

Leduc

Leduc by Aubrey Kerr. Calgary, 1991 ISBN 1-55056-115-4.

Review by James H. Morrison

Aubrey Kerr is a geologist/oil finder who knows of what he writes. He was in Leduc, just south of Edmonton, when the promise of the Leduc oil fields became a reality. Kerr's first-hand account ranges over science and sociology to provide a riveting account of the first discovery of Leduc No. 1 oil field. He also analyzes the important issues of land tenure and crown revenue land. A special section (on green paper) about Leduc personalities is invaluable as his major source is oral testimony. The stories of these oil pioneers give a human face to the men and women of various ethnic origins who were a part of an important time in Canadian industrial history when the province of Alberta "was sitting on a bountiful power keg." (159)

The book also includes an excellent selection of photos, maps, original documents and an index. Kerr has drawn upon the sources of the Glenbow Archives, as well as the Petroleum Industry Oral History Project which he founded in 1980. Although he was a part of history in the making, Kerr handles his role in Leduc with sensitivity and modesty. He directs the reader's attention with his skillful prose to a wonderful and diverse cast of participants in Canada's oil industry when Imperial Oil, with its major discovery in Leduc, Alberta in 1947 brought about the beginning of large scale western Canadian oil production.