



Arthur M. Lockhart 1972

Arthur M. Lockhart of Long Beach, California, departs from Hall of Fame tradition in that he is the first from the marketing end of the oil industry to be recognized by us. A further and perhaps more important distinction is that he and his five brothers formed and managed a company that proved vital to the development of the petroleum business in this region.

Rio Grande Oil Company was organized in El Paso in 1915 by Lloyd E. Lockhart and Arthur Lockhart. Subsequently and at various times Cecil, Herman, Leslie, and Lynn Lockhart joined the enterprise. It first sold gasoline and kerosene in El Paso, but later opened a refinery there. Expansion brought refineries at Phoenix and Los Angeles, marketing throughout the southwest, and, finally, discovery of major fields in California. Its assets eventually became part of what is now Atlantic Richfield.

Rio Grande's story is one of those in which highly motivated individuals crated a truly great enterprise from a shoestring.

We honor them here, however, for what the Lockharts did in and for the Permian Basin. In 1922 they opened the first pipe line in the Basin – 29 miles long – to move oil from the new wells in Mitchell County. There is good reason to think that they took delivery on two tank cars for oil from and even earlier well which apparently produced briefly in Mitchell County in 1917. If so, they shared in the very first commercial production from the Permian Basin.

In the years immediately after 1922 they provided what was one of the very few outlets for Permian Basin oil as production levels began to move upward. Rio Grande thus stimulated the industry's growth in a significant and much needed way.

Arthur Lockhart was then predominantly a marketer but was also a corporate executive and director. Today he remains active as a processor of asphalt in Long Beach. His is a remarkable story, and Rio Grande Oil Company's story is equally unique. At a time when few believed in this area, he and his brothers saw new things arising and moved vigorously to help create what others could not conceive. His brothers are gone, but what they and Arthur Lockhart saw is with us still.