

The History of The Bobrka Oil Field

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In the Podkarpacie region, 15 kilometers from Krosno and 6 kilometers from Dukla, a village of Bobrka is located. It was established by Paszko of Skotniki, in 1397. Its history, over the several hundred years, was similar to that of the other poor piedmont settlements. It was not before the middle of the 19th century that Bobrka became something extraordinary, with a special appeal to people of energy and determination. From the times immemorial, natural springs of thick black liquid were seen all over the area.

It was not before 1854 that Tytus Trzecieski, a philosopher, farmer and a miner by profession - owner of the Polanka estate - got in contact with Ignacy Lukaszewicz. He presented Lukaszewicz a sample of oil from Bobrka and was assured of its value. A company set up by both men, the first in the history of the Polish petroleum industry, started to develop the oil field. The place, nowadays, is commemorated with an obelisk. The inscription on the plaque attached to the obelisk is concise but meaningful: "*To commemorate the founding of the rock oil mine in Bobrka, 1854 - I. Lukaszewicz*".

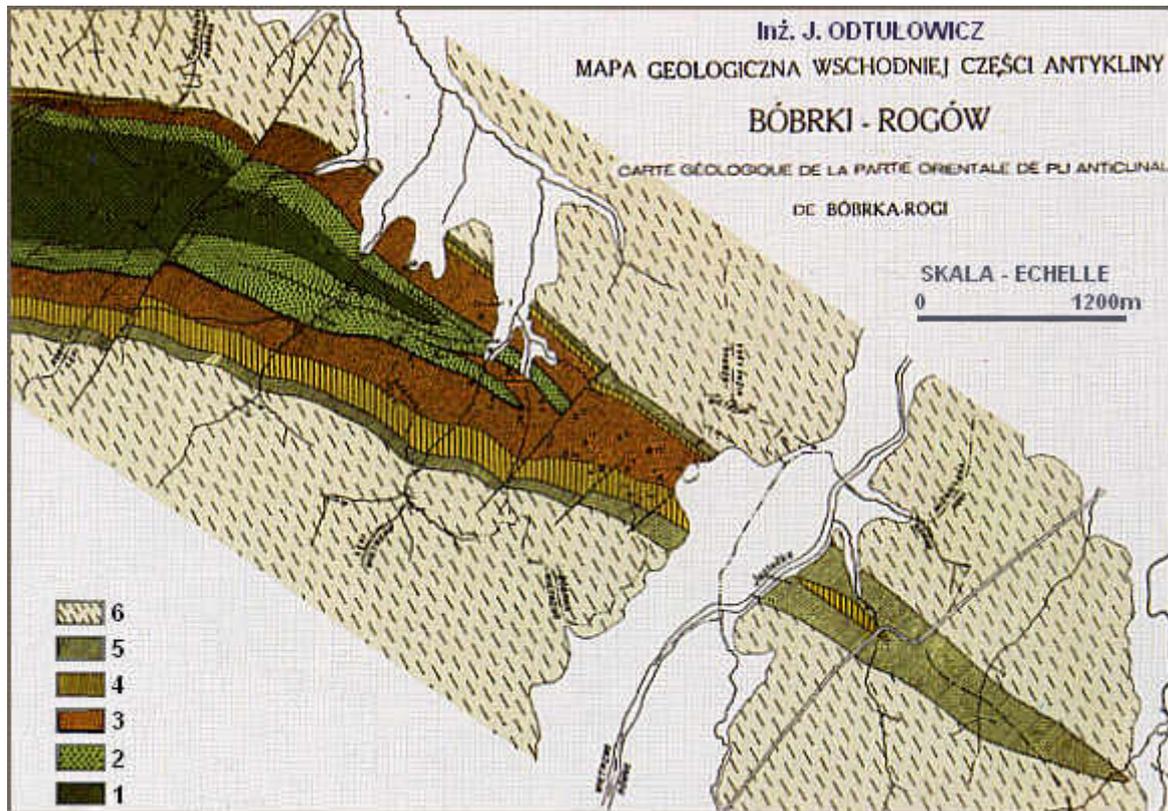
According to Szczesny Morawski, the world's first oil field in Bobrka, "... awakened life hitherto unknown, and opened a little God's world that was never before, the little world of miner's toil". The wells were sunk manually, with shovel and pick. The cross-section of such hand-dug well was a square, usually 1.2 × 1.2 meters, and its walls were lined with beams. It was equipped with a winch to lower the diggers and remove the soil. Some inventive fans were used to supply the fresh air and prevent the action of toxic gases. Initially, such wells were sunk up to 15 meters, then 60 meters. One of them, named *Izydor*, reached astounding 150 meters. Until year 1868, Bobrka had 60 hand-dug wells - two of them *Franek* and *Janina*, still exist.

Ignacy Lukaszewicz managed the oil field in such a way that any innovation was welcome. It was not long before the spade and the pickaxe were substituted with a drill bit on rods and a free-fall drilling apparatus. It was a manually operated percussion-type drilling device, brought by Lukaszewicz from Austria. Further improvements by Henryk Walter made possible the drillings as deep as 200-250 meters and to contain the down-hole water. The production was booming. In 1870, Albert Fauck arrived to Bobrka and introduced the cable drilling. In 1872 the manual drill force was superseded by the steam engine.

However, the time had come when Lukaszewicz - the founder of the Bobrka oil field and the nearby refinery in Chorkowka (1873) - had to retire, and to hand his duties over to someone else. And again, both the way he did it and the man he chosen as his successor, tell us much about his wisdom and character. In 1879, Lukaszewicz hired a pharmacist, Adolf Jablonski, and after two-year practical experience, sent him to the United States to study geology, physics and chemistry. Jablonski - then a high class specialist - returned home, and until his death in 1887, was busy with implementing in Bobrka his overseas know how. He also published a book *Oil Drilling and Production* and other papers. The premature death (1882) of Lukaszewicz was a great loss to Polish oil industry. Yet, the oil field he had created was vibrant with oilmen's activity and the country was receiving an ample stream of oil, as he had intended. Following Adolf Jablonski, eng. Zenon Suszycki took over as the director of Bobrka oil field. He introduced the Canadian drilling method and a waterproof casing to cope with water.

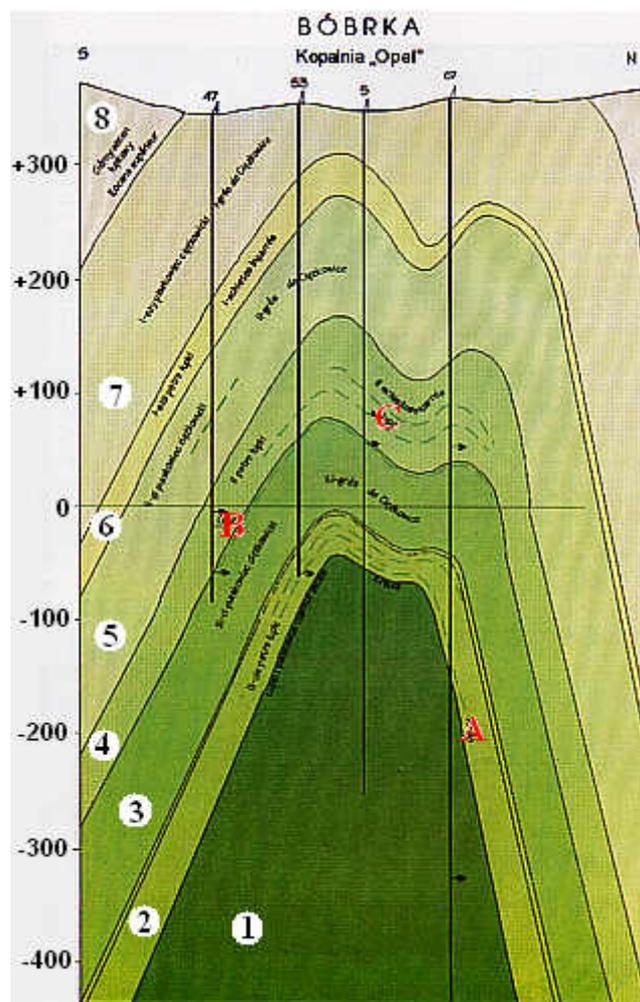
In 1893, the field became the property of W. H. MacGarvey and later on of the Galician-Carpathian Petroleum Society. Until the World War One, the managing directors were, consecutively, Charles Nicklas, Jozef Kwapinski, Jakub Perkins and Roman Klein. Klein is also known as the author of a valuable publication *The First Rock Oil Field of Bobrka* (1912).

During the World War One, Bobrka was supervised by Włodzimierz Bukojemski and in the inter-war period the director's post was occupied by Władysław Henning, Eugeniusz Parski, Stanisław Parski, Stanisław Bielewicz, Kazimierz Szczepanski, Jan Niesiolowski and Stanisław Szumanski. Jan Schwarzenberg-Czerny, Marian Ptak, Leon Mercik and Zenon Lendusko, worked as directors during World War Two, and Kazimierz Szczepanski, Jan Wegrzyn, Jozef Zuzak, Eugeniusz Kalisz, Stanisław Kondera, Ludwik Borek and Zbigniew Nowak, during the 1945-1995 period. Bobrka oil field is still at work, nowadays. In the fifties, the field even saw its revival; on the southern arm of the anticline new reservoirs were discovered. The total commercial reserves of the field have been estimated at 1.237 thousand ton. Since its birth, 140 years ago, it gave a total of 1.190 thousand ton. Oil production in Bobrka continues and some of the active wells date back to the times of Ignacy Lukaszewicz.



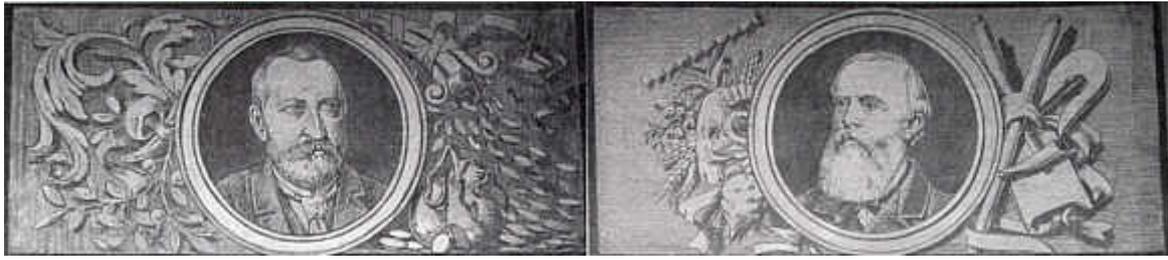
🇵🇱 Geological map of the eastern part of the anticline Bobrka - Rogi

- 1 - Cretaceous, sandstone from Czarnorzeki, 2 - Lower Eocene, red shales, 3 - Lower Eocene, sandstones and conglomerates with red shales, 4 - Upper Eocene, mottled shales, 5 - Oligocene, Krosno beds



☒ Cross section of the Opal Mine fold in the Bobrka oil field

1 - shales and sandstones from Czernorzeki, 2 - 3rd mottled shales, 3 - 3rd Ciekowice sandstone, 4 - 2nd mottled shales, 5 - 2nd Ciekowice sandstone, 6 - 1st mottled shales, 7 - 1st Ciekowice sandstone, 8 - shaly Upper Eocene



☒ Karol Klobassa-Zrencki, Tytus Trzeczieski - a fragment of the fresco in the building of the Eastern Bank of the Sugar Industry



☒ A part of the oil field Bobrka in the beginning of the exploitation



☒ A view of the Bobrka oil field in 1951

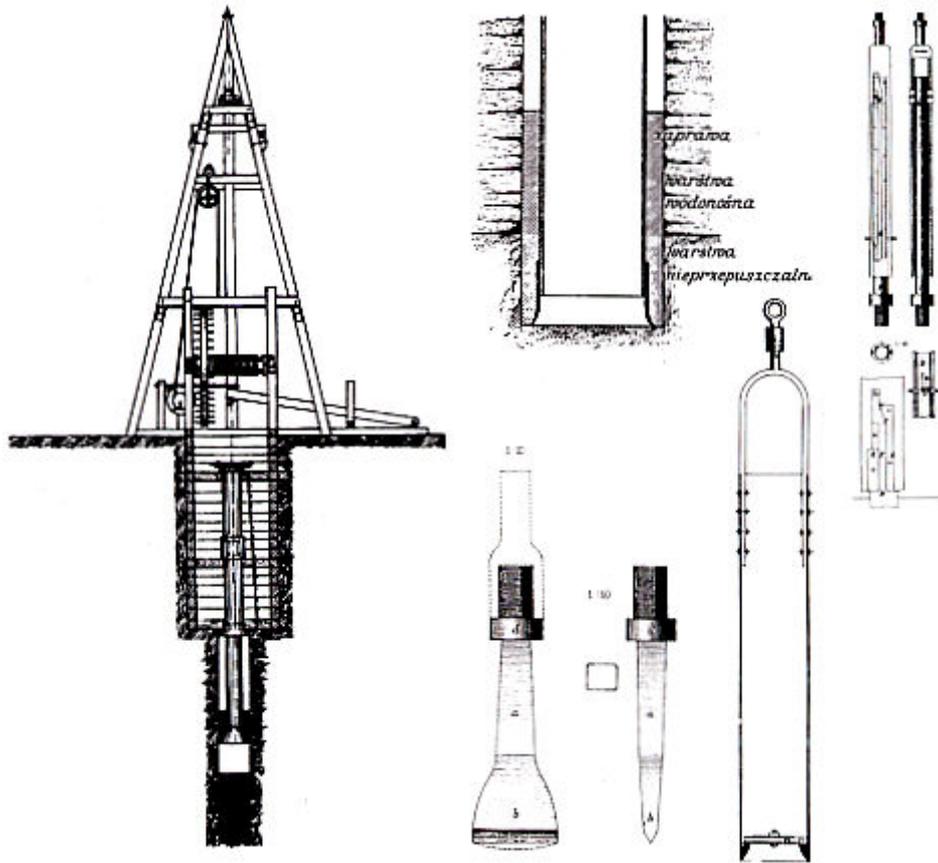


🇵🇱 The obelisk commemorating the foundation of the Bobrka oil field in 1854



🇵🇱 Hand-dug oil well "Frank", dating back to 1860

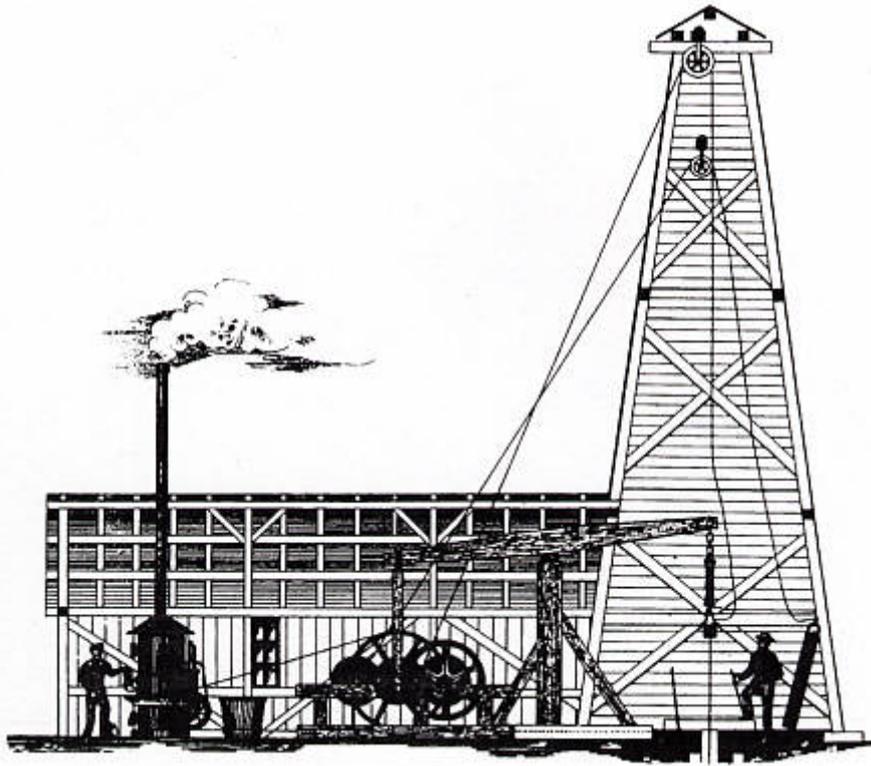
🇵🇱 Cross section of a hand-dug well with winch, timber lining and tools



🇵🇱 Manually driven percussion-type rig with drill tools, dating back to 1862



🇵🇱 Lubricating a cart axle with thickened oil



🇺🇸 Cable tool rig powered by steam engine, 1872



🇺🇸 Administration building at Bobrka built at the Łukasiewicz's time, the present-day view



 Crew and supervisors of the Bobrka oil field, 1908

From the publication "Bobrka — our petroleum heritage", ed. Jozef Sozanski, authors: Jozef Sozanski, Stanislaw Kondera, Jacek Sozynski, Ryszard Wolwovicz, Jozef Zuzak, translation by Jacek Lesniak, Krosno 1996, ISBN 83-906506-0-6.

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