

State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

1069 State Office Building
Portland 1, Oregon

REPORTED OIL SHALE OCCURRENCE ON THE GEORGE LYNCH PROPERTY

Linn County

Location: The location of the reported "oil shale" was in a gravel pit on the George Lynch farm located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 4, T. 15 S., R. 3 W., Linn County. The gravel pit is on the west side of the Highway 99 Freeway.

Property owner: George Lynch, 7255 Belts Road, Route 2, Box 87, Harrisburg, Oregon.

Background Information: I visited the George Lynch farm on Wednesday, October 12, 1960, to investigate an oil shale discovery reported to have been made by the Roy Houck Construction Company on Lynch's property while excavating gravel. The discovery was reported in the Oregonian on Tuesday, October 11, 1960, "Well diggers strike oil on farm at Harrisburg".

Mr. Lynch said that employees of the Houck Construction Company noticed a bad taste in water from the 65-foot water well near where the gravel was being excavated so a sample of the water was reportedly sent to a laboratory in Eugene for checking. The results were mailed back a week later saying the water was undrinkable because of oil contamination. Mr. Houck refused to disclose the name of the laboratory when asked by V. C. Newton, but said it was up to George Lynch to give out that information. Mr. Lynch had previously said that the laboratory check was made by Houck and would have to be obtained from him. George Lynch and Houck Company people concluded that since there was oil in the 65-foot well near the gravel pit, the dark layer of gravel in the pit must be oil bearing.

Investigation of the gravel pit and oily water: A visit was made to the gravel pit being excavated by Roy Houck Construction Company on Lynch's property.

The gravel plant supervisor requested that I obtain written authorization to enter the property even though he was told that Mr. Lynch had sent me to him. The written permission was obtained and the investigation continued.

The pit proved to be a sizable excavation covering about three acres and between 20 and 30 feet deep. Two large power shovels were at work in the pit at the time of my visit. The dark layer of gravel thought to be oil bearing could be easily distinguished in the pit walls. Upon close inspection it was found that the dark gravel consisted of rounded pebbles and cobbles of basalt with a dark coarse sand matrix. The sand was made up mainly of basalt fragments with some feldspar and quartz.

The dark gravel bed was about 10 feet thick and appeared to be dipping gently northwest (N 75° W). There was no petroleum odor or oily appearance to the gravel.

Laboratory results: A fresh sample of the gravel was taken for checking in the Department's chemistry laboratory. A sample of water from the 65-foot well near the gravel pit was also taken to the laboratory for checking.

No trace of oil could be found in either the gravel sample or water sample, P-25838 (gravel sample) and P-25839 (water sample).

Report by: V. C. Newton

October 17, 1960