10 SUPRISING THINGS ABOUT SINCLAIR OIL

Sinclair Oil turns 100 in 2016. It has survived wars, depressions, recessions and more. Here are just a few of the highlights:

1. **Harry Sinclair started with nothing.** Sinclair Oil is a true story of a self-made American. Harry got into the oil business only after losing his father's drugstore when a speculative investment he'd made went bad. He found a job selling lumber for oil derricks, then began buying and selling small oil leases on the side. His uncanny success with his "side" business attracted enough investors for him to be able to quit his day job selling lumber. He formed Sinclair Oil & Refining Corporation in 1916.

2. **Within a month of its founding, Sinclair Oil was among the top 10 oil companies in the nation.** By September 1919, it was four times its original size.

3. **Sinclair introduced modern service stations to America – and the world.** When cars first hit the streets, owners had to figure out where to buy fuel and how to do their own maintenance because there were no established networks or standards for fueling or maintaining cars. That became less practical as more and more families purchased cars. Sinclair was the first to offer oil changes and other basic maintenance along with fueling services at a Chicago "service station" in 1922. As road-tripping became more common, Sinclair was one of the first to install restrooms in its "super stations," much to the relief of hundreds of millions of motorists in the years since.

4. **Sinclair introduced the first high-octane gasoline.** In 1924, everyone in the industry was going crazy for the ethyl additives distilled from ethane as a way of decreasing the sound and damage caused by car engine "knocking."

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Sinclair took a different approach by trying to increase the octane rating – effectively the amount of combustive power in a gallon of gasoline. He developed H-C (Houston Concentrate), the industry's first 72-octane fuel, in 1926. H-C prevented engine knocking at a lower cost than ethyl. And its popularity with motorists helped Sinclair cross the billion-gallon sales mark.

5. **Sinclair was the first to use racing promotions**. The rising popularity of internal combustion engines also meant the introduction of a new kind of racing that had nothing to do with horses – or humans – running. Sinclair was the first company to dress champion racers in branded coveralls – including motorboat racer Gar Wood, motorcyclist Floyd Clymer, and road and track auto winners Tommy Milton, Ralph DePalma, Gaston Chevrolet, Cannonball Baker and Art Kline.

6. **Sinclair grew significantly during the Great Depression – and saved hundreds of jobs in the process.** People thought Harry Sinclair was crazy in 1930 when he sold his half of the "Ajax" pipeline, which had given him an advantage over one of his biggest competitors. But the cash from that sale to John D. Rockefeller allowed Sinclair to buy up struggling competitors during the Depression. They included Rio Grande Oil Company, Richfield Oil Company and the Producers & Refiners Corporation (Parco). Parco alone employed more than 600 people. More than ironically, in 1932 Sinclair still had enough money from his sale of his 50 percent stake to buy Prairie Oil Gas, the Rockefeller-owned company that owned 100 percent of the Ajax pipeline. In all, Sinclair doubled in size during the darkest time in America's economic history.

7. **Sinclair rocked the World's Fair – twice.** It was in 1930 that Sinclair's advertising began using dinosaurs to promote the company's Pennsylvania crudes. The 1933-1934 Chicago World's Fair featured an exhibit full of life-size dinosaurs created by P. G. Alen, who was known for creating lifelike papier-mâché animals for motion pictures. Dino, an Apatosaurus incorrectly identified for many years as a Brontosaurus, stole Americans hearts. At the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair, Sinclair's Dinoland exhibit featured nine life-size animatronic dinosaurs. They were built by artist Louis Paul Jones and a team of engineers, scientists and artists. Sinclair also used the New York World's Fair to show off rotating gas pumps, a fueling dock for boats and vehicle maintenance, all of which visitors could use right on the fair's parking lot and at its marina.

8. **Sinclair helped win two World Wars.** By 1918, Harry Sinclair's incredible business success by 1918 earned him a place on the World War I War Service Committee along with 11 other oil industry leaders. That group regulated the flow of America's petroleum resources during the war. In World War II, 24 percent of Sinclair's production output went to U.S. and Allied militaries. That included the powerful 100-octane gasoline that was critical to the performance of top combat planes like the P-51 Mustang and B-17 Flying Fortress.   (more)

9. **Earl Holding started with next to nothing, too.** Earl Holding's family lost everything in the Black Tuesday stock market crash in October 1929. He was just 3 at the time, but by age 9 he was mowing the lawns of the small apartment complex his parents ran. He continued to work through high school and college. After serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II Holding became a successful businessman, building the Little America chain of hotels and gas stations with his wife, Carol. The chain became Sinclair's biggest customer before Holding bought Sinclair in 1976.

10. **Now in its 100th year, Sinclair is growing again.** After surviving the tumultuous ups and downs of the oil industry, Sinclair is moving forward into its second century. With its new UNEV pipeline running from Salt Lake City to Las Vegas; a bold, fresh new look for its gas stations; and DINOCARE™ TOP TIER™ Gasoline (which helps decrease carbon deposits in engines for better gas mileage and less maintenance), Sinclair is primed to fuel America's journeys for years to come.

Learn more about Sinclair Oil's amazing history at SinclairOil.com/History.

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