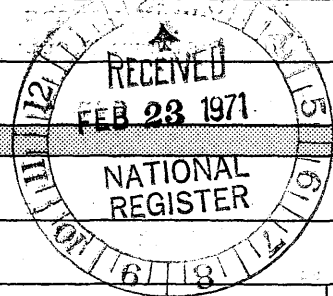


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia	
COUNTY: Wirt	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 715540003	DATE 5/6/71



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Burning Springs Complex

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Rathbone and Karns Wells

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Burning Springs

STATE West Virginia	CODE 54	COUNTY: Wirt	CODE 105
------------------------	------------	-----------------	-------------

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
See Continuation Sheet.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Wirt County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:  
Elizabeth West Virginia 54

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER: 715540003  
DATE: 5/6/71  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The stretch of river between Burning Springs Run and Nettle Run today is heavily wooded, but here and there among the trees glimpses are afforded of summer cottages, each with about an acre of property.

Drilling and pumping equipment still marks the spot of the 1917 Mellon Well, fairly close to the mouth of Burning Springs Run. About one third the distance toward Nettle Run a plugged pipe nearly ten feet in height marks activity at that spot. At the bend in the stream marked "Oil Lott" on the 1963 map, a small wooden crib marks the site of a well.

The Little Kanawha River, according to "old-timers," has eaten into the northern bank several feet since 1860, so that some of the early wells may be now under water or sand.

In 1860 the area was farm land and relatively clear, except for oil derricks, as indicated in one of the accompanying photographs.

The Rader Hotel is the only building in the reserved area more than 75 years old. To the casual tourist, except for this building and an occasional cottage, this area would appear almost primeval.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

 Pre-Columbian  
 15th Century

 16th Century  
 17th Century

 18th Century  
 19th Century

 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1860

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal

 Prehistoric  
 Historic

 Agriculture  
 Architecture

 Art

 Commerce  
 Communications  
 Conservation

 Education  
 Engineering  
 Industry

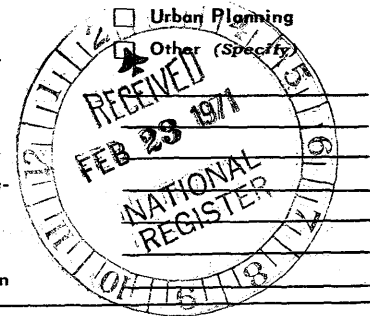
 Invention  
 Landscape  
 Architecture

 Literature  
 Military  
 Music

 Political  
 Religion/Philosophy

 Science  
 Sculpture  
 Social/Humanitarian

 Theater  
 Transportation

 Urban Planning  
 Other (Specify)


## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The land along the Little Kanawha River between Burning Spring Run and Nettle Run is at the focal point of the origin of the world's second great oil field, springing up only months after the Drake Well in Pennsylvania, which was brought in on August 26, 1859.

"At the outbreak of the Civil War there were but two producing oil fields in the world, Titusville and Burning Springs."<sup>1</sup>

"Burning Springs is the first military oil objective in the history of warfare,"<sup>2</sup> having been destroyed by General William E. Jones on May 9, 1863 with a loss estimated by operators of that day at 300,000 barrels. In fact, despite the silence of history on this point, 'Burning Springs was the most important industrial complex in enemy hands destroyed by the Confederates in the course of the War.'<sup>3</sup>

The site being nominated witnessed the drilling of several wells, two of particular importance that precipitated a rush to West Virginia that created a town (Burning Spring) of 5,000 overnight.

From the standpoint of its effect, the single most important well next to Drake's was the second drilled by the Rathbone Brothers, J. V. and J. D., and J. N. Camden, in the summer of 1860, which produced 40 or 50 barrels an hour and stirred the imagination and dreams of hungry eastern investors. The Rathbones gave substance to their dreams in 1860 and the following year, when they "surveyed their entire 600 acres at Burning Springs into one-acre parcels, and offered to lease one acre to all comers for a royalty of the production."<sup>4</sup>

Another important well in oil history is that worked by an Allegheny County, Pa. man, Sherman D. Karns, at the mouth of Burning Spring Run, which he got into production late in February of 1860. His lease from the Rathbones, contracted on February 20, can be regarded as the first south of the Mason and Dixon line. The well had been drilled in 1832 for salt. It was salt that had brought the Rathbones from New York City in 1840, but it was Karns' well that shifted their attention to the possibilities of oil, just then coming into its own as an illuminant and lubricant, due in part to the scarcity of whale oil. The Rathbones were already selling medicinal "Rock Oil."

The Rathbones then drilled the first two of many wells a few rods north of Burning Spring Run and forged a family tradition in oil that led to

1. Louis Reed, "Conflict and Error in the History of Oil" West Virginia History, Vol. 25, No. 1 (October 1963), p. 21.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 22.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lee, Howard B. The Burning Springs and Other Tales of the Little Kanawha. Parsons, W. Va., 1968.

Reed, Louis "Conflict and Error in the History of Oil," West Virginia History, Vol. 25, No. 1 (October 1963), pp. 21-26.

Thoenen, Eugene D. The Petroleum Industry in West Virginia, 1860-1900. Morgantown, 1956.

Reed, Louis. The Oil Mill in Wirt County. Ms., 1969.

Roberts, Glen W. Early Oil Development in West Virginia. Ms, 1923.

Rolston, Julian K. The First Decade of the Petroleum Industry in the Mid-Ohio Valley. Ms, M.A. thesis, 1948, Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio.

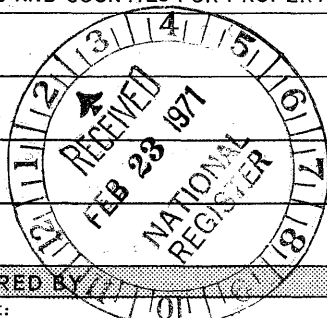
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38°59' 31.38"	81° 19' 15.80"		0	0	
NE	38°59' 31.38"	81° 19' 04.56"				
SE	38°59' 01.58"	81° 19' 04.56"				
SW	38°59' 01.58"	81° 19' 15.80"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 20 acres ±

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.**

ORGANIZATION: **Wheeling College** DATE: **August 15, 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Wheeling** STATE: **West Virginia** CODE: **54**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Dallas B. Shaffer  
Dallas B. Shaffer  
Title State Liaison Officer

Date February 15, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Gunn + a Company  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAY 6 1971

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
William M. Montgo  
Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 22 1971

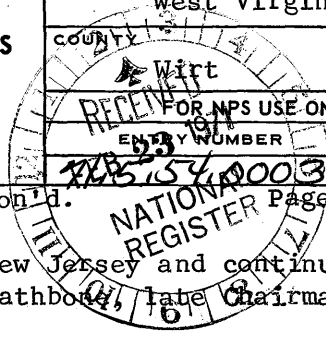
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

H13  
 17/4315730 / 4314810  
 472460 / 472460 / 472190 / 472600  
 4314810 / 4315730

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	West Virginia	
COUNTY	Wirt	
RECEIVED FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	225-54-0003	DATE 5/6/71



(Number all entries) 8. Significance - Burning Springs cont'd.

association with Rockefeller in Standard Oil of New Jersey and continued to J. V. Rathbone's great-grandson, Monroe Jackson Rathbone, late Chairman of the Esso Corporation.

Karn's well is referred to on a map in Deed Book 4, p. 147, accompanying a deed of partition by and between the heirs of William P. Rathbone, October 7, 1863. See Fig. 1. That there was a salt well at the mouth of Burning Spring Run we know from a January 2, 1854, deed in which J. C. Rathbone and wife reserved "two acres of land at the mouth of the Burning Spring Run, on which there has been a Salt Well sunk."

To locate the Rathbone well there is an early map. Fig. 1 shows an "OIL LOT" of 3 acres on this map, drawn in Deed Book 4, Wirt County, p. 157, on October 7, 1863. When the two Rathbones and Camden sold their oil properties in September 29, 1864 (Deed Book 4, Wirt County, p. 3) they reserved the interest of W. V. A. Rathbone "in the old Rathbone well and lot."

Fig. 1 also shows Karns' lot at the mouth of Burning Spring Run, where he pumped oil from an old salt well. On the lot above this still stands the old Rader Hotel, nearly a century old, now used as a store and post office.

Two photographs still assist in the proximate location of the wells in question. One is reproduced in Howard B. Lee's 1968 book, The Burning Springs and Other Tales of the Little Kanawha. Fig. 2 pictures what he identifies as the first well as seen from across the Little Kanawha River. The other picture, of the same well and similarly identified, is taken from the rear of the well and shows an unmistakable stretch of river in the background, Fig. 3, taken from the West Virginia Geological Survey, Vol. 10, 1938, p. 363. Mr. Lee, now 90, is in the third generation of Lees to grow up in Burning Springs. He recorded the memories of his grandfather, who was 55 years old when oil was discovered there. The picture he reproduces on page 27 (a copy of the original enclosed) shows most of the strip of territory being nominated on the bend of the Little Kanawha River. The derricks of several wells may be noted in the background.

Disruption of the war and consequent deficiencies of reporting for tax purposes make precise estimates of production impossible, but Mr. Reed regards the 300,000 barrels of oil destroyed by the Confederates as a normal inventory for the Burning Spring field - one of several closely related fields - and estimates the value of this inventory at \$1,500,000 worth of oil and \$40,000,000 worth of equipment destroyed in a town larger than Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, whose burning aroused so much attention in American history. The General Assembly at Wheeling had incorporated the Rathbone Petroleum Company on Feb. 3, 1863.

According to Mr. Glen Roberts, of Elizabeth, whose family has been in the oil production industry since 1860, the stretch of shoreline nominated contained many historic wells. A stone's throw north of the Karns well, Gilfillan and Rathbone brought in wells about ten feet apart during the early boom. A Mellon Oil Company drilled the same spot successfully around 1917, while T. Elmer Cain, the Mellon superintendent, returned around 1960, drilled in the same spot, and got about 50 barrels of oil per day. Cain is now dead.

J. K. Rolston's M.A. Thesis at Marietta College reports that W. L. Jackson, John Gilfillan, T. J. Smith, and J. B. Neal (cf. October 7, 1863 map) con'd

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

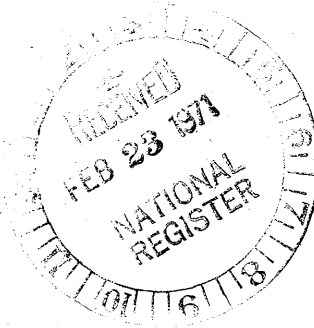
STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Wirt	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 715,541,0003	DATE 5/6/71

(Number all entries) 8. Significance - Burning Springs con'd.

Page 3

obtained a producing well and immediately disposed of a three-eighths interest for \$12,000.

Note: The original name of the run and district was in the singular, Burning Spring. The post office was changed to Rathbone in 1861, and changed back to Burning Springs in 1869.



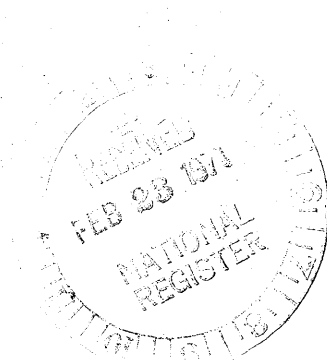
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Wirt	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 4155410003	DATE 5/6/71

(Number all entries) 4. Owner of Property

- 22.01 Ronald and Loris Walters  
Burning Springs, W. Va.
- 22.03 Lulu G. Parsons  
534 Goff Mountain Road  
Nitro, West Virginia
- 22.04 Gladys S. George  
Reedy, West Virginia
- 22.05 Margaret Florence  
1805 Staunton Avenue  
Parkersburg, West Virginia
- 22.06 Theda Cooper Burgess  
Address unknown
- 22.07 Dr. F. L. Blair  
Parkersburg, West Virginia
- 29 O. F. and Mable Sites  
Burning Springs, West Virginia
- 30 R. and D. Waters  
Burning Springs, West Virginia
- 31 } W. H. H. Wheaton Estate
- 32 } Harry F. Strong  
19371 N.E. 1st Place  
Miami, Florida
- 33 Glen W. Roberts  
Elizabeth, West Virginia



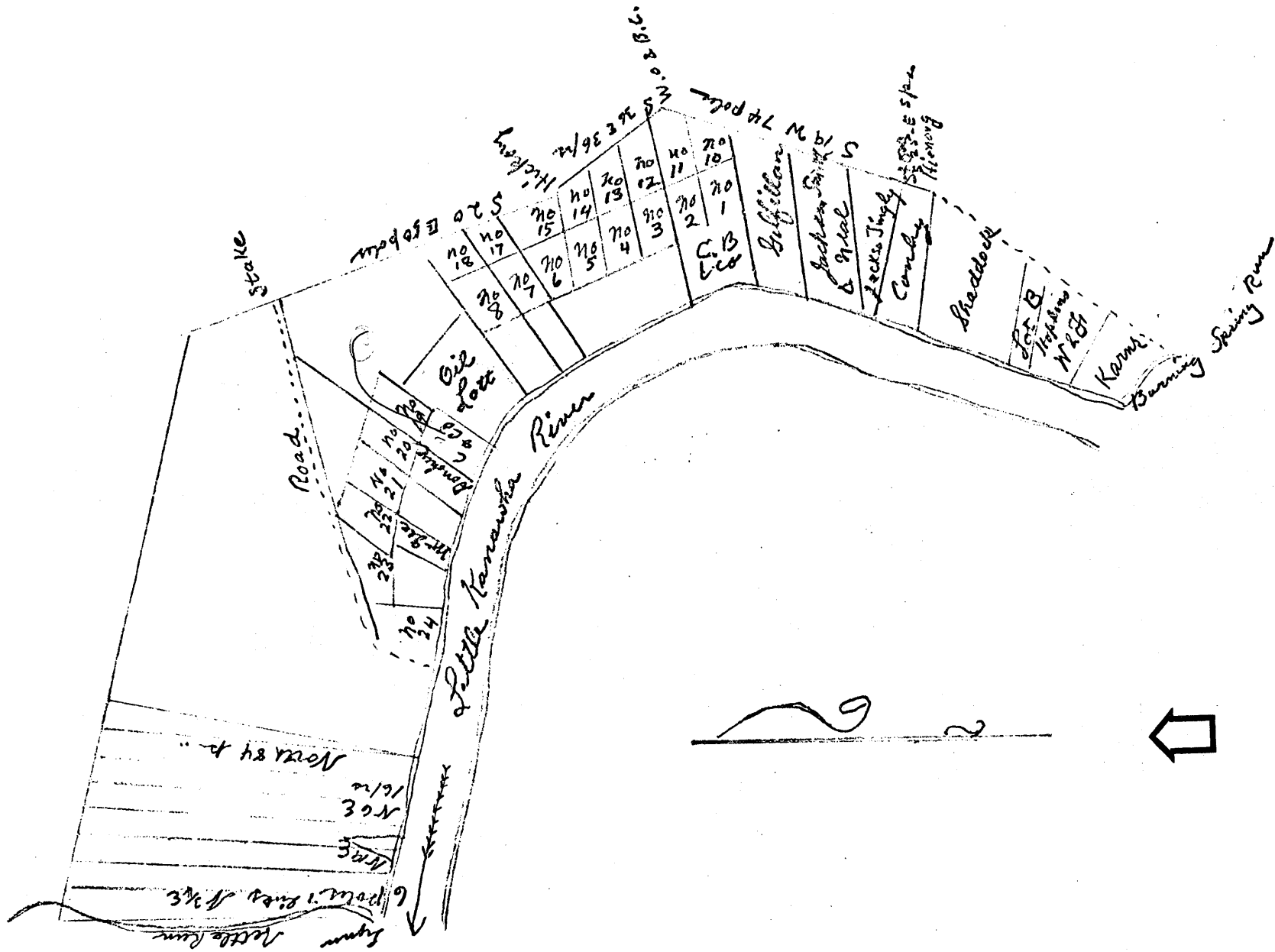


Fig. 1

Map accompanying  
 record of Oct. 7th, 1863  
 Wirt County Deed Book No. 4