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The Quest for Oil - Stories From the History of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists

SPEAKER

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What happens when human history and geological history meet? One result is the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists. The story of the CSPG is the story of Canada's quest for hydrocarbons.

Seventy-five years ago, in December 1927, a dozen men met and decided to form a society to further the interests of exploration and development of oil and gas in Canada. Spurred on by the discoveries in Turner Valley, they searched the Canadian west for petroleum during the 1930s and 1940s.

In addition to finding oil, the members of the Society also developed a vital organization. Over the decades its members have spoken out on many issues - scientific, economic and political - giving voice to the opinions and perspectives of Canadian geologists; in 1949, 1973 and 1980 Society representatives addressed important issues of the day.

The Society's history has not been without controversy. Its operations have changed over the years to reflect the changing nature of the role of the geologist in the oilpatch. In the early days it worked to safeguard against "*inadequately trained and unscrupulous men posing as petroleum geologists.*" Professionalism is still important to the Society, but its responsibilities reach into many other areas as well.

But most of all, the story of the CSPG is the story of geologists, the men and women who scrambled up mountains, rode horses and canoes, bumped around in bushplanes and helicopters, always in the quest of black gold.

"The Quest for Oil" builds on the recently published history of the Society, "*Field Notes: The Story of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists*", and is presented by its author, historian David Finch.

BIOGRAPHY

David Finch holds the M.A. from the University of Calgary in Canadian History and is the author of more than a dozen books on the history of the Canadian west. His recent biography, R.M. Patterson: A Life of Great Adventure, documents the fascinating life and exploits of the man who made the South Nahanni famous and went on to become an early Canadian adventure travel writer.