

## **Oil Shale and the Colorado School of Mines**

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The Colorado School of Mines has a long time interest in oil shale and the production of shale oil. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Colorado School of Mines President, Victor C. Alderson, began writing papers on oil shale and began a symposium on this subject. The symposia ran through 1924 and then stopped because of decrease in interest. During World War I, and for a short period after that, shale oil was produced in several re-torts in Colorado. Later, during World War II, new interest was aroused and the U.S. Bureau of Mines began work on shale in the Naval Reserve near Rifle. This work continued until the 1970's and in the 1960's government land was provided for oil companies to do experimental work on the production of shale oil.

In 1964, the Colorado School of Mines initiated an annual Oil Shale Symposium which continued until 1992. This series of symposia was composed of 25 sessions. It was ended after the 25th Session because of the difficulty in getting enough worthwhile papers to make the sessions worthwhile. Funds to support research in this field had dried up and work was gradually discontinued. The general thought was that if crude oil reached prices of \$25.00 a barrel or above, then shale oil would be a viable competitor. Today, of course, crude oil sells for \$60.00 a barrel and the prediction is that it will stay above \$50.00 a barrel in the future.

The future of synthetic crudes from oil shale looks better than it has in the past – that's why we are here today.