Oil and Gas in Clay County, Missouri
by Bruce Netzler

The first record of drilling in Clay County was in 1888. The well, owned by Randolph Coal Company, was drilled near Randolph Station. It was drilled to 848 feet, and a trace of oil was reported at 148 feet.

An east-west cross section of the county is shown directly below the county map. On this section, the major sand zones, which are the potential oil and gas producing intervals, are marked. Their depth varies with topography, but generally, because the regional dip of the beds is 20 to 50 feet to the west-northwest, they are deeper in the west than in the eastern parts of the county.

The geologic column on this page shows the rock types that may be encountered when drilling in the county. The beds that may contain oil or gas are marked. Based on subsurface structure there are certain areas that have greater potential than others for oil and gas accumulation, and these are so marked. This does not mean that oil or gas will be found in these areas only that the potential is higher.

Information About Drilling a Gas Well

1. The operator of the well will be required to file certain forms and follow certain rules in compliance with the Oil and Gas Council Rules and Regulations before drilling, completing, and/or abandoning a well. "Monthly well status and production reports may be waived by the state geologist upon application in the event that gas production by an owner is for the sole and private use." (A copy of the Oil and Gas Council Rules and Regulations is available from the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Land Survey, P.O. Box 250, Rolla, Missouri 65401, or call 314-573-1972).

2. To insure protection of any possible water horizon, hire a competent driller familiar with casing and cementing requirements.

3. Groundwater must be protected from contamination by proper casing and cementing.

4. Proper maintenance of water wells is important — gas leaks can be dangerous. Natural gas is odorless, but commercial gas companies usually add an easily detectable odor supplement to man’s gas leaks.

5. Some gas wells produce gas and water vapor. In the winter, when gas is most needed, water vapor condenses and collects in low places in the home and may become poisonous in the home. If a separator is used, the water separated will be salt water, and disposing of it may be a problem.

6. A well approximately 600 feet deep will cost an estimated $4,000 to $6,000. There are drillers who are cheaper, but be careful, because some may not follow Oil and Gas Council Rules, a practice that could result in contamination of your water supply.

7. Remember, there are more nonproducing wells than producing wells.

References


Missouri Department of Business and Administration, Division of Geophysical Survey and Water Resources, 1969. The stratigraphic succession in Missouri: Rolls, Missouri, v. 40, 2nd Series.

Rules and Regulations of Missouri Oil and Gas Council


Publication is out of print