



That's Jack Bartles leaning against fence to right of horsemen. Nearest rider is his son Joe.

pumping thousands of gallons every hour. Thousands of gallons with which you'll be filling hundreds of drums. But how are you gonna get them drums transported off the frontier?"

"Just watch," Jake said. "I'll show you." And he did.

Moving with a swiftness typical of his past ventures he began planning his own railroad. First he called the offices of the Santa Fe railroad; then those of the Katy; and finally those of the Rock Island. All refused to lay rails through Bartlesville, just as his business associates had prophesied.

"Well, all right," Jake shouted into the face of the Santa Fe president. "I'll lay the rails. I'll lay 'em myself and then sell 'em to you!"

Jake did exactly that. He bought a right-of-way extending west from Caney, Kansas to Collinsville, Oklahoma. During the weeks that followed his work gangs struggled fiercely at clearing a road bed, driving rails, and laying tie. The "Bartles Railroad," latest of "Cap'n Jake's follies," was in the making.

By the day of its completion nearly every petroleum company in the United States was overwhelmed with demands for oil. Oil such as was being pumped from the banks of the Caney River; oil such as could be transported out by freight car—with the railroad charging a tremendous fee for the service. Jake announced himself as willing to sell his right-of-way for the best offer. The highest bid-

der turned out to be the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe. Their president, red-faced and much abashed, paid him a princely sum for the line. The same line which they themselves had only the year before refused to build.

The Bartlesville boom, just as Jake had predicted, was on. Men—fortune hunters, geologists, roughneckers, wildcatters, hoodlums, whoremongers, pimps—rainbow chasers of every shade and description, they streamed in from all over. Tens of thousands of souls were there, hoping to help bring about a lucky strike. Bartlesville, which ten years before had been but a flouring mill surrounded by a few dozen shacks and shanties, now seethed with humanity and roared with oil. Every minute of every hour of every day the earth beneath it was kept rumbling. A low rumble, a loud blast, and then another spurt of black wealth shooting skyward.

"Yes-sirree!"

"Thar she blows!"

"It's oil! She's come in at 1300 feet!"

After considering the heritage and background of Jacob Henry Bartles—the man who made all this possible—my reader will probably not find the feat so astounding. His father, Joseph A. Bartles, was a pioneer of note and a rare contributor to this country's progress. He had played a role in the history of communications, stringing the first telegraph lines in New York City. Later he developed one of the

better farms in New Jersey. This was sold to the Childs family, famous New York restaurateurs. On what had once been Bartles soil they raised the produce and meats served in their fine eateries.

Here, near Chester in Morris County, Jacob Henry Bartles was in 1842 born the last of three children. The boyhood he shared there with his older brother Theodore could have been fashioned from the pages of *Tom Sawyer*. They ran and played in the woods together, exploring caves and searching heedlessly for buried treasure.

By 1857 Joseph Bartles found himself no longer able to resist the call of opportunity resounding from out of our great American West. There on the virgin plains west of the Mississippi awaited a frontier to be settled. A frontier on which great courage could be bartered for greater opportunity.

Late one evening he called the family to the fireside and explained to them that in the very near future they would be boarding a steamboat and sailing down the river to St. Louis. Young Jake, as he listened, felt his breath catch in his throat. And in a few short weeks it all began to come true.

The Bartles family were crowding the deckside of a river boat and viewing the approaching shore with the cap'n's fog-horn voice ringing in their ears: "A-r-r-i-ving at St. Louis! Sai-nt Lou-is!"

Ahead of them lay the long journey across the great staked plains to Quin-