



John J. Kovach 1993

John J. Kovach entered America as a two-year-old emigrant from Germany. As a young man he went to work for Continental Supply Company, first as a clerk in Wichita Falls, then as a salesman in Breckenridge.

Johnny almost lost his new sales job by selling a drilling rig, on credit, to an unknown wildcatter. His bosses were not pleased, but the wildcatter was Carl Cromwell and his Santa Rita #1 well not only came in, but discovered the Bit Lake Oil Field.

A Big Lake store was opened and Johnny soon became top salesman. Demand was so brisk, equipment first sold right off the rail sidings. Later Johnny lived in the store, making himself available day or night. By the time he was 25, Johnny was the store manager.

Supply stores were more than just stores – they served as combination post offices, information centers and employment agencies. Johnny’s knowledge of equipment, his willingness to meet customer’s needs regardless of the work involved, and his regard for his fellow man made Johnny friends with most of the early West Texas pioneers and wildcatters.

In 1933 Johnny was transferred first to Pyote and then to Odessa to manage stores. In 1946 he moved to Midland as continental’s district salesman and drilling equipment specialist. He retired in 1965.

It takes more than just wildcatters, drillers and roughnecks to develop an oilfield. Somebody has to be there to supply the tools, rigs and equipment. Johnny was the “Dean of Oilfield Salesmen”, a “supply man’s supply man” who “delivered the goods and kept the rigs running, hot or cold, rain or shine, day or night”.

In honor of supply men everywhere, John J. Kovach is inducted into The Petroleum Hall of Fame.