The offshore petroleum industry: the formative years, 1945-1962

Abstract
This dissertation is the first to examine the offshore oil industry born in the calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The dissertation describes the offshore industry's origins and tracks its development as a consequence of a search for new oil frontiers. In addition, it elaborates how the oil industry moved into the marine province using available technology, and how economic urgency to compete and develop new oil territories fueled marine activity. Enterprising drilling contractors and operators seized the offshore gamble, finding it possible to lower the economic and technological threshold by drawing directly from wartime research and surplus equipment. Though large oil companies eventually placed its indelible stamp upon the industry, the smaller, independent oil operators set the initial pace to establish the offshore frontier. As a technological frontier, offshore development depended upon creative and unconventional engineering. Unfamiliar marine conditions tested the imagination of oil industry engineering. The unorthodox methods of John Hayward of Barnsdall Oil and R. G. LeTourneau of LeTourneau, Inc. among others transformed the industry by blending petroleum and marine engineering. Grappling with alien marine conditions and lacking formal training, Hayward and LeTourneau merged a century of practical oil field knowledge and petroleum engineering with 2,000 years of shipbuilding experience.

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Petroleum production and export play a dominant role in Nigeria's economy and account for about 90% of her gross earnings. This dominant role has pushed agriculture, the traditional mainstay of the economy, from the early fifties and sixties, to the background. Major Events in the history of the Nigerian Oil and Gas 1908 Nigerian Bitumen Co. & British Colonial Petroleum commenced operations around Okitipupa. 1938 Shell D' Arcy granted Exploration license to prospect for oil throughout Nigeria. 1955 Mobil Oil Corporation started operations in Nigeria. 1956 First successful well dr