



# BOIL BOOM!

*Music to Celebrate the Canadian Quest for Oil by:*

**BERNIE GILMORE**

## The Shaw Gusher

*Hugh Nixon Shaw – what a story! This man – penniless, almost shoeless – spent everything he had to find oil. Suddenly at ten o'clock in the morning of Friday, January 16, 1862, he struck oil! The rock split open and oil sprayed beyond the tree tops, creating Canada's first oil gusher.*

It was just another day for Mr. Shaw  
Read his Bible and he thought he'd take a walk  
He strolled out on mucky soil known for its oil  
But no one here had dug beneath the rock

People thought that Yankee man insane  
His drilling friends and money almost gone  
They said "Shaw its time to go, this oil will never flow"  
He turned and said "I need another day"

And the Bible says it better  
I came to wash my steps in butter  
And the Bible says it all  
The rock poured out rivers of oil.....

It was the middle of the morning on that day  
The drilling rig was pounding on the rock  
Suddenly the ground belched out an awful sound  
The rock was cracked and oil began to spray

When I dug down beneath the soil  
The rock poured out rivers of oil  
I came to wash my steps in butter  
And the rock poured out rivers of oil.....

The liquid fountain blew way up high  
Oiler men ran to save their lives  
As you looked up to the trees, oil carried by the breeze  
Was thick and black and filled the morning sky

Now oil was never found in such a way  
Digging far below the rock and clay  
Thanks to Mr. Shaw and others yet to come  
The modern world would never be the same

Bernie – vocals, acoustic guitar; Ashley Condon – harmony vocals; Jane Lewis – harmony vocals; Evan Gordon – electric bass; Shaman Ayerhart – dobro; Geordie Gordon – mandolin.



## Black Gold

*Men dug for oil in the early days, and were known as 'miners', a term we normally associate with diggers of coal. In Oil Springs and Petrolia today, oil continues to be coaxed from the ground, as wells ooze out the 'black gold'.*

A few years ago, men made a fortune  
From digging holes in the ground  
As miners they dared the land they prepared  
To give up the treasure they found  
With tools made of metal men pounced on a  
treadle  
And watched as the oil sprayed back  
The smell of the air was heavy and rare  
And the land was covered in black

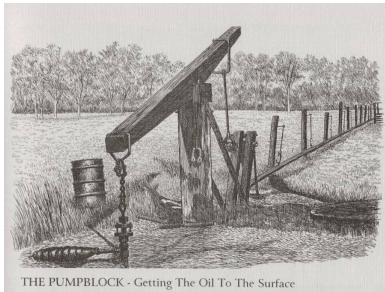
### Chorus

Black gold for miners of oil  
Brought a life that many enjoyed  
Made some men a name made others insane  
For black gold and miners of oil

Soon a city of grease and oil took shape  
With a skyline of tripods (teepee) and wood  
And a scramble went on beginning at dawn  
To dig deep and as fast as they could  
For Fairbank and Shaw, the land that was raw  
Lent them a place for their dreams  
And the flood of oil drenching the soil  
Would go on forever it seemed

Now still lies the ground once filled with sounds  
Of men seeking gold that was black  
Where men of the day, dug deep in the clay  
Causing the earth to crack  
Now empty the earth that once gave birth  
To oil and gas and tar  
And the wounds that were made by men who  
were crazed  
Stay covered and stiff like a scar

*Bernie – vocals, acoustic guitar; Sandra Swannell – violin, viola; Evan Gordon - double bass.*



## Oil Was Found in Canada First

*The bug infested swamps of Lambton County –specifically the area now known as Oil Springs– is where the first commercial oil well in North America was dug. James Miller Williams dug this first well in 1858, setting off a frenzy that began the petroleum age.*

When the Pennsylvania oil was the story of the day  
Like California gold the rush was on  
Land was bought and sold and they were told  
how much to pay  
And a golden age was breaking like the dawn.

But further to the north and many months  
before  
A discovery to quench the devil's thirst  
They were digging in the ground and reaching  
down to its core  
When oil was found in Canada first.

First it was the gum beds they were scraping up  
the tar  
They were using oil for making kerosene  
Then James Miller Williams a man to raise the  
bar  
Was the first at finding oil at fourteen feet.

So word was getting out as fast as horses could  
run  
Farmhands and drillers had the curse  
They were hauling up the oil at 40 barrels in the  
sun  
And oil was found in Canada first.

Now men who drilled the oil were so much in  
demand  
They were finding jobs in places 'round the  
world  
And meanwhile back at home they were mining  
all the land  
And companies controlled the price of oil.

Then a friendly giant reaching up from the south  
Said I'll help you now before the times get worse

I can buy up your company avoid the pending  
drought  
And he didn't care if oil was found here first!

When the Pennsylvania oil was the story of the  
day  
Like California gold the rush was on  
There were fortunes won and lost, no one  
stopped to count the cost  
Always ready to meet the morning sun.

Now the oil boom was fading by 1889  
But even today there seems a thirst  
When other nations celebrate they stop and  
realize  
That oil was found in Canada first

We can look around the world but it's right  
before our eyes  
That oil was found in Canada first!

*Bernie – vocals, acoustic guitar; James Gordon  
– tin whistle; Geordie Gordon – mandolin.;  
Evan Gordon – electric bass*



## Enniskillen

*The oiler men of Enniskillen Township – known as 'Hard Oilers' – were not always considered a good catch by bachelor women of the times. In turn, the oiler men sometimes experienced difficulty in coaxing young wives to come out to what had been referred to as the 'howling swamp'*

On a cold and rainy day in November  
My darling Johnny turned and said to me  
I know we talked of spending time together  
So leave your mother's home and follow me

He said there's a place called Inniskillen  
Where dreams are made and land is almost free  
So come and start a life if you are willin'  
There are riches there beyond our wildest dreams

### Chorus

What could ever come from a howling swamp?  
Who would ever stay in the cold and damp?  
And why would a woman get caught up in the spell  
And walk on land and meet with the devil himself?

Well I couldn't leave my home in Nova Scotia  
Where I grew up near my mother's knee  
So I said to him you wild and foolish dreamer  
All the dangers up ahead you cannot see

For I've heard of all the fuss and crazy living  
And the black and smelly stuff that they call oil  
And did you hear of how the rivers there were burning?  
And did you know that all that glitters is not gold

So I had a talk with Madame Orloff  
The lady who was born with a double veil  
She said stay in the land of your sisters  
Don't go traveling down this lonesome trail

You see following the dreams of another person  
Can catch you with its sparkle and a spin  
But for the real things in life I say just listen  
And follow the dreams you find within

*Bernie – vocals, acoustic guitar; Ashley Condon – harmony vocals; Jane Lewis – harmony vocals; Evan Gordon – double bass; Shaman Ayerhart – dobro, mandolin.*

# CLAIRVOYANT

## Madam Orloff

Has returned to town in response to requests from some of our leading ladies and will only remain a few days. The greatest Palmist and Trance Medium of her age. She can be consulted on all affairs of

## Business, Love and Money Matters.

Never-failing advice to young men or women on Courtship, and

### How to Choose a Wife or Husband

For happiness. Madam Orloff is the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, born with a double veil. She tells the

### PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

All in trouble call on the Madam now, at the

### Anderson House, Petrolia,

Office hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Petrolia, March 18th, 1895.

Petrolia, March 18th, 1895.

## Letter from Java (Foreign Drillers)

*Beginning in 1874, the men known as 'foreign drillers' were hired to bring in oil fields in 87 countries around the world. These were Petrolia's 'Hard Oilers' – men who knew how to drill for oil, water and natural gas, and designed their tools and drilling equipment as they went along.*

The streets here are wide and bound by trees  
The mountains high as one can see  
The perfume from the flowers rare  
Seems to always fill the air  
And skies reveal a morning star  
Above the ancient antiar (Javan tree)  
It's here I walk upon the strand  
As I live out a dream in a foreign land

### Chorus

Like miners digging gold  
Like poets with stories untold  
We're called to do what we can  
And live out a dream in a foreign land

Just yesterday in all the heat  
I made my way through crowded streets  
And joined the other men who toil  
And dig in the ground for foreign oil

You see my dear when other men  
Stayed to work in Enniskill'n  
I felt the urge to lend my hand  
And live out a dream in a foreign land

You've heard of young William McGarvey and  
how  
He dressed in white collars and strolled through  
the town  
Well they made him a king down in Austria now  
He's made a fortune and wondering how  
He's told everyone there are other men  
Young and daring and ready to win  
Now they say we're the ones in such high  
demand  
As we live out our dreams in these foreign lands

*Bernie – lead and harmony vocals, acoustic guitar; Steve Hardy – piano; Evan Gordon – double bass; James Gordon – accordion.*



## PETROLIA - Hard Oiler Town

*It could be stated that Petrolia experienced the boom times of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Petrolia rocketed to national prominence with the discovery of its own oil pool in the mid 1860's, launching a second 'Oil Boom' that would continue for 40 years.*

Now the ghost of an old hard oiler,  
In his muddy knee-high boots,  
Came walking through Petrolia,  
Remembering his youth,  
As a young wild-catter,  
He tamed that swampy ground,  
And he listened for the clatter  
Of the field-wheels going round.

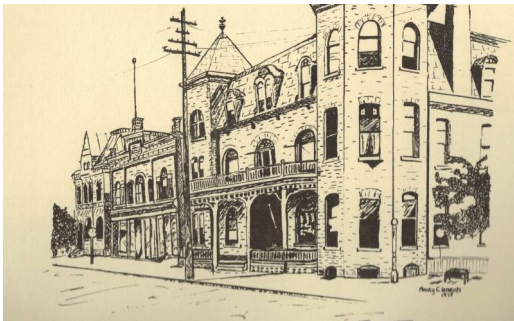
### Chorus

The jack pumps now are silent,  
The spring poles standing still,  
And things are not as polished  
Up on Quality Hill  
Down Discovery Line and old Eureka Street,  
Things are not as lively as they once used to be,  
The derricks now are down from over the wells,  
But looking around it's easy to tell,  
Petrolia was a Hard Oiler town,  
Petrolia was a Hard Oiler town.

He walks by the Fairbank mansion,  
And the grand Victoria Hall,  
Where the finer folk went dancing,  
At the fancy evening ball.  
He wonders where the hotels went,  
The drillers in those rooms,  
All those daylight hours spent  
To make this boom town boom.

Englehart and Corey,  
If they looked all around,  
They'd marvel at the journey  
Of this Enniskillen town,  
Where discovery, wealth and daring  
Were common in the day  
And where the Hard Oiler glory  
Will never fade away

*Bernie – lead and harmony vocals, acoustic guitar; Sandra Swannell – violins; Geordie Gordon – mandolin; Evan Gordon – double bass.*



## Nitroglycerine

*Nitroglycerine was used to create an underground explosion that would help to increase oil production. A Robertson Torpedo consisted of nitroglycerine that was lowered into the well and then lit with a fuse.*

*These were frightening times! One man hauled open bottles of nitroglycerin through the streets of Petrolia, a woman brewed her own batch of nitro above a Main Street store, and one by one, five nitro plants blew themselves and their workers off the face of the earth.*

Come on boys now ain't she great  
Give me some whiskey, steady my hand  
It's something I found down in Pennsylvania  
State  
Oh nitroglycerine  
Oh nitroglycerine

Bradley had the big idea  
Give me some whiskey steady my hand  
To come home from the war with a Roberts  
Torpedo  
Oh nitroglycerine  
Oh nitroglycerine

If you find your grease flows a little too slow  
Give me some whiskey steady my hand  
Drop this in her and watch her go  
Oh nitroglycerine  
Oh nitroglycerine

Lower it down in an old tin cup  
Give me some whiskey steady my hand  
What goes down must blow up  
Oh nitroglycerine  
Oh nitroglycerine

Careful where you drive those nails  
Give me some whiskey steady my hand  
Careful how you set those pails  
Oh nitroglycerine  
Oh nitroglycerine

Look at those flames lightenin' up the sky  
Give me some whiskey steady my hand  
Another factory whose time has gone nigh  
Oh nitroglycerine  
Oh nitroglycerine

Oh nitroglycerine  
Count those fingers see if any one's missing  
You know those young boys never listen  
Oh nitroglycerine

*Bernie – vocals; James Gordon – acoustic guitar, harmony vocals, boots; Sandra Swannell – fiddles; Geordie Gordon – mandolin.*

## Edna and Henry : A Love Song

*In 1862, John Henry Fairbank was a recent resident of Oil Springs, and still not making much cash at his new career in the oil business. His wife Edna chose to remain in Niagara Falls with their young children, and struggled to make a living on the family farm. In one of his letters to Edna, John Henry writes:*

Dear Henry, I dug up potatoes all day,  
8 bushels is all that I got,  
The rest, that were rotten, I left where they lay.  
Dear Henry I miss you a lot.  
Dear Henry I miss you a lot.

I wish you could be here with me,  
I'm tired of living alone,  
Forget about oil, there's plenty of toil  
For you, here John Henry, at home.

Dear Edna, I sit with a pot belly stove  
While you're in Niagara Falls  
Of all that I miss I want you to know  
It's you that I miss most of all  
It's you that I miss most of all.

I wish you could be here with me,  
I'm tired of living alone,  
Dear Edna, your farming, it really is charming,  
But Edna, dear, nothing has grown.

Dear Henry, young Charlie is needing new shoes,  
He gets taller with each passing day,  
And Henry, I have my own pot belly news  
A new baby is on the way,  
Our third one is coming in May.

I wish you could be here with me,  
It's hard raising children alone.  
You've been digging that clay for two years and  
a day,  
Dear Henry, it's time you came home  
Dear Henry, it's time you came home.

Dear Edna, Old Fairbank, it finally came  
through–  
24 barrels a day,  
Our troubles are over, my darling, it's true,  
Dear Edna, sweet Edna, Hooray!

I wish you could be here with me,  
It's hard celebrating alone,  
Its time you were here, Edna my dear  
And together we could be, we would be trouble  
free,  
Can't wait for you to see, our  
beautiful brand new home.

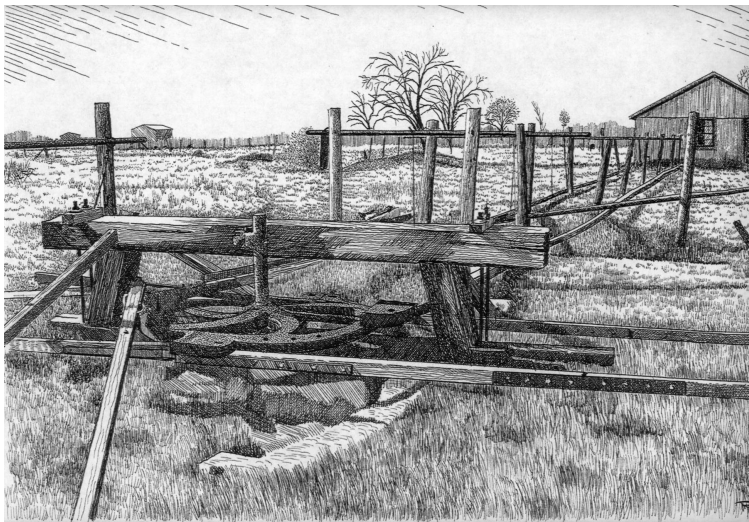
*Bernie – vocals; Ashley Condon - vocals; Steve  
Hardy – piano; James Gordon – trumpets.*



## **Jerker Line Breakdown**

*The Jerker Line is a method designed by the famous oil baron John Henry Fairbank to pump multiple wells with a single pumphouse engine. The 'music' of the Jerker Lines has been heard for almost a century and a half in Oil Springs, and continues to this day on the site of the world's longest continually producing oil field.*

*Bernie – claw hammer banjo, acoustic guitar; Steve Greer – 5 string banjo; Glen Teeple – electric bass, percussion; Shaman Ayerhart – dobro.*



*A double jerker line – transferring power*

## The Oil We Have Today

*Listen to how these local children created music and words of their own to celebrate Lambton's oil heritage. It is equally interesting to share their perspective, and hear their concern about a possible future without oil.*

### Chorus

That's the oil we have today  
Hauling that sticky black gold away

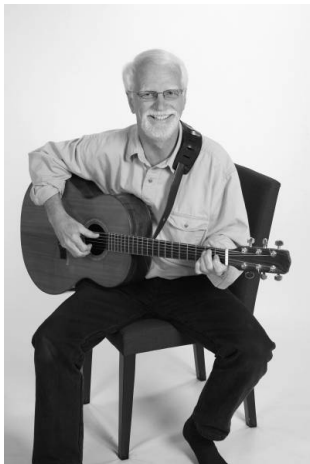
Watching the Oilers on a sunny day  
The Tripp brothers hauled all the gum away  
Hearing the complaining in the stinky air,  
They still won an award at the Paris fair

The father of the oil industry  
James Miller Williams made history  
Mr. Charlie Fairbank still runs the show  
Drilling the wells with a great heave-ho

The creaky rhythm of the jerker line  
A big oil gusher shot to the skyline  
Hugh Nixon Shaw was covered with oil  
All was coated including the soil

Nylon, lipstick, gasoline and glue  
We use oil in most things, it's true  
Because oil makes most things today  
What will we do when it runs out someday  
Because oil makes most things today  
What will we do when it runs out someday

*Bernie – acoustic guitar, Students from  
Lambton Central Centennial Public School -  
vocals.*

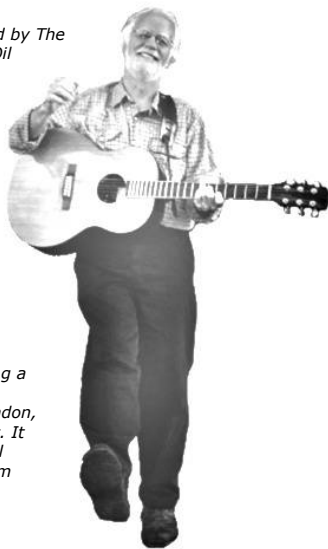


All songs written by Bernie Gilmore (SOCAN) with the exception of Nitroglycerin by Alex Sinclair  
© 2007 Alex Sinclair, published by SGB Productions (SOCAN); Edna/Henry by Gilmore/Hardy;  
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Today written with students of Lambton Central Centennial Public School.

# Thanks...

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