



## **FUN FACTS ABOUT OIL AND THE OIL HERITAGE DISTRICT**

Imperial Oil's Esso name comes from the letters "S" and "O" of Standard Oil.

- Asphalt made from Oil Springs crude was sent to the Paris International Exhibition in 1855.
- The "Little Red Bank" in Petrolia closed in 1924 and was one of Canada's last private banks.
- Canada's early pioneers didn't drill for oil. They dug with shovels.
- Petrolia has a Eureka Street, an Oil Street and a Tank Street.
- The Oil Heritage District has great names: Petrolia, Oil City and Oil Springs.
- The oil in Oil Springs is usually found 400 feet below surface.
- Thanks to the Foreign Drillers the name Petrolia was better known around the world than Toronto or Montreal.
- Canada's first gusher in Oil Springs was stopped by packing it with flax seed in 1862.
- Oil baron John Henry Fairbank had Lambton County's biggest mansion in 1899.
- John Henry Fairbank's first shanty in Oil Springs measured 12 by 16 feet.
- Oil wells pump around the clock but used to be stopped on Sundays.

- Oil Springs has produced over 10 million barrels of oil and Petrolia has produced 18 million.
- Petrolia's gusher came in 1866 and the oil boom lasted four decades.
- The Black and Matheson well in Oil Springs produced 6,000 barrels in 24 hours.
- Early oil drillers thought oil could only be found near creeks.
- Canada's first pipelines were built in the 1870s in Petrolia.
- In 1861, John Henry Fairbank bought his first well in Oil Springs for \$1,000. He sold it four years later for \$6,000 in gold.
- The well that started Petrolia's oil boom was called "The Big Well."
- Oil pioneers often hired diviners to help them find oil. In the early 1860s, the population of Oil Springs soared to 4,000.
- Oil Springs and Bothwell both had two oil booms.
- The heavy clay soil in much of Enniskillen Township is called Brookston Clay.
- On Aug. 2, 1867 the Petrolia oil field fire would have covered nine football fields.
- Oil was discovered in Bothwell in 1862 by J.M. Lick.
- James Miller Williams' work in Oil Springs earned him the name "The Father of Refining".
- The first daily newspaper in Lambton County was the Oil Springs Chronicle in 1862.
- Fairbank Oil has been supplying Imperial Oil with crude since 1880.
- John McMillan produced paraffin wax and when he died in Petrolia in the 1800s, he had paraffin wax poured into his coffin.

- A barrel of oil equals 42 U.S. gallons, 35 Imperial gallons and 159 litres.
- George Brown founded Bothwell and named it after his mother's hometown in Scotland.
- *The Globe* carried very early news of Oil Springs because it was owned by George Brown who founded Bothwell in 1854.
- Bothwell oil producers Frank Carmen and Dr. Charles Fairbank regularly donated 200 Christmas turkeys to the townspeople.
- Petrolia's fire of 1867 was the Kuwait of its day.
- Oil Springs was in The Great Enniskillen Swamp. Draining has continued since the 1870s.
- The arrival of pipelines meant hundreds of men who ran horse-drawn wagons were out of work in the 1880s.
- The first piece of concrete sidewalk was laid in Petrolia in 1898.
- VanTuyl and Fairbank Hardware in Petrolia was the biggest hardware store west of Toronto.
- Long before oil producers, First Nations used Lambton crude for medicinal purposes.
- In Oil Springs, James Miller Williams was selling lamp oil a year before Colonel Drake struck oil in Pennsylvania.
- Removing impurities from the early oil of Oil Springs was difficult and the oil smelled awful.
- British whalers protested gas light and said it was "dangerous, poisonous - or a defiance of Almighty God."

William Henry McGarvey was Petrolia's most famous driller and he was nicknamed The Petroleum King of Austria.