



# Giant Under the Hill: A History of the Spindletop Oil Discovery at Beaumont, Texas, in 1901

*Jo Stiles, Judith Walker Linsley, Ellen Walker Rienstra*

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How did a profligate who killed a deputy sheriff before reforming, a mining engineer who went AWOL from the Austrian navy, and three East Texas drillers join forces with other equally colorful characters to drill on Spindletop Hill? The answers are all here—the challenge and frustration of the search, the excitement of the discovery, the euphoric chaos of the boom, and the genesis of the giant companies.

In this scholarly work firmly rooted in the narrative tradition, and using material collected over decades, the authors bring to life the efforts of Pattillo Higgins, Anthony Lucas, Al and Curt Hamill, and Peck Byrd to master the Spindletop salt dome—efforts that culminated in the discovery of the great Lucas Gusher. Their find subsequently transformed not only the state of Texas but the entire oil industry.

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