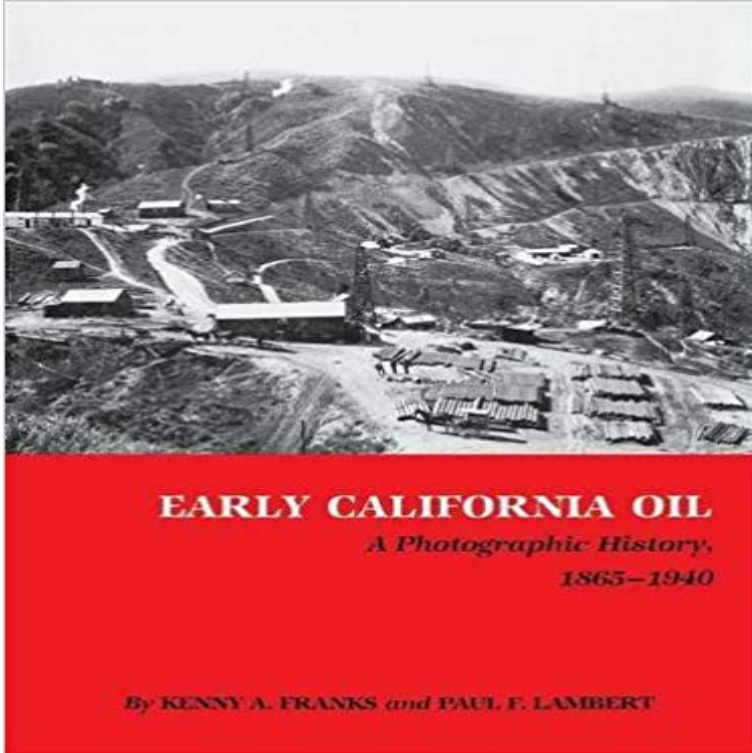


Early California Oil: A Photographic History, 1865-1940 (Kenneth E. Montague Series in Oil and Business History)



In light of the importance of oil and gas in California, perhaps the discovery of gold there should be viewed as just a flash in the pan. By 1938, the cumulative value of all the gold found in the state stood at something more than two billion dollars, while the cumulative value of the oil and gas produced was more than double that sumwell over five billion dollars. The story of California oil deserves to be told, and pictures tell it best. The more than three hundred photographs in this book vividly portray the development of California's rich and colorful petroleum industry from the early exploration of the mid-nineteenth century through the boom years of the first four decades of the twentieth. Although Indians and Spanish explorers had known of and used local oil seepages for centuries and the search for commercial production had begun on several fronts in the 1850s, the actual birth date of California's oil industry may be set as 1865, with the first commercial sale of oil refined in the state (by the Stanford brothers) from a well drilled in the state (on the Matthole River in Humboldt County). The fascinating text and the impressive array of photographs here assembled reveal the variety and vigor of the development that ensued: from the world's smallest producing lease, on Signal Hill, to the derricks sharing Huntington Beach with the bathers, to the millions of mice infesting the Taft oil field in 1926; from the mounted patrols keeping livestock out of the Coalinga fields to the blinking light on a fence warning motorists of a well in the middle of a Los Angeles street. First among the states in oil production in eighteen of the first thirty years of the twentieth century, California experienced a boom of immense proportions and extraordinary diversity. These illustrations, along with contemporary descriptions by many of those who worked the fields and a wealth of detail provided by the authors, graphically portray the scenes and

characters of California's second great mineral rush. An epilogue takes the boom up to the present, highlighting the shift in production to the offshore leases and the controversy surrounding them.

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