



Spindletop Unwound: A True Story of Greed, Ambition and Murder in the First Degree

Roger L. Shaffer

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Through a Mexican land grant in 1834, William Humphries obtained a parcel of land near Beaumont, Texas. Although his purported heirs claim that land was never sold, in 1883, through a strange set of circumstances, W.P.H. McFaddin became the landowner of record.

At the turn of the century Captain Anthony Lucas, an immigrant from Austria, leased the land and on January 10, 1901, brought in the well that would be regarded as the "mother of all gushers." Spindletop's gusher drew more people to the oil patch than the California or Klondike gold rushes, and the Texas oil industry leaped into life. Spindletop attracted big names and big money. And the fortune produced by Spindletop fueled a ninety-year attack for ownership and mineral rights to the Humphries original parcel of land. There was Texas-sized trouble brewing.

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