



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

**PETROLEUM MARKETING BY THE
STANDARD OIL COMPANY (NEBRASKA): 1911-1939**

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- **ENTERING the AGE of the AUTOMOBILE: The Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an Independent Company (1911-1918)**
- **ENTERING the AGE of PETROLEUM MARKETING: 'Normalcy' and the New Decade (1919-1929)**
- **ENTERING the LEAN YEARS: The Decline of the Standard Oil Company in Nebraska (1930-1939)**

C. Form Prepared by

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Organization Nebraska State Historical Society Date April 2004

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register Criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Date 6/23/04

Signature and title of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Date of Action 8/20/04

Signature of the Keeper

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for application to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

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**Petroleum Marketing by the Standard Oil Company
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**PETROLEUM MARKETING BY THE
STANDARD OIL COMPANY (NEBRASKA): 1911-1939**

The subject of this Multiple Property Documentation submittal is the marketing operations of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an independent company from 1911-1939. The Standard Oil Company began marketing in Nebraska as early as 1878. The company's operations in Nebraska were incorporated in 1906, yet controlled by the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), a holding company, until 1911. In that year Standard Oil of New Jersey was found by the U.S. Supreme Court to be in violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and ordered to be dissolved. As one of 34 companies that were cited in the dissolution decree, Standard Oil of Nebraska emerged as an independent company and assigned marketing operations within the State. Through its former affiliation with the Standard Oil combination, Standard of Nebraska was left with substantial holdings and rose to become Nebraska's dominant petroleum marketer. During the period of the company's operations from 1911 to 1939 it both led and responded to marketing practices, competition, and a declining position that resulted in its sale to the Standard Oil Company (Indiana) in 1939. The following documentation identifies the historic contexts associated with the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an independent company:

- **ENTERING the AGE of the AUTOMOBILE: The Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an Independent Company (1911-1918)**
- **ENTERING the AGE of PETROLEUM MARKETING: 'Normalcy' and the New Decade (1919-1929)**
- **ENTERING the LEAN YEARS: The Decline of the Standard Oil Company in Nebraska (1930-1939)**

PREFACE

The petroleum industry, like that of any industry dealing with a raw material or commodity, is represented by production, manufacturing, and marketing. *Production* is the extraction of crude oil from commercially viable oil fields, first found to be feasible in 1859 by drilling operations conducted by Edwin L. Drake in Pennsylvania. Manufacturing, or petroleum *refining*, includes the distillation and other techniques applied to crude oil resulting in a huge range of products for household, farm, and industry. *Marketing* represents the process of distribution through wholesaling, jobbing, retailing, and sales to the ultimate consumer. The *integration* of production, refining, and marketing is made complete by transportation by rail, water, land, and pipeline.

With relatively small reserves of crude oil, limited production, and few refining operations, Nebraska may seem far removed from the greater story of the petroleum industry in the United States. Therefore, the distribution or marketing of petroleum products best represents the petroleum industry in Nebraska.

And Nebraska may seem far removed from the famed Standard Oil Company, the company that came to dominate the petroleum industry in the United States. That company, too, is best represented by the distribution and marketing operations of the Standard Oil Company in Nebraska. Those operations date to last quarter of the nineteenth-century in Nebraska, followed by the incorporation of Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) in 1906

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and its organization as an independent company following the dissolution of the Standard Oil combination in 1911.

INTRODUCTION

Standard Oil Operations in Nebraska (1878-1911)

The Standard Oil Company traces its origins to 1863, when John D. Rockefeller and several associates established a Cleveland-based refining company. By 1870, Rockefeller and his associates operated the largest refineries in Cleveland, which with other holdings were incorporated in Ohio as the "Standard Oil Company," a million-dollar corporation. The company acquired and owned massive holdings in a loose alliance of companies and partnerships. In 1879 the shares of this group of companies were transferred to a common ownership held by three trustees.¹ In 1882 under the Standard Oil Trust Agreement, a trust was established as the sole and central holding arrangement under which the stocks of forty companies that were either wholly owned or partly owned were transferred to nine trustees. The Trust agreement became the mechanism not just to maintain centralized ownership, but to manage the diverse holdings into what became a totally integrated business.²

Domestic Marketing in the West: Standard Oil's Entry into Nebraska

The Standard Oil Company extended its control beyond refining and into wholesaling of its products. As lucrative domestic markets developed in the West, Standard Oil began to develop distribution systems to tap these growing markets. The Standard Oil Company first entered the states and territories west of the Mississippi with the organization of the Consolidated Tank Line Company, a marketing company that purchased various independent firms and organized its operations in the West with the establishment of its own facilities.

The Consolidated Tank Line Company, headquartered in Cincinnati, was established when Alexander and James McDonald of Alexander McDonald & Company entered into partnership with the Standard Oil Company in 1878. By 1886, the company's marketing territory consisted of southeastern Ohio, southern Indiana, southern Illinois, northern Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and southern Dakota Territory.³

Shortly after its organization, the Consolidated Tank Line Company entered Nebraska with facilities in Omaha and Lincoln. The Lincoln operation was acquired from an independent company, the Nebraska Tank Line Company.⁴ The Consolidated Tank Line Company established the Omaha operation in 1879.⁵ By 1886,

¹ Hidy, Ralph W. and Muriel E., Pioneering in Big Business (1882-1911): History of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey). New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955, page 23.

² Hidy, pages 46-47.

³ Hidy, pages 113-114.

⁴ Andreas, A.T., History of the State of Nebraska. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1882. Volume II, page 1069.

⁵ Savage, James W. and John T. Bell, History of the City of Omaha. New York and Chicago: Munsell & Company, 1894. Page 483.

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Omaha became the company's Western Sales Division for Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, northern Missouri, and southern Dakota Territory.⁶

The company's wholesale distribution of bulk petroleum and products was handled from main stations, located for their advantage as a shipping point along rail lines. Here, volumes of products were received either in wooden barrels or in bulk from tank cars. Bulk petroleum was prepared for shipment to dealers in wooden barrels. The barreling operations were a primary function of the warehouse complexes. In cooper shops, barrels were assembled or prepared for reshipment. Main stations were rounded out by large iron storage tanks, a yard for barrel storage, wood frame warehouses for storage and office, and wagon sheds or liveryes. From these stations, barrels of petroleum were for shipped to other wholesalers, jobbers, or local "oil peddlers."

Standard Oil Marketing Companies assigned to Nebraska		
Date	Company	Company Held/Controlled By:
1878	Consolidated Tank Line Company	Standard Oil Company (Ohio), Standard Oil Trust (1882)
1892	Standard Oil Company (Kentucky)	"Standard Oil Interests"
1896	Standard Oil Company (Indiana)	"Standard Oil Interests," Standard Oil (New Jersey) (1899)
1906	Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)	Standard Oil Company (New Jersey)

The Standard Oil name first came to Nebraska when the marketing territories of the Consolidated Tank Line Company were assigned to the Standard Oil Company (Kentucky).⁷ By 1894, branch offices were located in Lincoln, Beatrice, Hastings, Norfolk, Fremont, Columbus, York, Nebraska City, and Council Bluffs, Iowa.⁸

Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) and Standard Oil Combination, 1892-1911

The Standard Oil Trust was challenged by the State of Ohio, resulting in an 1892 ruling of the Supreme Court of Ohio prohibiting the Standard Oil Company (Ohio) from maintaining its trust agreement. Following the decision, Rockefeller and his associates took steps to liquidate the Trust and the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) was assigned a leading corporate role under a loose union of twenty separate and independent companies that had regrouped the holdings of ninety-two former companies. This unofficial union was referred to as the "Standard Oil Interests" held together only by the ownership of the majority of stock by a very small group willing to act as a unit. Recognizing that the loose affiliation of the "Standard Oil Interests" did not serve the complete control of the management and integration of its operation, the charter of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) was revised in 1899. The Standard Oil Interests became a "combination" under a central holding company allowed by New Jersey's corporate laws.

⁶ Historical and Descriptive Review of Omaha. Omaha: Jno. Lethem, 1892, page 71.

⁷ Giddens, Paul H., Standard Oil Company (Indiana): Oil Pioneer of the Middle West. New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1955. Page 44. Also see directory listings in Nebraska State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1893.

⁸ Omaha City Directory. J.M. Wolfe Directory Company, 1894, advertisement opposite page 700.

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Standard Oil Company (Indiana)

Of the companies that were organized or acquired by the Standard Oil Company, the Nebraska operations would be most closely identified with those of the Standard Oil Company (Indiana). After a new supply of crude oil was discovered near Lima, Ohio in 1885, Rockefeller proposed to enter into the production of petroleum by the purchase of Lima crude. Standard Oil identified the opportunity to refine Lima crude and distribute its products from Chicago, a great center of railroad transportation with opportunity for water transport on Lake Michigan. A refinery for the Lima crude was begun at Whiting, Indiana just across the river from Chicago, and Standard Oil of Indiana was incorporated in 1889 with responsibilities over production at the great refinery.

The Whiting refinery was the westernmost location of any held by Standard. Upon reorganization in 1892, Standard of Indiana expanded its marketing operations and by 1896 enlarged its western market with the acquisition of the marketing properties of Standard of Kentucky.⁹

Bulk Stations and Tank-Wagon Delivery

Increasing concerns arose between Standard and its wholesalers and jobbers. Lack of aggressive marketing by wholesalers and jobbing houses lead to increased competition in their trade areas, and demands for greater discounts were resulting in shifting profits from Standard's refineries to its wholesaling units. Standard's Domestic Marketing Committee pushed for more direct control over marketing.

Having already located a strategic number of main stations, Standard extended its distribution and marketing territories with smaller substations, generally called "bulk plants" or "bulk stations." A pioneer in this distribution system, Standard entered into jobbing, distribution of smaller units direct from railroad tank car to retailer, eliminating the functions of middlemen and maintaining the profits that had accrued to the jobber. In large cities, however, Standard operated retail operations under names such as the Fidelity Oil Company, its Omaha retail supplier.

Bulk stations varied in size, but included tanks that held large quantities of bulk petroleum and a storehouse for barrels, other products, office, and vehicles. Stations were built near rail lines or sidings, most often on right-of-way leased from railroad companies. Customers were served by tank wagons. Kerosene was the most important product. Gasoline or naphtha, and lubricating oils ranked behind kerosene in order of sales. Through this system of bulk stations and tank wagons, Standard Oil established an extensive system of bulk distribution for its petroleum products. Competitors largely continued to distribute by barrels.

The development of this network of bulk stations was ambitious and expensive to introduce, particularly in rural markets where economies per unit depended on a volume of sales. In particular, rural areas represented a comparatively sparse market restricted by the range that a horse- or mule-driven tank wagon could cover in a day's time on poor systems of roads.

⁹ Giddens

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Standard of Indiana developed the most extensive system of bulk plants of the companies held by the Standard Oil Company. As such, Standard of Indiana held a dominant position over all competitors in its marketing territory. Between 1900 and 1911 its territory held about 88 per cent of the kerosene and gasoline business.¹⁰ In 1900 there were 33 bulk stations in Nebraska. By comparison, Standard had one major competitor in the state, Scofield, Shurmer & Teagle, who operated one distribution facility located in Omaha.¹¹ Between 1906 and 1909, the number of Standard's bulk stations in Nebraska rose to 312; ninety-five percent of the Nebraska's bulk stations were built during this period.¹²

Rural Delivery to Farmers

Standard's system of bulk stations and tank-wagon delivery is generally recognized as the most substantial marketing effort of its kind, penetrating the rural markets that the company served. However, another significant move by the company was direct marketing to farmers by tank-wagon delivery, inaugurated by Standard of Indiana between 1905 and 1910. By direct marketing, sales from the tank wagon were at the same price regardless of whether to retailer or consumer. Prices were lower and the volume of business was increased. Local drivers built substantial good will for the company due to their reputation for service and personal relations with rural customers. Apart from mail delivery by "rural free delivery" (RFD), this system was the most impressive example of service to the rural customer.¹³

Products and Product Development

Standard Oil was a pioneer in developing techniques and methods applied to the refining and manufacturing of petroleum products. The company gave emphasis to improving both the yield of crude oil and quality of its products. And its products were extensively marketed for home, industry, and farm under trade names held by the company.

Kerosene remained the most important product until about 1910, used primarily for illumination and heating. "Perfection Kerosene Oil" was the highest grade and the most recognized trade name. To complement its sale of kerosene, the company entered into agreements and even loaned capital to several manufacturers to produce lanterns, lamps, cookstoves, and heaters specifically marketed to give the highest results from its kerosene. "Rayo" lamps and lanterns, and "Perfection" cookstoves and heaters were two trade names extensively marketed and particularly successful in agricultural areas where fuel was expensive to obtain and gas or electricity was not available.¹⁴

¹⁰ Giddens, page 83.

¹¹ State of Nebraska v. Standard Oil Company of Indiana, 61 Nebr., 28, No. 11,074, Filed December 5, 1900. Deposition of L.J. Drake taken September 10, 1900. Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹² Rettinger v. Pierpont et al, Nebraska Supreme Court, 15 N.W. 2d 393, Nos. 31559, 31560, 31561, Filed July 28, 1944. As published in Reports of Cases Decided in the Nebraska Supreme Court, September Term, 1944, and January Terms, 1944 and 1945. Lincoln: Claflin Printing Company, Volume CXLV, hereafter cited as Nebraska Reports. This source provides a substantial background source to the operations of Standard Oil of Nebraska, events leading to the sale of the company in 1939, and a complete text of legal findings by the Nebraska Supreme Court and its ruling following a challenge to the sale of the company. Nebraska Reports, page 166.

¹³ Giddens, pages 73-76.

¹⁴ Giddens, pages 51-52.

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Second in volume was gasoline, another product that resulted from the distillation of crude oil. Gasoline was first seen only as a byproduct of the most important product, kerosene. Some crude oil yielded as much as 20% gasoline, but there was little demand for the product.¹⁵ As production of kerosene increased, so did the byproduct of gasoline. Some uses were found by dealers in paint and varnishes, as a cleaning product, for street lighting, and in homes and hotels that had plants to convert gasoline into a gas.¹⁶ As stationary engines came into general use by grain elevators, manufacturers, and farmers, another market was developed. Standard began to market gasoline for use in cookstoves, "stove gasoline." Its "Red Crown" brand of "deodorized" stove gasoline became a trade name equated with quality.

Another important group of products for industry, home, and farm were lubricating oils and greases. "Mica" axle grease and "Granite Harvester Oil" were two products of an extensive line that also included floor dressings, harness oil, liniments, medicinal oil, candles, and canning wax. With the "Good Roads" movement came markets for road oil or "asphaltum," a byproduct recovered from the refining process.

Dissolution, 1906-1911

Growing public sentiment was being brought against the Standard Oil "octopus" in business, political, and press circles. The Standard Oil combination through its affiliated corporations controlled between 80 to 90 percent of the nation's petroleum industry. In November of 1906, charges were filed naming the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Rockefeller and his associates, and affiliated corporations and partnerships as defendants to charges of violating the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

Following a District Court ruling appealed to the United State Supreme Court, a 1911 opinion found the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) constituted a monopoly under the Sherman Antitrust Act, ordered to be restrained from its unfair trade practices, and dissolved within six months. The dissolution involved Standard Oil of New Jersey and 33 corporations of the Standard Oil combination.¹⁷

Within the six months ordered by the Supreme Court, ownership of stock in the New Jersey holding company was divided on the basis of fractional shares in Standard of New Jersey and the 33 companies. Management from the company's prominent business address at 26 Broadway in New York City was reassigned to the independent companies, which were hastily reorganized. Eleven companies were assigned marketing territories nationally: Standard Oil of New York, Atlantic Refining, Standard Oil (New Jersey), Standard Oil (Ohio), Standard Oil (Kentucky), Standard Oil (Indiana), Standard Oil of Louisiana, Waters-Pierce Oil Company, Continental Oil, Standard Oil (California), and Standard Oil (Nebraska).¹⁸ Although independent in

¹⁵ Giddens, page 34.

¹⁶ Dedmon, Emmett, Challenge and Response: A Modern History of Standard Oil Company (Indiana). Chicago: The Mobium Press, 1984, page 8.

¹⁷ Standard Company of New Jersey (et al) v The United States, United States Supreme Court, 221 U.S. 1 (1911). For a complete text of the decision, see United States Reports: Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court at October Term, 1910. New York: The Banks Law Publishing Company, 1911, Volume 221.

¹⁸ Giddens, "Marketing Territories of Standard Oil Units in the United States," map facing page 458.

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their operations, the companies for the most part retained their relative positions as leaders in their respective fields. After dissolution, the companies were often referred to as the "Standard Oil group."

Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

In Nebraska, growing sentiment against the Standard Oil combination resulted in the 1906 incorporation of the Standard Oil Company in Nebraska. By circumstances of its incorporation and the ruling of the United States Supreme Court in 1911, Standard Oil of Nebraska became an independent company assigned to marketing operations within the state.

Sentiment against big business had long been expressed in Nebraska. In a highly agricultural state dominated by farmers and small business, distrust of big business and monopoly - mostly railroads charged with high freight rates and low commodity prices received by farmers - arose noticeably in the 1880s within the Democratic and an Anti-Monopoly party. The election of 1896, rallied by Nebraska son and Democratic nominee for president, William Jennings Bryan, led to the first time in history when Republicans lost all the state offices. With a Democratic-Populist majority in both houses and executive branch, these fusion parties joined in the 1897 legislature to pass sweeping reform measures, including legislation known as the "Anti-Trust Law."¹⁹

Unsuccessful litigation under the Anti-Trust law was brought against Standard Oil by Nebraska's Attorney General in Nebraska Supreme Court actions of 1900 and 1901. A major case was begun in neighboring Kansas in 1904 and 1905. And a donation of funds by John D. Rockefeller to build the Temple Building by the Nebraska State University further aroused the public, politicians, and press. The Kansas situation and the Rockefeller donation led to a 1905 heated resolution by the Nebraska House of Representatives.

By November of 1906, Standard was confronted by at least twenty-one cases in eleven states.²⁰ These events likely set the stage to motivate Standard Oil to organize in Nebraska under a corporate charter. In June of 1906 the Standard Oil Company filed for incorporation in Nebraska, within days of a formal announcement that the United States Attorney General would begin proceedings to prosecute the oil giant.²¹ The Standard Oil Company was incorporated in Nebraska with capital stock of \$1,000,000 authorized, its place of business as Omaha, and operations that were limited to the distribution and marketing of petroleum products.²² Although chartered under the name Standard Oil Company, the company name was most commonly referred to as Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) to identify it from the other Standard namesakes. With its incorporation, the marketing facilities of Standard Oil of Indiana were transferred to the Nebraska company. The Nebraska operation, however, remained closely allied to the Standard Oil Company of Indiana for its supplies of refined

¹⁹ Compiled Statutes of Nebraska, 1899, Chapter 91a, Secs. 1-14.

²⁰ Hidy, see Table 52, page 683.

²¹ Omaha Daily Bee, June 23, 1906, page 1:2.

²² Standard Oil Company, Articles of Incorporation, Book 8, page 382, filed June 23, 1906. RG002 Secretary of State, SG9 Corporation Records, S2 Articles of Incorporation, Nebraska State Historical Society.

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or bulk products. And the company was held under the Standard Oil of New Jersey combination and supervised by overall company management from 26 Broadway in New York City.²³

Since most financial data was not released, little is available about the company's financial position after its incorporation. In 1906 the company was capitalized at \$600,000. Legal investigations that year indicated a profit of \$79,181 and the book value of the company at \$687,615.²⁴ The value of the company probably increased substantially by 1911, when the decree of the United States Supreme Court ordered the dissolution.

Of the \$600,000 of capital stock in Standard Oil Company (Nebraska), \$599,500 was owned by Standard of New Jersey.²⁵ Under the redistribution of shares, the holders of one share of New Jersey stock received a fractional share of 5,995/983,383 in Standard of Nebraska.²⁶ The fractional shares were prepared for release on December 1 and the formalities of the dissolution were made on December 8, 1911 "without a minute's cessation of office routine" at its headquarters in the Brandeis Building in Omaha. Its incoming president and general manager, C.L. Alleman, assured that "(t)his company is now absolutely independent in ownership and management of any other Standard Oil company." Immediately before this appointment, Alleman served as vice president and general manager of the Nebraska operations. The outgoing president, W.B. Cutler, had served from Standard Oil headquarters in New York City.²⁷

The Automobile Arrives in Nebraska

As early as 1900, privately owned and commercially manufactured automobiles began to appear on the streets of Nebraska towns; novelties that warranted some attention when first witnessed. The earliest indication of the number of automobiles that had arrived in the state was in 1905, the first year registration with the Nebraska Secretary of State was required. For the partial year ending in 1905, 571 motor vehicles were recorded.²⁸ By 1911 the number of automobile registrations in the state rose to 18,405.²⁹

With the increase of automobile sales and ownership, markets were becoming apparent from the sale of gasoline and oil products to serve the automobile. By 1910 and 1911, the sale of gasoline nationally had exceeded kerosene, which had long been the mainstay of the petroleum industry. In the years that followed, gasoline and other products for automobiles overcame all aspects of petroleum marketing.

Gasoline, once recognized only as a byproduct of the refining of kerosene and difficult to market, soon overtook the petroleum market. Statistics for 1910 indicate that the sale of gasoline in Nebraska reached 198,839 barrels;

²³ Omaha World-Herald (Morning Edition), December 9, 1911, page 10:2-5.

²⁴ Wall Street Journal (Morning/Eastern Edition), November 21, 1911, page 7:2.

²⁵ Standard Oil Company v. United States, 221 U.S. 1 (1911).

²⁶ Wall Street Journal (Morning/Eastern Edition), November 16, 1911, page 7:2.

²⁷ Omaha Daily Bee, December 9, 1911, page 14:5-6.

²⁸ Motor Vehicle Registration, Volume A, June 14, 1905 to June 24, 1907. Microfilm, RG002 Secretary of State, Nebraska State Historical Society.

²⁹ Warne, Clinton, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska." Nebraska History, 37(September 1956), Appendix I, page 235.

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kerosene sales reached 162,912 barrels.³⁰ Unlike kerosene, the highly flammable liquid was volatile enough to readily form a gas, which was required to produce power and economy when used in the internal combustion engine. With the arrival of the automobile "stove gasoline," the product previously marketed for use in vapor or gasoline stoves, became the product first recommended to motorists. One company representative of Standard Oil claimed it to be "the best all round product to use in a gasoline motor, and also for getting a flame in a steam automobile."³¹ Of the products marketed by the Standard Oil Company was its "Red Crown Brand." The trade name "Red Crown" became synonymous with the Standard Oil Company.

When automobiles were still uncommon, gasoline could be purchased directly from a bulk station or delivered by tank wagon to the home equipped with a storage tank. Soon, businesses recognized that the sale of gasoline and oil products could be a lucrative sideline, especially by grocers, general merchants, or hardware retailers where sales supplemented their main line of goods or services. A storage tank at the back of the store or in a shack behind the business yielded profits with a relatively small investment. The idea was also popular to the bulk dealer, since he now had a retail outlet to supply and was no longer inconvenienced by serving individual customers, who burdened his business operation with small sales of gasoline.

The automobile would soon come to dominate all aspects of American lifestyles. And the petroleum industry responded to the growing market of products and services that paralleled that of the automobile.

ENTERING the AGE of the AUTOMOBILE: The Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an Independent Company (1911-1918)

Its first decade, punctuated by the World War, marked a period of realignment and resurgence for Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an independent company. While the company retained its position as the preeminent marketer of petroleum products in the state, it was also poised to assume a rapidly developing market that paralleled the phenomenal growth in sale and ownership of automobiles. Standard Oil of Nebraska was in a position to quickly respond with new retail operations to serve the automobile. The company was well capitalized and held substantial assets, its distribution system of bulk stations was in place, and its products were well recognized and positioned in the market.

Following the dissolution, many of the now-independent Standard Oil group of companies were faced with the challenge to realign their operations assigned by the Supreme Court, but without the "machine" that once served to orchestrate the functions of production, refining, and marketing as an integrated whole. For example, Standard Oil of Indiana retained three large refineries and a large marketing territory that included some nine states, but without substantial crude oil supplies, pipelines, or tank cars.³² Perhaps more so than its larger "siblings," Standard Oil of Nebraska was poised to overcome the dissolution. It was assigned to distribution

³⁰ Hidy. See Table 42, pages 474-475, for comparative statistics for 1906 and 1910.

³¹ "A Talk on Gasoline" by R.H. McNall (1902). Reprinted in *Motoring in America: The Early Years*, edited by Frank Oppel. Secaucus, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1989, pages 340.

³² Giddens, pages 130-139.

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and marketing within a limited territory and readily able to serve that market with its well-established system of bulk stations. With little production or refining capacity in the state, the company could forego the challenges of reintegration. And its supply of products was readily assured by Standard Oil of Indiana, which had an outlet in a market it was already supplying.

Standard Oil of Nebraska emerged from the dissolution with sound financial assets. In 1912, the year following dissolution, the company distributed a cash dividend of 20 percent and a 33 1/3 percent stock dividend. The following year, a 30 percent cash dividend was distributed and a 20 percent stock dividend.³³ The company was now fully capitalized at \$1,000,000.

From a marketing standpoint, some half-dozen companies of the Standard Oil group maintained the rights to market under the "Standard" name. The companies also shared the rights to many trade names of well-established products. Although negative perceptions to the former Standard Oil monopoly still lingered, the name itself equated to petroleum, quality products, and substantial good will held by local dealers and tank-wagon drivers who supplied Standard products.

The "Age of the Automobile" Arrives

With both irony and coincidence, the breakup of the Standard Oil combination occurred at a time when the sale and ownership of the automobile became substantial. In 1912, Nebraska was reported to rank first among states nationally in per capita ownership of automobiles with one vehicle registered for every forty-five people, or one in ten families who owned an automobile.³⁴ One newspaper boasted in that same year, "If all the automobiles registered at the secretary of state's office were formed into one continuous line, they would make a parade seventy-five miles long..."³⁵ Between 1911 and 1917 automobile ownership increased dramatically from 18,405 automobiles registered in 1911 to 148,101 in 1917, an average of 40 percent a year.³⁶ By 1918, Nebraska's per capita ownership reached one automobile for every 6.7 persons.³⁷ Nebraska's ratio of automobile ownership consistently ranked among the highest nation throughout the decade, probably due to the popularity of the automobile to Nebraska farmers, and the relative prosperity experience in crop prices and land values.

And the increased mobility afforded by the automobile focused local efforts to encourage "Good Roads" and by booster organizations that began to promote cross-country routes. This is reflected in the organization of three regional roads through Nebraska in 1911: the Omaha-Denver Transcontinental Route, the Meridian Road Association, and the Platte Valley Transcontinental Route, the latter becoming the route of the transcontinental

³³ National Petroleum News, April 13, 1921, page 101. This source was credited to a trade journal, Automotive Industries for January 13, 1921.

³⁴ Nebraska Signal (Geneva, Nebraska), September 26, 1912, page 5:1. The source of these statistics was attributed to a trade journal, The Automobile.

³⁵ York Republican, August 9, 1912, page 5:7.

³⁶ "8,887,572 Cars and Trucks Registered in U.S. During 1920," National Petroleum News, January 26, 1921, page 21. Warne, Clinton, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska," Nebraska History.

³⁷ Lincoln Daily Star, January 3, 1919, page 5:3.

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Lincoln Highway through Nebraska. By 1918, some 38 "automobile trails" were being promoted under descriptive names and marked with colorful signposts.³⁸

NEBRASKA AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATIONS (1911-1918)	
1911	18,405
1912	23,939
1913	25,617
1914	40,929
1915	59,140
1916	100,534
1917	148,101
1918	175,409

Source: Clinton Ware, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska," *Nebraska History*, 37(September 1956).

Gasoline: The Fuel that Drove the Age of the Automobile

*G is Garage, and the God, Gasoline,
Who Guides all his subjects, yet never is seen.*³⁹

When refined under simple distillation processes, gasoline is produced in limited quantities. This gasoline is referred to as "straight-run" gasoline. As the production of gasoline fell short of demand, Standard Oil of Indiana perfected and patented the process of "cracking" in 1913, a method of subjecting oil under high temperature and high pressure. William Burton and Dr. Robert Humphreys, working for Standard Oil of Indiana at its Whiting, Indiana refinery, revolutionized gasoline production under this process. The product was first marketed as "Motor Spirits," a trade name registered in Nebraska by Standard Oil of Indiana in 1914.⁴⁰ When the public became critical of the product and competitors capitalized on the perception that cracked gasoline was inferior, Standard of Indiana dropped the name. Cracked gasoline was mixed with straight-run gasoline and marketed under the well-established name, "Red Crown." Red Crown became the signature product for Standard Oil and for years the company held to this product as the single line of gasoline it offered.⁴¹

Along with its other refineries, Standard of Indiana established a cracking plant at Casper, Wyoming adjacent to the refinery of the Midwest Refining Company in 1913 and supplied Nebraska. Standard Oil Company (Kansas) also supplied Standard of Nebraska. Standard of Kansas had emerged from the Standard Oil

³⁸ "Map of Nebraska," The Kenyon Co. Map Makers, Des Moines Iowa, 1918.

³⁹ "The ABC of the Automobile" by Carrie Foote Weeks (1905). Reprinted in *Motoring in America: The Early Years*, edited by Frank Oppel. Secaucus, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1989, page 5.

⁴⁰ Nebraska Secretary of State, RG002: Subgroup 9 Corporate Division, Series 5 Trademarks and Trade Names, Trademark Register (1912-1933), Nebraska State Historical Society.

⁴¹ Giddens, pages 178-179, 286.

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combination as a refining company, obtaining its supply of crude oil from the "Mid-Continent" fields that had been developed in that state.⁴²

Standard Oil of Nebraska developed an extensive advertising system for its products, consisting of stock advertising copy that ran in local newspapers and magazines. Series of weekly advertisements appeared in both the larger daily newspapers and county weeklies, distributed both through direct sales or companies that offered "ready-print" or boilerplate news services. By 1914, Standard Oil of Nebraska began marketing to the automobile trade with its two preeminent products: "Red Crown" gasoline and "Polarine" motor oil. Like its well-established "Red Crown" brand, "Polarine" became a signature trade name of the company. The company's advertising served to fix the name of its products by copy that read "look for the sign" or "remember the sign," featuring the familiar Red Crown logo and Polarine script. Since the majority of its local outlets were independently operated garages, its advertisements simply read, "at any garage or supply store" or "at garages everywhere." By 1918, "Stanolind Gas-Engine Tractor Oil" and "Perfection" kerosene began to appear in advertisements for use in farm tractors, paralleling the emergence of mechanized agriculture.

The Filling Station

Gasoline consumption nationally increased to 85 percent of the market between 1909 to 1919.⁴³ As demand increased and convenience of sale by both motorist and retailer became apparent, retailing of gasoline evolved from small sideline operations distributed at the curbside to the retail outlet that became well known as the "gas station."

The firm of Gilbert & Barker, a manufacturing company of the Standard Oil group, began to produce gasoline and oil pumps for the home and garage of the most serious automobile owner. But the "curbside" pump, often called a "filling station," became the first and most convenient method to retail gasoline. Served by an underground storage tank connected to a pump positioned near the street, the curbside operation began to appear in front of automotive garages, hardware stores, and other general retail businesses. For the merchant, the business of gasoline sales became a lucrative sideline or complement to its other line of trade. For the motorist, drive-up service offered convenience. And a pump did away with measuring and funneling gasoline into the fuel tank.

With an extensive distribution network of bulk stations, Standard Oil of Nebraska was well positioned to supply these growing numbers of retail outlets with gasoline. Pumps were owned by merchants or supplied by the company, such as the Gilbert & Barker line offered by Standard of Indiana.

The proliferation of curbside filling stations, however, soon came to the attention of city officials, especially when located in the larger, more concentrated commercial districts where the operation posed a fire risk and overall nuisance to street traffic and pedestrians. But for garages and establishments at rural crossroads and in small towns, the curbside pump remained an important retail outlet for many years to come.

⁴² National Petroleum News, January 22, 1919, page 53.

⁴³ Jakle, John A. and Keith Sculle, The Gas Station in America. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994. Page 50.

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The off-street, drive-in "filling station" soon came on the scene. The filling station had little or no precedent to a commercial retail enterprise. It was unique to serving the automobile and the motoring public. Early examples included the utilitarian "shed," familiar to operations dealing in bulk commodities such as lumber and coal yards. Metal or common frame sheds were also familiar to petroleum operations at oil fields or bulk stations.⁴⁴ These modest operations served the motorist at a time when poor roads and open-air vehicles made the sale of gasoline a seasonal business. Automobiles were placed in storage during winter months and the sale of gasoline was a "fair weather" business.⁴⁵

The "first" gas station in the United States is disputed, but various types of retail stations appeared between 1907 and 1913. Standard Oil of California is said to have established such an operation in 1907 in Seattle.⁴⁶ Standard Oil of Indiana opened its first station in Minneapolis in 1912 and followed with one in Chicago the next year.⁴⁷ The gasoline station became a year-round operation as automobiles came into use in all seasons:

A few years ago the man who intended to purchase a car held onto his money until spring, for the cars of yesterday were not the finest winter vehicles obtainable.

Now all that is changed.

Every car offered by the modern factory is the sure conqueror of winter roads; all but the biggest of blizzard snows, which tie up the railroads as well as the pikes of the countryside...

With all the latest inventions of science that can be obtained at reasonable prices, the car can be made almost as warm and comfortable as a vestibuled train...

Now is the time to look over the entire 1915 models, and the time for the wise man to do his buying.

Make the car do its fair share of work in winter as well as in the summer time, when most any model of antique vintage is comfortable.⁴⁸

The gasoline station had indeed arrived. Between 1907 and 1920 the number of gas stations increased by an average of about 1,200 a year reaching about 15,000 nationally.⁴⁹

In Nebraska, the location of the "first" is likewise unclear. The 1914 Omaha city directory listed two retail outlets, the Omaha Auto Filling Company and the Missouri Valley Oil Company. That same year, Standard of Nebraska opened its first drive-in filling station. Given the dominance of Standard's position in Nebraska, if it was not the first to build a filling station, it was certainly the first to extensively market through filling stations.

Standard Oil of Nebraska entered into the retail marketing of gasoline through company-owned and company-operated filling stations, keeping with its practice of direct marketing to the customer, first initiated by tank-

⁴⁴ Jakle, John A. and Keith Sculle, page 137.

⁴⁵ Jakle, John A., "The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970," *Journal of American Culture*, (Fall 1978), page 524.

⁴⁶ Jakle, John A. and Keith Sculle, page 131.

⁴⁷ Giddens, page 175.

⁴⁸ *Omaha Sunday World-Herald*, October 11, 1914, page 11E: 1-2.

⁴⁹ Reiser, E.B., "Oil Marketing a Typically American Merchandising Enterprise," *National Petroleum News*, February 5, 1936, page 238.

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wagon delivery to farmers. The company's first filling station was planned for a Lincoln location at 12th and Q Streets in 1914, an inexpensive and utilitarian metal shed. According to a building permit, it was described as a 8 x 18 foot, galvanized iron building supported by 3-inch angle irons and bolted to a cement foundation, costing a modest \$250.⁵⁰ The company soon adopted a more attractive design for its early filling stations, described by the Norfolk, Nebraska newspaper as "bungalow-style."⁵¹ The design was built to plans by Omaha architect Everett S. Dodds for an Omaha station in June of 1914, consisting of a small brick "box" topped by a hipped roof and flared, overhanging eaves.⁵² Ranging from 8 to 16 feet square or rectangular, the buildings cost upwards of \$700 to \$850 to construct. In some cases the company paid premium prices for its new locations, such as in Norfolk where the local paper felt newsworthy to quote the price of Standard's new site at "\$100 per front foot...(for) forty-six front feet."⁵³ From 1914 to 1919, twenty-four stations were built by Standard Oil of Nebraska.⁵⁴ Most were probably located in larger cities over 5,000 in population where a sizeable local trade was assured and better-maintained city streets accommodated the year-round use of the automobile.

Increasingly, concentrations of automobile-related businesses began to locate on main thoroughfares that stretched outward from larger business centers, the "automobile row." In Norfolk's example, its new 1915 station even signaled the development of what became the town's most identifiable automobile row. Its location west of the business district's "main street" was at an intersection where boosters of the Meridian Road first routed that automobile trail. Standard's station was the first and for a time the only outlet approached by the motorist when entering town on the Meridian Road from the north or west. Soon, the block held a concentration of newly built businesses, including the Ford agency, battery shop, and service garages. By 1918, the block became so trafficked by automobiles that the business owners discussed the widening of the street with city officials:

With new businesses going into the block and the establishment there of an automobile row, the traffic there becomes congested frequently. Narrow escapes from accident are reported frequently and the movement of cars to and from the automobile garages makes the block increase the inconvenience.⁵⁵

Enter, The Independents...

Certainly, Standard of Nebraska like those of other companies of the Standard Oil group, entered the market after dissolution with the most substantial market share. By 1918, however, small independent jobbers also entered the market with petroleum products mostly sold either as unbranded or under their own private brands to the curbside operators. They became known as *independents*, originally a term to describe companies that were independent of the Standard Oil group.⁵⁶ By 1918 the independents were well enough established to

⁵⁰ Building Permit 5408, issued by the City of Lincoln, March 12, 1914. City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections.

⁵¹ Norfolk Daily News, April 20, 1915, page 7:4.

⁵² City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division. Plan dated June 1914 on microfilm.

⁵³ Norfolk Daily News, April 15, 1915, page 5:4.

⁵⁴ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 166.

⁵⁵ Norfolk Daily News, April 24, 1918, page 5:4.

⁵⁶ Liebs, Chester H., Main Street to Miracle Mile. Boston: A New York Graphic Society Book published by Little, Brown and Company, 1985. See footnote, page 232.

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informally band together. They expressed concerns about their survival among the major oil companies and intended to “(bring) men within the handgrasp of each other in business and convention,” as the group’s first secretary described. “All in all it is a clearing house for oil men for debatable questions as well as information.”⁵⁷

...and Entering a New Decade

At the close of its first eight years as an independent company, Standard of Nebraska had shown substantial growth, profits, and assets. In 1915, the company reported earnings of 56 per cent on its stock, and through 1918 paid dividends of 20 per cent annually.⁵⁸ Its total assets at the close of 1918 were \$5,344,933. In its first annual statement for 1919, the company showed net earnings of \$757,116 after taxes or 75.71 per cent a share on its \$1,000,000 in capital stock.⁵⁹ The company was financially in a position to expand in the next decade.

ENTERING THE AGE of PETROLEUM MARKETING: ‘Normalcy’ and the New Decade (1919-1929)

The oil business had every reason to be optimistic following America’s entry in the World War from 1917-1918 and the return of “normalcy.” The war saw the development of the tank, the use of the airplane, and the practical application of motor trucks. It was a “mechanized” war that spurred greater quests for crude oil. On the home front, Nebraska’s agricultural economy enjoyed a boom, although short lived. Road construction, advanced by state and federal participation under the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916, resumed after wartime interruptions in labor and materials. Industrial production that had been diverted during the war, including automobiles and components, was expected to retool for post-war production. Automobile dealers expressed optimism for automobile sales to rebound to pre-war levels despite delays in delivery:

If it hadn’t been clear before the war that gasoline was the industry’s primary product and would become even more important in the years ahead, the war drove the point home. No substantial oil company with growing ambitions could any longer afford to ignore gasoline...⁶⁰

One industry observer, a consulting engineer for a prominent manufacturer of oil tanks and pumps, estimated that at the close of 1919 the total number of drive-in filling stations had reached over 15,000 nationally:

It would appear at first thought that the field is fairly well covered; however, there are still great many excellent opportunities in the large cities and hundreds of the smaller places which are without a filling station of any type. It must be remembered and taken well into account that the field is continually broadening due to the ever-increasing number of passenger automobiles and trucks and the corresponding increase in the sale of gasoline and lubricating oils for their operation.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Sintek, Ellen L., *50 Year History of the Nebraska Petroleum Marketers*. Henderson, Nebraska: Service Press, 1970, page 6.

⁵⁸ *National Petroleum News*, January 22, 1919, page 53.

⁵⁹ *National Petroleum News*, April 7, 1920, page 109.

⁶⁰ “Money to be Made: The Oil Marketing Story,” *National Petroleum News*, February 1969, page 115.

⁶¹ Bean, F.W., “Planning a Drive-In Filling Station,” *National Petroleum News*, October 22, 1919, page 35. Bean was a consulting engineer with the Wayne Oil & Pump Co.

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The post-war year of 1919 marked the entry of Standard's greatest expansion of distribution and marketing facilities in Nebraska since establishment of its network of bulk stations and tank-wagon delivery under the former Standard Oil combination. The 1920s witnessed the construction of some 200 company-owned and company-operated filling stations, new distribution plants in Hastings and North Platte, and its six-story, "flagship" headquarters building in Omaha.

In January of 1919, the company authorized an increase its capital stock from its initial \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000.⁶² In its first financial statement for 1919, Standard Oil of Nebraska reported total assets of \$5,118,576.⁶³ The company's surplus increased from \$2,361,256 in 1918 to \$2,918,372 at the end of 1919.⁶⁴ Its existing investment in the company's network of bulk stations, large distribution facilities in Omaha and Lincoln, and a strong cash position all set the stage for the phenomenal growth of the company in the decade of the 1920s.

Leading the company was A.H. Richardson, who advanced to president in 1917 and served for the next twenty years. Alexander H. Richardson entered into employment with Standard Oil in 1897 and became treasurer and assistant secretary with Standard Oil of Nebraska when incorporated in 1906. As vice-president of Standard Oil of Nebraska from 1911 to 1917, Richardson gained experience in the field by locating and purchasing sites for new filling stations, representing the company to local officials when a new site was proposed. A.H. Richardson served until 1937, witnessing all but the last two years that the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) operated as an independent company.

Best representing the company's confidence was the construction of its new headquarters building. Company management was housed in the Brandeis Building in downtown Omaha for over a decade. When the J.L. Brandeis & Sons department store announced a major expansion into the upper floors of its building, the company's lease was terminated and in May of 1920 relocated to temporary offices at 1912 Farnam.⁶⁵ With the loss of its offices, the company planned a "flagship" building, the first permanent headquarters owned by the company. The following year, its architects began working on plans to construct a new six-story office building at 18th and Howard Streets.⁶⁶ The \$183,000 building was designed by John and Alan McDonald and opened in May of 1922.⁶⁷

By 1920, Standard of Nebraska was certainly in a financial situation to expand its marketing operations. Its cash position increased from \$164,400 at the end of 1919 to \$1,063,638 in 1920. Its surplus was \$3,780,466, over three and three-fourths times its outstanding capital stock of \$1,000,000. When the company announced a 200

⁶² Standard Oil Company, Amendment, Articles of Incorporation, Book 37, page 15, filed January 31, 1919. RG002 Secretary of State, SG9 Corporation Records, S2 Articles of Incorporation, Nebraska State Historical Society.

⁶³ National Petroleum News, April 7, 1920, page 109.

⁶⁴ National Petroleum News, April 13, 1920, page 101.

⁶⁵ Omaha Sunday World-Herald, May 9, 1920, page 5W:6. Omaha city directories.

⁶⁶ Omaha Sunday World-Herald, June 5, 1921, page 7W:2.

⁶⁷ Building Permit 1217, issued by the City of Omaha, filed August 17, 1921. See also Omaha Sunday World-Herald October 9, 1921, page 5W and May 7, 1922, page 8C.

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percent stock dividend at its meeting of the board of directors on April 7, 1921 it "cut the melon" and the amount of its outstanding stock was increased from \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000.⁶⁸

"Roads" Become "Highways"

Road construction under the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 resumed after wartime interruptions. Nebraska authorized a system of primary state highways in 1919, consisting of 88 designated sections of roads laid out by the state engineer. These numbered highways were to be improved with state and federal funding.⁶⁹ Federal aid was reauthorized by the Federal Highway Act of 1921, requiring states to concentrate Federal-aid funds on no more than 7 percent of all roads. Under the 1921 act, 5,619 miles were made eligible in Nebraska. The Nebraska Legislature authorized a tax on gasoline in 1925, allowing the state to match its allocation of Federal-aid and shift revenues for highway construction and maintenance from the property tax.

A federal system of numbered highways, interstate in character, was adopted in 1926. East-west highways were given even numbers and two national cross-country routes through Nebraska were designated, U.S. 20 and U.S. 30 (the route of the former Lincoln Highway). North-south highways were assigned odd numbers, U.S. 81 (the Meridian Highway) was designated as the nation's only continuous route from Canada to Mexico. Highway development, now lead by state and federal governments, largely supplanted the named "automobile trails" that had been promoted by local and regional boosters. A survey for the manufacturer of gasoline pumps in 1928 predicted that highways would open greater opportunities for business:

Such conditions call for the adoption of standard guide signs adapted to modern travel speeds at and preceding the intersections, for the concerted action between federal and state highway officials, municipalities, automobile associations, and map publishers. As such cooperation increases, oil companies who now acquire strategic locations should be able to establish profitable stations.⁷⁰

As local roads became highways that were long distance in character, more motorists took to the highways for both business and pleasure. Per capita automobile ownership by Nebraskans was reported to share the highest ranking nationally with Iowa in 1919.⁷¹ Registration of motor vehicles topped 200,000 in 1920 and increased at a steady rate until 1929, when 375,725 vehicles were registered.⁷²

Improved roads also meant trucking became economically and logistically viable. When the World War placed pressures on the railroad transportation, long distance transport by motor trucks on the home front supplemented rails, a trend that eventually overtook railroads as the major means of transportation of farm commodities, goods, and other freight. For example, between 1919 and 1928, the delivery of livestock to the Omaha market by motor trucks increased from 2.9% to 23.7%.⁷³

⁶⁸ National Petroleum News, April 13, 1921, page 101.

⁶⁹ Monthly Highway Report, May 1919. Lincoln: Nebraska Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage, page 15. See also Nebraska Revised Statutes, Title VII, Department of Public Works, Article II, State Highways, Section 1, "Highways Established."

⁷⁰ "Kind of Highway Determines Type of Successful Station," National Petroleum News, June 6, 1928, pages 29-30.

⁷¹ Columbus Telegram, March 19, 1920, Second Section, page 3:2.

⁷² Warne, Clinton, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska." Nebraska History, 37(September 1956), Appendix I, page 235.

⁷³ Nebraska Highways, May 1929, page 5.

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NEBRASKA AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATIONS (1919-1929)	
1919	198,000
1920	205,000
1921	219,781
1922	233,658
1923	259,382
1924	277,449
1925	301,716
1926	337,989
1927	342,357
1928	360,355
1929	375,725

Source: Clinton Ware, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska." *Nebraska History*, 37(September 1956)

Distribution

For the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska), its methods of distribution remained dominated by its network of bulk stations. Standard of Nebraska maintained 347 bulk stations in 1925.⁷⁴ The company did however respond to several new factors that entered into transportation and jobbing in the 1920s, delivery by motor tank-truck from its bulk stations and the construction of two new distribution plants to handle the increasing number and volume of products.

Standard Oil of Nebraska probably began converting to motorized tank trucks and "stake trucks" by 1914 when a building permit was issued for a garage at its Omaha distribution plant.⁷⁵ This early entry into motor transportation was probably limited to local deliveries. Tank trucks gradually replaced animal-driven tank wagons as rural roads were improved and reliable year-round service could be provided. Beginning in 1919, Standard of Nebraska placed six Nebraska-made "Patriot" trucks in service, advertised by their manufacturer "for use in a rural section, over country roads, where unusually hard service was required."⁷⁶ A year later, Patriot advertised that it had provided Standard with a fleet of 51 trucks. The Patriot Motor Company boasted that Standard Oil's experiment in using their trucks was under the "worst roads territory in Nebraska – a territory where other trucks have fallen down badly."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Omaha (Morning) *World-Herald*, April 30, 1925, "Progress Section," page 7. See advertisement, "A Few Facts about Standard Oil Company."

⁷⁵ Building Permit 1145, issued by the City of Omaha, filed October 21, 1914. *The (Omaha) Daily Record*, October 22, 1914.

⁷⁶ *National Petroleum News*, December 17, 1919, advertisement by the Hebb Motors Company, page 37.

⁷⁷ *National Petroleum News*, August 18, 1920, advertisement by the Patriot Motor Company, page 111.

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The company also entered into regional distribution of lubricating oils and greases. Because bulk lubricating oils were shipped by railroad tank cars and at volumes too large to distribute through bulk stations, the company operated distribution plants as jobbing locations where the product was barreled in smaller quantities. Since motor oil was not yet being pre-packaged in cans, barrels of oil were shipped from the company's distribution plants to its bulk stations then the retailer. At the retail outlet, a pump was mounted on the barrel or oil was dispensed from a "lubester," a device that was equipped with pumps and tanks holding different grades of oil. The product was then measured into glass bottles for filling the automobiles of customers.

Standard built two new branch offices and warehouse complexes in Hastings and North Platte. Bulk oil was received by rail, pumped into large storage tanks in the warehouse, and transferred to steel barrels for shipping. The barreling operation received barrels that were returned from the field and they were cleaned and repainted. When opened in 1921 the operation in Hastings was described as:

...a marvel of convenience. Here may be seen five tanks for lubricating oil, each with a capacity of 15,000 barrels. From the tank cars the oil runs into the warehouse, and is then pumped into the storage tanks. Each of the big tanks has compartments inside which the different oils are stored separately. There is a network of pipes, and by the operation of valves the oils may be pumped out of any tank into any desired compartment of another tank.⁷⁸

The Hastings plant delivered products to 90 stations in western and northern Nebraska.⁷⁹ About three years later a second distribution plant was located in North Platte, serving twenty-three counties in western Nebraska.⁸⁰ Along with its large plant and main office in Omaha, branch offices were now operated in Lincoln, Hastings, and North Platte.

Retail Marketing

With the distribution and sales of products for the automobile now substantially dominating the petroleum industry, the decade of the 1920s was a period of aggressive marketing both for the Standard Oil group of companies and an increasing number of competitors. And the drive-in filling station came to dominate all the elements of retail petroleum marketing. Nationwide, from 15,000 gas stations by 1920 the number increased at an average of 12,000 a year well into the next decade.⁸¹ With greater numbers of automobiles hitting the road and oil production spurred by the World War, the 1920s saw a burgeoning market grow to an eventual over-expansion of retail marketing facilities.

Standard Oil of Nebraska ambitiously expanded its retail operations through a building program of company-owned and company-operated filling stations. Starting with about twenty-four locations by 1919, by 1928 the company expanded to its highest peak in the number of company filling stations. By 1925 the company

⁷⁸ Hastings Tribune, March 11, 1921, page 3:5.

⁷⁹ Hastings Tribune.

⁸⁰ North Platte and Lincoln County, Nebraska – The Largest City in Western Nebraska, circular issued by the City of North Platte and Chamber of Commerce, [1929].

⁸¹ Reiser, E.B., "Oil Marketing a Typically American Merchandising Enterprise," National Petroleum News, February 5, 1936, page 238.

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advertised that it maintained 90 service stations in 56 Nebraska towns and supplied 1,500 garages.⁸² By 1930, the company operated stations in about 130 Nebraska towns.⁸³ Eventually, about 200 Standard Oil stations were built.

A new design for the company's filling stations appeared in 1920, designed by father-and-son architects John and Alan McDonald of Omaha who were commissioned to design the Standard Oil headquarters building at about the same time.⁸⁴ Using red brick with a distinctive wall cornice surrounding the office and canopy, the design and materials gave a modest, but "respectable" appearance resembling a small civic building.⁸⁵ Although modest in their design as compared to the elaborate stations that were being built by some companies in larger cities, there was a certain resemblance to banks, libraries, and city halls of the period. As quoted in a 1922 article of The American City magazine, an advocate of the "City Beautiful" movement:

The tumble-down shack had no place...it would behoove cities to include in their ordinances regulations for the erection of such buildings, limiting them to certain types, insisting that the design be in keeping with other buildings of the neighborhood."⁸⁶

As such, the company's new stations offered a compatible appearance within their setting, whether commercial or residential.

Location, Location, Location

Petroleum marketers increasingly applied more "scientific" methods to locating gasoline stations. One sales and distribution manager for an independent oil company applied the following factors in locating its stations:

1. Volume and direction of traffic.
2. Possibilities of permanent year-around customers in neighborhood of station.
3. Consuming power of area to be served including number of motor vehicles, etc.
4. Proximity and character of competition.⁸⁷

⁸² Omaha (Morning) World-Herald, April 30, 1925, "Progress Section," page 7. "Map of Marked Automobile Trails in Nebraska," distributed by Standard Oil Company (Nebraska), edition of 1924.

⁸³ "Map of Marked Automobile Trails in Nebraska," distributed by Standard Oil Company (Nebraska), edition of 1930.

⁸⁴ Newspaper advertisements illustrate this design by October 1920. Three building permits have identified examples of this design and/or the McDonald firm. The earliest is a location at 60th and Military, Omaha, dated 1921 (Building permit 1160 dated August 9, 1921, City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division, plans on microfilm: reel 14, drawing 45). Locations at 13th and South (1923) and 14th and High (1927), Lincoln, both identify the McDonald firm as architects (Building permit 11036 dated April 20, 1923 and building permit 16871 dated September 21, 1927, City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections).

⁸⁵ In his work on gas station forms, Daniel L. Vieyra describes the "respectable" in terms of grander, prestigious designs arising from the "City Beautiful" movement. The concept, however, might be applied to Standard's design, although taking on a much more modest appearance. (see Vieyra, Fill'er Up: An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co, Inc., 1979).

⁸⁶ As quoted in Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile, pages 98-99.

⁸⁷ "Jobbing Company Follows Scientific System in Selecting Locations for Filling Stations," National Petroleum News (September 6, 1922) page 47.

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The same company employed a "clocker" to record the number of vehicles passing a potential location, counting cars, trucks, whether traffic was "transient" or local, and the direction of greatest traffic flow. Another index was the consuming power of the city or county, measured by automobile registrations.

Candidates for that company's locations included business districts, suburban or residential districts, and along major roads or at a point where major feeders converged. The business district was to be studied by:

...the consuming power of trucks used by business houses or other concerns in the immediate neighborhood. Another factor for a downtown station is whether the site would be an easy and attractive stop for the shopper or business man who drives in to the business district and parks his car regularly.⁸⁸

And for locations in suburban or residential districts:

...the possibilities of a large list of permanent customers is a valuable study. It includes a survey of the homes within a radius of several blocks to see how many automobiles there are in the neighborhood. It includes the character of the people in the community, or rather the amount of motoring they do in business and pleasure...the neighborhood filling station may be as much of an institution as the community grocery or drug store in the residence section...the filling station in the outlying district is not usually faced with some of its competitive conditions which the station in the congested part of the city often confronts.⁸⁹

In a series of articles by a consulting engineer for one tank and pump manufacturer, however, advocated sites in residential districts over business districts or heavily traveled highways:

The records of one company prove quite conclusively that the station located in a fairly well settled residence district where practically every house, for a radius of ten or twelve blocks from the station, owns a car and keeps such car in their own private garage and instead of a public garage, is a better paying station, as far as daily average sales is concerned than the station which is located in the heart of the business district on a heavily traveled highway or boulevard where practically all of the sales are of a transient nature. In other words, the station located where community purchases are certain is practically assured of success.⁹⁰

The opinion of that same engineer recommended corner lots for the location of gasoline stations:

Corner lots are always more desirable than inside lots. They are almost absolutely essential on boulevards and other places of congested traffic in order for cars to get in and out without danger of damage or an accident. Another strong point in their favor is that they are very seldom shut in from view and can be seen by approaching cars for several hundred feet.⁹¹

Standard of Nebraska no doubt applied similar principles in locating its stations. Locations were most often within or closely located near the central business district where less expensive or vacant lots were available, local trade was attracted, and where early highways zigzagged through towns to give highest exposure to local

⁸⁸ "Jobbing Company Follows Scientific System in Selecting Locations for Filling Stations," National Petroleum News.

⁸⁹ "Jobbing Company Follows Scientific System in Selecting Locations for Filling Stations," National Petroleum News.

⁹⁰ Bean, F.W., "Planning a Drive-In Filling Station," National Petroleum News (October 22, 1919) pages 36-37.

⁹¹ Bean, F.W., "Planning a Drive-In Filling Station," National Petroleum News, pages 36-37.

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commercial offerings. Of the fifty-six towns where stations were located by the mid-decade, forty-five were county seats. Thirty were located where populations ranged from 1,000-2,500.⁹² In the latter part of the decade, the number of stations in towns of less than 1,000 in population increased, in many cases where some of the newly designated state and federal highways were passing. In mid-sized and larger towns such as York and Norfolk, the automobile row became a desirable location.⁹³

In the major cities of Omaha and Lincoln, the company also located a number of stations within some of the commercial nodes or residential areas that were growing increasingly outward from central business districts. Omaha had twenty-three stations by 1925.⁹⁴ The number of stations in Omaha eventually exceeded thirty-six. These included the expanding areas that developed in the late nineteenth century on streetcar lines, as nearby towns were annexed, and as the new suburbs "leap-frogged" to the city's fringes and where its residents increasingly being served by the automobile.⁹⁵ Lincoln had nine stations in 1925.⁹⁶

In selecting a site for its stations, a company representative was sent to inspect prospective locations and obtain local permits, often negotiating the purchase in his name and transferring title to the company. The cost to build a station was about \$2,000. Probably in an effort to build good will when entering a new town, the company used local labor and materials, and employed a manager well known in the community. The company's uniform plans and specifications were probably easy for a local contractor to build from, with minimal supervision by architect or company representative during the course of construction. As an example of a new station being built in Pilger: "A local man will be picked to operate the station as that is the policy with the Standard people. They also employ local labor on construction and buy all materials locally."⁹⁷

Place...

Standard's "standard" design was composed of a masonry "box" that served as the office and, most often, a single attached canopy. The office was simply furnished with built-in cabinets to display and store a small line of products, a countertop, and a heating stove. A small single restroom was carved from the corner of the office, serving both station operator and customers. The canopy accommodated drive-in service and sheltered the pump, customer, and station attendant.⁹⁸ Mounted beneath the canopy was the gasoline pump, supplied by an underground tank. As other grades of gasoline were added to the product line, additional tanks and pumps

⁹² "Map of Marked Auto Trails in Nebraska," Fifth Edition [1925] issued by Standard Oil of Nebraska. Population is based on the 1920 census.

⁹³ Population (1920 Census) for York was 5,388 and Norfolk 8,634. Both cities had automobile rows, which were extensions of the main street and the local route of the Meridian Highway.

⁹⁴ City Directory for Omaha, 1925.

⁹⁵ Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation in Omaha, 1980. Pages 44-45, 58, 63. (History by Garneth O. Peterson, Omaha City Planning Department)

⁹⁶ City Directory for Lincoln, 1925.

⁹⁷ Pilger Herald, September 8, 1927, page 1:6.

⁹⁸ City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division. Plans on microfilm. See also Building Permit 1160, issued by the City of Omaha, dated August 9, 1921.

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were required and the cost of these improvements was probably considered carefully when the company decided to offer a new gasoline product.

The buildings were well placed to accommodate access and for visibility, almost exclusively on corner lots. Stations were often placed diagonally to the intersection, although in some cases where the size of the lot was larger, the building was placed at a right angle to one of the fronting streets. Lighting and signage contributed to additional exposure to the stations and their products. A row of sockets holding single light bulbs surrounded the cornice. As one new station was described: "It has been lighted up for several nights and sure does make a wonderful attraction for the town..."⁹⁹ A horizontal rooftop sign reading simply, "Standard Oil Co." and curb signs further identified the business or individual products. Building sites were improved with hard-surfaced driveways. Small areas were landscaped and lampposts added to an attractive appearance from the roadway.

...Product

Standard of Indiana aggressively marketed its two signature products for the automobile, Red Crown gasoline and Polarine motor oil. Red Crown was advertised as the best all-around gasoline, "one grade, one quality best by test." In its handbook for employees, attendants were instructed:

Don't say "Gasoline," always "Red Crown."

Don't say "Oil," always "Polarine."¹⁰⁰

As the automobile industry began to recommend more exacting specifications and as other oil companies promoted superior lines, Standard of Indiana responded by developing and introducing new products. Different grades of transmission and motor oils were introduced to meet the needs of better-engineered automobiles and seasonal weather conditions. Demand for a quality-grade motor oil to compete with the Pennsylvania grades resulted in Standard Oil of Indiana introducing "Iso-Vis" motor oil in 1926.¹⁰¹

And in a radical departure from its single offering of Red Crown gasoline, Standard of Indiana introduced a premium grade of gasoline in 1922, "Solite." The new introduction was soon overshadowed when General Motors introduced an additive containing tetraethyl lead, "Ethyl." The Indiana company was the first to contract for exclusive rights to market Ethyl in its eleven-state marketing territory in 1923. When it was found that Ethyl produced health problems to station attendants when added at the pump, Ethyl was withdrawn and reintroduced in 1926, this time by the Ethyl Corporation, now a partnership formed by General Motors and the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey). Competitors soon offered their own premium gasolines to capitalize on qualities of Ethyl.

Since Standard Oil of Indiana supplied the Nebraska company, most of the products marketed by Standard of Nebraska were those offered by the Indiana company, although there were some exceptions. With Pennsylvania-grade motor oils preferred by customers, Standard Oil of Nebraska offered "Gargoyle Mobiloil,"

⁹⁹ Tribune-Sentinal (Grant, Nebraska), September 8, 1927, page 4:3. Reporting on the new station built in Venango.

¹⁰⁰ "Information for Employees," Standard Oil Company (Indiana), [1922].

¹⁰¹ Giddens, pages 293-295.

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a product of the Vacuum Oil Company and a producer known for its high-quality lubricants. Gargoyle Mobiloil was sold alongside Polarine, the well-established product marketed by Standard of Indiana. And although Standard of Nebraska apparently deferred in the entry of Solite, it did recognize the potential market for Ethyl and introduced "Red Crown Ethyl" in 1927 through demonstration programs hosted for dealers and the press.¹⁰² Having shared the Red Crown and Polarine trade names, Standard of Nebraska filed trademarks for Red Crown, Red Crown Ethyl, and a new logo for its Polarine motor oil, now offered in special grades for different seasons and models of automobiles. "Consult the Chart" and the Nebraska-trademarked, "Use Correct Grade," were marketing phrases used for the Polarine products.¹⁰³

...Packaging

With the introduction of the new design for its gasoline stations in 1920, Standard's advertising copy very effectively integrated a drawing of its stations, promoting visual recognition of its outlets. The following year the company introduced its first edition of a Nebraska road map with an image of its filling station prominently featured on the cover. The "Map of Marked Automobile Trails," by Standard of Nebraska is considered among the earliest introduced by a member of the Standard Oil group.¹⁰⁴ The road map became the premiere marketing device for the petroleum industry. Rand McNally, the supplier of Standard's earliest road maps of Nebraska advertised, "Put Your Sign Post in His Pocket."¹⁰⁵

With Red Crown gasoline as the company's single gasoline product and signature trade name, the company often referred to its stations as "Red Crown Service Stations," although services were limited. Standard's gas stations offered air for tires, water for batteries and radiators, car washing, and a single inside restroom serving both the attendant and customer. The limited line of services also included tire repair, car washing, small mechanical jobs, and lubrication served by an outdoor grease pit.

But one service eventually became a major marketing device by the industry. Observers of the trade began to comment on values of public restrooms:

Now that tens of millions of our population are on the move every day in conveyances that heighten the calls of nature – and we might as well discuss this frankly in order to make a correct analysis of the oil industry's part in it – toilet facilities become imperative...

...The job of supplying comfort stations is by force of circumstances, falling to the oil industry. The industry has to have toilet facilities at its service stations for its employees. The public asks to use them. This use cannot be denied. The public finds these toilets not all that they should be and many times indeed, filthy. The public then condemns the oil industry. It is useless for the industry to argue that

¹⁰² Pierce County Call, October 13, 1927. Reporting on a program hosted by representatives of the Ethyl Corporation and Standard of Nebraska in Norfolk.

¹⁰³ Nebraska Secretary of State, RG002: Subgroup 9 Corporate Division, Series 5 Trademarks and Trade Names, Trademark Register (1912-1933), Nebraska State Historical Society. "Red Crown Gasoline," "Red Crown Ethyl," and Polarine "Use Correct Grade" were all entered as trademarks or trade names in 1927.

¹⁰⁴ Yorke, Douglas A., Jr. and John Margolies, Hitting the Road: The Art of the American Road Map. San Francisco: Chronicle Press, 1996, page 41-42.

¹⁰⁵ Jakle, John A. and Keith Sculle, page 59.

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these toilets are not intended for public use. The public will insist on using them. So the oil industry might as well meet the situation frankly and intelligently.¹⁰⁶

When marketers recognized that clean public restrooms were a service that enhanced sales and traffic volume, especially by women who were taking to the wheel and travelling in greater numbers, companies began to add an additional restroom designed with an outside entrance for "modesty." "Don't put the women's toilet right where all the station attendants will be standing at the door," commented the same industry observer.¹⁰⁷

Another writer, described as "a newspaper woman of Chicago who drives great distances without male escort," commented on the services most appreciated by the woman tourist:

The consensus was that at the top of the list of reasons for picking out a certain gasoline station was 'the one which has a modern, sanitary and clean rest room.' And wise indeed is the station which advertises this convenience. A woman will pass station after station until she sees one which has the sign of a modern restroom...

...If (a station operator has) a modern rest room it pays to advertise. But don't overstep yourself as did one man in Michigan whose sign read: 'Finest ladies rest room in the state. A rest room fit for a King.'¹⁰⁸

By 1927, Standard Oil of Nebraska began to provide ladies restrooms. The company's standard design was modified with the floor plan of the office integrating a ladies restroom, accessed by an outside entrance. An addition was added to its earlier stations to serve ladies, again with an outside entrance.

The Independents: "Business is Good, Thank You"

The company, however, could not be complacent in holding its substantial market share. The decade of the 1920s witnessed growing competition in jobbing, retail outlets, and pricing. The competition did not come entirely from the companies in the Standard Oil group, who for the first decade after independence hesitated to enter the markets of their former "siblings." Smaller independent companies had begun to enter the field in the decade following the breakup of the Standard Oil combination. These companies – the "independents" – first entered the Nebraska market through jobbers, who supplied the curbside retail outlets and individual entrepreneurs who began building local gas stations.

With a wide margin between tank-car prices (the price delivered to bulk stations) and tank-wagon (the price delivered to retailers) the number of jobbers increased. In 1920, the informal group of jobbers formally organized Nebraska Independent Oil Men's Association (NIOMA) with L.V. Nicholas as president and 37 charter members. At the time, the organization represented half of Nebraska's independent marketers and

¹⁰⁶ Platt, Warren C., Editor, "Industry Should Furnish Good Toilets and Make Public Pay for Them," National Petroleum News, September 12, 1928, page 85.

¹⁰⁷ Platt.

¹⁰⁸ Barrett, Beatrice, "What Gasoline Station Appeals Most to the Woman Tourist?" National Petroleum News, October 10, 1928, page 27.

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jobbers with a third of the remaining signifying their interest in joining.¹⁰⁹ L.L. Coryell assumed the presidency of NIOMA in 1923 and would become one of the most aggressive independent marketers in the next decade.

Several independents had also established their own retail outlets. Among several of the earliest were the Missouri Valley Oil Company, the Cudahy Refining Company, L.L. Coryell & Son of Auburn, and the L.V. Nicholas Oil Company of Omaha. L.V. Nicholas was perhaps the most innovative of the independent marketers. When the economy entered into a post-war slump, his slogan was "Business is good, thank you."¹¹⁰ Ironically, Nicholas' company struggled against a downturn in the oil jobbing business brought on by the collapse of the farm economy. He sold out to the White Eagle Oil & Refining Co. of Kansas City in 1922 and worked to bring together two national groups into the National Petroleum Marketers' Association as its president.

The decade of the 1920s also saw *branded* independents entering the market, establishing their own name recognition with brand-name products or stations. Branded stations were company-owned, jobber-owned, or dealer-owned outlets.¹¹¹ Several of the smaller, regional businesses that operated in Nebraska were the Manhattan Oil Company and the Monarch Manufacturing Company of Council Bluffs. Monarch marketed under the name "MonaMotor" and advertised through its subsidiary company, the radio station appropriately named "K-OIL." "Victory" gasoline was a branded product of the B&L Oil Company of Fairbury. And the owner of the Reinhardt Oil Company of David City used his local telephone number, "99," first as an easy number for customers of his tank service to remember, only to find that his branded "99" oils and gasoline were favorably received compared to nationally advertised brands.¹¹²

A number of companies had become integrated in production and refining, primarily in the rich oil fields of Texas, Wyoming, and the Mid-Continent of Kansas and Oklahoma. These independent companies became major competitors in the retail scene, marketing under branded outlets or branded products that became equated with individual companies. In the Midwest territory of Standard Oil of Indiana and Standard Oil of Nebraska, these included Sinclair, The Texas Company (Texaco brand), Phillips, Mid-Continent (D-X brand), Cities Service, White Eagle, the National Refining Company (En-Ar-Co brand), Pure Oil (Purol brand), and Roxana or Shell. And several of the Standard Oil group broke into the traditional markets of Nebraska Standard and its main supplier, Standard of Indiana: Vacuum Oil Company with its popular Mobiloil and the Mobilgas trade name, and the Continental Oil Company, which marketed Conoco gasoline.¹¹³

In the market territory of the Standard Company of Indiana, the independent jobbers and retail marketers made significant inroads. In 1920, 675 oil companies sold gasoline in the marketing territory of Standard of Indiana.

¹⁰⁹ National Petroleum News, December 1, 1920, page 36.

¹¹⁰ National Petroleum News, December 15, 1920, page 37.

¹¹¹ Jakle, John A. and Keith Sculle, page 52.

¹¹² McPherson, Ralph H., "Reinhardt's Phone Number is His Trademark," The Nebraska Merchant and Trade Review, January 1927, page 20.

¹¹³ Giddens, pages 304-305.

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That number jumped to 15,421 in 1929.¹¹⁴ From some 80 percent of the business in the territory of Standard of Indiana following the 1911 dissolution, the company's business had been reduced to about 34 percent of the business in 1928 as measured by gasoline sales.¹¹⁵ Still, that company continued to make money due to its extensive marketing system and large volume, and despite lower prices in gasoline precipitated by its competitors.

Pricing

The Standard Oil group of companies largely became the barometer for market prices that were set in the industry. When the margins between tank-car prices and tank-wagon prices were large and retail prices high, sales by independents were profitable. Seeing that price competition was destructive, Standard generally held to higher prices and avoided price competition.

But maintaining high prices, however, gained the attention of the public – and politicians. A U.S Senate committee and an investigation lead by the powerful Senator Robert M. LaFollette resulted in a scathing report in 1923 that charged the Standard Oil group with the control of prices. That same year, Governor W.H. McMaster of South Dakota challenged Standard Oil of Indiana by purchasing surplus or “distress” gasoline and opening a state-operated retail operation in Mitchell, selling gasoline at 16 cents a gallon compared to 26.6 cents at Standard's stations.¹¹⁶ The move precipitated attention across the border in Nebraska by Governor Charles W. Bryan, who threatened the same. Standard of Indiana conceded and reduced its price in South Dakota. On the heels of Indiana's move, Standard of Nebraska reduced its prices to 17 ¾ per gallon.¹¹⁷ Government-owned retail operations gained substantial momentum in Nebraska. Both the cities of Omaha and Lincoln opened municipal stations – commonly called “muny” stations- beginning in 1924.

In efforts to market products more extensively, competitors most often marketed their products through privately operated or leased outlets, avoiding the investment required to build company-owned gas stations. As early as 1922 in a major departure from its direct-marketing policy, both Standard of Indiana and Nebraska entered into the leasing of privately-owned service stations through several types of lease arrangements. Leases allowed Standard to enter smaller towns where the larger investment in building company-owned stations was prohibitive. Although statistics are not available to determine the extent of this practice by Standard of Nebraska, the move resulted in a substantial increase in the number outlets selling under the Standard name.

“Nebraska's Servant These Many Years”

When the National Petroleum Marketers' Association launched the first campaign by the independent oil industry in 1922, its logo was superimposed with a red eagle and Standard Oil's respected Red Crown was the target. L.V. Nicholas, the Association's president, pointed out that the American eagle represented everything

¹¹⁴ “Money to be Made: The Oil Marketing Story,” National Petroleum News, February 1969, pages 116-117.

¹¹⁵ “Dr. Wilson Tells How Competition Grew to Cut Standard's Share of Oil Market,” National Petroleum News, April 19, 1950, page 27.

¹¹⁶ Giddens, page 321.

¹¹⁷ Palisade (Nebraska) Times, August 17, 1923, page 1:4.

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opposed to monarchy and monopoly, "everything a crown does not stand for."¹¹⁸ A few years later, the Independent Oil Men of America introduced a marketing scheme for its own members to use as a recognizable gasoline product, "Red Hat." Its logo resembled the hat of Uncle Sam surrounded by a row of stars. The use of the Red Hat was obviously another jab at Standard's Red Crown brand. Standard always vigorously defended its trade name and trademark products; Red Hat was successfully challenged as an infringement to the trademark of the Standard Oil product.¹¹⁹

The devices used by Standard's competitors illustrated efforts to recall the trade practices of the former "Trust." The Standard Oil group of companies had always been perceived as working in concert, unable to shake the reputation of a monopoly. Following the scathing Senate report of 1923, Colonel Robert W. Stewart, head of the Standard Oil Company (Indiana) rebutted that although Standard was "the biggest frog in the puddle, we are not the puddle."¹²⁰ And contrary to the perception of Standard as a remote corporate giant, the independent dealers were seen as hometown businessmen, next-door neighbors, and local leaders in the community.

Probably as a reaction to these perceptions, Standard of Nebraska attempted to put a new face on the company as "A Nebraska Institution." The first in the series of advertisements was released in 1925 and headlined "Nebraska's Servant These Many Years:"

A Nebraska institution that has grown with Nebraska, understands her needs and serves them, this Company seeks to make it possible for all Nebraskans to buy standard quality petroleum products at uniformly fair prices in the smallest hamlet and in her large cities.¹²¹

The series attempted to establish a company position that could be identified with Nebraska and by Nebraskans.

Also, in an effort to increase the company's Nebraska profile, the following year Standard of Nebraska reduced the value of each share of stock from \$100 to \$25.¹²² Just two weeks prior, its stock had traded at \$230 on the New York Curb Market. Few stockholders in Nebraska held shares. The company's officers and directors purchased and redistributed 1,794 shares and at the reduced value of \$25 a share, intending that local people would buy stock and become customers and boosters of the company.¹²³

The decade ahead, however, would see the devastation of the stock market and pose a host of challenges that would eventually lead to the sale of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska). Perhaps a subtle omen was written into one of its "home-state" advertisements in 1925:

¹¹⁸ National Petroleum News, September 20, 1922, page 19.

¹¹⁹ Giddens, pages 326-328.

¹²⁰ Giddens, page 316.

¹²¹ Omaha (Morning) World-Herald, April 30, 1925, "Progress Section," page 7. The series of advertisements, based on incidents in Nebraska history, was reprinted as Leaves From the Book of Nebraska and published by Standard Oil Company of Nebraska.

¹²² Standard Oil Company, Amendment, Articles of Incorporation, Book 54, page 411, filed April 13, 1926. RG002 Secretary of State, SG9 Corporation Records, S2 Articles of Incorporation, Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹²³ Rettinger vs Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 167.

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Doing business in this state, directed, staffed and operated by Nebraska citizens, chartered under Nebraska laws and paying all wages and taxes in Nebraska, this company is a home institution. It shares the fat years and the lean with Nebraska...¹²⁴

ENTERING the LEAN YEARS: The Decline of the Standard Oil Company in Nebraska (1930-1939)

And the decade of the 1930s was certainly lean. With the stock market's "Crash of '29" the nation's business and industry ground to a near halt. The Great Depression had a major impact on all phases of the petroleum industry. Capital that had increasingly invested in the industry had resulted in over-expansion during the 1920s. Overproduction of crude oil, excessive refining capacity, and expansion of retail operations had reached the point of saturation. When demand fell and the margin of profit declined, the industry was forced into dramatic change.

In the midst of 1920s prosperity, agriculture had not fared well and combined with the arrival of the business Depression, the Nebraska economy was particularly struck. Between 1929 and 1933 in Nebraska, the number of wage earners dropped from 27,933 to 19,483, wages paid declined from \$36,648,000 to \$18,872,000 and retail sales, \$562,945,000 to \$247,575,000. Parity, the purchasing power of Nebraska farm products measured against a factor of 100, averaged only 87.22 during the 1920s, declined to 83 in 1930, 65 in 1931, and 54 in 1932.¹²⁵

NEBRASKA AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATIONS	
(1930-1939)	
1930	367,410
1931	356,068
1932	322,196
1933	336,437
1934	350,284
1935	347,311
1936	352,735
1937	351,184
1938	342,646
1939	344,278

Source: Clinton Ware, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska."
Nebraska History, 37(September 1956)

¹²⁴ Leaves From the Book of Nebraska. Standard Oil Company of Nebraska, [1925].

¹²⁵ Olson, James C., History of Nebraska. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955, pages 300-302.

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After years of consistent increases in the number of automobiles in the Nebraska, a record high of 375,725 motor vehicles was registered in 1929. The year 1930 saw the first decline in the number registered since the automobile had arrived in the state. The 1929 record would not be exceeded until the year of 1948.¹²⁶ Gas consumption reached a high in the reporting year of 1930/31 with 230,900,000 gallons, dropping 16.5 percent the following year to 192,725,000 gallons.¹²⁷

For Standard Oil of Nebraska, operated solely as a marketing company, the Depression hit on two fronts. Overproduction and excess refining capacity resulted in price decreases and declines in the company's margin of profit, turning its position from growth and profitability to a sequence of losses. On the marketing side, unemployment, the virtual collapse of the farm economy and its corresponding effects on farm mechanization, decreased consumer spending, and reduced sales of automobiles and tractors were direct effects of the business depression. Demand for petroleum products slowed and excessive competition entered an industry that was already over-saturated in production and marketing. But most ironic, the company's once-progressive system of distribution and marketing that it had built to its advantage now severely hindered Standard's ability to adapt to the difficult times.

Cut-throat Competition...

An estimated 90 percent of the refining facilities and 70 percent of the marketing facilities built in the 1920s were the result of overproduction and not demand. Excessive competition and price-cutting took over the market place, seeing the national average of retail gasoline prices drop from 17.9 cents in 1929 to 12.4 cents in 1933.¹²⁸ As one NIOMA jobber observed:

The entry of new people and new capital into the petroleum marketing business has been so rapid that the industry has been under a strain to assimilate them...The marketing business today is in much the same position as the producing business was some years ago; everybody in it would like to get out and everybody out would like to get in.¹²⁹

Some of the so-called independents grew to the point of becoming substantial competitors of companies in the Standard Oil group, earning the name, *majors*. By 1935, the Texas Company (Texaco) held 7.5 percent of the nation's market and Shell with 6.3%. Of the Standard Oil group, the Standard Oil Company of New York - now merged with Vacuum Oil as Socony-Vacuum - still held led with 8.7 percent of the market, followed by Standard of Indiana with 8.5 percent.¹³⁰

In the Midwest territory of Standard Oil of Indiana and Standard Oil of Nebraska, the majors included Phillips Petroleum, Skelly, Texaco, Shell, and Sinclair. Members of the Standard Oil group also entered the Mid-West

¹²⁶ Warne, Clinton, "The Acceptance of the Automobile in Nebraska." *Nebraska History*, 37(September 1956), Appendix I, page 235.

¹²⁷ Calculated by gasoline taxes collected and motor fuel rates reported in Nebraska. Gas tax collections are found in annual reports maintained by the Motor Fuels Division, Nebraska Department of Revenue.

¹²⁸ "Money to be Made: The Oil Marketing Story," *National Petroleum News*, February 1969, page 118.

¹²⁹ Sintek, Ellen L., *50 Year History of the Nebraska Petroleum Marketers*. Henderson, Nebraska: Service Press, 1970, page 16.

¹³⁰ "Money to be Made: The Oil Marketing Story."

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market as major competitors. The Continental Oil Company, now had merged with Marland under the "Conoco" name. Socony-Vacuum, which now had acquired White Eagle, marketed under the "Pegasus" trademark and its well-recognized Mobilgas and Mobiloil products. Even the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) contemplated a major expansion into a nationwide market as early as 1928, registering the trade name "Esso," a take-off of the abbreviation "S-O" for Standard Oil. In Nebraska, the Esso trade name was registered in 1929.¹³¹ Since the name conflicted with companies in the Standard Oil group marketing under the "Standard" name, action was later initiated by Standard Oil of Indiana. After lengthy litigation, the court determined that the name infringed on the company's rights; the Esso name was removed from Indiana's territory and, as such, never entered the Nebraska trade.

Just as some of the independents had outgrown their name and became majors, smaller private-brand or branded operators now inherited the title of independents. The Mid-Continent Petroleum Corporation began marketing 1927 with a program of branded merchandise. By 1936, the company distributed its Diamond and D-X products from a district office in Omaha.¹³² Rounding out the list, several others in the Standard of Nebraska territory were Deep Rock, Globe, Sovereign Service, and Champlin.

...and Cut-rates

Also entering the competitive mix were the price cutters or *price-cut* operations. Price, not service, was their competitive edge. Through direct marketing of unbranded products shipped direct from refineries, co-operative arrangements, and cut rate prices, these competitors operated on price and quantity.

Taking advance of direct marketing from refineries, lower transportation costs, and circumventing the bulk stations and jobbers were "trackside" operations. These operations pumped gasoline directly from railroad tank cars or trackside storage tanks into the customer's auto. Applying this same concept to motor transport, carriers purchased direct from the refinery, delivering to service stations, dealers, or in some cases directly to the customer from retail "terminals."

Another serious competitor in the Mid-West was the co-operative. The "co-op" capitalized on buying wholesale quantities at tank-car prices and passing the lower costs to the consumer. In states like Nebraska, cooperative buying or co-ops had special appeal with farmers for products such as tractor fuel, kerosene, and tires.

But by far, the most innovative and sometimes unique of price cutters were the *cut rate* operators. And Terry Carpenter, a Nebraska-based wholesaler, jobber, and retailer of Scotsbluff-Gering, was the most colorful. Carpenter was the owner of a large number of business operations, a political character selling oil products under his own "Senator" brand, and a personality nicknamed "Terrible Terry." Carpenter eventually operated 15 retail gasoline outlets in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado capitalizing on the "Terrible Terry" name, using

¹³¹ Nebraska Secretary of State, RG002: Subgroup 9 Corporate Division, Series 5 Trademarks and Trade Names, Trademark Register (1912-1933), Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹³² National Petroleum News, February 5, 1936. Advertisement for Mid-Continent Petroleum Corporation, page 449.

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the caricature of an angry-looking boxer. Carpenter even shipped Wyoming crude to his own refinery. In his own newspaper, the Daily Senator for 1937, he said: "If you want to save 5 or 6 cents a gallon on your purchases, you will patronize Terrytown Service Stations. If you want to pay the old Wall Street Gyps prices, you will trade elsewhere."¹³³

Another Nebraska-based cut-rate operator was L.L. Coryell & Son, who set up a large number of stations in the state. "We give less service, less advertising, and less in expensive service stations," Coryell advertised.¹³⁴ The House of Gurney, a seed and nursery business in Yankton, South Dakota aggressively entered into the gas and oil business by 1932 under lease arrangements with a large number of outlets in north central and northeast Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa. Gurney's had established a wide following with its mail-order seed and nursery business - especially with rural customers - and advertised its petroleum products over its company-owned radio station, WNAX, which had a large audience in the region. Marketing under the "WNAX Fair Price Plan" Gurney's guaranteed to sell gasoline to its vendors at Standard Oil's quotations, as published in the Chicago Journal of Commerce on the day of sale to its outlets. When one loyal customer recommended a variation of the WNAX call letters, Gurney's adopted the slogan, "Will-Not-Allow-Xtortion."¹³⁵ Like many of the price cutters that mixed nontaxable fuels to its gasoline, both Coryell and WNAX used a grain-alcohol blend in order to cut prices further.

Fighting the Competition

Just as "Terrible Terry" Carpenter used the image of a boxer to promote his cut-rate gasoline, the majors also entered the ring with their own "fighting" grade of low-price, or third grade gasoline. Throughout the 1930s, Standard of Nebraska followed its supplier, Standard of Indiana, by shifting its product lines to meet other competitive offerings and adding new products.

Among the third grade gasolines that gained popularity were those dyed with a blue color. Colored gasoline not only became a distinctive product for Standard but its competitors. The inexpensive grade of gasoline was popular, but many warned of its quality, its performance, and its detrimental effects on the automobile's engine. In one 1931 article, a Nebraska writer urged the unwary buyer of "the hokum of cheap gasoline:"

The imposing array of signs which greet the eye of the motorist, announcing gasoline at an assortment of cut prices, presents a problem that is far-reaching. To buy, or not to buy, is the question facing every motorist...

The motorist may well pause and wonder when he looks at the sign offering gasoline at a low figure, whether that sign means gasoline cheap or cheap gasoline. Perhaps occasionally, the gas behind the sign

¹³³ "Terrible Terry: Tribute to a Legend," Special Section, Scoffsbluff Star-Herald, March 28, 1978. "Telephone Directory," Platte Valley Telephone Corp., December 1934.

¹³⁴ National Petroleum News, February 5, 1936. Advertisement for L.L. Coryell & Son, page 138.

¹³⁵ "The Story of WNAX and WNAX 100% Pure Pennsylvania Motor Oil," A promotional booklet issued by The House of Gurney, Inc. [1932].

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is really good gas, but in the large number of cases the gasoline is cheap gasoline, often colored to hide the yellowness that betrays its short acquaintance with the refinery and a close association with sulfur.¹³⁶ Even the Nebraska Petroleum Marketers suggested at its annual meeting for 1931 that the organization take steps to prevent the sale of colored, low-quality gasoline. Opponents overcame the suggestion "on the ground that the handling of colored gasoline was an effective means to meet competition of cut-price dealers."¹³⁷

In 1931, Standard Oil of Indiana introduced "Stanolind Blue," a third-grade blue gasoline. Standard of Nebraska certainly intended to add the product when it entered a 1931 trademark, "Nebraska Blue," but probably deferred until the next year with its own third-grade offering of the Stanolind brand, "Reliance." Three grades of gasoline were now offered in Nebraska: Reliance, marketed as an economical white gasoline, Standard Red Crown, an improved high-octane grade of its long-established Red Crown brand, and Red Crown Ethyl.¹³⁸ The "Solite" name was reintroduced to Nebraska about 1935, now marketed as "Solite with Ethyl" and replacing Red Crown Ethyl.

When competition entering the market with motor oils packaged in refinery-sealed cans instead of motor oil sold in barrels and measured into glass bottles, Iso-Vis "D" in cans was added to Nebraska's product line. "Reliance Motor Oil" became Nebraska's trademark for the Indiana's lower grade "Stanolind" followed several years later with a proposed product, "Standard Penn," another reaction to customer preferences to Pennsylvania-grade motor oils.¹³⁹ However, like Standard of Indiana it conceded to the sale of the leading competitor's brand, "Quaker State," by 1938.¹⁴⁰ Other products offered by Standard Oil of Nebraska were tractor fuels marketed under the "Stanolind" trade name and furnace oil, used for heating.

Standard of Nebraska, however, failed to meet or was slow to follow local price-cutting in its local markets. In 1934 it adopted a policy of meeting price conditions, only to sustain its largest operating loss for that year. For the years 1935-38, the company received some relief from its supplier when Standard Oil of Indiana granted \$248,160.76 in rebates based on a showing of loss due to price conditions in Nebraska.¹⁴¹

The extreme competition had eroded the market share. In the greater Mid West market of Standard Oil of Indiana, competition for the share of gasoline sales reduced the market share of Standard of Indiana from about 28% in 1928 to less than 20% in 1940.¹⁴² Although statistics confirming the declining market share for

¹³⁶ "The Hokum of Cheap Gasoline," Nebraska's Own Magazine, (June-July 1931), page 26.

¹³⁷ "Colored Gas Main Topic at Oil Meet," The Nebraska Merchant (January 1932), page 35.

¹³⁸ Nebraska Secretary of State, RG002: Subgroup 9 Corporate Division, Series 5 Trademarks and Trade Names, Trademark Register (1912-1933), Nebraska State Historical Society. The trade name "Nebraska Blue" was registered in 1931, followed by "Standard Red Crown Gasoline" and "Reliance Gasoline" in 1932.

¹³⁹ Nebraska Secretary of State. The trade name "Reliance Motor Oil" was registered in 1932, followed by "Standard Penn" in 1935.

¹⁴⁰ Giddens, page 574.

¹⁴¹ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, pages 170, 173.

¹⁴² "Dr. Wilson Tells How Competition Grew to Cut Standard's Share of Oil Market," National Petroleum News, April 19, 1950, page 27.

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Standard Oil of Nebraska are not available, in 1940 the company's percent of total sales of gasoline to total consumption fell to a demoralizing 9 percent.¹⁴³

The Filling Station Becomes the Service Station

The rapid growth of the gasoline station is considered to be unparalleled in retail merchandising history. From an estimated 15,000 gasoline stations in 1920, the U.S Department of Commerce Census of American Business of 1933 calculated 170,404 gasoline stations in the United States. An additional 200,000 were estimated to carry gasoline as a sideline business.¹⁴⁴ The 1933 census of retail distribution showed that the gasoline station in the United States had grown to rank third in number among the leading "main street" businesses, followed only by restaurants and food stores.¹⁴⁵

From the same source, Nebraska now had 2,639 retail stations. With 336,437 motor vehicles registered in the state each gas station served only 127 vehicles, not calculating the equal or greater number of operations that carried gasoline as a sideline. Although gas consumption in Nebraska reached its lowest with 192,725,000 gallons in the reporting year of 1931/32, consumption gradually returned to highs reached in years previous.¹⁴⁶ But with the entry of so many competitors and retail outlets, all were competing for the same "gallonage."¹⁴⁷ For Standard Oil of Nebraska, two competitive fronts had to be overcome.

Place...

First, its ability to cut prices was limited since it depended on Standard Oil of Indiana as its source and had to follow the price established by its supplier. Since the company had no production or refining capacity, it had no ability to improve its margins. Responding with gallonage as a method to overcome narrow price margins, Standard of Nebraska like many of the majors, entered into a substantial number of lease arrangements with privately owned outlets and private operators.

Its leasing policies, first established in the 1920s, allowed Standard of Nebraska to enter a larger number of local markets without investment of building its own stations. The company also could reduce the number of its employees and pass on the risk of low price margins to local operators. The company probably did so under hesitation to relinquish control over quality of service and the sale of other products it supplied. Poor service reflected on the company and not necessarily the local operator. Local operators sometimes carried products not supplied by Standard, often based on customer preference or more favorable price points. And when their business operations could not make a profit, turnover and ill will resulted in bad publicity for the company,

¹⁴³ Giddens, page 582.

¹⁴⁴ Reiser, E.B., "Oil Marketing a Typically American Merchandising Enterprise," National Petroleum News, February 5, 1936, page 239.

¹⁴⁵ Platt, Warren C., "Competition Invited by the Nature of the Oil Business." National Petroleum News, February 5, 1936. See figure, bottom of pages 214-215.

¹⁴⁶ Report of Tax Commissioner, State of Nebraska. Tax reports, revenues and rates provided by the Nebraska Motor Fuels Division, Department of Revenue.

¹⁴⁷ "Gallonage" is a term used by the industry to measure sales by gallons, rather than price.

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especially in smaller towns. Local operators, who built a loyal clientele often went into business with a competitor and took customers with them.¹⁴⁸

In 1934, the company reported that it held 176 company-owned service stations and controlled another 152 under lease.¹⁴⁹ By the late 1930s Standard of Nebraska began leasing its company-owned stations to individual operators, another departure from a long-standing policy of direct marketing from the company to customer. In 1939, Standard of Nebraska operated only 27 of its company-owned stations and leased 173.¹⁵⁰

...Product

Second, was a practice that was becoming widely adopted in the industry to overcome decreasing profit margins on gasoline sales: entry into more profitable product lines and additional services. Although once discouraged by industry observers who noted, "Ever since oil men first began to stock their service stations with a line of automotive equipment there has been a large element in the industry to contend that the two businesses would not go well together."¹⁵¹ But the gasoline station began to enter into the retail merchandising of tires, batteries, and accessories (in the trade called "TBA"), expanded repair services, and more offerings to the traveling public. As such, the "filling" station evolved into a true "service" station, sometimes proudly called "super service stations" by their companies. Between 1929 and 1939, the increase in service stations of all companies in Nebraska was approximately 149 percent.¹⁵²

Several companies of the Standard Oil group were early to enter into retail merchandising of the TBA line. In 1929, Colonial Beacon and Standard Oil of New Jersey, Ohio, Kentucky, California, Indiana, and Nebraska organized the Atlas Supply Company as agent for automotive products sold nationwide under the brand name "Atlas." The first product to be marketed was Atlas tires in 1930, soon to follow by Atlas batteries, windshield wiper blades, lamp bulbs, and spark plugs. Other products carried at Standard stations included radiator cleaners, car polishes, and household oil.¹⁵³

...Packaging

But the entry into service stations called for extensive capital investments in new or remodeled outlets. Certain features of the older types of stations became obsolete because of changing marketing conditions. The retail merchandising of products called for appealing displays and floor space to show and store products. Adding automotive repair services required the replacement of the grease pit or outdoor hoist with service bays to allow indoor servicing of automobiles.

¹⁴⁸ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 170.

¹⁴⁹ National Petroleum News, July 17, 1935, page 11.

¹⁵⁰ National Petroleum News, August 2, 1939, page 1.

¹⁵¹ Halbert, Ward K., Staff Representative, "Automobile Equipment Thrown Out of Many Service Stations," National Petroleum News, October 11, 1922, page 73.

¹⁵² Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 170.

¹⁵³ Giddens, pages 448-450.

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For Standard Oil of Nebraska, the large number of stations it had built in the previous decade had become sorely outdated, unable to accommodate both traffic volumes and the entry into expanded product and service lines. At the time that the majority of its gas stations were built in the 1920s the standard design included a canopy, a single indoor toilet, and an outdoor pit for lubrication. The canopies allowed limited access due to their narrow lanes and one-way access. The addition of new service islands, which now required three pumps for the company's expanded line of gasoline, the narrow lanes and low clearance of the canopies made it difficult to serve trucks, larger vehicles, and drive-in access.¹⁵⁴

Because of the expense, Standard Oil of Nebraska did not enter into a large program of modernization except for a few stations.¹⁵⁵ In some cases, Standard Oil of Nebraska entered into the operations of a service station by simply building a single, detached service bay as an economical way to add repair services. Where more profitable locations warranted and more extensive remodeling was desirable, the company rebuilt its older stations by adding a service bay and a shop area to the existing building. Canopies were removed and borrowing from techniques used in retail merchandising, the main office was remodeled for more attractive display of products and storefronts were rebuilt with large display windows. Pilasters flanked the display windows and the main entrance. These designs featured a prominent "classical" pediment that capped the redesigned front. As part of the redesign, stations were whitewashed.

Where a large customer base warranted, some new service stations replaced an older and outdated station. One example that could earn the name of a super-service station was built in Lincoln at an estimated cost of \$2,500 when constructed in 1932. Identified as a Type "O" plan by Omaha architects John and Alan McDonald, the station used brick in its construction, sported a canopy that extended diagonally from the main office, and included three attached service bays.¹⁵⁶

Service, economy and quality of products, and local management developed into a marketing strategy. "Cheerful Stan," the Standard man, entered into Nebraska's advertising scheme by 1934, followed in 1936 by an aggressive promotion, the "World's Greatest Road Test." Standard Oil of Indiana was largely responsible for this promotion, but collaborated with Standard of Nebraska in the extensive year-long marketing plan.¹⁵⁷ To reinforce both the quality and economy of Standard products, customers were challenged to log their purchases, calculate mileage, and compete for prizes. A campaign was developed to accompany the test: newspaper advertising, billboards, a distinctive emblem that could be attached to motorists' license plates, point-of-purchase displays, and curb signs. The following year, Standard of Nebraska announced "what is believed to be the largest localized advertising campaign ever staged in Nebraska."¹⁵⁸ The results of the road test were accompanied by advertisements identifying the local Standard dealer.

¹⁵⁴ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 173.

¹⁵⁵ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 171.

¹⁵⁶ Building Permit 20837, dated October 10, 1932, City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections. City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections. Plans on file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁵⁷ Standard Oil Company, "Guide Book to Spring-Summer 1936 Advertising-Selling Program." Issued to Standard operators as a calendar of promotion events "as you plan and carry on your day-by-day selling in the coming months."

¹⁵⁸ Keith County News (Ogallala), May 27, 1937, page 1:7.

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The single word "Standard" replaced the name "Standard Oil Company," an emphasis on name recognition and not necessarily company ownership of its outlets.¹⁵⁹ No longer were the company's stations of its uniform and easily-recognized designs as more and more leased operations carried on business in a host of their own assortment of buildings. And with the traveling public moving at higher speeds, motorists were confronted with more and more companies competing for visibility. When seeking out their preferred products and services, the word "Standard" was immediately recognized. In 1934, Standard of Nebraska adopted a "ball-and-bar" shaped sign in red-white-blue colors and the single word, "Standard." This new look began to appear as large signs on tall poles in front of the company's outlets, and in advertising, promotion, and road maps urging travelers: "Watch for the Standard Sign."¹⁶⁰

Standard Oil gas stations were not only competing for visibility, but also changing traffic patterns brought about by highway development. And overall changes in transportation systems overcame the methods of distribution and marketing that had once made Standard Oil the dominant petroleum marketer in Nebraska.

Transportation Development

The 1930s saw changes in transportation systems entering the mix of petroleum retailing, jobbing, and wholesaling. Government relief programs gave injections into the development of highways and resulted in major improvements to Nebraska's highway system. Two emergency federal-aid acts were enacted in 1930 and 1932 aimed at putting the unemployed back to work and were followed by New Deal programs. Speed, safety, and efficiency became standards for highway development. These included the elimination of railroad grade crossings, more direct routes that eliminated the zigzag of rural section line roads and routes through towns, concrete and asphalt paving, and rerouting of traffic away from congested main street commercial areas or entire towns. But even where conditions afforded optimism for an industry tied to distribution and transport, travel, and consumption of petroleum products, Standard of Nebraska was ironically and adversely hit by changes brought by transportation development.

Many of the company-owned stations of Standard Oil of Nebraska were built in the 1920s with an eye to local markets and traffic patterns, located primarily within or near business districts. Highways began being rerouted through towns, sometimes bypassing entire communities and leaving Standard's older stations poorly located. Forty-eight stations were removed from main routes, resulting in twenty-five being closed by Standard Oil due to reduced sales.¹⁶¹ Due to the capital investment of relocating its stations, only a few followed with new locations in the higher traffic areas farther from the commercial centers or at the outskirts of town.

¹⁵⁹ Giddens, pages 548-551.

¹⁶⁰ Nebraska Secretary of State, RG002: Subgroup 9 Corporate Division, Series 5 Trademarks and Trade Names, Trademark File "Standard," Nebraska State Historical Society. In transition to Standard's new image, its "Highways of Nebraska" road map, Fourteenth Edition (1934) shows the image of the company's standard-design station, used since the company issued its first edition road map in 1921, alongside the "new" sign. Later editions gradually phased out the image of the "standard" station, replaced by the sign itself.

¹⁶¹ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 173.

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But by far, transportation development brought the most serious challenges to the distribution systems that once placed Standard Oil of Nebraska in a leading position as a marketer of petroleum products. Competitors adopted new and efficient methods of transporting and distributing petroleum products, while those of Standard Oil of Nebraska remained tied its extensive system of bulk stations served by railroad tank cars and located on right of way leased from railroad companies. The number of bulk stations in Nebraska reached 347 in 1925.¹⁶² That number remained high despite the company's conversion to local delivery by tank trucks, which probably factored into a reduction to 249 bulk stations by 1939.¹⁶³

The development of highways gave rise to long distance trucking, including motor transport of petroleum products. In the early 1930s truck transport began to spread, serviced by the refineries of the Mid-Continent fields of Kansas and Oklahoma, and marine and pipeline terminals.

The national trade journal, National Petroleum News, featured the striking transition to motor transport, stating "Nebraska may be the proving ground for long distance transportation in the middle west..."¹⁶⁴ By 1937, thirty-six percent of all gasoline entered Nebraska by truck transports operated by oil companies and independent transporters that hauled petroleum products as jobbers or contract carriers. Of the 852 importers of gasoline, eighty percent received truck shipments.¹⁶⁵ High freight rates charged by railroads and rail service that was based largely on the east-west main lines, both were factors in making truck transport economical and logistically efficient. The capacity of transport trucks ranged from 2,000-3,000 gallons, providing economical service to bulk stations or direct delivery to retailers, avoiding the jobbing function once held by bulk stations and tank-truck delivery. And retail terminals equipped with storage tanks and located on highways competed for price by selling direct from refiner to customer. The bulk of transport traffic into Nebraska followed two major north-south highways, U.S. Route 81 and U.S. 77. "Seldom is a mile traveled without meeting one transport, frequently three will be seen within a quarter mile," it was reported.¹⁶⁶

Standard Oil of Nebraska considered entering the field with a fleet of transports, but deferred due to expense of purchasing the transports and the cost of rebuilding its bulk stations to serve truck transports. Since most of its bulk stations were located on railroad property, the company was tied to railroad delivery and freight rates charged by the railroads. When railroads failed to adjust their rates, the gross margin on gasoline was reduced. Standard also feared losing its leases on land owned by railroad companies and occupied by its bulk stations if it reduced or eliminated its business with the railroads.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Omaha (Morning) World-Herald, April 30, 1925, "Progress Section," page 7. See advertisement, "A Few Facts about Standard Oil Company."

¹⁶³ Rettinger, Edgar H. Plaintiff et al v. Henry W, Pierpont and Morse Palmer et al, Nebraska Supreme Court, 15 N.W. 2d 393, Nos. 31559, 31560, 31561. Case file held by Nebraska State Historical Society. Hereafter cited as Rettinger v. Pierpont et al, Nebraska Supreme Court, 15 N.W. 2d 393. Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁶⁴ Barringer, E.L., "80% of Nebraska's Marketers Use Long Distance Trucking," National Petroleum News, June 30, 1937, page 34.

¹⁶⁵ Barringer.

¹⁶⁶ Barringer.

¹⁶⁷ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, 172-173.

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Competitors also entered into the construction of pipelines and transportation by barges. The building of pipelines to carry gasoline provided another efficient and economical method of transport. In 1930, Barnsdall decided to build a pipeline from Oklahoma to the north and was joined by the Continental Oil Company to form the Great Lakes Pipe Line Company. Pure Oil, Skelly, Mid-Continent, Phillips, the Texas Company, Sinclair, and Cities Service joined in ownership or operation by 1938. From the terminal in Des Moines, a line was run to Council Bluffs and Omaha. Champlin completed a gasoline pipeline from Enid, Oklahoma to Superior, Nebraska. Socony-Vacuum began oil shipments by barges on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, followed by the completion of a terminal at Omaha in 1939. Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Colorado, and Nebraska were being served by truck transports carrying gasoline from water and pipeline terminals. As the economies of pipeline transport entered the marketing territory of Standard Oil of Indiana, the directors approved the construction of a pipeline from its Sugar Creek refinery near Kansas City to Council Bluffs.¹⁶⁸

The Decline and Sale of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

Up to 1931, Standard Oil of Nebraska had been extremely successful; business had been good, and profits in cash and stock dividends high. But beginning in 1932, the company entered a series of yearly losses despite an average sales volume of \$5,000,000 and an advertising budget of about \$100,000 a year.¹⁶⁹ The market prices of its stock on the New York Curb Exchange dropped as low as 5 ½ on its shares of \$25 par value.¹⁷⁰ In 1934, Standard Oil of Nebraska filed its financial statement to the Securities and Exchange Commission to register 185,904 shares on the New York Curb Exchange. It reported an operating loss of \$451,887 on a sales volume of about \$6,000,000.¹⁷¹

Standard Oil Company (NE)		
Losses 1932-1938		
	Net Loss	To Surplus**
1932	\$270,234.75	\$152,355.14
1933	349,850.63	285,233.12
1934	641,624.43	594,849.86
1935	81,112.33	41,607.67
1936	10,786.88*	34,390.07*
1937	133,206.28	96,125.42
1938	136,939.04	111,731.25

Source: Rettinger v. Pierpont,
15 N.W. 2d 393

*Profit

**Losses were transferred to earned surplus

¹⁶⁸ Giddens, page 467,543, 585-586.

¹⁶⁹ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 173.

¹⁷⁰ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 186.

¹⁷¹ National Petroleum News, July 17, 1935, page 11.

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That same year the possibility of the company's merger with another integrated company is perhaps evidenced by an amendment to the company's articles of incorporation. At a meeting of stockholders on January 8, 1934 the company expanded the definition of its business from marketing to include the production of crude oil, manufacturing and refining of products from crude oil, transporting, and the laying and operation of pipelines.¹⁷²

Upon the retirement of A.H. Richardson as president in 1937, the company's condition fell to his successor Henry W. Pierpont. Arguably, the company was far from insolvent. At the end of 1938, the company held \$346,000 in cash, investments of \$808,000 in government bonds and other stock, accounts receivable of \$237,000, and an inventory and other current assets amounting to \$2,115,000. It had absorbed a significant amount of its annual losses from its earned surplus (see table above).¹⁷³ The company's officers had adopted a policy of retiring stock by purchasing it on the market for much less than book value and between 1936 and 1938 purchased some 24,500 shares at \$331,000 thus adding to its assets.¹⁷⁴ The company's real estate, buildings, and equipment after depreciation were valued at \$2,784,000 at the end of 1938.¹⁷⁵ Real estate holdings included 207 service stations in 128 towns, warehouses and distribution facilities in Omaha, Lincoln, Hastings, and North Platte, and 15 bulk stations.¹⁷⁶ An additional 249 bulk stations were located on leased land, Standard of Nebraska owning only the improvements. Finally, the company's trade name and that of its products held considerable value in terms of good will and market recognition.

The company's losses over this period of years did, however, contribute to restlessness on the part of the stockholders and led to the desire of disposing of the company's assets or merge with some integrated company that had producing and refining capacity.¹⁷⁷ The company's business practices of using railroads when competitors were using pipelines and truck transport was raised at its annual meeting of stockholders in the spring of 1938.¹⁷⁸ Standard's condition was probably well known and Pierpont received interest from a succession of companies and brokers. Finally, Pierpont solicited the interest of Standard Oil of Indiana in July of 1938. While Standard of Indiana expressed no interest, it did send several employees to examine the company's operations and make recommendations, resulting in economies adopted by the company in the amount of \$115,078.¹⁷⁹

After repeated contacts, Pierpont issued a memorandum to Standard of Indiana stating that any company that acquired Standard of Nebraska would have exclusive rights to the Standard name and the trademark brands it

¹⁷² Standard Oil Company, Amendment, Articles of Incorporation, Book 73, page 363, filed January 15, 1934. RG002 Secretary of State, SG9 Corporation Records, S2 Articles of Incorporation, Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁷³ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al, Nebraska Supreme Court, 15 N.W. 2d 393. Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁷⁴ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 172.

¹⁷⁵ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al, Nebraska Supreme Court, 15 N.W. 2d 393. Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁷⁶ Records of Buell F. Jones, General Counsel of Standard Oil Company (Indiana), box B0101167, file name "Standard Oil Company (Nebraska): Acquisition and Purchase by SOCO(Ind.)," [1939]. bpAmerica Inc.

¹⁷⁷ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 176.

¹⁷⁸ "S.O. Indiana Offers to Buy S.O. Nebraska," National Petroleum News, August 2, 1939, page 9.

¹⁷⁹ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, pages 176-177.

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owned. Pierpont's memo apparently received attention. After a series of conferences, Standard of Indiana tentatively agreed to buy the 161,403 outstanding shares for \$17.50 a share. The offer was presented to stockholders at their meeting of August 29, 1939 and the purchase was accepted.¹⁸⁰

Upon the sale and to avoid any lapse in trade name or trademark rights, new articles of incorporation were filed on the day of the sale for "Standard Oil Company of Nebraska." The former Standard Oil Company (Nebraska), first chartered in 1906, was dissolved six months later.¹⁸¹ The company's assets as of May 31, 1939 had a book value of \$4,629,433.20.¹⁸²

Postscript

Standard Oil Company of Nebraska after 1939

The sale of the company was soon challenged in two separate cases. Clarence E. Winter of Omaha, owner of ten shares of stock in the former company filed suit in the District Court of Douglas County at Omaha. Winter charged that the sale was "wrongful, unlawful and fraudulent" and that the assets of the company were worth \$29.06 a share, much more than that offered by Standard Oil of Indiana.¹⁸³ Winter agreed to dismissal of the suit in October of 1940. A similar suit was filed by Edgar H. Rettinger and joined by Edward J. Peterson, an attorney and one-time employee of Standard of Nebraska. The District Court of Douglas County found on behalf of Rettinger, ordering a recovery of \$1,465,180.75 on behalf of the stockholders. The defendants, who included officers of the former Standard of Nebraska, Henry Pierpont and Morse Palmer, appealed to the Nebraska Supreme Court. The Supreme Court reversed and dismissed the case by a decision filed July 28, 1944.¹⁸⁴

The Standard Oil Company of Nebraska operated as a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana until 1944. On December 1, 1944 the Board of Directors of the Standard Oil Company of Nebraska met at the company's headquarters in the Standard Oil Building in Omaha and approved a plan for the company's complete liquidation and the transfer of all assets to the sole stockholder, Standard Oil of Indiana.¹⁸⁵ The operations in Nebraska largely became a sales division of the company, which marketed under the Standard name in the central United States.

STANDARD OIL of TODAY

Many of the 34 companies in the Standard Oil group that emerged after the 1911 dissolution continued as leaders in their respective fields. With America's entry into World War II, the petroleum industry mobilized

¹⁸⁰ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, pages 176-188.

¹⁸¹ Standard Oil Company of Nebraska, Articles of Incorporation, Book 103, page 199, filed August 29, 1939. Nebraska Secretary of State. Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) was dissolved March 6, 1940.

¹⁸² Giddens, page 587.

¹⁸³ Giddens, page 587-588. See also Omaha World-Herald, November 24, 1939, page 15:2-3.

¹⁸⁴ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. See Nebraska Reports for a complete statement on the case.

¹⁸⁵ Standard Oil Company of Nebraska, Dissolution, Book 127, page 199, filed December 2, 1944 and associated correspondence. Nebraska Secretary of State.

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along with other industries to produce the vast resources needed for the war effort. In the post-war years the growth of the industry went hand-in-hand with Americans who were taking to the automobile as a lifestyle, family units seeking entertainment and the offerings of the bright lights along commercial strips, in the growing suburbs, and along high-speed highways. Trucking assumed dominance in commercial transport, overtaking the role once achieved by railroads. Petroleum companies grew in scale and scope, product development, and marketing. The Standard Oil group of companies that had inherited their affiliation with the Standard Oil combination, achieved national and global prominence probably never imagined when John D. Rockefeller first organized the Standard Oil Trust. And those companies that once carried the identity of the Standard Oil group have become almost entirely disassociated to the former roots of the Standard Oil Company, both in their corporate legacy and in the minds of consumers today.

Through mergers within the former Standard Oil group of companies and, ironically, with other majors that once were aggressive competitors. The descendants of the Standard Oil Company have since become otherwise recognizable in marketing to customers nationwide:¹⁸⁶

- Standard Oil of New York (Socony) and Vaccum became **Mobil**.
- Atlantic Refining and Richfield merged to become Atlantic-Richfield – **Arco** - and joined with **Sinclair**. Atlantic-Richfield was court-ordered to sell most of the Sinclair operations in 1973. Sinclair now operates as a major independent with no associations to any of the former Standard Oil group.
- Standard Oil (New Jersey), once marketing under the **Esso** name, became **Exxon**.
- Standard Oil (Ohio) or **Sohio** was purchased by British Petroleum (**BP**).
- Continental Oil became **Conoco**, a subsidiary of DuPont Corporation.
- Standard Oil (California) or **Socal** became **Chevron** and merged with **Gulf**.
- The Ohio Company, first organized under the Standard Oil Trust as a production company, eventually entered into marketing and became **Marathon**, a subsidiary of USX, Inc.

In an even more immense scale, Exxon and Mobil have now merged as **ExxonMobil**, Chevron and **Texaco** have become **ChevronTexaco**, and Conoco has merged with **Phillips** Petroleum to become **ConocoPhillips**.

The Standard Oil Company (Indiana) holds a special place in the Standard Oil legacy. With the acquisition in Nebraska, the Standard Oil Company (Indiana) or its subsidiaries had a marketing territory in 39 states and the District of Columbia.¹⁸⁷ Its well-recognized flaming torch superimposed over an oval shield of red, white, and blue colors was adopted in 1945 and carried the name of Standard or its affiliates, "**Pan-Am**" and "**Utoco**" across the face. In 1954, Standard Oil of Indiana resolved its long-standing issues associated with its minority ownership of the American Oil Company, which now became a wholly owned subsidiary. With its ownership of American Oil, it acquired the well-established "Amoco" trade name. In 1957 Standard of Indiana consolidated its nine subsidiaries into four operating companies, followed in 1960 by turning all operations to

¹⁸⁶ Henderson, Wayne and Scott Benjamin, Standard Oil: The First 125 Years. Osceola WI: Motorbooks International, 1996. Pages 125-126.

¹⁸⁷ Giddens, page 587.

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its subsidiaries and becoming exclusively a parent company, the “American Oil Company,” with Standard Oil as a division.¹⁸⁸

The American Oil Company entered into nationwide status, marketing from coast-to-coast under the torch-and-shield as “**American**” but retaining the “Standard” name in the traditional 15-state Midwestern marketing territory of Standard Oil of Indiana. American Oil became **Amoco** in 1973 and began marketing under the torch-and-shield with its simpler Amoco name. Perhaps according to marketing and advertising executives, the Amoco name was better suited to consumer identity and its simple five-letters more easily identified by high-speed motorists travelling at 65 miles an hour or more on the nation’s modern highways and interstate highway system. The company was the last to carry the venerable “Standard” name when Amoco subsequently replaced the Standard name in the Mid West, although some dealers opted to retain their Standard signage.

And ironically the legacy of this uniquely American company has now become affiliated with one that has its legacy as a foreign company. Amoco’s merger with British Petroleum (**BP**) in 1998 resulted in the name, **BP Amoco**.¹⁸⁹ Both the former Sohio and Amoco now operate as **bpAmerica**, a unit of the BP parent company. Perhaps the company attempts to downplay its foreign roots, preferring the use of the initials “bp” and sometimes marketing as “**Beyond Petroleum**. But the transition in marketing was most noticeable when Amoco’s red, white, and blue colors and the torch-and-shield sign began to be replaced nationwide in 2000, giving way to the green and yellow color scheme and sunburst logo used by bpAmerica. Amoco brand names continue to be used at the pump, reflecting the high name recognition of its gasolines, the most popular being the “Ultimate” brand. Some of the company’s signs read “BP featuring Amoco fuels.” The Amoco brand names will also provide customers with a transition to the company’s new look and marketing, particularly its “super-convenience stores” that are appearing in larger markets and along major freeways. In Nebraska, the transition visually began to appear in the Omaha market and in stations across the state when the torch-and-shield started to come down in 2002...¹⁹⁰

...And with the signs, the last relic of the great Standard Oil Company.

¹⁸⁸ Dedmon, pages 59-63, 79-80. In this authoritative work, Challenge and Response: A Modern History of Standard Oil Company (Indiana), Emmett Dedmon extended the work of Paul H. Giddens, Standard Oil Company (Indiana): Oil Pioneer of the Middle West, which was published in 1955.

¹⁸⁹ Correspondence with Tom Pardo, archivist for bpAmerica, email dated May 17, 2004.

¹⁹⁰ Finney, Daniel P., “Sun to Rise, Amoco Logo to Fall.” Omaha World-Herald, January 5, 2002, page D-1.

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TABLE E-1

Trade-Marks and Trade Names as Registered with the Nebraska Secretary of State for Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)		
Trade-Mark, Label, or Trade Name	Date	Notes, Description, or Product (if verified)
"Red Crown Ethyl Gasoline"	1927	"In use since 1906," 'Ethylized' Gasoline
"Red Crown Gasoline"	1927	"In use since 1909," Gasoline
"Polarine" "Use Correct Grade"	1927	Triangular logo, Motor Oil
"Nebraska Blue Gasoline"	1931	Round logo, 'Third-grade' Gasoline
"Standard Red Crown Gasoline"	1932	'High-octane' Gasoline
"Reliance Gasoline"	1932	"Is about to be used," Gasoline
"Reliance Motor Oil"	1932	Motor Oil
"Standard"	1934	Ball and bar logo, Name "in use since 1906"
"Standard Penn"	1935	Motor Oil
"Stanisol"	1939	Cleaning Fluid
"Stanolind"	1939	'Third-grade' Gasoline, Motor Oil
"Standard Blue Crown Gasoline"	1941	'Third-grade' Gasoline
"Standard White Crown Gasoline"	1941	'Ethylized' Gasoline
Source: Index to Trade-Marks, Labels, and Trade Names, Nebraska Secretary of State (1912-1934)		
RG002, SG9 Corporations, Series 5 Trade Marks and Trade Names		
Nebraska State Historical Society		
Note: Index goes through 1934, entries after 1934 are not indexed.		

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TABLE E-2

Standard Oil (Nebraska)		
Location of Company-Owned Gas Stations		
1924	1930	1939
Ainsworth	Ainsworth	
Albion	Albion	Albion
	Alliance	Alliance (3)
	Alma	Alma
	Ansley	Ansley
	Arcadia	Arcadia
	Arlington	
Ashland	Ashland	Ashland
Auburn	Auburn	Auburn
Aurora	Aurora	Aurora
Bayard	Bayard (2), one closed 1936	Bayard
Beatrice	Beatrice	Beatrice (2)
Beaver City	Beaver City	Beaver City
	Beaver Crossing	Beaver Crossing
		Benkelman
	Bertrand	Bertrand
	Big Springs	Big Springs
Blair	Blair	Blair
	Bloomfield	Bloomfield
	Brady	Brady
Bridgeport	Bridgeport	Bridgeport
Broken Bow	Broken Bow	Broken Bow (2)
	Burwell	Burwell
	Callaway	Callaway
	Cambridge	Cambridge
	Cedar Bluffs	Cedar Bluffs
	Cedar Rapids	Cedar Rapids
Central City	Central City	Central City (2)
Chadron	Chadron	Chadron (2)
Chappel	Chappel	Chappel
	Clay Center	Clay Center
	College View	(Lincoln)
Columbus	Columbus	Columbus (3)
	Comstock	Comstock
		Cozad
	Crawford	Crawford
Crete	Crete	Crete
	Crofton	Crofton
	Culbertson	Culbertson

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TABLE E-2 (continued)

	Curtis	Curtis
David City	David City	David City
	Dorchester	Dorchester
	Elm Creek	Elm Creek
	Elwood	Elwood
	Eustis	Eustis
Fairbury	Fairbury	Fairbury
	Fairmont	Fairmont
Falls City	Falls City	Falls City
	Farnam	Farnam
	Franklin	Franklin
Fremont	Fremont	Fremont (2)
	Friend	Friend
Fullerton	Fullerton	Fullerton
Geneva	Geneva	Geneva
Gering	Gering	Gering
	Gordon	Gordon
Gothenburg	Gothenburg	Gothenburg (2)
Grand Island	Grand Island	Grand Island (4)
	Grant	Grant
	Gretna	
	Guide Rock	Guide Rock
	Hartington	Hartington
Hastings (2)	Hastings	Hastings (3)
	Havelock	(Lincoln)
	Hebron	Hebron
Holdrege	Holdrege	Holdrege
	Howells	Howells
Humboldt	Humboldt	Humboldt
	Imperial	Imperial
Kearney	Kearney	Kearney (2)
Kimball	Kimball	Kimball (2)
	Laurel	Laurel
	Lewellen	Lewellen
Lexington	Lexington	Lexington (2)
Lincoln (9)	Lincoln	Lincoln (13)
	Lodgepole	Lodgepole
	Long Pine	Long Pine
	Loup City	Loup City
		Lyons
McCook	McCook	McCook (2)
Madison	Madison	Madison

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TABLE E-2 (continued)

	Maxwell (closed 1933)	
	Merna	Merna
	Milford	Milford
	Minatare	Minatare
Minden	Minden	Minden
	Mitchell	Mitchell
	Morrill	Morrill
Nebraska City	Nebraska City	Nebraska City (3)
Neligh	Neligh	Neligh
Norfolk (2)	Norfolk	Norfolk (2)
North Platte	North Platte	North Platte (4)
	Oakland	Oakland
Ogallala	Ogallala	Ogallala
Omaha (23)	Omaha	Omaha (40)
	O'Neill	O'Neill
Ord	Ord	Ord
	Orleans	Orleans
Osceola	Osceola	Osceola
	Oshkosh	Oshkosh
	Palisade	Palisade
	Pawnee City	Pawnee City
	Pilger (deeded to Village, 1936)	
Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth
Randolph	Randolph	Randolph
Ravenna	Ravenna	Ravenna
Red Cloud	Red Cloud	Red Cloud
		St. Paul
	Sargent	Sargent
Schuyler	Schuyler	
Scottsbluff	Scottsbluff	Scottsbluff (3)
Seward	Seward	Seward
Sidney	Sidney	Sidney (2)
South Sioux City	South Sioux City	South Sioux City
		Stanton
	Stapleton	Stapleton
	(Stratton)*	
	Sumner	Sumner
Superior	Superior	Superior
	Sutherland	Sutherland
	Sutton	Sutton
	Syracuse	Syracuse
	Tecumseh	Tecumseh

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TABLE E-2 (continued)

	Tekamah	Tekamah
	Utica	Utica
	Valentine	Valentine
	Venango	Venango
Wahoo	Wahoo	Wahoo
	Wakefield	Wakefield
	Walthill	Walthill
		Wauneta
	Wausa	Wausa
Wayne	Wayne	Wayne
	West Point	West Point
	Wisner	Wisner
	Wymore	Wymore
York	York	York (2)
Source: "Map of Marked Auto Trails in Nebraska," Fifth Edition [1925], Standard Oil Company (Nebraska).	Source: "Map of Marked Auto Trails in Nebraska," Eleventh Edition [1931], Standard Oil Company (Nebraska).	Source: "List of Service Station Properties," [1939]. Company Records, bpAmerica, Inc.
Count: 56 locations 80 service stations	Count: 130 locations *proposed	Count: 128 locations 207 service stations

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F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The subject of this Multiple Property Documentation submittal is the marketing operations of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as an independent company from 1911-1939. The company's operations from 1911 to 1939 is represented by property types associated with the company as it both led and responded to marketing practices, competition, and a declining position that resulted in its sale to the Standard Oil Company (Indiana) in 1939. Therefore, historic contexts are applied to identify properties associated with the company's marketing operations in Nebraska and to evaluate the significance of associated property types.

Marketing operations by the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) include all business activities involved in the moving of goods – primarily petroleum products – from manufacturer to consumer. Management directs all business activities associated with company policy, administration, fiscal operations, and marketing practices assumed by officers, directors, and managers the company. Functions of marketing include distribution through wholesaling, jobbing, retailing and sales to the ultimate consumer. The integration of marketing functions is made complete by transportation systems that facilitate the movement of goods.

Wholesaling is the receipt and distribution of large quantities of products at the lowest level of cost. Therefore, wholesaling by Standard Oil of Nebraska is largely represented by the receipt of large quantities of bulk petroleum or other products by rail, tank-car, or motor transport and the facilities that store and distribute quantities of those products. Wholesaling facilities as property types include warehouses and distribution plants.

Jobbing involves breaking the large quantities of products into smaller units for distribution by, or sales to, middlemen and dealers. An area of particular importance to the jobbing operations conducted by Standard Oil of Nebraska was its longstanding policy of direct marketing, providing its products direct to consumers, thus avoiding the functions of middlemen and dealers. These included tank-wagon sales to farmers and retail operations through company-owned and company-operated gasoline stations. Jobbing facilities as property types include bulk stations.

Retailing and sales include pricing, product development, branding, advertising, and retail operations. It may also include related services and other products that compliment or enhance the retailing and sales of the company's principal line of goods. An area of importance to the operations of Standard of Nebraska was its direct marketing through retail outlets. Associated property types are those that were served, owned, or leased by the company.

PROPERTY TYPES

For the purpose of defining property types under this Multiple Property Documentation submittal, historic resources associated with the marketing of petroleum products by the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) can be described as those related to company management, wholesaling, jobbing, and retailing:

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Section F Page 2

Headquarters/Main Offices of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

Warehouses and Distribution Plants of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

Bulk Stations of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

Retail Outlets of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

- Subtype: Curbside Outlets and Garages
- Subtype: Filling Stations (1914-1919) The "Brick Bungalow"
- Subtype: Filling Stations (1920-1929) The "Box and Canopy"
- Subtype: Service Stations (1930-1939) The "Transitional"
- Subtype: Leased Outlets

Property types can be evaluated for potential significance through the application of one, two, or all of the historic contexts. A description of property types, significance, and registration requirements identified in this Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) submission follows.

Headquarters/Main Offices of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

Since shortly after 1878 and its entry into the marketing territory of Nebraska, the regional or main offices of the Standard Oil Company were always housed in Omaha. During its period as independent company, 1911-1939, the company's operations were housed at three locations: the Brandeis Building at 200 S. 16th Street, a temporary leased location at 1912 Farnam, and an office building that was constructed by the company at 500 S. 18th Street. See Table F-1.

Description. Company management was housed in the Brandeis Building in downtown Omaha shortly after its construction, beginning about 1907. The building was constructed by the Brandeis family to house the J.L. Brandeis & Sons Store, Nebraska's preeminent department store. When constructed, the department store occupied three floors and the basement. The upper five floors were leased as business and professional offices, including those occupied by the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska). When the J.L. Brandeis & Sons department store embarked on a major expansion into the upper floors of its building, the company's lease was terminated and in May of 1920 relocated to temporary offices at 1912 Farnam.

With the loss of its offices in 1920, the company planned a "flagship" building, the first permanent headquarters owned and occupied by the company. The following year, its architects began working on plans to construct a new six-story office building at 18th and Howard Streets. The site selected for the building was located immediately west of Omaha's commercial center, an area identified by the city's planning board for development and furthered by major public works in the area. The location for the Standard Oil Building, in part, was occupied by one of its filling stations, which was removed to a new site just south and adjoining the

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building site. The six-story office building was designed by John and Alan McDonald at an estimated cost of \$183,000. Construction began in July of 1921 and the building opened in May of 1922. At the time of its opening both the Standard Oil Company and offices of other tenants occupied the building.

Significance. As headquarters and principal business address for the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska), these locations are associated with the marketing policies, management, operations, and sales both established or conducted by the company. Significance, therefore, may be established under **Criterion A** of the National Register of Historic Places at the state level. Similarly, significance under **Criterion B** may be established for a person(s)' substantial contribution to marketing policies, management, operations, or innovation. These may include officers, directors, and key personnel.

Registration Requirements. Registration requirements under this MPD can be applied to two of the locations occupied by Standard Oil; the third or temporary location at 1912 Farnam is not extant. The J.L.Brandeis & Sons Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, citing significance for both association with the commercial enterprise of the department store and architectural merit. As such, the building has been evaluated in areas of significance unrelated to the Standard Oil Company. Integrity of association would only be defined by the company's occupancy as a tenant.

Following the loss of its lease in the Brandeis Building and a temporary location, the company built the Standard Oil Building. It became the "flagship" of the company from its completion in 1922 through 1939. Under Criterion A, the Standard Oil Building significantly represents the management and marketing practices of the company during its most important period of growth through its decline and sale. Two persons can be significantly associated to the company under Criterion B. A.H. Richardson advanced to president in 1917 and served until 1937, witnessing the period of the company's most substantial entry into the marketing of petroleum products through the difficult times that eventually led to the company's sale. Henry W. Pierpont assumed the presidency of the company after the retirement of Richardson and assumed the substantial duties associated with the company's declining years and the negotiation of the company's sale to Standard Oil of Indiana. Although this building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the current nomination inadequately addresses the significance of the Standard Oil Company and is largely in error. Therefore, the building could be appropriately reevaluated under this MPD and resubmitted under appropriate procedures for amending properties already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Warehouses and Distribution Plants of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

With its main office in Omaha, the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) operated warehouse and distribution complexes in Omaha, Lincoln, Hastings, and North Platte. See Table F-2. While both the Omaha and Lincoln locations date from the company's former associations with the Standard Oil combination before 1911, both were significantly expanded and retooled as changes in marketing techniques and transport methods occurred. The company built the Hastings and North Platte locations during its period of major growth and in response to products it supplied to serve the automotive trade.

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Description. Before 1911, two large warehouse complexes were built in Omaha and Lincoln. The Omaha location was along major railroad sidings near the "Sulphur Springs" subdivision at 14th and Locust Streets. In Lincoln, the warehouse complex was located on the B&MRR main line at 14th & Clarmont Streets. In their early development, both locations served as points where bulk petroleum was received by railroad and prepared for shipment to dealers in wooden barrels. The barreling operations, consisting of a cooperage where wooden barrels were assembled or repaired for reshipment, were a primary function of the warehouse complexes, which were rounded out by large iron storage tanks, a yard for barrel storage, wood frame warehouses for storage and office, and wagon sheds or liveries. Distribution and marketing techniques evolved with the company's development of its network of bulk stations after about 1900. The warehouse complexes were largely rebuilt with more substantial brick warehouses, but included yards that held above-ground elevated storage tanks that were expanded for the increased volume and additional bulk petroleum products the company provided. As motor transportation was adopted for local and regional delivery of products after about 1914, brick garages were built for vehicle storage and repair. Auxiliary buildings included shops and storehouses.

In the 1920s, the Standard Oil Company built two large, brick warehouse complexes in Hastings and North Platte that served as regional distribution plants and branch offices. These facilities served primarily for distribution of lubricating oils and greases. Since bulk lubricating oils were shipped by railroad tank cars and in volumes too large to distribute through bulk stations, these distribution plants served as locations where the product was barreled in smaller quantities. Bulk oil was received by rail, pumped into large storage tanks in the warehouse, and transferred to steel barrels for shipping. Barreling operations included paint shops where steel barrels were prepared for reuse and shipment. These complexes also included yards for large exterior storage tanks holding bulk petroleum, office quarters, and garages for motor vehicle storage and repair.

Significance. Warehouses and distribution plants represent the most substantial of the company's wholesale operations, serving extensive regions or the entire state. Warehouses and distribution plants evolved as more efficient means of wholesaling were put in place and as products shifted to the automobile trade. Associated with these facilities were building types representing structural engineering, technologies, or transportation methods that were applied to these functions. The significance of warehouses and distribution plants may be applied to the wholesaling and jobbing of petroleum products by Standard Oil and established under **Criterion A** of the National Register of Historic Places. The significance of warehouses and distribution plants may also be established under **Criterion C** of the National Register of Historic Places as properties that represent the type, period, or method of construction for petroleum distribution established by Standard Oil. As distinct property types, warehouses and distribution plants represent the functions of both petroleum wholesale operations and the jobbing of specific products, namely motor oil. Significance under **Criterion D** may be established for research values or understanding of the technology of the distribution systems that may be evident in groups of, or in individual buildings or structures of warehouses and distribution plants. Ordinarily, significance would not be attributed to persons such as regional managers or personnel on the basis of tenure or management abilities. **Criterion B** would require documentation that such person(s) contributed substantially to the development, implementation, or innovation applied to wholesaling operations by the company. Since all of Standard's warehouses and distribution plants represent significant functions of the company's marketing

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operations and were operated as major outlets to serve extensive regions or the entire state, statewide significance is applicable.

Registration Requirements. Registration requirements may be applied to the four locations of warehouse and distribution plants. Although no extensive field evaluation has been conducted at these locations, extant buildings and associated structures may be considered as group or as major components that remain extant. In order to qualify, warehouses or distribution plants would need to have integrity of design, location, workmanship, and setting. Warehouses and distribution plants must have sufficient properties extant in whole or in part to convey wholesaling operations or specific functions of wholesaling techniques, technologies, or transportation. These include functions significant to the company's wholesale operations, evolution of distribution techniques applied by the company as it progressed through the period associated with this MPD, or transportation and technologies of a period or periods identified under associated historic contexts. Construction methods, structural types, and engineering qualities can be evaluated to both groups of buildings and structures within a complex or to individual buildings that remain extant. Research or information potential would apply to significant technologies of pumping systems used for moving bulk quantities of lubricating oil, but only if historical sources such as trade journals, archival documents, and company records fail to yield substantial information.

Bulk Stations of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

The most ambitious entry of the Standard Oil Company into distribution was the development of its extensive network of bulk stations, smaller complexes that served as the principal operations for the jobbing of bulk petroleum products. A pioneer in this distribution system, Standard entered into jobbing - distribution of smaller units direct from tank car to retailer - eliminating the functions of middlemen. Between 1906 and 1909, the number of Standard's bulk stations in Nebraska rose to 312; ninety-five percent of the Nebraska's bulk stations were built during this period. Kerosene was at first the most important product, but during the period when the Standard Oil Company operated as an independent company, 1911-1939, the product mix and volume of sales significantly shifted to gasoline. Until rural electrification, however, kerosene remained an important product for the farm, along with fuel oil and tractor fuel. In 1925, the company maintained 347 bulk stations, probably about the peak in the number operated. See also Table F-2. As motor tank trucks replaced the tank wagon, the number of bulk stations declined somewhat but remained a substantial part of the company's jobbing to its retail outlets and direct sales to farmers.

Description. When initially established, bulk stations were located about the distance that a horse- or mule-driven tank wagon could cover in a day's time. Bulk stations were built near rail lines or sidings, most often on right-of-way leased from railroad companies, a distance from adjoining buildings, and outside the fire limits of town. Bulk stations were retooled and improved as the company's operations entered into the marketing of more extensive lines of products to serve the automobile trade. Bulk stations included above-ground storage tanks elevated on concrete cribs to hold large quantities and individual types of bulk petroleum products. Over

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the years, storage tanks were upgraded from iron to steel, riveted to welded. A small frame storehouse held a small office and storage of products and vehicles. A pump house served to transport bulk petroleum from railroad tank cars and to dispense bulk products to tank wagons or tank trucks.

Significance. Through this system of bulk stations and tank-wagon delivery, Standard Oil established an extensive system of jobbing its petroleum products and held a dominant position over all competitors. The move was ambitious and expensive to introduce, particularly in rural markets where economies per unit depended on a volume of sales. Rural areas represented a comparatively sparse market restricted by the range of a horse- or mule-driven tank wagon on poor systems of roads and under variable weather conditions. Direct marketing to farmers by tank-wagon delivery was inaugurated by Standard of Indiana between 1905 and 1910 and probably appeared in Nebraska under that company's management. Apart from mail delivery by "rural free delivery" (RFD), this system was a most impressive example of service to the rural customer.

While the establishment and number of bulk stations largely predate the period of Standard Oil as an independent company, bulk stations represented an extensive investment and positioned the company competitively. This extensive network of bulk stations allowed the company to enter into the fast growing marketing opportunities that came with the automobile trade. Service to farmers, however, remained an important function of bulk stations. Therefore extant bulk stations significantly represent the period or periods of historic contexts established under this Multiple Property Documentation submittal.

The significance of bulk stations to the marketing of petroleum products by Standard Oil may be established under **Criterion A** of the National Register of Historic Places. Through this system, Standard adopted a long-standing policy of direct marketing, providing its products direct to retail operations, farm customers, and most important, its company-owned and company-operated chain of gasoline stations. Bulk stations significantly represent the system of distribution or jobbing of petroleum products in which Standard excelled. As competitors adopted more efficient means of jobbing or transport, the system of bulk stations also contributed to the company's decline. As distinct property types that represent the functions of petroleum jobbing, the significance of bulk stations may also be established under **Criterion C** of the National Register of Historic Places as types, possessing distinct qualities of both groups of buildings or individual structures of engineering technology of a period. Significance under **Criterion D** may be established by research values or understanding of the technology applied to bulk stations. The technology of pumping systems used for moving bulk petroleum, for example, offers some potential in this area, but only if historical sources such as trade journals, archival documents, and company records fail to yield substantial information. Ordinarily, significance would not be attributed to persons such as bulk station managers or tank wagon deliverymen on the basis of tenure or management abilities. **Criterion B** would require documentation that such person(s) contributed substantially to the development, implementation, or innovation adapted to jobbing operations by the company.

Registration Requirements. Registration requirements may be applied to individual bulk stations, similarly to those of warehouses and distribution plants except in terms of scale. Extant stations may be considered as a complex or as relic components that represent important functions of this property type. In order to qualify,

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bulk stations would need to have integrity of design, location, and setting. Bulk stations must retain sufficient buildings or structures in whole or in part to convey jobbing operations or specific functions of jobbing techniques, technologies, or transportation. These include functions significant to the company's jobbing operations, evolution of jobbing techniques applied by the company, or transportation and technologies as it progressed or declined through period or periods of historic contexts associated with this MPD.

Retail Outlets of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska)

The retailing of petroleum products for the automobile trade is most significantly represented by the outlets built to accommodate the motoring public. These outlets, or the evolution of these outlets, represent the retail practices by the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) as it developed marketing policies, responded to competition, and as consumer preferences changed. Two principles can be applied to marketing through retail outlets and as property types, as follows.

Form and Function¹⁹¹

As a property type, the evolution in the *form and function* is reflected in types of retail outlets that served the automotive trade. In particular, it was the gasoline station that came to dominate retail sales and service to the motorist. The gasoline station had no precedent to a commercial retail enterprise and was unique to the petroleum trade. The design and architecture of the gasoline station is represented in distinct building subtypes that evolved through time. "Major changes in marketing strategies have always prompted the development of new station prototypes."¹⁹²

This typology is applied to the *form* adopted for Standard's company-built retail outlets: the company's first "metal shed," the "brick bungalow," the "box and canopy," and the "transitional." And *function* applies to changes in retail strategies as Standard's gasoline outlets progressed from sideline operations or "curbside" businesses, to "filling stations" devoted mostly to sales of gasoline and motor oil, and to "service stations" that offered a larger range of products and services.

Place-Product-Packaging¹⁹³

Some independents or major companies pursued gasoline station designs as a means of establishing an identity, employing professional architects or designers, or using prefabricated buildings. The gasoline station became a "total design" representing the company and easily recognized by its major customer, the motorist:

¹⁹¹ Adapted from John A. Jakle, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970," *Journal of American Culture*, (Fall 1978), pages 520-538. Jakle identified the architecture of gasoline stations as reflected within a narrow range of building types through different time periods. See also John A. Jakle and Keith Scully, *The Gas Station in America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, Chapter 5, pages 130-162.

¹⁹² John A. Jakle, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970," page 538.

¹⁹³ All references to "place, product, packaging" are attributed to John A. Jakle and Keith Scully, *The Gas Station in America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

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Companies did compete through territorial marketing strategies based on the development of brand consciousness through advertising. Gasoline station design was a critical element in a company's quest for visibility. The standardized station was a most important advertising device by which companies sought to develop sales territories... This is clearly seen in the case of American gasoline distribution. Stations have had to look like gasoline stations although each company has tried to make its stations distinctive. Nonetheless, deviations could not depart substantially from established norms. The challenge has been to find that rare quality of "difference in similarity" that would attract customers, but also reassure them. This need prompted a constant drift to new color schemes, signage, and decoration, but always within a narrow range of building types in any one time period.¹⁹⁴

When the gasoline station is placed in a context of retail marketing, or "*place-product-packaging*," the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) excelled in two areas. First in its early and consistent practice of adopting uniform designs and materials for its stations; second in maintaining or developing a identity for its products through the use of brand names, trademarks, logos, and signage. In developing its gasoline stations throughout Nebraska, place-product-packaging became a marketing method to capitalize on all that was represented by the name "Standard Oil."

• **Subtype: Curbside Outlets and Garages**

Among the early methods of retailing was the "curbside" pump that began to appear in front of business establishments such as hardware stores, liverys, and general retail operations. Automotive garages that provided repair services, stored, and sold automobiles were particularly complimented by the addition of a curbside operation that supplied gasoline. In most cases, the curbside operation fell out of favor as city ordinances began to preclude the installation of pumps as both a fire hazard and disruption to city street and pedestrian traffic. Consumer preferences also shifted and competition entered the picture as gasoline stations offered drive-in convenience, services, and products for the motorist. A survey conducted for S.F. Bowser & Co., manufacturer of gasoline pumps observed that by 1928: "...General observation indicated that the poorly equipped and casually operated curbside and roadside fill was gradually being supplanted by the better type of drive-in station."¹⁹⁵ Curbside operations, however, continued to operate as complements to garages and automobile agencies, in small towns, and rural crossroad stores.

A practice extensively adopted by Standard's competitors as well as the Standard Oil group of companies was to give away or lease tanks and pumps with the condition that only the company's products be sold. Standard of Indiana, for example, entered into what was called "Pump and Property Leases." When complaints were made to the Federal Trade Commission and followed by litigation, the practice was ordered to "cease and desist" in 1919.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ John A. Jakle, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970," pages 522, 538.

¹⁹⁵ "Kind of Highway Determines Type of Successful Station," National Petroleum News, June 6, 1928, pages 29-30. The survey included 81.8 miles of highway in Nebraska.

¹⁹⁶ Giddens, pages 308, 313.

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Description. Curbside pumps, themselves often called “filling stations” were most often installed in the public right-of-way in front of business establishments. The buildings occupied by these businesses would be of common designs well established for commercial functions or of garage buildings being built to serve the automotive trade. In some cases, an awning may have been installed to accommodate curbside service.

Significance. The curbside operation was among the first ways that retailing of gasoline was perfected for the automobile. It offered “drive-up” convenience for the motorist and a method for an attendant to supply measured quantities of gasoline. At a time when the gasoline station had no precedent, curbside operations were an extension of traditional marketing outlets, such as stores and garages. By 1925, Standard Oil of Nebraska supplied some 1,500 garages with petroleum products and although no statistics are available, a significant number of these garages probably sold gasoline by curbside pumps.

Registration Requirements. Ordinarily, the curbside pump or an associated commercial building would not be eligible as a historic resource under this Multiple Property Documentation. The primary artifact that can convey this subtype is the pump itself. Although this subtype represents the importance of retail marketing in its earliest stage of development, the presence of a curbside pump *in situ* is the only defining feature of such an operation. By discontinuing the practice of Pump and Property Leases and as city ordinances banned curbside pumps, the outlets of supplied by Standard of Nebraska eventually declined and pumps were removed. Additionally, those who continued as curbside operators probably changed suppliers at a rapid rate and significant associations to Standard Oil would not be present or difficult to determine.

• **Subtype: Filling Stations (1914-1919)**

The “Brick Bungalow”

Other than the curbside operation, the earliest retail outlets for gasoline sales served motorists from the curbside or rudimentary sheds. The sale of gasoline and oil was largely a seasonal operation:

Before 1915 few motorists drove their automobiles in inclement weather as automobiles were not enclosed. Cars were stored during the winter months in cold areas. Thus the sale of gasoline was a “fair weather” activity and little effort was made to protect either the station operator or his customers.¹⁹⁷

Due to its longstanding position as the State’s dominant petroleum marketer, the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) was well positioned to enter into the retail sale of gasoline through company-owned and company-operated filling stations. This practice was in keeping with its long-held policy of direct marketing to consumers, first initiated by tank-wagon delivery to farmers. Its entry into company-owned and company-operated filling stations began in 1914. Through 1919 Standard built and operated twenty-four filling stations in Nebraska. Most were probably located in larger cities where a sizeable local trade was assured and well-

¹⁹⁷ John A. Jakle, “The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970,” page 524.

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maintained city streets accommodated the year-round use of the automobile.¹⁹⁸ See Table F-3 for known locations.

Although the first documented example of a filling station built by the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) was a modest metal “shed,” the company soon adopted a more attractive design for its early filling stations, described by one newspaper as “bungalow-style.” The design was built to plans by Omaha architect Everett S. Dodds. Everett S. Dodds came to Nebraska in 1910. He had received training in architecture in his home state of Minnesota and continued his study in Nebraska, entering into a partnership with Fred Peterson in the Omaha firm of Peterson & Dodds. In 1913 he began his own practice.¹⁹⁹ His specialty was residential house plans, which he offered as “stock” plans to homebuilders or modified to suit individual preference. His building plans were soon being illustrated in a weekly feature of the Omaha Sunday World-Herald, “Some New Home Suggestions,” and in 1914 Dodds prepared to release a plan book of house designs.²⁰⁰ Besides being a designer of fine residences and bungalows, he is credited with public buildings, schools, and apartments.²⁰¹

His design for filling stations built by the Standard Oil Company of Nebraska is certainly a most interesting example of his of commissions and the application of the expertise in which he came to specialize. The early “filling station” had little or no precedent to petroleum companies or their designers and residential architecture was most commonly applied to this new building type. Dodds’ expertise in “stock” or standard residential plans probably served the needs of Standard Oil Company of Nebraska for several reasons. The design was simple, yet attractive and featured materials and architectural details familiar to houses or residential garages. When presenting their design to local officials, company representatives could offer assurance of their intentions when seeking approval to construct a new filling station. And when used in construction, the plans were suitable for modification and prepared in a manner that local contractors could easily build from them.

Evidence suggests that these small stations were located on corner lots to maximize access to vehicles and provide exposure to the business. At least in some cases, the building was placed close to the intersecting streets. What would normally be considered the formal front of the building faced into the lot and a semicircular driveway encircled the building. But as one petroleum executive noted:

In many places where filling stations are built today you find the office on the corner and the driveways at the rear. This, we have never found practical or profitable. First your cement driveway costs you twice as much if you place your office on the corner and the driveways in the rear. Second, your customer wants to get in and get oil as rapidly as possible.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 166. This source identifies 1913 as the date of Standard Oil erecting a filling station at 12th and O Streets.

¹⁹⁹ Omaha: The Gate City and Douglas County Nebraska. Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917, volume II, page 580.

²⁰⁰ Omaha Sunday World-Herald (Morning Edition), July 5, 1914, page 7W.

²⁰¹ Sheldon, Addison Erwin, Nebraska: The Land and the People. Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1931, volume III, page 171-72.

²⁰² Hancock, L.B., President Pure Oil Company, “Erection, Operation and Maintenance of Filling Stations,” National Petroleum News, March 30, 1921, page 35.

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A single gasoline pump offered the company's only grade of gas, Red Crown. Lampposts, landscaping, and signage rounded out the site.²⁰³ In one example, the company promised local officials that at its new location "...the corner will resemble a park...(a)ll the ground that is not used for a driveway will be parked with shade trees and blue grass."²⁰⁴

Description. As a subtype, the filling stations built by Standard Oil during this period can be called a "brick bungalow." The earliest documented example of Dodds' "brick bungalow" are architectural plans for an Omaha station, consisting of a small brick "box" topped by a hipped roof and flared, overhanging eaves. The front elevation consisted of a centrally located door flanked by single, double-hung windows.²⁰⁵ The side elevations featured a window wall composed of three double-hung windows. The brick bungalow ranged from 8 to 16 feet square or rectangular.

Significance. This property subtype significantly represents Standard Oil's first entry into the retail marketing of petroleum products through standardized, company-built and -operated drive-in filling stations. This subtype furthermore represents the company's policy of direct marketing to the consumer. Significance may therefore be established under **Criterion A** of the National Register of Historic Places. As a distinct property subtype that represents and conveys petroleum retailing of the period, the significance of these filling stations may also be established under **Criterion C** of the National Register of Historic Places. This property subtype can significantly convey the form and function of early gasoline stations, and the concept of "place-product-packaging." Significance under Criterion C may also be associated with the "look alike" design adopted by Standard Oil. The architect that designed these early buildings, Everett S. Dodds, specialized in residential house plans, which he offered as "stock" plans to homebuilders or modified to suit individual preference. His design for filling stations built by the Standard Oil Company of Nebraska offers an important example of this application to the needs of his customer, Standard Oil. The application of Everett Dodds' expertise in "stock" or standard residential plans could be ascribed to these properties as a type, the "brick bungalow." Ordinarily, significance would not be attributed to persons such as local operators on the basis of tenure or service to the company. **Criterion B** would require documentation that such person(s) contributed substantially to the development, implementation, or innovation applied to retail operations recognized or adopted by the company. Other considerations may include unique sales ability, innovative operations conducted at a local station, or other service to the community such as public office gained as a respected business operator. As examples of Standard Oil's early and distinct entry into retail marketing and due to what is considered a rare number extant, statewide significance could be applied.

Registration Requirements. A primary factor in locating these retail establishments was local trade and traffic patterns. Most examples were probably located in or closely near central business districts. In all cases,

²⁰³ Sanborn Map Company: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, various. See also historic photo (1916) of a station built at 1740 "O" Street, Lincoln, Nebraska. Nebraska State Historical Society (RG2158.PH:2303), loaned for copy courtesy Jim McKee, Lincoln.

²⁰⁴ *Norfolk Daily News*, April 20, 1915, page 7:4.

²⁰⁵ City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division. Plan dated June 1914 on microfilm.

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consideration should therefore be given to integrity of location, feeling, association, and setting. Properties must also have integrity of design, materials, and workmanship such as roof configuration. Since only a small number of these stations were built and evidence suggests that many were replaced with newer designs, few if any may survive. Therefore a more liberal application of integrity may be considered.

• **Subtype: Filling Stations (1920-1929)**
The “Box and Canopy”

With Red Crown gasoline as the company’s single gasoline product and signature trade name, the company often advertised its stations of this period as “Red Crown Service Stations.” A new design for the company’s filling stations appeared in 1920, a masonry “box” or cube that served as the office and an attached canopy. The canopy, sometimes described as an “overhang,” “covered drive,” or “driveway shed,” became a popular feature of gasoline stations during the period.²⁰⁶ As one petroleum executive recommended:

The architectural design should be something more than the square box effect stations that are used by many people. The canopy over the driveway is very essential. Other engineers who have talked on the subject from time to time have discouraged canopies over the driveways. This is entirely wrong from any practical or architectural idea, and we speak from experience along this line.²⁰⁷

Standard’s standardized plan was developed by father-and-son architects, John and Alan McDonald of Omaha.²⁰⁸ Faced in red brick with a distinctive wall cornice surrounding the office and canopy, the design and use of materials gave a modest, but “respectable” appearance resembling a small civic building.²⁰⁹ As such, the company’s new stations offered a compatible appearance within their setting, whether commercial or residential.

The McDonalds were prominent in Omaha architectural practice. The elder McDonald had first developed a successful practice, largely through residential commissions from the city’s upper-class families. Alan McDonald joined his father upon receiving a degree in architecture from Harvard University in 1915. Both father and son were deeply rooted in late-19th and early 20th century historical revivalism, producing what can be viewed as Omaha’s most coherent group of Colonial Revival buildings.²¹⁰ Their body of work represents fine design and architecture styles they applied in practice. Their commission for Standard Oil’s filling stations

²⁰⁶ Jakle, John A., “The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970,” pages 526-527, 536.

²⁰⁷ Hancock, L.B., President Pure Oil Company, “Erection, Operation and Maintenance of Filling Stations.”

²⁰⁸ The earliest is a location at 60th and Military, Omaha, dated 1921 (Building permit 1160 dated August 9, 1921, City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division, plans on microfilm: reel 14, drawing 45). Locations at 13th and South (1923) and 14th and High (1927), Lincoln, both identify the McDonald firm as architects (Building permit 11036 dated April 20, 1923 and building permit 16871 dated September 21, 1927, City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections).

²⁰⁹ In his work on gas station forms, Daniel L. Vieyra describes the “respectable” in terms of grander, prestigious designs arising from the “City Beautiful” movement. The concept, however, might be applied to Standard’s design, although taking on a much more modest appearance. (see Vieyra, *Fill’er Up: An Architectural History of America’s Gas Stations*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co, Inc., 1979).

²¹⁰ Meyer, Lynn, “City of Omaha’s Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission,” homepage, entered May 19, 2004.

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represents the application of “respectable” design, although modest, and the historical revivalism they practiced during the period.

The locations preferred by Standard Oil were within or closely located near the central business district where local trade was attracted and where early highways zigzagged through towns to give highest exposure to local commercial offerings. In larger towns, locations were selected on main thoroughfares that were beginning to stretch outward from business centers, the automobile row, or within residential areas that were growing increasingly outward from the commercial centers. See Table F-4 for locations and documented examples of this property subtype.

The buildings were well placed to accommodate access and for visibility, primarily corner lots. Stations were often placed diagonally to the intersection, although in some cases where the size of the lot was larger, the building was placed at a right angle to one of the fronting streets. Lighting and curbside signage contributed additional exposure to the stations and their products. Small areas were landscaped and lampposts, described by the architects as “electroliers” added to an attractive appearance from the roadway. Building sites were improved with concrete driveways, aprons, and perhaps an area sometimes described as a “car washing floor.” Outdoor grease pits or in later years, “electrically operated auto lifts or greasing racks,” were built for lubrication and small mechanical jobs.²¹¹

Description. As a subtype, the filling stations built by Standard Oil during this period can be called a “box and canopy.” The small one-story gasoline stations consisted of a square or nearly square “box” or cube of solid masonry construction that served as the office, and most often, a single “canopy” extending directly from the office and supported by a pair of masonry piers. Both the office and piers were of red face brick.

Dimensions of the office ranged from approximately 14 feet to 18 feet. The sidewalls of the office were symmetrical, consisting of a window wall composed of three multi-paned double hung windows and flanked by brickwork of vertical lines of bricks laid with ‘soldiers,’ creating a panel-like motif. The brick panels are distinguishing features of Standard’s stations. The primary façade of the office consisted of a center door and transom, symmetrically flanked by windows matching the sidewalls and simple brick pilasters engaged near the front corners that appear to support the canopy or paired at the corners to create a canton.

The interior walls were painted masonry and the ceiling was covered in pressed tin. A flue connected to the exterior brick chimney. The office was furnished with built-in cabinets, countertop or “table case,” and bench – all specified in the plans furnished by the architects.²¹² In the earliest documented examples, the interior of the office was partitioned for a single restroom, carved from the corner of the office, serving both station attendant and customers. In later years, the company began to add an additional restroom for ladies. Designed with an outside entrance for “modesty,” a ladies restroom was provided either by placing a small addition to its existing

²¹¹ As described in “Map of Marked Auto Trails in Nebraska,” Tenth Edition [1930] issued by Standard Oil of Nebraska.

²¹² Building permit 1160 dated August 9, 1921, City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division, plans on microfilm; reel 14, drawing 45.

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stations or, in the case of later stations, integrating the restroom within the design of the office “box.” Where additions were added to the rear of the office, similar brick construction was used and a sloped roof reached a height below the cornice. Those specifically designed to include a ladies restroom included a small anteroom leading to a “toilet room.” A smaller mens restroom remained accessed from the office.²¹³

Opposite the office were two masonry piers that supported the canopy, repeating the decorative panels of brick. The canopy accommodated drive-in service and sheltered the pumps, customer, and station attendant. The canopy extending directly from the office at a length ranging perhaps 11 feet to 20 feet, depending on lot size or the desire to accommodate one or two automobiles. Some examples show variations of the standard single canopy. Variations may have included canopies at the front and rear, canopies at right angles to the office, or perhaps no canopy if the site was limited in size. One example shows canopies extending on both front and back from the office, as illustrated on a Standard road map dated 1925.²¹⁴ Another is shown in architectural plans for a Lincoln station dated 1927 with canopies extending at right angles from the office. The Lincoln example is identified as “Filling Station Type F” with a notation, “Plan showing changes so as to build Type F station with two canopies.”²¹⁵ The entire building was crowned with a wall cornice of wood construction, with a row of light sockets in the frieze. The cornice is also a distinguishing feature of this design. A flat roof gently sloped inward from the canopy and office and was hidden behind a parapet, which with the wall cornice made up the assembly.²¹⁶

Significance. The decade of the 1920s was the most significant period of growth and development for the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska). Standard Oil ambitiously expanded its retail operations through a building program of company-owned and company-operated filling stations. Starting with twenty-four locations by 1919, by 1928 the company expanded to its highest peak in the number of company filling stations, around 200. By 1930, the company operated its filling stations in about 130 Nebraska towns; several larger towns had multiple stations.

This property subtype significantly represents Standard Oil’s unprecedented growth and development in the area of retail marketing of petroleum products through standardized, company-built and company-operated drive-in filling stations. This subtype also represents the continuance of the company’s policy of direct marketing to the consumer, and the advancement of the company’s use of their stations in advertising and promotion. Significance may therefore be established under **Criterion A** of the National Register of Historic Places. As a distinct property subtype that represents and conveys petroleum retailing of the period, the significance of the “box and canopy” station may also be established under **Criterion C** of the National Register of Historic Places. This property subtype significantly conveys the form and function of Standard Oil gasoline stations of this period and the concept of “place-product-packaging.” Furthermore, the application of

²¹³ Building permit 16871 dated September 21, 1927, City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections. Plans on file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

²¹⁴ “Map of Marked Auto Trails in Nebraska,” Fifth Edition [1925], Standard Oil Company (Nebraska).

²¹⁵ Building permit 16871, City of Lincoln.

²¹⁶ Building permit 1160, City of Omaha.

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quality materials and design – or “respectable” architecture evoking civic buildings – could be a basis for evaluating these buildings in the context of filling station design advanced by Standard Oil and other companies of the period. Ordinarily, significance would not be attributed to persons such as local operators on the basis of tenure or service to the company. **Criterion B** would require documentation that such person(s) contributed substantially to the development, implementation, or innovation applied to retail operations recognized by the company, unique sales ability or operations conducted at a local station, or other service to the community such as public office gained as a respected business operator. As examples of Standard Oil’s most substantial entry into retail marketing, statewide significance could be applied.

Registration Requirements. A primary factor in locating these retail establishments was local trade, traffic patterns that were developing along the states early highway systems, visibility, and accessibility. Most examples were probably located in or closely near central business districts and on corner lots. In all cases, registration requirements would include integrity of location, feeling, association, and setting. Properties must also have integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as best evidenced by brickwork, canopy/canopies, and wall cornice. The presence of exterior features, such as grease pits or outdoor hoists would add to the ability of the property to convey the types and means of services offered during this time.

- Subtype: Service Stations (1930-1939)

The “Transitional”

A practice that was becoming widely adopted in the industry to overcome decreasing profit margins on gasoline sales was entry into more profitable product lines and additional services. The gasoline station entered into the retail merchandising of tires, batteries, and accessories (in the trade called “TBA”), expanded repair services, and more offerings to the traveling public. As such, the “filling” station evolved into a true “service station. The entry into service stations called for extensive capital investments in new or remodeled outlets. The retail merchandising of products called for appealing displays and floor space to show and store products. Adding automotive repair services required the replacement of the grease pit or outdoor hoist with service bays to allow indoor servicing of automobiles.

For Standard Oil of Nebraska, the large number of stations it had built in the previous decade had become sorely outdated, unable to accommodate both traffic volumes and the entry into expanded product and service lines. At the time that the majority of its gas stations were built in the 1920s the standard design included a canopy, a single indoor toilet, and an outdoor pit for lubrication. The canopies allowed limited access due to their narrow lanes and one-way access. The addition of new service islands, which now required three pumps for the company’s expanded line of gasoline, the narrow lanes and low clearance of the canopies made it difficult to serve trucks, larger vehicles, and drive-in access.

Many of the company-owned stations of Standard Oil of Nebraska were built in the 1920s with an eye to local markets and traffic patterns, located primarily within or near business districts. As highways were rerouted through towns, sometimes bypassing entire communities, Standard’s older stations were often found to be poorly located. Forty-eight stations were removed from main routes, resulting in twenty-five being closed by

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Standard Oil due to reduced sales.²¹⁷ Due to the capital investment of relocating its stations, only a few followed with new locations in the higher traffic areas farther from the commercial centers or at the outskirts of town. See Table F-5 for locations and documented examples of this property subtype.

Several of the majors experimented with modern designs incorporating large display windows and service bays within a streamlined "oblong box," such as Texaco's model by industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague and a prototype for Socony-Vacuum by industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes.²¹⁸ Standard's architects, John and Alan McDonald were no doubt familiar with this trend and prepared a similar design in 1936 for a service station and storage garage for the "Easy Parking Company" in downtown Omaha.²¹⁹ Other companies of the period adopted a transitional design with elements of "domestic" architecture and traditional designs or materials found in their earlier stations.²²⁰ Plans by the Engineering Department of Socony-Vacuum for a proposed station in Omaha included stucco with brick quoins, shutters, and broken pediment over the doorway.²²¹ In 1934, consulting architect Frederick G. Frost, Jr. came up with a series of designs for Socony-Vacuum that integrated service bays and office into its new or remodeled stations. These featured a stepped parapet and pediment that retained some of the appearance of traditional designs within the newer form of the oblong box.²²²

Substantial capital investment was needed to transition into the operations of service stations and Standard Oil of Nebraska did not enter into a large program of modernization except for a few stations.²²³ In some cases, Standard Oil of Nebraska entered into more extensive repair services and tire and battery sales by simply building a single, detached service bay as an economical way to expand its offerings. The outdated canopy was removed and the brick buildings were whitewashed.

Where other profitable or well-located stations warranted and a more extensive remodeling was desirable, the company rebuilt its older stations by adding a service bay and a shop area to the existing building. Canopies were removed and borrowing from techniques used in retail merchandising, the main office was remodeled for more attractive display of products and storefronts were rebuilt with large display windows. Pilasters flanked the display windows and the main entrance. Remarkably similar to Frost's transitional design of Socony-Vacuum, these designs featured a prominent "classical" pediment that capped the redesigned front. As part of the redesign, stations were whitewashed.

²¹⁷ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 173.

²¹⁸ Liebs, pages 104-106.

²¹⁹ Plans identified as "Job 2269, May 1936," John McDonald & Alan McDonald, Architects. As filed with City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division, plans on microfilm.

²²⁰ Liebs, pages 106-107. The term "transitional" was applied by Liebs to describe companies who adapted a gradual modernization rather than a radically new design.

²²¹ Plans identified for a "One-Car Lubratory Station, Socony-Vacuum Engineer Department, [1935]. As filed with City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division, plans on microfilm.

²²² Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile, pages 106-107. An architectural rendering dated 1938 is featured in Plate 11, between pages 182 and 183.

²²³ Rettinger v. Pierpont et al. Nebraska Reports, page 171.

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Where a large customer base warranted, some new service stations replaced an older and outdated station. One example that could earn the name of a "super-service station" was built in Lincoln at an estimated cost of \$2,500 when constructed in 1932. Identified as a Type "O" plan by Omaha architects John and Alan McDonald, the station nodded to the company's older design in the use of brick in its construction, a canopy that extended diagonally from the main office or "attendants room," and a simplified cornice. A three-car service bay was described by the architects as a "service room" and specified to include overhead doors and two hoists. Accommodation was made for five pumps. A mens restroom was entered from the interior of the office; a ladies restroom was entered from the outside and was appointed with a shelf and mirror and a single toilet stall.²²⁴

Description. As a subtype, service stations built or remodeled by Standard Oil during this period can be called "transitional," both in terms of adapting its existing stations to accommodate new product and service lines and in stylistic treatment. Few new stations were built during this period, but in the case of one that has been documented, the company continued to use brick in its construction, a canopy, and a simplified cornice. Attached service bays accommodated the sales and repair services added to the company's offerings. In some cases, Standard entered into the operations of a service station by simply building a single, detached service bay as an economical way to add repair services. Where more profitable locations warranted and more extensive remodeling was desirable, the company rebuilt its older stations by adding a service bay and a shop area to the existing building. Canopies were removed and borrowing from techniques used in retail merchandising, the main office was remodeled for more attractive display of products and storefronts were rebuilt with large display windows. Pilasters flanked the display windows and the main entrance. Unlike some of the majors who were experimenting with streamlined architecture for their new stations, Standard Oil adapted a design featuring a prominent "classical" pediment that capped the redesigned front. As part of the redesign, stations were whitewashed.

Significance. This property subtype significantly represents Standard Oil's modest entry into the marketing practice of adding additional product and service lines to offset declining margins in gasoline sales. Significance may therefore be established under **Criterion A** of the National Register of Historic Places. As a distinct property subtype that represents and conveys petroleum retailing of the period, the significance of the "transitional" station may also be established under **Criterion C** of the National Register of Historic Places. This property subtype significantly conveys the form and function of Standard Oil gasoline stations of this period and the concept of "place-product-packaging." Ordinarily, significance would not be attributed to persons such as local operators on the basis of tenure or service to the company. **Criterion B** would require documentation that such person(s) contributed substantially to the development, implementation, or innovation applied to retail operations recognized by the company, unique sales ability or operations conducted at a local station, or other service to the community such as public office gained as a respected business operator. As properties representing the transition of its operations to service stations, statewide significance can be applied.

²²⁴ Building Permit 20837, dated October 10, 1932, City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections. City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections. Plans on file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

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Registration Requirements. The registration requirements for the subtype require integrity of location and setting. Properties must also have integrity of design, materials, and workmanship that conveys the type of improvements or new construction applied to Standard's stations of this period. However, in evaluating properties, other alterations made to Standard Oil's earlier stations can convey the more modest upgrading put in place by the company. Examples include removal of canopies that characterized the company's standardized design of the 1920s.

• Subtype: Leased Outlets

A marketing practice that began to be adopted by both the majors and the Standard Oil group in the 1920s was to enter into lease agreements with the owners or operators of privately owned stations. This practice was based on the desire to increase gallonage and expand into markets without the investments in company-owned and -operated stations. The company also could reduce the number of its employees and pass on price margins to local operators. Leased stations may have overcome Standard's hesitation to invest in the relocation of its company-owned stations, as locations on higher speed highways on the outskirts of towns became more desirable.

Several methods for leasing private service stations were introduced by Standard of Indiana in 1922; forms of the Lease-and-Agency Agreement used by many oil companies in the late 1920s and early 1930s. To increase gallonage, Standard Oil of Indiana, for example, established a "Quantity Discount Agreement Plan" (QDA) in 1925, offering greater discounts for larger purchases. A subsequent practice to counter price competition in the 1930s included a "Service Station Quantity Discount" plan. Written contracts were made with gasoline customers for one year.²²⁵

One method was to lease the station from the owner and make him the company agent or operator, a "Private Drive-In Service Station Leased," or PDISSL. And under "Authorized Agents Agreements," a dealer would agree to offer the exclusive line of Standard's products and rented his station to Standard Oil with an option to purchase it at a pre-arranged figure. Another plan, introduced in 1928, was to lease a station from the owner for a year and place a salaried employee or a private individual under a sublease to operate the business. This arrangement was called a "Privately Owned Service Station Leased," or POSSL.²²⁶ Rentals of stations were based, in part, on volume and value of other business done. Sometimes loans were made to lessees to pay for the stock needed to establish a station.

In 1934, Standard of Nebraska held 176 company-owned service stations and controlled another 152 under lease.²²⁷ By the late 1930s the company began leasing its company-owned stations to individual operators, another departure from a long-standing policy of direct marketing from the company to customer. Although

²²⁵ National Petroleum News, December 26, 1928, pages 78-79. Also see Giddens, pages 324, 480.

²²⁶ Giddens, pages 313-314.

²²⁷ National Petroleum News, July 17, 1935, page 11.

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sources vary, in 1939 Standard of Nebraska operated only 27 of its company-owned stations, leased 173 of its company-owned stations, and had 101 service stations under lease.²²⁸

Description. Collectively, these various forms of arrangements may be called “leased operations,” or as a subtype, “leased outlets.” Beginning in the 1920s and extending into the following decade was Standard Oil’s policy of entering into lease agreements with private owners or operators, probably following the practices and methods of Standard of Indiana. While little is known of the type or locations that the company leased, it is assumed that most stations were built to the owner’s design or built prior to a lease arrangement with Standard Oil.

Significance. Standard Oil’s leasing policies, first established in the 1920s, allowed the company to enter a larger number of local markets without the investment of building company-owned stations. By the 1930s the company oversaw a substantial increase in the number of individually owned and operated outlets selling under the Standard name. Leasing allowed Standard Oil to expand its locations and sale of branded products without investing in company-owned retail outlets. As a significant marketing policy of the company, **Criterion A** may be applied to leased stations. Application of **Criterion B** and **Criterion C**, however, is limited. Local owners or operators were considered as private dealers, and their gasoline stations were privately owned and had little or no design attributes required by Standard Oil. As a significant marketing policy used by the company, however, statewide significance is applicable.

Registration Requirements. A leased gasoline station may be registered as a historic resource under this Multiple Property Documentation submittal if a lease arrangement can be documented. In some cases documentation can establish that Standard Oil exercised an option to buy a private station and subsequently continued to operate it as a company outlet. Integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association must be present. Since private owners or operators built stations, few design attributes can be ascribed to Standard Oil. Therefore, integrity of design, materials, and workmanship is applied to individual properties on a case-by-case basis.

²²⁸ National Petroleum News, August 2, 1939, page 1. Giddens reported 193 company-owned service stations when Standard of Nebraska was acquired by Standard of Indiana, page 587.

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TABLE F-1

STANDARD OIL OF NEBRASKA							
Headquarters/Main Offices							
Location	Date	NeHBS*	Source of Information	Status**			Notes
				L	P	I	
Omaha	[1907]	D009:	City Directory, NeHBS (D009:124-9)	X			Brandeis Bldg.(Leased) NRHP, 1982
Omaha	1920		Omaha City Directory, 1921			X	1912 Farnam (Temporary offices)
Omaha	1922	D009:	NRHP (1979) NeHBS (D009:122-1)	X			18th & Howard (S.O. Building)
L=Listed							
D=Demolished							

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TABLE F-2

STANDARD OIL OF NEBRASKA							
Warehouses/Distribution Plants							
Bulk Stations							
Location	Date	NeHBS*	Source of Information	Status**			Notes
				L	P	I D	
Omaha	[Var.]		Sanborn Map, 1970 (No current verification)				14 th & Locust (Whse, Shop, Garage)
Lincoln			Field Observation, February 2004	X			N. 14th & New Hampshire (Garage)
Hastings	1921	AD04-010	Adams County Survey, 1998	X			West B & Emerson (Distribution Plant)
N. Platte	1923	LN06-568	Lincoln County Survey, 1993	X			509 7th St. East (Distribution Plant)
Alliance			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Beatrice			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
David Cy			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Fremont			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Gr. Island			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Herman			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Kearney			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Lakeside			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Lyons			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Ne. City			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Norfolk			Field Observation, February 2004	X			7th & Prospect (Bulk St/Pump Hse)
S. Sioux			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Utica			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Wayne			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station
Winside			Inventory (1939)				Bulk Station

* Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Nebraska State Historical Society

**Status as of/subject to Source of Information:

L=Listed, National Register of Historic Places

P=Potentially Eligible, National Register of Historic Places

I =Integrity Issues

D=Demolished since Source of Information reported, see Notes

Source (Primary Reference): "List..." Box B0101167, Folder Standard Oil Company (Nebr.),

bpAmerica Inc., Naperville, Illinois

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TABLE F-3

STANDARD OIL OF NEBRASKA Filling Stations (1914-1919)							
Location	Date	NeHBS*	Source of Information	Status**			Notes
				L	P	I	
Lincoln							
12th & Q	Mar-14		City of Lincoln Building Permit #5408			X	Galvanized Iron
11th & J	1915		Lincoln City Directory			X	Brick
18th & O	Jun-16		City of Lincoln Building Permit #6617			X	Brick
Omaha							
29th&Harney	Jun-14		City of Omaha Building Permit #771			X	Brick, Everett Dodds, architect
18th & Cass	Aug-14		City of Omaha Building Permit #1039			X	Brick
39th/Farnam	Mar-15		City of Omaha Building Permit #154			X	Brick
Norfolk	Apr-15		Norfolk City Council approves plans			X	Brick
Fremont						X	Replaced, 1922
Hastings	1915		Sanborn Fire Insurance map, Nov.1915			X	Replaced, c.1922
**Status							
D=None are known to be extant							

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TABLE F-4

STANDARD OIL OF NEBRASKA Filling Stations (1920-1929)							
Location	Date	NeHBS*	Source of Information	Status**			Notes
				L	P	I	
Venango	1927	PR06-009	Perkins County Survey, 1989		X		
Orleans	c.1929	HN04-018	Harlan County Survey, 1985		X		
Palisade	c.1927	HK03-037	Hitchcock County Survey, 1990		X		
Utica			Field Observation, 2002			X	Vacant, altered
Kimball			Field Observation, September 2003			X	Vacant, deteriorated, altered
Chadron			Informant, September 3, 2000			X	Altered
Pilger	1927	ST01-055	Stanton County Survey, 1988			X	Altered
Ogallala	1922	KH04-053	Keith County Survey, 1989		X		Pending NRHP, 2004
* Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Nebraska State Historical Society							
**Status as of/subject to Source of Information:							
L=Listed, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)							
P=Potentially Eligible, National Register of Historic Places							
I =Integrity issues, see Notes							
D=Demolished since Source of Information reported, see Notes							

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TABLE F-5

STANDARD OIL OF NEBRASKA Service Stations (1930-1939)							
Location	Date	NeHBS*	Source of Information	Status**			Notes
				L	P	I	
Lincoln	1932		City of Lincoln, Building Permit #20837		X		18th & "O" Street
Broken Bow	1937	CU05-072	Historic Highway Survey, 2002		X		Vacant, 2003
Norfolk	c.1937	MD06-142	Historic Highway Survey, 2002			X	Demolished, 2002
Alliance		BX01-014	Box Butte County Survey, 1975			X	Demolished
Beatrice		GA03-231	Gage County Survey, 1992		X		
* Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Nebraska State Historical Society							
**Status as of/subject to Source of Information:							
L=Listed, National Register of Historic Places							
P=Potentially Eligible, National Register of Historic Places							
I =Integrity issues, see Notes							
D=Demolished since Source of Information reported, see Notes							

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G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The geographical area covered by this Multiple Property Documentation submittal is the **State of Nebraska**, the historical marketing territory assigned to the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) after dissolution of the Standard Oil combination in 1911. During its period of operation as an independent company from 1911-1939, the company's operations remained entirely within the State of Nebraska.

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H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This Multiple Property Documentation submittal is based on properties previously identified in the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, research of published and archival sources, and some field observations conducted between July 2003 and April 2004.

Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) is maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society as a comprehensive survey and inventory of the State's historic resources. Conducted since 1974, the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey currently represents 65,098 properties in the State (April 2004). Survey files and databases are maintained in the State Historic Preservation Office, and include survey data gathered from county-by-county fieldwork, inventory data for properties identified in thematic/multiple property studies, and properties that have been evaluated or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The work of the Nebraska State Historical Society in its level of comprehensive survey and study of historic highway development is well recognized in the field.

From the NeHBS database, over 160 surveyed gasoline stations were retrieved. Seven properties associated with the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) were subsequently identified from the survey. Two warehouses and distribution plants were surveyed and in course of this research attributed to Standard Oil. No bulk stations have been surveyed to date. Additional properties were identified by field observation; several more were confirmed with the assistance of local informants. All are denoted in the tables accompanying Section F.

One project conducted for the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey in 2001-2002, "Nebraska Historic Highways Survey," focused on historic resources associated with five major highways (see report of findings dated August 2002; Multiple Property Documentation submittals for each of the five highways studied are currently in draft). A total of 1,048 properties were identified, resurveyed, or reverified, including bridges and engineering works, roadbeds, and roadside businesses. Special consideration was made to the multiple alignments that were routed through communities and urban areas through time, with the understanding that these communities would include a concentration of roadside businesses. Generally, the survey included properties constructed before 1960 and the factors of integrity were broadened in cases of gasoline stations with the understanding that alterations through time may be important to understanding the changing marketing practices of the industry. While only several gas station properties attributed to Standard Oil were identified in the survey, additional information on gas station property types and associations to Nebraska's highway development will continue to yield further information to both gasoline stations and the general study of roadside businesses. As additional properties are identified and entered in the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, more complete data will be generated to supplement this work.

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey does have certain limitations and biases. County surveys are conducted at a reconnaissance level, sometimes called "windshield" surveys. Detailed evaluation is seldom researched but those conducted after the mid-1980s surveyed sites in categories of context, including transportation-related resources. Surveys that were conducted before the mid-1980s often did not recognize

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roadside businesses for architectural or historical merit. Alterations, especially in the case of gasoline stations, may have often precluded survey, perceived as lacking integrity rather than being recognized as responses to historic marketing practices. Improved databases and Geographic Information Systems will enhance the ability to study the significant scope of the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey. Systematic efforts are being undertaken to resurvey counties that are incomplete or dated. A field guide to subtypes of Standard's gasoline stations and known locations is proposed to assist in the identification of additional properties.

Archival Sources

No records of the Standard Oil Company (Nebraska) are known to exist. However, several items relating to the sale and disposition of the company were located in the archives of bpAmerica, Inc., successor to the Standard Oil Company (Indiana). Correspondence with the archivist for bpAmerica, Tom Pardo, resulted in a small but important collection of both archival and photographic materials. These included a 1939 inventory of real estate holdings by Standard of Nebraska at the time of its acquisition by Standard Oil of Indiana.

Sources maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society and several Nebraska agencies contributed important information, including incorporation files, trademarks, and legal cases. In particular, documentation was available for a legal challenge that was initiated after the 1939 sale of Standard Oil of Nebraska. The case was appealed to the Nebraska Supreme Court (Rettinger v. Pierpont). The Supreme Court's decision, published in Nebraska Reports and the case file held by the Nebraska State Historical Society, provided substantial background and factual information about the company. This case was initially filed in the District Court of Douglas County. District Court records, if available, may provide further information.

Public Records

Deed records, maintained by county governments, confirmed the company's ownership of a number of properties. Deed research on the company's owned and operated stations is made particularly easy by a simple identification of the first deed transaction entered for the Standard Oil Company. Local newspaper articles coinciding with the transaction date were source materials for several individual gasoline stations.

Building permits, which are available for Lincoln and Omaha revealed information about locations, types, and architectural designs. Architectural drawings of the earliest standardized design of a Standard Oil filling were located on microfilm of the Omaha Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division. An important photograph dated 1916 was used to confirm the same design and general site layout for this early example of this property subtype. Building permits maintained by the Lincoln Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections confirmed the architectural firm for the standardized design built by Standard Oil in the 1920s. A 1921 architectural drawing of this type was located in the Omaha Permits and Inspection Division. Designs for a 1927 and a 1932 station were located in a collection of architectural plans accompanying building permits from the City of Lincoln, now housed at the Nebraska State Historical Society. In towns where permits for building and safety were issued by local governments, the minutes of city councils or village boards yielded information about construction dates and subsequent improvements for several individual gasoline stations.

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Published Sources

Two authoritative histories provided significant information on Standard Oil operations. The work of Ralph W. and Muriel E. Hidy, Pioneering in Big Business (1882-1911): History of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), provided a background to operations of the Standard Oil Company before 1911. An important work by Paul Giddens, Standard Oil Company (Indiana): Oil Pioneer of the Middle West, was published in 1955 and provided information related to petroleum marketing by the Standard Oil Company of Indiana. The work was particularly helpful, since Standard Oil of Indiana was the principal supplier of products that were marketed to Standard Oil of Nebraska. As such, the products and marketing practices of the Nebraska company often followed that of Standard of Indiana. And since the marketing territory of Standard of Indiana included the greater Midwest, the information on regional markets and marketing operations was particularly insightful. Giddens' work was brought up to date by Emmett Dedmon, Challenge and Response: A Modern History of Standard Oil Company (Indiana), published in 1984.

A most important reference was the trade journal, National Petroleum News, founded in 1909 to serve independent oil producers and provide price reporting for the industry. Although this trade journal concentrated on oil exploration and production, attention was given to marketing practices, retailing, and gasoline station operations and designs. Events significant to Standard Oil of Nebraska, such as stock transactions, meetings of stockholders, and sale of the company were reported. A complete series of National Petroleum News on microfilm was examined for the period of January 1919-December 1922 for the purpose of identifying aspects of the industry's major entry into retail marketing. Others were examined on a case-by-case basis for the purpose of locating source material cited in various published sources and to fill research voids for periods of petroleum marketing not well established from other reference sources.

John A. Jakle and Keith Sculle have published the most extensive work on gas stations as both property types and marketing operations in The Gas Station in America (1994). Jakle's earlier work on the typology of gasoline stations, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970" in Journal of American Culture (1978) gave insight into the changing form and function of structural types, which reflect changing marketing trends in product and service lines. Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture by Chester Liebs is a recognized work on the commercial roadside, including gasoline stations, the early "automobile row," and automobile garages and dealerships. Daniel Vierya's book, Fill'er Up: An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations (1979) was helpful in identifying the imagery applied to the architecture of gasoline stations. Numerous collectors' guides to "petroliana" assisted in identifying products, branding, and equipment of gasoline companies and manufacturers.

Product Literature, Advertising, and Road Maps

Standard's early publication of its yearly editions of Nebraska road maps is significant. Maps provide locational information and a wealth of insight representing marketing practices, products, and services of the company through the period of its operations. Product literature and various promotional materials issued by both Standard Oil of Nebraska and Standard of Indiana added to information about marketing initiatives, products, and operations. Also significant was the extensive use of advertising by Standard of Nebraska.

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Local Sources

Locations of Standard's company-owned gas stations, warehouses, and distribution facilities were extensively studied. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps have been particularly helpful. Road maps issued by Standard Oil of Nebraska (1921-1939) identified towns where Standard operated its stations. As additional locations are identified, a fuller picture of Standard's property types will assist in future work. Local newspapers, telephone books, and city directories helped to round out information about specific properties owned or operated by Standard Oil in Nebraska.

Historic photographs, when they can be located, are excellent source material. Collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society and local sources contained pictorial information about properties, such as warehouses, bulk operations, distribution plants. Photographs of individual gasoline stations showed evidence of subtypes, site layout, landscaping, equipment, and signage. A fine collection of historic photographs (c.1922-1931) has been gathered for a Standard Oil gas station in Ogallala, which is being considered for nomination under this MPD.

Finally, since living persons associated with Standard Oil operations in Nebraska before 1939 have yet been identified, no interviews were conducted. Current distributors of Standard Oil/Amoco products may lead to potential contacts or private collections. Conversations with several people helped elaborate on other petroleum operations during the time period. These included Eilert Wilhelms of Bruning, a retired independent oil distributor who began in the business by driving a tank truck in 1938. Lea R. Puschendorf (Sr.) of Norfolk, operated family-owned Standard Oil gasoline stations after his service in World War II and was well acquainted with the company's marketing practices, local petroleum dealers, and independent companies that operated in the 1930s.

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Nebraska Supreme Court, "State of Nebraska v. Standard Oil Company of Indiana," 61 Nebr., 28, No. 11,074, Filed December 5, 1900. Case file held by Nebraska State Historical Society.

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City of Lincoln, Building and Safety Division, Permits and Inspections, various building permits. Architectural records that accompanied the City's building permits are maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society.

City of Omaha, Planning Department, Permits and Inspection Division, various building permits and plans on microfilm.

bpAmerica, Inc. Records of Buell F. Jones, General Counsel of Standard Oil Company (Indiana), box B0101167, file name "Standard Oil Company (Nebraska): Acquisition and Purchase by SOCO(Ind.)." Manuscripts include "Inventory of...Properties" of Standard Oil Company real estate [1939]. "Memorandum" dated February 19, 1942 attributed to Buell Jones, listing events leading to and closing of the acquisition of Standard Oil of Nebraska by Standard of Indiana.

Trade Journals, Periodicals, Newspapers

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Telephone books and city directories, various.

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Representation in Existing Surveys

Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (1974 to present). Survey files and databases are maintained in the State Historic Preservation Office and include survey data gathered from county-by-county fieldwork, inventory data for properties identified in theme/multiple property studies, and nominations of properties that have been evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Nebraska State Historical Society, "Nebraska Historic Highway Survey." Produced in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Roads and conducted by Mead & Hunt, Inc. and Heritage Research, Ltd. in 2001-2002. A published report of findings is dated August 2002. Multiple Property Documentation submittals for each of the five highways studied are currently in draft.