**The Story of Spindletop and Gladys City**

On January 10, 1901, oil was found on Spindletop Hill near Beaumont, Texas. The Lucas Gusher, named after Captain Anthony Lucas who founded the oil well, was the first oil gusher in Texas. The Spindletop oilfield became the largest oil deposit in the United States at the time.

Before the discovery of oil at Spindletop, people rode horses and wagons as their main modes of transportation. After the discovery, there was enough oil to make gasoline. People invented automobiles and airplanes to use the gasoline as fuel. There were many more products made from oil, including plastics, kerosene, and even some paints. Oil has made our lives much easier.

Pattillo Higgins was the first man to drill for oil at Spindletop. He was a self-taught geologist who was convinced a giant oil well lay below Spindletop Hill. He drilled three wells, all of which were unsuccessful. He planned to build a great city near Spindletop. It would be named Gladys City in honor of a little girl in his Sunday school class.

Higgins could not find the oil on his own. He put an ad in the newspaper detailing the oil at Spindletop. Eventually, a man named Captain Anthony Lucas came to Beaumont. Captain Lucas was an Austrian-born mining engineer. He came to Beaumont with his family in response to Higgin’s ad. He also believed that oil could be found at Spindletop Hill. After securing outside funding, he, along with Higgins and the Hamill Brothers, began to dig an oil well 1200 ft. into the ground. It was this well, Later named the Lucas Gusher, that stuck the oil.

News spread about the discovery of the largest oil deposit in the world. Thousands of people from all over the country came to Spindletop to drill for oil. Many people hoped to get rich. Because of the large amount of people arriving in Beaumont daily, a town of shacks and tents was built near the oil fields. It was a wild town filled with oil-boomers, prospectors, and even a handful of families. This town became known as Gladys City, one of the many boomtowns that appeared in Southeast Texas during this time.

Hundreds of oil wells were drilled in the few years following the discovery of the Lucas Gusher. Because of the large amount of wells and lack of conservation efforts, soon all of the oil was gone. The people in Gladys City left the area to find new oil fields. In less than ten years, nothing was left of Gladys City.

Today there is a museum called the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. It is built to look just like the real Gladys City did many years ago. When you visit Gladys City today you can see how people lived during the days of the Spindletop oil boom.

Would you like living in a boom town like Gladys City?

**Spindletop and Gladys City Questions**

1. Who was the first man to drill for oil at Spindletop?
   1. Anthony Lucas
   2. Pattillo Higgins
   3. The Hamill Brothers
2. What was the name of the oil well that struck oil first?
   1. The Lucas Gusher
   2. The Spindletop Gusher
   3. The Gladys City Gusher
3. In what year did Captain Lucas struck oil?
   1. 1900
   2. 1910
   3. 1901
4. What was the name of the town that Pattillo Higgins planned and that eventually became a shanty town full of shacks and tents?
   1. Caroline City
   2. Gladys City
   3. Higgins City
5. Who was Gladys City named after?
   1. Anthony Lucas’s Wife
   2. The First Lady of the United States
   3. Pattillo Higgin’s Sunday school student
6. What type of transportation did people use before Spindletop?
   1. Horses and Wagons
   2. Cars
   3. Airplanes
7. Why did people in Gladys City eventually leave the area?
   1. The oil wells dried up so they moved on to find new oil fields.
   2. There was too much crime so they moved to safer cities.
   3. They didn’t like the weather of Southeast Texas so they left to more temperate areas.
8. Why did people come to Gladys City after 1901?
   1. To be closer to family
   2. To get rich quickly
   3. To evade law enforcement
9. What were some products made from the oil?
   1. Food, houses, and roads
   2. Lumber, boats, and paper
   3. Plastic, kerosene, and paint