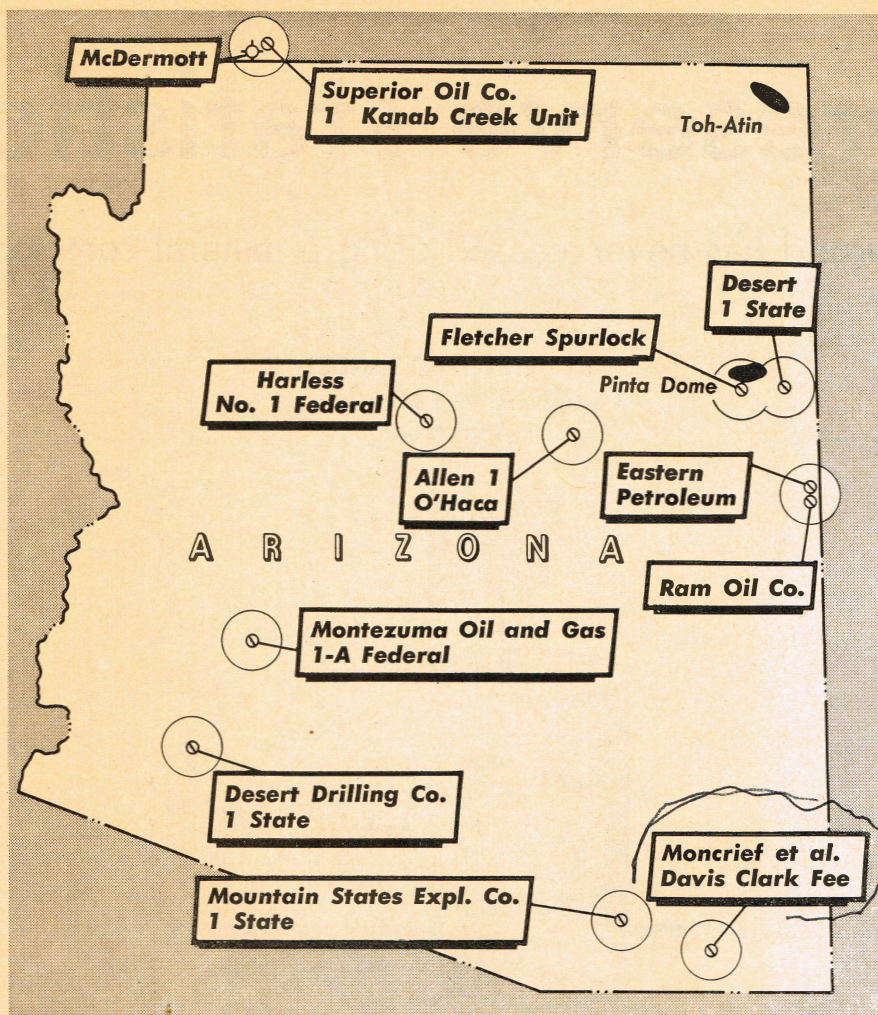


Exploration



WILDCATTING in Arizona spans the entire state, as independents probe for new oil and gas fields. There's been only 1 new field this year, but of the 10 wildcats shown here, 1 should hit, if averages of the past hold meaning.

Arizona shows signs of year-end flurry

BY FRANK J. GARDNER

ARIZONA, exploration stepchild of the Four Corners, is the scene of 10 wildcat operations today. Some are deep, some are shallow, but every well drilled in the state is one more step toward the important oil future that surely must lie ahead of it.

There was a day when a legitimate oil operator would have scoffed at the very idea of drilling in Arizona. For one thing, the state had long been noted for sucker-baiting drilling shenanigans. For another, nothing had ever been found there. And on top of that, there was a market-outlet problem.

But when Shell Oil Co. brought in the state's first producer in October 1954, this three-legged mental

block began to disappear. At the time of discovery, incidentally, the Shell well was the only operation in all of Arizona. Since then, four new oil and gas fields have been found, legitimate operators large and small have moved in, and the market problem has begun to evaporate. As a bonus, the country's richest helium field has developed at Pinta dome.

Still, the really big discovery that Arizona needs has failed to materialize. And that big strike probably lurks in the Black Mesa basin in the northeastern corner of the state. This prize objective has been largely held off the exploration mar-

ket by the cold-war boundary dispute between the Hopi and Navajo Indians, but that problem, too, will soon be solved. Black Mesa offers 10,000 sq miles of excellent oil targets at reasonable depth; and its drilling density is only one well per 2,000 sq miles!

Meanwhile, back at the rigs, independent operators are probing every corner of Arizona. And if the averages hold, at least 1 of the 10 should hit.

One of the most interesting wildcats is the R. B. Moncrief et al. 1 Clark-Davis in the legendary Tombstone country of Cochise County, southeastern corner of the state. This well, in 5-21s-24e, is below 2,000 ft in Pennsylvanian on its way to the Devonian at 4,000 ft; grapevine reports say it may go to basement at 7,000 or 8,000 ft. If so, it should prove a conclusive test for this area, where some geologists believe 20,000 ft of sediments await the drill.

Forty miles west-northwest of the Moncrief well, Mountain States Exploration Co. is drilling an 8,000-ft basement wildcat at the 1 State, in 29-19s-18e, in Pima County. This too, will be a significant test, and one to watch; prime target is Devonian, expected at around 4,000 ft.

In Yavapai County, near the center of Arizona, R. F. Harless is drilling the 1 Federal, in 4-17n-4e, as a 3,000-ft test on the Great Colorado Plateau; at last report, it was near 2,000 ft, believed to be in Mississippian. And in Yuma County, in southwestern Arizona, Desert Drilling Co. is waiting on orders at the 1 State in 16-7s-13w; this one has reached 6,774 ft and is reported to have found gas showings at total depth.

Other wildcats shown on the map are shallow tests of lesser exploratory interest. One deep wildcat in southwestern Utah, however, has Arizonans absorbed, for the possible effects it could have on their state. This is Superior Oil Co. 1 Kanab Creek unit, in 16-42s-7w, Kane County; it is near 8,000 ft on a 9,500-ft Precambrian contract.

So keep your eye on Arizona from now till year's end. It could just possibly make exploration headlines. **End**