

# YESTERDAY

## AAPG begun by OU people

By PHIL C. WITHROW

The photograph at the right was taken in January, 1911, on the campus in Norman. The men were staff members and students of the School of Geology at the University and staff members of the Oklahoma Geological Survey. The picture is from C. N. Gould's collection in the Manuscripts Division of Bizzell Memorial Library. Jerry B. Newby, '11ba, Oklahoma City, and V. E. Monnett, '11ba, Norman, have helped identify the men in the group. (They are posing on rocks which were left over from construction of the Administration Building. Adams Hall and Buchanan Hall are located on the site where the picture was made.)

Several outstanding geologists are included in this group. C. N. Gould, at that time director of the Oklahoma Geological Survey, had founded the School of Geology at the University in 1900. D. W. Ohern, head of the School of Geology in 1911, was later director of the Survey and a successful petroleum geologist. Frank Buttram was chemist for the Survey (Gould noted on the picture that his salary was \$75.00 per month), and he became one of the larger independent oil operators in Oklahoma. Charles H. Taylor succeeded Ohern as head of the Geology School and later was successful as a geological consultant in Oklahoma. V. E. Monnett was a student in 1911. He did graduate work at OU and Cornell, and taught at OU from 1916 until his retirement in 1959. From 1925 to 1955 he was head of the School of Geology and was instrumental in developing it into an outstanding petroleum geology school. Two other men should be mentioned who were members of this group but were not in the picture. Jerry B. Newby was on a trip with the OU basketball team, and E. L. DeGolyer had left for Mexico a short time before.



GEOLOGY STAFF AND STUDENTS IN 1911

In 1911, most geologists were employed by state or federal geological surveys or were in the teaching profession, and geology was not widely used in the oil industry. During 1914 and 1915, geologists working for the Empire Gas and Fuel Co. (now Cities Service) under Everett Carpenter, '11ba, chief geologist, and C. N. Gould, consultant, were responsible for the discovery of two major oil fields in Kansas—El Dorado and Augusta. They applied the basic principle of mapping the structure of surface rocks. This significant and successful application completely transformed the geological profession in a few months, and a great demand was created for graduate geologists. Geologists had demonstrated that their efforts could discover oil, and most oil companies immediately hired all the geologists available to explore for oil.

Early in 1915, DeGolyer, then chief geologist for the Mexican Eagle Oil Co., lived in Norman for several months while writing reports for his company. He suggested to Prof. Charles H. Taylor that geologists of the Southwest organize for the purpose of meeting to discuss problems and exchange ideas. Taylor began making plans to accomplish this. J. Elmer Thomas, Tulsa, invited a group of petroleum geologists to gather there on October 2, 1915. At this meeting, Taylor announced that with-

in a few weeks, he would call a conference for geologists working in the Southwest to convene at Norman, and invitations were mailed on October 25, 1915.

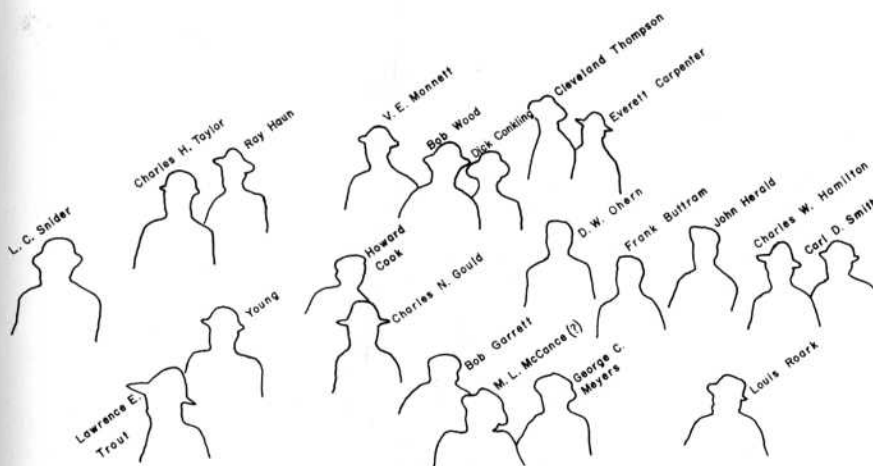
The meeting was held at the University in Norman on January 7 and 8, 1916. About forty geologists attended and heard a technical program that included "Geological Work in the Southwest," by Charles N. Gould, and "The Granite of Kansas," by Charles H. Taylor.

In 1917, the Southwest Association of Petroleum Geologists was formally organized at the Tulsa meeting. Taylor presided at this meeting at which Thomas was elected president, Alexander Deussen, vice president, and Dr. M. G. Mehl of the University, secretary-treasurer. Taylor was elected editor, a post he held for three years. The following year the name of the organization was changed to American Association of Petroleum Geologists.

The AAPG now has over 15,000 members throughout the world to whom it provides many diverse services including publication of technical articles, dissemination of scientific data and ideas among geologists, as well as many civic and public service programs. The Association observed its semi-centennial at a convention in St. Louis in April, the Norman meeting in 1916 being considered as the first meeting of the organization.

During the first 50 years, many University faculty members and alumni have made significant contributions to the development and growth of the AAPG. L. C. Snider was elected president of the Association in 1940, and Fritz L. Aurin was president in 1942. Honorary membership has been awarded to C. H. Taylor, V. E. Monnett, C. N. Gould, Fritz L. Aurin, Everett Carpenter, E. L. DeGolyer, C. E. Decker, and M. G. Mehl. DeGolyer and Monnett were awarded the Sidney Powers Medal, highest honor given by the Association. The University and the School of Geology have made outstanding contributions to the creation and development of petroleum geology, and the worldwide professional organization of geologists.

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