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RAPID PROGRESS OF RIVER FRONT TOWN – Remarkable Growth of Marcus Hook from a Quiet Fishing Hamlet to a Prosperous Borough – Ideal Spot for Industries

Few people in Delaware County have an idea of what is transpiring down in the extreme southeastern portion of the county within the confines of the little borough of Marcus Hook, and for the benefit of its readers the Times today presents a word-picture of that thriving town – made famous in the past by its fine brand of Delaware shade in the spring and the work of its baseball team in the summer and early fall. In later years the borough has also gained notoriety from the quality of oil fumes produced. But these, too, with the other achievements are practically by-gone, and the residents are now busy in other pursuits, which have transformed the town from the fishing hamlet of days gone by to an industrious borough, second to none in the State. Of course, some fish are still caught, some ball games are played and some oil fumes wafted over the borough, but these are secondary considerations when compared to the industrial air which permeates every nook and corner of the old burg.

Rounding out the most prosperous year in its history with the close of 1910, Marcus Hook entered upon 1911, with still brighter prospects. The new year is full of promise and is certain to witness many changes along industrial and municipal lines as well making history which will be pointed to with pride, not only by those who have been instrumental in bringing it about, but by those who will follow.

THE OIL INDUSTRIES – With three big oil concerns occupying almost the entire river front, and two others just over the borough line, which give employment to hundreds of men at good wages, the borough has an industrial backbone which has never yet felt the depressing times so frequently in evidence in other manufacturing lines. Starting with small plants, and a mere handful of workmen, these industries have increased in size until they cover acres of ground in area, and represent in combined capital millions of dollars. Those plants within the borough limits are the Union Petroleum Company, the Sun Company and the Pure Oil Company, while these adjoining Marcus Hook are owned by the Standard Oil Company and the Texas Company. The latter two draw many of their employees from the town and for that reason are considered part of its industrial life.

The splendid water front forms an ideal spot for the oil industries and the shipping facilities are completed by branch lines of the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia & Reading railroads, which run parallel with the river. Steamers from many of the important ports in the old world touch at Hook and receive their cargoes of oil and never a week goes by that one or more tankers is not in port. In addition to the shipments made by water several trainloads of petroleum products leave the borough each day, for the output of the concerns has found a ready market among the consumers of the country.

FIRST COMPANY LOCATES – The oil industry had its origin in Marcus Hook a number of years ago, when the Crescent Pipe Line Company laid a pipe line into the town and the Bear Creek Oil Works constructed a plant for the purpose of handling the petroleum in its crude state. A number of large oil tanks were constructed, and an up-to-date refinery was soon in active operation. The two concerns prospered for a term, giving employment to fully one hundred and fifty men and boys, and soon attracted the attention of the Standard Oil Company. Its shipments rivaled those of the latter's Point Breeze plant in Philadelphia and the excellent water front gave the independent companies a big advantage. Eventually the Standard secured control of both concerns, and operated them

to their full capacity for a short time. Later the business was transferred to the Philadelphia plant, and since that time the work of dismantling the works has been in progress, until now only a small portion of the once prosperous industry remains. Oil is still piped to the plant and stored in tanks until such time as it is needed at Point Breeze, to which place it is shipped in barges. L.E. Cowles is superintendent of the plant and under his direction much of the dismantling has taken place.

UNION'S PINE PLANT – The Union Petroleum Company, of Philadelphia, was the second oil company to realize the excellent manufacturing sites afforded by Marcus Hook and in 1900 erected a station in the borough with facilities for shipping oil in barrels, cases and bulk to any place in the civilized world. Although not the largest in the borough, the plant of the Union is one of the most complete, being equipped with the most modern machinery for handling its large trade. The company has its refineries at Weyersville, N.Y., and Clarendon, Pa., both operated exclusively on Pennsylvania crude petroleum. Situated in the heart of the oil district, of this state the refineries are admirably located for their business, for the oil is easily piped to the works for refinement. There it is converted into the finest grades of lubricating and illuminating oils and gasoline. At Philadelphia the company also has a plant for the manufacture of oils to meet its various demands. The concern holds an enjoyable position in the oil work, for everywhere it is noted for the high grade of its products.

The Union Petroleum Company had figured materially in the prosperity of Marcus Hook and its residents. From the first the plant has given steady employment to a number of men, and this force has been increased as the company has expanded. During the past year a plant was erected for casing oil for shipment to Oriental ports. This addition has given employment to an additional force of men, all of whom are mostly residents of the borough. Recently a shipment of 1,600,000 gallons of case oil was shipped to India from the plant, a new departure of the part of the local works. The Standard Oil Company has held a monopoly on this trade for many years, and the action of the Union is evidence that the trust is fast losing its grip on the foreign oil trade.

Oil from the Marcus Hook station is shipped to all parts of the world, to the extent of millions of gallons yearly. Foreign trade conditions have been successfully met and in some instances the oils are exported to the seaports of foreign countries and then transported to the interior on mule and camel backs. Fred McMichael is at present in charge of the company's Hook interests.

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE – Much credit for the prosperity of the borough, in fact, the greater part of it, is due the Sun and Pure Oil Companies, for at these plants more than four hundred men and employment. Operating day and night, the employees are kept busy three hundred and sixty five days each year, and the thousands of dollars paid out each month in wages means much to the residents of the town. The entire working force of the two concerns are not by any means drawn from Hook alone, for many residents of Chester and the villages in close proximity to the burg find unemployment there. It is estimated that more than \$15,000 a month is paid out by the two companies in wages and it can readily be seen why the old borough is doing so well. Especially so when the payrolls of the other industries are added to those of the larger plants.

The Sun Company followed the Union to the borough and from the start has been busy. Its location followed closely the discovery of Texas oil and that product of the Lone Star State is used exclusively in the refinery. The oil is brought to Hook on the company's

own line of tankers and the progress made in its refinement has been wonderful. From a petroleum, at first looked upon by oil experts as being almost next to nothing as far as value was concerned, the Sun has developed a wealth of by-products which command excellent prices. Not only are fine grades of petroleum products taken from the foul-smelling oil in its raw state, but an expensive quality of asphalt is obtained, which finds a ready market among the paving contractors of the East. Gas-oil, used in the manufacture of illuminating gas, is one of the principal outputs of the concern, and the monthly shipments of the works are enormous.

MEN WELL TAKEN CARE OF – No expense has been spared by the Sun Company either in the equipment of its plant or in looking after the welfare of its men. J.N. Pew president of the concern has a warm spot in his heart for the working man and he is continually putting into operation plans which will add to their comfort and convenience. The works themselves are built along the most expensive lines and equipped with the most modern machinery; the work of refining the oil is conducted on a system second to none in the country. For the men, just as much consideration is shown and an idea of this is given by the recent completion of a men's building at the plant. Here provision is made for those men who carry their dinners to find a comfortable place in which to spend their noon hours, and the building is equipped with baths of all kinds and accommodations for the workmen to change their clothing before starting work and also at the close of their day's labor. Then, too, another act of the company which is much appreciated, is the recent arrangement whereby all the employees are given an opportunity to take a free course in the Scranton Correspondence School in order that they may become more proficient along the various lines they have chosen as their means of obtaining a livelihood. All this is appreciated for the men are made to feel that their work is more of a pleasure than the usual daily grind. Howard Pew, son of the president, is practically in charge of the plant with Mr. Hoopes as superintendent.

WHAT THE PURE OIL IS DOING – At the works of the Pure Oil Company, West Virginia, crude oil is the chief petroleum used although of late no small quantity of Oklahoma and Indian Territory crude has been refined. The West Virginia produce is piped to the plant by the United States Pipe Line Company and from it the company produces many fine grades of oil. Everything possible is extracted from the crude material and the company has in operation in conjunction with its extensive refinery a complete wax plant, where is manufactured a quality of wax that has won for the refinery much praise. The Oklahoma and Indian Territory oil is brought to the plant by the Guffey line of tankers, being piped to the Gulf from the oil fields and there loaded on the steamers. This is a most expensive way of handling the petroleum, but before long the company hopes to have it piped to its plant and it is said that the pipe line is at present under construction.

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR – Like all the other industries in Marcus Hook, the works of the Pure Oil Company are complete and the business of the concern is rapidly increasing. While no figures are obtainable, it is said by those who know, the export trade of the past year has been a record breaker, for refined oil has been shipped to all parts of the world in enormous quantities. For a greater part of the year, three and four steamers have been loaded by the company each week, and it can be truthfully stated that at no oil plant are tankers more quickly or skillfully loaded than by the Pure Oil Company. This increase in output has made it necessary for an increase in refining facilities, with the consequent addition to the working force, and no small amount of credit is due the concern

when the borough's prosperity is considered. Edward Bush is general manager of this hustling independent concern, with Mr. Morgan as his right-hand man in capacity of superintendent.

WITH THE TEXAS COMPANY – The plant of the Texas Company, although located in Delaware, draws almost its entire working force of sixty-five men from Marcus Hook, and the \$3,000 paid out each month in wages figures extensively in the borough's prosperity. The refineries of this big concern, which is capitalized at \$35,000,000, are located at Port Arthur and Port Niches in the heart of the Texas oil district, and the products are distributed among its one hundred stations by the company's own line of steamers. The Delaware River station at Hook is in charge of George B. Smith as superintendent, and has been kept busy ever since it was located almost four years ago. At Marcus Hook the road oil and macadam binder sold by the company are manufactured and shipped by rail to the consumers. Gasoline, illuminating oil and a compound lubricating oil, all of which are manufactured in Texas, are handled by the local station, and the business has rapidly increased under Mr. Smith's supervision. Among the contracts filed by the Hook concern is the furnishing of fuel oil to all government boats in this section. The company has its own barreling plant and it is in this branch that many of the men are employed. Tanks with a storage capacity of 350,000 barrels are erected on the company's property just over the State line.

The Texas Company has perhaps made more rapid strides in the Texas oil business than any other concern. An idea of its equipment in Texas may be obtained from the statements that the two refineries cover an area of 1,700 acres. The compound lubricating oil recently placed on the market is acknowledged by experts as being of excellent quality, while the quality of asphalt extracted from the crude petroleum has already won a number of prizes in competitive exhibitions of paving materials.

A BUSY BARREL MANUFACTORY – With a capacity of 1,400 barrels of various sizes per day, the plant of A. Knabb & Co., Incorporated, has done much to increase the prosperity of Marcus Hook. This industry, though covering but a small area, is one of the busiest and gives employment to almost one hundred men in its various departments. The payroll of the concern is about \$4,500 per month, a large portion of which is paid to residents of the town. Barrels or packages, varying in size from three to seventy-five gallons in capacity, are manufactured by the Knabb Company, and are sent