

= Pattillo Higgins =

Pattillo Higgins (December 5 , 1863 ? June 5 , 1955) was a businessman as well as a self @-@ taught geologist . He earned the nickname the " Prophet of Spindletop " for his endeavors in the oil business , which accrued a fortune for many . He partnered to form the Gladys City Oil Gas and Manufacturing Company and later , established the Higgins Standard Oil Company .

= = Early life = =

Pattillo Higgins was born to Roberto James and Sarah (Raye) Higgins on December 5 , 1863 , in Sabine Pass , Texas . His family moved to Beaumont when he was at six years old . He attended school until he reached the fourth grade , after which he apprenticed as a gunsmith under his father ' s direction . In his youth , he was a violent troublemaker , pulling pranks and harassing African Americans . When he was seventeen , he pulled a prank on a black Baptist church that got the attention of a sheriff deputy . The deputy fired a warning shot over Higgins ' head , after which Higgins fired back and delivered what would later turn out to be a fatal hit . The wounded deputy managed to fire again , striking Higgins lower left arm . Higgins ' arm would later become severely infected , requiring amputation from the elbow down . Higgins was put on trial for the murder of the deputy , but he would be found not guilty by a jury that perceived his act as self @-@ defense . After his acquittal , he worked as a logger along the Texas @-@ Louisiana border , apparently unhindered by his lack of an arm . It was in 1885 that he attended a Baptist revival meeting where he made the decision to become a Christian . Realizing that the lumber camps were not the ideal place to maintain a good morality , he decided to return to Beaumont , Texas to establish himself as a businessman .

= = Higgins ' venture into business = =

Higgins ventured into real estate at first , and with the money that he saved as a logger , he started the Higgins Manufacturing Company to manufacture bricks . The business sparked his interest in oil and gas , as he used it for his kilns to burn the bricks evenly . He decided to travel to Pennsylvania to learn about these fuels and study the geographical features that give signs to the presence of underground oil . Studying geology on his own , he dedicated himself to finding these clues by reading all the United States Geological Survey reports and books that he could find . The details he learned reminded him of what some Beaumont locals back home referred to as " Sour Hill Mound " , a place where he frequently brought his Sunday school students for outings . This mound was described as " sour " due to the unpleasant sulfur smell that came out of the springs around it . Convinced that this salt dome mound had oil below it , Higgins first partnered with George O 'Brien , George Carroll , Emma John , and J.F. Lanier to form the Gladys City Oil , Gas , and Manufacturing Company in 1892 . It was during this time that other formally trained geologists dismissed the idea of finding oil along the gulf coast region of the United States . Higgins ' personal integrity was even challenged by the local newspaper . However , his informal training in geology influenced his belief that the Spindletop field contained oil below due to the presence of mineral water and gas seepage , and he managed to convince the partners to proceed with the venture . Work began the following year , but all three of the shallow drilling attempts failed to locate oil due to the shifting sands and unstable clay under the hill . Higgins held onto his ownership and leases of land over the salt dome , but resigned from the company .

= = Partnership with Anthony Lucas = = =

Unwilling to give up hope of striking oil , Higgins placed numerous ads in industrial magazines and trade journals in an effort to spark others ' interests in the prospect of hitting a successful well at the site . Only one man responded to the ads , a Croatian @-@ American named Anthony Francis Lucas . Lucas signed agreements with the Gladys City Company and also with Higgins in 1899 , and

in June of the following year , he began to drill . The first well Lucas made with his light equipment collapsed after reaching 575 feet (175 m) . This failure exhausted the partners ' finances , so Lucas turned to John H. Galey and James M. Guffey in Pittsburgh for backing . The terms set forth by Guffey (who held and controlled the funds) limited Lucas ' percentage cut to a small amount , and eliminated Higgins and cut him completely from the deal .

= = = The Lucas Gusher at Spindletop = = =

In late October 1900 , with the help of the experienced crew of Al and Curt Hamill from Corsicana , drilling began again . This time , the drilling would be done using a newer , heavier , and more efficient rotary type bit . Over the next several months , work was difficult maintaining the drilling through the underground sands . On January 10 , 1901 , the six tons of four @-@ inch (102 mm) drilling pipe began to shoot up out of the hole , sending the roughnecks fleeing for safety . The geyser shot oil over 150 feet (46 m) high and flowed an estimated 100 @,@ 000 barrels per day (16 @,@ 000 m³ / d) . The well was at a depth of 1 @,@ 020 feet (310 m) , and as it turns out , was at the precise location as initially predicted by Higgins . The well would not have struck oil if it had been drilled just 50 feet (15 m) to the south . The well , which was dubbed " Lucas 1 " , had an initial flow rate greater than all of the oil wells in the United States combined in that day . The Spindletop oilfield churned out over 3 million barrels (480 @,@ 000 m³) the first year of operation , and over 17 million barrels (2 @,@ 700 @,@ 000 m³) the following year . This effectively brought an end to John D. Rockefeller ' s world monopoly .

= = = Lawsuit against Lucas and the Gladys City Company = = =

Higgins sued Lucas and Gladys City Oil , Gas and Manufacturing Company for royalties , using the basis that the second lease was invalid due to the fact the first lease had not yet expired when the second was enacted . After the parties settled out of court , Higgins formed the Higgins Oil and Fuel Company located at the center of Spindletop . This company was vulnerable to takeover bids due to Higgins ' over @-@ zealous land prospecting , which enabled the lumber baron and businessman John Henry Kirby to overtake his ownership in 1902 by purchasing his shares of the company for \$ 3 million . Higgins maintained his leasing rights to his land , and would establish the Higgins Standard Oil Company . He later established other wells with various investors , with an eccentric habit of pulling his interests out , leaving the majority of the profits for others .

= = Higgins ' later life and death = =

Higgins ' lifestyle was varied in interests and occupations . Along with working as a wildcatter , his diverse activities involved drafting , work as an inventor , an artist , as well as an engineer to name a few . His religious beliefs kept him away from public entertainment and resorts , as well as maintaining a strong belief against the selling of alcohol . In addition to residing in Beaumont , he owned estates in Houston and San Antonio . He remained a bachelor until the age of 45 . In 1905 , he adopted a young woman named Annie Johns , who at the time was fifteen . Three years later Higgins married her , and later had three children with her , despite the scandal . Higgins died in San Antonio on June 5 , 1955 .

On December 4 , 1955 , six months after Higgins ' death , he was dramatized by the actor Robert Bray in the CBS history series You Are There in the episode entitled " Spindletop - The First Great Texas Oil Strike (January 10 , 1901) " . Mike Ragan was cast as Marion Fletcher ; Parley Baer as Captain Lucas , Jean Byron as Caroline Lucas , DeForest Kelley as Al Hammill , Tyler McVey as Mayor Wheat , and William Fawcett as a farmer .

= = Higgins World 's Oil Company = =

From the Prescott Evening Courier ? Dec 23 , 1905 : Articles of Incorporation for the " Higgins

