in the shallower portions of the oceans. Their number was greater by trillions than Washington can conceive. As they died and sank to the ocean bottom, each carried with it a minute particle of fatty material . . . and at the same time, sands and shales from the rivers and shores were settling

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