



Mrs. H. H. Champlin, wife of the founder, and Mrs. Jane Edwards Champlin, '30-'31, wife of Joe Champlin, stand in front of the lobby display of the newly completed Champlin Refining Company office building in Enid, Okla., as company has openhouse.

### A Sooner Special

# The Champlins and Oklahoma Crude

**The successful combination got its start in 1916 when H. H. Champlin started drilling operations. Today the Champlin Refining Company is the largest independently owned refining company in the world.**

By DAVID BURR, '50

In Enid, Oklahoma, they've got something that many Oklahoma and Southwestern towns would like to have, and one that no other town in the United States can boast. Just a few blocks from Enid's courthouse square, the general offices of the largest independently owned refinery in the world presents a white, bright new appearance. Across town the refinery of the Champlin Refining Company goes about its business of processing Oklahoma crude oil and of distributing the refined products to

the world. For Champlin Refining Company and for its owners, the Champlin family, Enid is home.

Inside the company's newly completed office building, a young lady, who knows a receptionist should smile, sits answering the phone and receiving a steady stream of visitors. Behind the receptionist, appears an endless sea of faces. For here in one big family work the junior executives, secretaries and clerks that handle a big company's business. Around the walls are fash-

ioned the offices of the executives of the company.

In the building's southwest corner is the office of the son of the founder and company president, Joe Champlin. The president is something short of six feet, on the portly side, extremely modest (as I was to discover later), and the owner of the brightest and most penetrating eyes I've come under in a long time. Joe Champlin, '25, is only the second president of the firm which dates back to 1916. His father and

founder, H. H. Champlin was the first and only other president.

Under Joe Champlin's management the company is constantly expanding its facilities. The Champlin Refining Company serves all the functions of an oil company in addition to its refining activities. It has an exploration and development department that carries on a surface and sub-surface scouting program, a drilling department, a production department, a pipeline department for gathering crude oil and distributing the company's products, and other related departments that can be found in any major oil company. Add to this list the actual refining work and you get a rough idea of what the Champlin Refining Company does.

Champlin's scope of operations includes the states from Texas north in the mid-continent tier and bordering states. At present the company is drilling wells in North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, New Mexico and Texas. It owns or leases services stations in Oklahoma, Kansas, South Dakota, Colorado, Nebraska, Texas, Iowa, Missouri and Minnesota. It also supplies independent jobbers and dealers in nine other states. The three states that find the heaviest concentration of Champlin interests are Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma.

Because of the size of the organization, it might seem that the company headquarters in Enid would have trouble keeping pace with the field activity. Such an impression would be wrong. A communications system complete with telephone-teletypewriter units keep the company informed from all points of operation. Two company owned aircraft can fly personnel to a new well or to a field conference in a matter of hours.

This, then, is a modern industrial plant that little resembles the company that got off to a modest start in 1916. H. H. Champlin, a Kansas farm boy from near McPherson, arrived in Enid shortly after the Strip was opened. A banker, owner of lumber yards and a hardware business, H. H. Champlin was in his mid-forties before he began his most successful venture.

He didn't acquire the refinery in 1916 but he entered the oil business with a lease from the Garber Field. He got a good producer the same year. Over the next two years he continued drilling and brought in 31 producing wells. By as early as 1917 he was having difficulty in marketing his crude oil and bought a small refinery in Enid. He solved the crude oil marketing problem by processing his own oil. Perhaps, if he had encountered no marketing difficulty, there would be no Champlin Refining Company today.

The refinery, when Champlin became owner, could handle 200 barrels of crude a

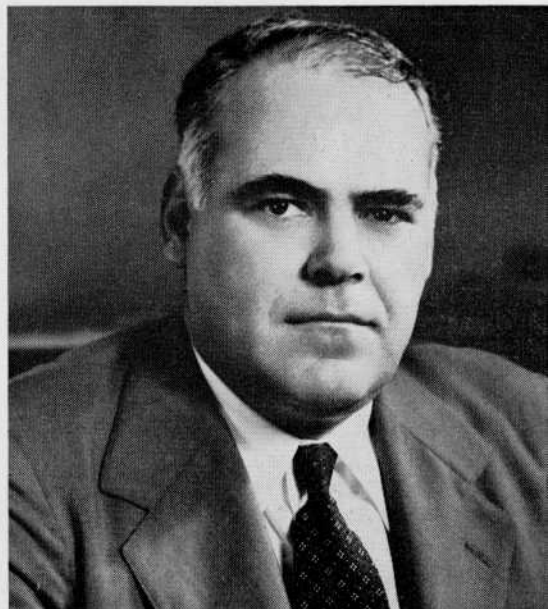
day. To facilitate transportation of the oil, a pipeline from the refinery to the Garber Field was laid. The refinery was rebuilt in 1921 and enlarged to a capacity of 16,000 barrels per day and the pipeline was extended from the Garber to Tonkawa Field where more Champlin interests were beginning to produce.

From 1921 to the present time several millions of dollars have been spent for added equipment for the purpose of making additional products or products of different specifications to keep up with the needs of the times.

An important step in the company's refining operations occurred in 1920 when equipment was added for making lubricating oil. Sold under the trade name, HI-V-I, it has proved over the years to be one of the better lubricants of the U. S. (The name comes from an abbreviation of the term, high viscosity index, an index established by the industry to determine partially the quality of product.) The lubricating oil plant was burned out in 1942 and when it was rebuilt a solvent process was installed. Once again in 1948 the company expanded its crude oil capacity from 16,000 barrels to 24,000 barrels per day.

Today the owners of the company are members of the founder's family. Mrs. H. H. Champlin; daughter, Helen Champlin Oven; son, Joe; and D. W. Cotton, husband of daughter, Marie Champlin, deceased, who serves with the others on the Board of Directors for his children.

Joe serves as president of the Board and of the company. He attended Enid schools



**JOE CHAMPLIN**  
... Only the Second

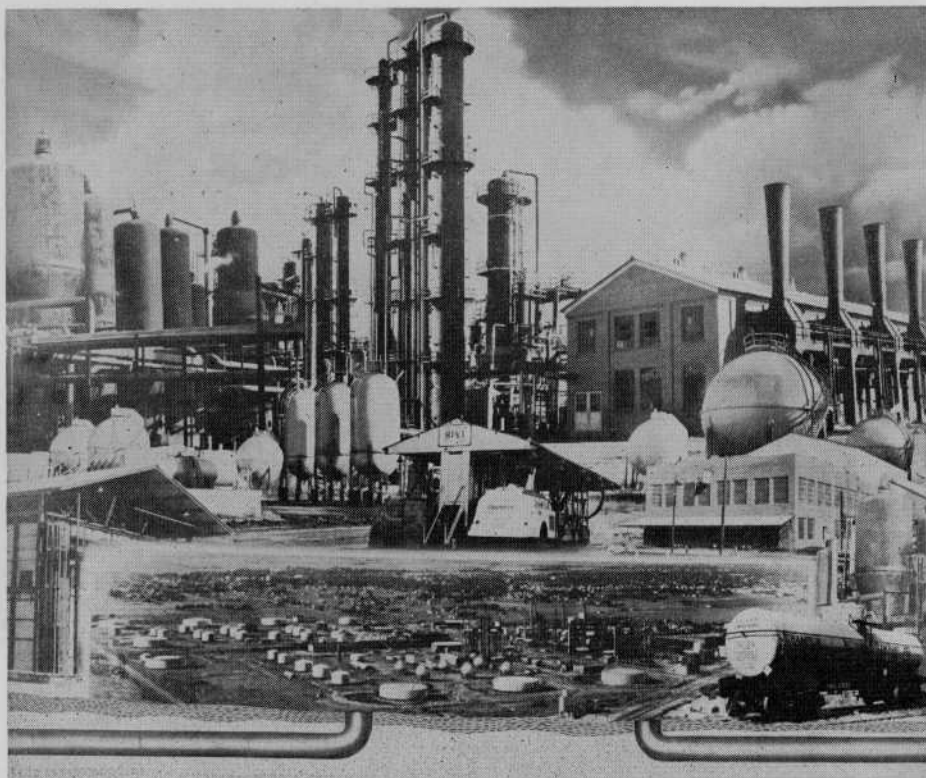
and enrolled as a freshman at the University of Michigan. During the summers he got a taste of the oil business in the refinery. He transferred to O. U. for his sophomore year, not as a geology major as might be expected, but as a history major.

Married to Jane Edwards, '30-'31, daughter of an Enid minister, they have three children, Joanne Marie, Herbert Hiram, Douglas Lloyd. All are enrolled in Enid's public schools. Joe served a 12-year apprenticeship as vice president of the company before he was promoted to the presidency in 1943.

Champlin is by no means the only O. U. alumnus at work in the Enid headquarters.



Three Champlin executives with long service records greeted visitors when company held openhouse in late February. They are E. G. Wilmoth, '17, vice president in charge of pipelines, Art Traynor, credit manager, and George Leverton, Comptroller.



A composite view of the Champlin Refinery in Enid shows the refining plant, the storage tanks and pipelines which bring Oklahoma crude in and take refined products out. (This is one of the lobby murals in office building pictured on page 8).

with the company are Harold J. Reedy, '47g.eng, senior geologist, Charles E. Pittman, '48geol, senior geologist, William A. Burns, '50geol, geologist, James W. Vater, Jr., '49p.eng, petroleum engineer, Willis Ice, '42bus, pipeline dispatcher, and Lester Drum, '37bus, assistant to the comptroller.

Officials of the company besides Champlin, Scarritt, Muir, Wilmoth and E. S. Champlin are F. W. Wentworth, vice president in charge of production, D. J. Oven, Sr., vice president in charge of drilling, E. J. Slater, vice president in charge of refining, E. W. Smith, vice president in charge of sales, Granvle Wilkinson, secretary-treasurer, and G. E. Leverton, comptroller.

These men operate the company—an operation that seems a bit complex to the outsider but the officials obviously consider it reasonably simple. After preliminary scouting for leases, and if the company decides to drill a well, one of the company's six strings of drilling tools is dispatched. If the well is a producer, it does not necessarily mean more oil for the Enid refinery. Only Oklahoma oil is processed there. Oil from wells in other states may be traded for Oklahoma crude or sold outright. So, in other states within their operational area,

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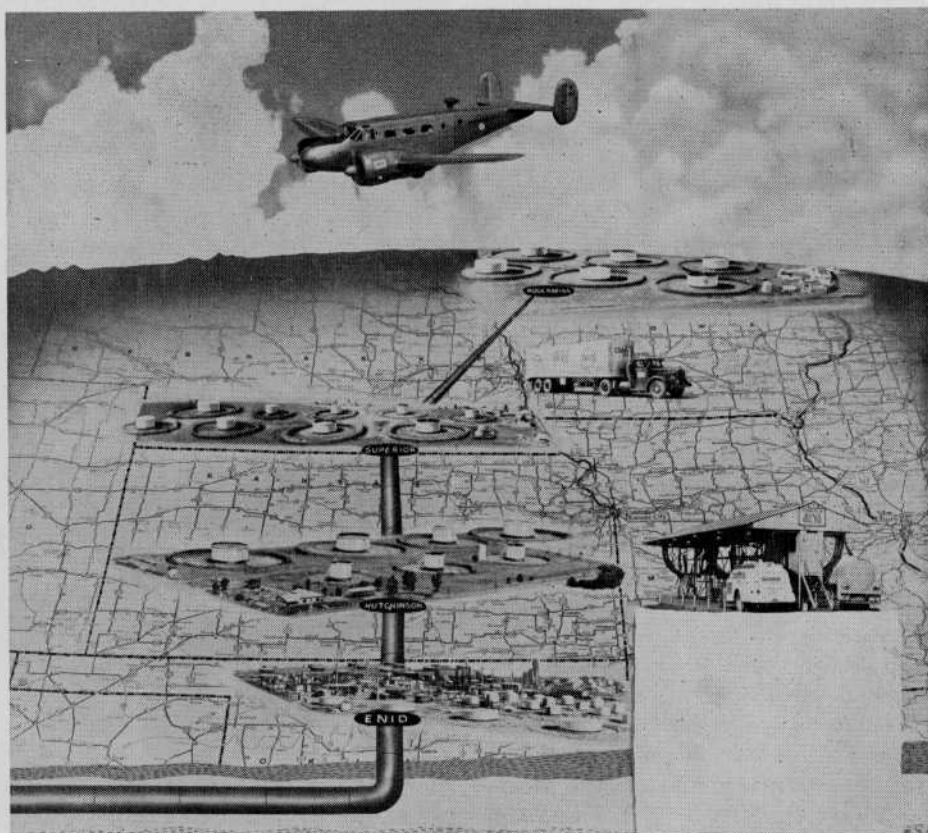
The company is loaded with them. No attempt was made to separate the many O. U. people from the 1,200 employees but many alumni names popped up during the interviews.

Three vice presidents of the firm are alumni. J. Lawrence Muir, '30geol, '33m. geol, vice president in charge of exploration and development, has been with Champlin since 1948. While I was in his office, the telephone kept bringing reports from distant operational points. Not all good, apparently, or all bad. Just in a day's work.

E. G. Wilmoth, '17, vice president in charge of pipelines, was a quarterback on one of Bennie Owen's football teams. He joined the company in 1918 shortly after it was organized. Nathan Scarritt, '23Law, is an executive vice president and head of the legal staff.

There are other staff members besides Joe Champlin who bear the Champlin name or who are related. Frederic Champlin, '34-'38, chief chemist, and his brother, E. S. Champlin, '30Law, assistant secretary-treasurer and member of the legal department, are cousins of the president. D. J. Oven, Jr., '50Law, son of Mrs. Helen Champlin Oven, is a member of the legal staff. (Oven strongly resembles his uncle and both are cast from a similar mold as H. H. Champlin.)

Other O. U. men in prominent positions



Another of the lobby wall composites shows a pipeline bringing in Oklahoma crude to Enid (at bottom) and the connecting links along the pipeline to its terminal at Rock Rapids, Iowa. Hutchinson, Kansas, and Superior, Nebraska, are way stations.

## The Champlins . . .

the Champlin Refining Company is primarily an oil company.

Oklahoma crude is brought to the Enid refinery by 500 miles of in-state pipeline—a pipeline that connects the refinery with most of the producing areas of Oklahoma. Upon arrival at the refinery, the crude oil is processed through intricate steps into gasoline, kerosene, tractor and furnace fuels and lubricating oils.

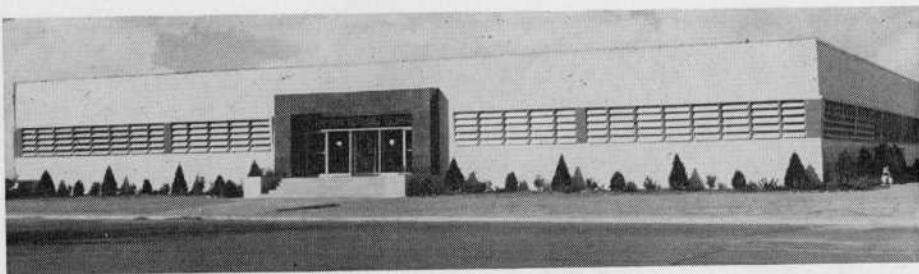
After the crude is given the works at Enid, lubricating oils are packaged and distributed through Champlin service stations, independent jobbers and dealers (much of the lub oil is contracted for by the military as are many of Champlin's products. It was estimated that 90 percent of the Champlin refined products were bought for defense purposes during World War II.)

The lighter products are pumped through a company-owned pipeline to Hutchinson, Kansas, to Superior, Nebraska, and to the Rock Rapids, Iowa, terminal, near the Iowa-Minnesota border. This stretch of pipeline measures some 516 miles. It is capable of delivering as high as 9,000 barrels of gasoline a day, but under normal conditions the pipeline handles about 6,000 barrels. From the Rock Island terminal, trucks transport the products to the point of distribution and use.

The officials, the tight-knit organization, the well-oiled operation—none of these three could succeed to the extent they are now achieving without a high degree of co-operation—an easy thing to seek but a difficult quality to gain in a big business. It comes in large doses here. In fact, the family atmosphere that permeates the company's highest echelon penetrates to the lower stratas.

When the vice president in charge of production, Wentworth, talked of his department, it was always with an eye to his associates. Wentworth does not see his department as a clearly defined unit with no relationship to, say, the exploration and development department. And the overlapping that would turn several hairs grey in some big businesses seems to be welcomed rather than spurned.

Aiding and abetting this unusual one-big-happy-family feeling is Joe Champlin. During an interview, he subtly switched the subject from the Champlin Refining Company, and more particularly from Joe Champlin, to something he thought the reporter would rather talk about—Bud Wilkinson and football. His attitude seemed to be that here was a subject worth a little



The home offices of the world's largest independently owned refining company, the Champlin Refining Co., is the newly completed structure above, near downtown Enid.

time—not something as commonplace as Joe Champlin.

This then is a brief glimpse of the Champlin Refining Company of Enid, Oklahoma. It holds a unique position in oil circles. In a day when it was ordinary, H. H. Champlin and his wife founded an independently owned. It is an important cog in the oil industry of Oklahoma and the Southwest.

## Carson . . .

a dinner for Carson. Forty-six engineers, all graduates and former students of the University, attended.

"It was like old home week," Carson said, "We certainly had a wonderful time."

The Carsons, who made the trip by

plane, were gone 16 days. En route home they stopped at Kingston, Jamaica, to observe hurricane damage. They also had stopovers in Mexico City and in Guatemala City, and in Panama where they viewed the canal and watched ships going through the locks.

While in Venezuela, Carson made a side trip, by plane, to the iron ore mines of southeastern Venezuela. He was accompanied by some of his boys on this adventure. They also saw one of the most impressive of all sights, the Angel Falls, which have the highest drop of any waterfall in the world.

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## Hal Muldrow, Jr.

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Insurance of all Kinds  
Bonds

Security National Bank Bldg.

Norman

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