

sun-parched, red clay soil were suddenly finding themselves wealthy beyond belief. Men, thousands of them, were making fortunes overnight. Men, many men, suddenly finding their neighbors unbelievably rich and their own land still worthless, put pistols to their heads and blew out their brains.

Tent cities, composed of canvas shanties and tarpaper shacks, sprang from the earth and then grew incredibly into great masses of towering skyscrapers. (Tulsa, Oklahoma, lying to the west of Bartlesville and today the Oil Capital of the World, was an example.)

And, of course, it also served to revive the Wild West. As it had been on frontiers in the past, violence and crime became widespread. Hi-jackers, lying low in the blackjack timber, cracked down on oil company transports carrying payrolls from one oil field to the other. Six-guns roared—and men died as never before. Train and bank robbers raided with an abandon not seen since the days just preceding the Civil War. Wanted posters, bearing names like Henry Starr, Al Spencer, Kelly Nash, Pretty Boy Floyd replaced those carrying names like Cole Younger, Bob Dalton, Bill Doolin, and Jesse James.

All this left Jake Bartles horrified. Thirty years ago he had come to frontier country hoping one day to see it civilized. He had hoped to help his father-in-law, Charley Journeycake, bring Christianity to the savage land and its inhabitants. Finally, after years of struggle, they had seen their dream become reality. But with a result altogether different from that expected. Now he found sin and evil more widespread than had been the case when residents of the Caney River Valley prayed to a Great Spirit.

Hoping to see law and order restored, Jake had his Bartles B Ranch foreman, Scott Bruner, appointed a United States Marshal. A crack shot with both rifle and six-gun, an adventurer whose fearlessness had never been questioned, Scott was also a man Jake could trust. This was important—for many of the peace officers were secretly in cahoots with the hi-jackers.

Bruner in his youth had been a cattle rustler. Jake had sought him out and made him see the error of his ways. He had given the boy a job, taken him into his home, treated him like a son. Now he knew Scott would repay that trust—by bringing an end to the violence and the turbulence.

Other events brought on by the oil

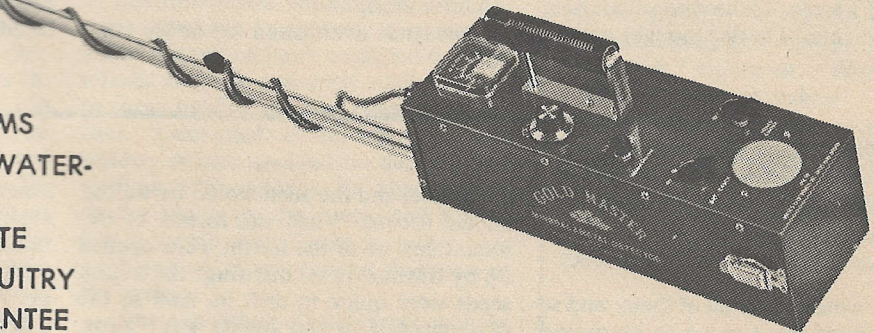
boom were more to Jake's liking. He, the visionary who had first foreseen the wealth spurting from Oklahoma soil, moved rapidly to profit from the situation. Just as he had planned, he housed two oil companies in the buildings previously made vacant. Later he would found a third—the Dewey Gas Company. His stores he stocked with the rare items Oklahomans could now afford to buy. Rich spices and rare red wines, silk shirts and diamond tie clasps, beaver pelt hats and alligator skin shoes. Now at last he was earning the fortune his genius merited.

Several of his neighbors profited even more from the bonanza. The Phillips Brothers, who owned the Woolaroc Ranch near Bartlesville, founded the 66 Oil Company which still exists today. H. V. Foster in 1901 gave birth to the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company which twenty-seven years later brought in the first Oklahoma City well and then became known as Cities Service. The skyscrapers housing these giant concerns today tower high into the sky and cast shadows down across most of Bartlesville. (Jake's companies were years ago swallowed up by Standard Oil.)

Was Jake resentful of his neighbors'

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