

0. OIL IN TEXAS - Story Preface

1. OIL IN TEXAS

2. SOURCE OF THE WEALTH

3. HOWARD HUGHES: AN ORPHAN

4. HOWARD TAKES CONTROL

5. HOWARD MAKES MOVIES

6. HOWARD IN THE AIR



The areas around Spindletop, the first Texas oil gusher, quickly become “oil towns” in the early 1900s. This image depicts the north end of Hogg Swayne Tract, at Spindletop, after a large fire occurred. The photo gives us a sense of how things looked at the time. This Edgerton photo is now maintained by the Texas Energy Museum. Click on the image for a better view.

Howard Hughes, Sr., born in 1869 - four years after the end of the U.S. Civil War - was the second of four children.

By the time of his birth, his ancestors had been in America about 250 years - ever since Jesse Hughes, an English-Welsh man, settled in [Powhatan County](#), Virginia.

As a young man, Hughes was restless. While [Robert Peary](#) and other explorers of the 'Heroic Age' were discovering previously unknown lands on the Earth's surface, Hughes was looking underneath. What he found, in various mines, was low-grade silver in Colorado, [zinc](#) in Oklahoma (then called Indian Territory), and - in 1901 - [lead](#) in Missouri.

Few people had cars, at the time, and oil was far from an indispensable commodity.

By the turn of the century, the elder Hughes had learned a few things about mining. He knew, for example, how difficult it was to drill through rock with [cable tools](#).

Captain [Anthony Lucas](#) knew that, too, but his efforts in [drilling for oil](#) near the sawmill town of [Beaumont](#), Texas shocked the whole world when (on January 10, 1901) a [stream of oil exploded](#) 150 feet into the air. It took nine days before Lucas could cap that Texas well, soon known as [Spindletop](#).

It took no time whatsoever for other fortune-seeking men to realize there was wealth beneath the Texas soil. Howard Hughes, Sr. was one of those men. As he later recalled:

I heard the roar [of Spindletop] in Joplin [Missouri] and made for the seat of disturbance. Beaumont in those days was no place for a divinity student. The reek of oil was everywhere...I turned greaser and sank into the thick of it. Rough neck, owner, disowner, promoter, capitalist and 'mark' - with each I can claim kin, for I have stood in the steps of each.

In those [early days](#), Hughes could not have predicted that a device he was about to invent would change the world of oil exploration and would make him, and his family, fantastically wealthy.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/OIL-IN-TEXAS-Aviator>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/OIL-IN-TEXAS-Aviator>



Robert Peary - A Pioneer

Library of Congress, image LC-USZ62-96047. Online, courtesy Library of Congress.
PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Robert-Peary-A-Pioneer>



Spindletop - Anthony Lucas Discovers Oil

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spindletop-Anthony-Lucas-Discovers-Oil>

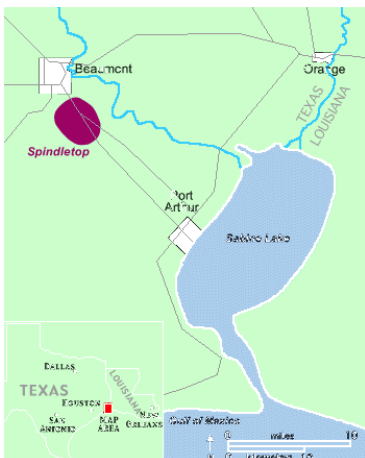


Oil Drillers at Spindletop

Image online, courtesy the Texas Energy Museum via the [Beaumont Enterprise](#) website.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oil-Drillers-at-Spindletop>



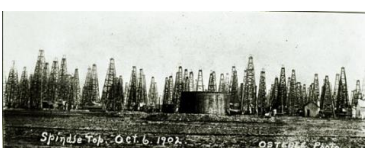
Map: Beaumont, Texas and Spindletop

Image online, courtesy [Museum of the Earth](#) website.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Beaumont-Texas-and-Spindletop>



Spindletop Oil Field in 1902

Image online, courtesy the Texas Energy Museum via [Beaumont Enterprise](#) website.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spindletop-Oil-Field-in-1902>



Black Gold at Spindletop - Lucas Gusher

Image online, courtesy the Texas Energy Museum via the [Beaumont Enterprise](#) website.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Black-Gold-at-Spindletop-Lucas-Gusher>



Early Days of Oil Exploration- Gladys City, Texas

U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Early-Days-of-Oil-Exploration-Gladys-City-Texas>



OIL IN TEXAS

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>