

George L. Craig



Life History



By George L. Craig (b.1865 d.1944), Sewickley, PA
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GEORGE LIGGETT CRAIG (G6)

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I was born on the 8th day of October, 1865, in the front room on the first floor of our old home at 66 Washington Street in the City of Allegheny, which later became the North Side of the City of Pittsburgh.

It is unknown to me where my given name "George" came from, but is believed to have been in the family on my Mother's side. "Liggett" comes from my Grandmother Craig's maiden name, "Elizabeth Liggett."

Aunt Hannah, my Mother's sister, who later married John Simpson of Mahoningtown, Pennsylvania, was living with Father and Mother at the time of my birth. It was she who frequently bathed me while a baby. One morning, when she was giving me a bath, the old clock on the mantle struck eleven. I seemed to have noticed the strike of the clock, which caused Aunt Hannah to remark: "That baby certainly has good hearing." It must have been this little incident to have the members of the family refer to me as "her boy."

Through the back of our property passed the canal which went down to the large locks on Federal Street, close to the present station of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Father owned two canal boats, one of which was operated by my Brother, William J. Craig, who drove the mules. For boats to pass, a turn out or recess was dug into our property. Nearby at this point was an old-fashioned pump where canal men stopped for water. As children, we were always fascinated in seeing a certain phenomenon take place at this pump, being due to the difference in the temperatures of the air and the water coming from the pump. This made the air look like smoke, leading us to believe that the fairies were cooking

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their breakfast. When the old canal was abandoned, to make way for the railroad, my Father's boats were taken out of the water at New Castle. The City of Allegheny then built a street at the rear of our property, partly over the old canal, through to Cedar Avenue. The name of Church Avenue was given to this new street. Our house number then became 86 Church Avenue.

During the late 1880's, Brother Joe built three houses facing on Washington Street for the sole purpose of giving my Mother an income. Our old home stood on the property until 1904 when Brother Joe had the old homestead moved on barge down to his farm at Stoops Ferry and built four houses on the property in its stead. It was soon after my marriage that we occupied 601 Washington Street, as houses in Allegheny were very scarce.

My Father owned a grocery store at 47 North Diamond Street, opposite the Allegheny Market House. When I was a little boy, I would help my Father in the store. It was customary for me to start work early in the morning and twice every week, on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings, I would leave home at 6 A.M., crossing East Park, to sell brown wrapping paper in the Allegheny Market. In those days, there were no paper sacks, nor bags, so the merchants would make cones out of the paper to put up berries, etc. The paper was made from straw. On these mornings, Mother would send hot coffee to me with Father when he would come to open the store.

In 1873, Father was caught in the panic. He had endorsed a note for \$10,000 to accommodate a man by the name of Barny Gray. As this note had to be paid, Father lost his store and was forced into bankruptcy. The court had appointed a man by the name of Gilmore to be the referee in bankruptcy. Gilmore made no accounting to the court. He stole whatever moneys and other available proceeds there were and did a great many unlawful things. Later, when my brothers, Ed and Joe, were older, they demanded an accounting from Gilmore and threatened to send him to the penitentiary.

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On bended knees, he appeared before Mother and cried for mercy. Through the graciousness of her heart, Mother asked the boys to let up and not press the case.

My first job came in July, 1881, when Brother Ed arranged for me, through a fellow Odd Fellow, to start work with the C. D. P. Telephone Company. Ed's friend was the Manager of the office. In those days, there were no automatic connections between switch boards, so it became my duty to collect slips of paper with numbers from the telephone girls who wished to be connected with other boards. I would run across the room with these numbers and call them off to other girls who would make the connections. I remember one Saturday, when there was a terrific electrical storm. It was so severe that everyone was frightened, mostly because there were no lightning arresters. I, too, was scared and told the Manager that I was quitting my job. He told me that they had a rule requiring employees to be with them a certain length of time before they could receive pay. I left without pay.

My next job came in June, 1882. It was with the Chautauqua Lake Ice Company with offices located at 20th & Pike Streets. My job was to collect bills in Allegheny for which I received one dollar per day.

Having spent only the summer of '82 with the Ice Company, an opportunity to work for Arbuckles and Company, wholesale grocers, was presented through Mr. Edwin Lare. I started on the 2nd day of September, 1882, at a salary of \$5.00 per week. Each morning at 7 A.M., I would go to the Post Office, receive the mail orders, copy them, and have them ready for the office manager to approve, then take them to the Shipping Department. Later, during the day, I would help Mr. Fisher, the bookkeeper, with his

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books and make myself generally useful. I remained with Arbuckles and Company until September 25, 1885, leaving then to go with Brother Joe. The employees of the Company presented me with a watch charm.

Brother Joe and Mr. Joe Cappeau were together interested in drilling for oil in McKean County, Pennsylvania. They had engaged me to look after a well which had just been brought in on the McDade tract at Kane and had sent me there on the evening of November 25, 1885. Brother Joe was such a heavy speculator in oil that he was caught short by the Standard Oil Company. This necessitated a sale of his property and my return to Pittsburgh in 1886, still in Brother Joe's employ.

With experience gained in the oil fields at Kane, I was sent to Taylorstown, near Washington, Pennsylvania, in August, 1887, to become Superintendent of the Natural Gas Company of West Virginia. There, I had charge of the wells. It was only a short time after my arrival that Joseph W. Craig, D. P. Reighard, P. A. B. Widener and Elkins, the latter two being from Philadelphia, started the Globe Refining Company and the Western Atlantic Pipe Line Company at Pittsburgh, and engaged me (along with Frank Lowery) to take charge of the companies.

Joseph W. Craig was Superintendent of the Globe Refining Company and Pat O'Brien was Superintendent of the Western Atlantic Pipe Line Company, and his brother, Tom, was one of the gaugers. Our first plan was to lay a pipe line into the refinery. I attended to the taking of the right of ways for this line and to the laying of it, coming down Sawmill Run to the Ohio River and up the Allegheny River to Sharpsburg. It was a three inch line. The contractor for laying the line in the rivers was Hulings Brothers, who owned a fleet of boats. John F. Casey was their bookkeeper at the time. As soon as all the lines had been laid, Frank Lowery

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took charge of the lines, and I took charge of the office, remaining there until February, 1891.

In March, 1891, the Mellon Family of Pittsburgh started the Crescent Pipe Lines. This line was to run from Pittsburgh to Marcus Hook on the Atlantic seaboard, near Philadelphia. They engaged me to undertake the job and supervise its construction. Jamieson and Fogg were the engineers. To be successful with such an undertaking, it was necessary to employ competent men, so with Pat O'Brien as General Superintendent, Addison Carl as Superintendent of building the pump stations, and Lawrence O'Hara as Superintendent of building a telegraph line, together with a few selected employees of the Western Atlantic Pipe Lines (one of whom was Jack Gross, Brother Joe's bookkeeper, who acted as our head bookkeeper in Pittsburgh), we commenced the line at Hayes Station, a point near Carnegie on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and headed out toward Greensburg, keeping south of the town. Here the line followed the valley through the mountains, running near Ligonier, and on up to Millbank Station on the Ligonier Valley Railroad. From Millbank, it crossed the mountain range to Ingleside, five miles south of Johnstown, and continued on to Saxton, a town on the Huntington and Broad Top Railroad. We were now heading for the Susquehanna River and a place to make the crossing. Marietta on the eastern side of the river was selected as this point. So, from Saxton, the line took an easterly course to Hayes Grove, which was reached in August of the same year. In order to fulfil our contracts a loading rack was built at this point to make shipment of oil in tank cars to Marcus Hook, which method of transporting oil was continued during construction of the remaining one hundred miles of line. After crossing the Susquehanna River, the line took a southeasterly course from Marietta to Marcus Hook, our objective and terminal, a distance of two hundred and seventy-six miles from

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Hayes Station. For the full length of this line, only four pump stations were required, which were located at Hayes Station, Millbank, Ingleside, and Hayes Grove. The operating cost for pumping the oil was about 2-3/4 cents per barrel of 42 gallons each. The capacity of the line was approximately 7000 barrels per day. The object was to supply the Bear Creek Refining Company with crude oil, a refinery owned by B. B. Campbell and others, an interest which (Brother Joe and I believed) was owned by the Mellons, as well as to export oil to Fennai and Despaux, France. At every point, interests of the Standard Oil Company fought us. Many of the cases were taken to court, which we won. Through purchase, the Standard Oil Company took possession January 1, 1896.

After the sale of the Crescent Pipe Lines to the Standard Oil Company, Brother Joe put me in charge of developing the Greensboro Gas Company, of which he was President. The company had gas leases in Green County and a potential market for its gas in the various towns along the Monongahela River. This Company later turned out to be most successful. It was sold in 1926 to The Manufacturers Light & Heat Company, being now a subsidiary of the Columbia Gas & Electric Corporation.

In 1902, W. L. Mellon sent for me to meet with him and R. B. Mellon to discuss a proposition in Texas where they were heavily interested and in great need of assistance. They had wanted me to take charge of and to reorganize the J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company. I was loath to leave Brother Joe again, but, upon advice from him, I could accept the Mellons' proposition, provided I didn't make a long term contract.

Colonel Guffey of Pittsburgh and a man named Lucas, while drilling for sulphur south of Beaumont, Texas, had struck oil and had interested the Mellons in their oil venture to the extent of a bond issue for approximately \$3,000,000. The Mellons, in turn,

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had sold most of these bonds to the Carnegie crowd, they being officials of the Carnegie Steel Company, and about \$500,000 worth to a bank in Boston. With no income to pay the interest, the bonds were becoming worthless. Something had to be done to save the Mellon name. A. W. Mellon, at first, did not wish to put more money into the J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company, as he could not see how it would be possible to make the company successful. I called on him several times and tried to convince him that the western country had wonderful prospects for oil. I would talk to him like a son to a father, telling him that Texas afforded a great opportunity to make money in oil. He became very enthusiastic and agreed to refinance the J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company.

On the 14th day of August, 1902, I made a satisfactory contract with the J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company, signed by W. L. Mellon, Vice-President, and departed from Pittsburgh for New Orleans, along with W. L. Mellon and G. R. Nutty, who was to take charge of sales of the finished products. On our journey southward, W. L. told me that I was to run the property to suit myself. He asked for my ideas of reorganization. I told him that I figured on a producing department, a pipe line department, and a marine department. There would be fair rates between the various departments to give a good idea as to how the different departments were working. W. L. Mellon said that was a wonderful idea and approved most heartily. We went to work on that basis. This was the beginning of what today is the Gulf Oil Corporation.

Our first step to reorganize was to take care of the personnel. J. D. Hogue was appointed General Agent to look after the affairs of the Company during any absence on my part. John F. Fisher was made General Superintendent. H. M. Wilcox was placed in charge of pipe lines. Cyrus A. Ewing was General Su-

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perintendent of production with H. E. Melatt, his assistant. H. P. Langworth was in charge of the office and Miss Hanzen took care of the leases, a very capable woman who had studied law. No sooner had we started than a great many adversities arose. It all seemed to be one great mess. I remember that, on one occasion, we got two or three telegrams from the Pittsburgh office to stop the pipe lines. I even had to work on W. L. Mellon for the Mellons to renew the contract with the New York Steamship Company to continue the construction of two tankers, the Ligonier and the Larimer. There just didn't seem to be any conception of organization under the old regime of the J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company. To help us over some of our difficulties, I employed Frank Leovy as one of the staff. This was done at the request of L. M. Hogue who was his next door neighbor. Frank Leovy was at that time employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad and had been most successful. He seemed to me to be the right man for the right place. Today, Frank Leovy is Vice-President of the Gulf Oil Corporation. As my contract was for a period of two years only, I returned to Pittsburgh at its expiration to engage in the oil and gas business with Brother Joe, as we had agreed. During all these years, the Company has undergone various reorganizations. I have taken no part whatsoever in any of them.

June 18, 1938

Appendix: Family Documents

I never had but the one sweetheart, Henrietta Burchfield. We went to the lower 4th Ward School together, for a time in the same room. I always loved her dearly. We grew up together and were married October 14, 1890, on the 25th Silver Wedding Anniversary of the Father and Mother of the bride. If I remember correctly, on our wedding trip, we went to Toledo to see Uncle Doc. She has been a wonderful wife and mother to the children and I love her dearly. On account of my nervous condition, she has had much to put up with, God bless her. I cannot express myself in words how much I love her. Continued long life and happiness to both of us.

June 18, 1938

Appendix: Family Documents

On the 14th day of August, 1902, I made an agreement with Mr. W. L. Mellon, Vice President of The J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company, to take over the general management and physical operations of The J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company. This contract was witnessed by Mr. R. B. Mellon. I succeeded Mr. J. C. McDowell, Vice President and General Manager of The J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company.

In conversation with Mr. W. L. Mellon at that time, I understood that approximately three million dollars in bonds had been placed by the Mellons on this property and sold to various ones, especially those connected with the Carnegie Steel Company and to one of the banks in Boston.

On August 14, 1902, Mr. W. L. Mellon, Mr. G. R. Nutty and myself left on an inspection trip to Texas. Mr. Nutty was to look after the Sales Department of the Gulf Refining Company, then building. On our arrival there, we went over all the properties, made a very careful inspection -- and, as I had been to the Lucas well when it came in, having been sent there by my brother, the late Joseph W. Craig, who was in the oil brokerage business at that time, I was very enthusiastic of the possibilities of finding oil in that section of the country.

On my return home, in talking with Mr. A. W. Mellon about our trip, Mr. Mellon at first did not wish to put more money in The J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company, as he could not see how it would be possible to make a successful company out of it. He had placed an order with the New York Ship Building Company for two new vessels to carry oil and he could cancel the order at a price of \$50,000.00 each, or \$100,000.00, and thought it would be best to make this cancellation. I begged him not to do so, because I was very enthusiastic that we were going to make a real company out of it, as we had wonderful possibilities - a well being drilled at Bartlesville, one small well at Red Fork, Oklahoma, and one at Corsicana, that showed oil in paying quantities. As Bartlesville is about 700 miles north of Beaumont, there would be wonderful possibilities of producing oil in that section of the country. No doubt, Mr. W. L. Mellon made a similar report to him, because he

finally agreed to go ahead.

On our way south, Mr. W. L. Mellon and I talked over the reorganization of the Company. He wanted my ideas how I was going to reorganize it. I went over the matter in detail and told him that I was going to make separate departments - producing, marine, and pipe line, -- with fair rates of charges between the departments. Mr. Mellon approved of it and said it was a wonderful idea. John F. Fisher was General Superintendent - in charge of production and pipe lines; C. A. Ewing - in charge of production; and H. M. Wilcox - in charge of pipe lines. James F. Foley was Superintendent of the Marine Department. At the Beaumont office, J. D. Hogue was General Agent -- with H. F. Langworthy in charge of the office, - and Miss Hanzen in charge of the Lease Department. Later, Mr. Frank Leovy was added to the staff as an assistant to Mr. Hogue.

George L. Craig

April 21, 1941.