

## Bemis-Shutts: the oil field that reshaped southern Rooks

If you drive the gravel roads south of Plainville and look toward the Saline River, you'll spot pump jacks nodding in the distance. Those wells are part of Bemis-Shutts, one of Kansas' most important "long-life" oil fields. The first big well here came in during 1928, and production has continued—up and down with prices—ever since. By now, the field has produced well over 250 million barrels of oil, putting it in the top tier for our state.

### Why this field kept going

Two rock layers hold most of the oil. The shallow one is the Lansing-Kansas City limestone group. The deeper one is the Arbuckle carbonate. Think of them as two separate sponges stacked in the ground. Companies learned to drill and manage both, sometimes in the same lease. As technology improved—better maps, more accurate well logs, and targeted water injection—operators found new pockets that earlier

crews had missed.

### How engineers "push" more oil out

After a field starts to slow down, operators use secondary recovery and enhanced oil recovery (EOR) to keep it working. Secondary recovery often means waterflooding—pumping water into the ground to push oil toward producing wells. Later projects sometimes add carbon dioxide enhanced oil recovery (CO<sub>2</sub>-EOR), which thins the oil and helps it flow. Bemis-Shutts has been a sort of classroom for these ideas in central Kansas. The geology is tricky—especially in the Arbuckle, where fractures and old caverns create "compartments." That makes planning floods and re-entries a technical puzzle, but it also gives the field its long life.

### What it meant for paychecks

Oil didn't replace farming here, but it gave families another income stream. Royalty checks helped some ranch outfits ride out

dry years. Machine shops stayed busy fixing both harvest gear and field equipment. Trucking firms hauled crude and supplies. Hotels, diners, and boarding houses filled up when new programs started. Over decades, that steady activity helped shape Plainville's mix of businesses—agriculture, oilfield service, and health care—rather than boom-and-bust "rush town" cycles. (When prices crashed, hours were cut. When parts were scarce, people improvised. That steadiness is the real story.)

### Where the names came from

Oil pools are usually named for the landowner, ranch, or nearby feature where the discovery well sits. The Shutts pool got its name from William Shutts, on whose farm Ellis County's first major oil well was completed on November 15, 1928. The Bemis pool took its name from the Bemis Ranch and the Bemis family's holdings in the area; early leasing records and later production ledgers show multiple "Bemis" leases tied to that name. In 1935, the Roark No. 1 discovery well defined the Bemis pool, and a few years later state records combined several nearby pools into what we now call Bemis-Shutts.

### A quick timeline

- 1928: First big Ellis County strike on the Shutts farm opens the door.

- 1935: The Bemis discovery follows to the north; development spreads along the Saline valley.

- Late 1930s–1950s: More pools around the edges get tied together in state records; waterfloods begin.

- 1970s–2000s: Operators re-map old rock with new tools; production bumps return.

- 2010s–today: Research teams test methods that could support CO<sub>2</sub>-EOR and better flood design; small, smart projects keep the field active.

### The science in plain English

The Lansing-Kansas City rocks are layered like a cake—limestone and shale. Traps form where the layers pinch or where the land gently arches. The Arbuckle is older and stranger: a thick, broken limestone full of cracks and pockets. Oil can move well in one spot and barely at all just a few hundred yards away. That's why you sometimes see a great well next to an average one. It's also why the field responds to careful planning—proper spacing, good flood patterns, and clean data.

### Why it still matters

Bemis-Shutts is not a boom headline; it's infrastructure. It supports jobs, from pumpers and welders to lab techs and office staff. It feeds local service companies. It adds to the tax

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The month of December has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in December 1925.

- The Farmer-Labour Party is dissolved just two hours after its formation in Japan December 1. The dissolution was ordered by the Japanese government, which accused the party of harboring a secret communist agenda.
- The border delineating Northern Ireland and Ireland is established December 3 when representatives of both countries sign the Northern Irish Border Agreement.
- The George Gershwin composition "Concerto in F" is performed for the first time December 3. The performance in New York's Carnegie Hall is conducted by Walter Damrosch and features Gershwin on piano.
- A counterfeiting scheme is uncovered by the Banco de Portugal December 4. An alert bank teller tips off the bank, which ultimately discovers that wealthy entrepreneur Arthur Virgílio Alves Reis is the mastermind behind the scheme. Reis is eventually sentenced to 20 years in prison.
- The Pottsville Maroons defeat the Chicago Cardinals in front of 6,000 fans December 6 in a game the press depicted as the championship of the National Football League.
- Russian Orthodox bishop Peter of Krutitsy is arrested December 9. Peter is charged with conspiring with Russian emigres in the west. Peter is ultimately executed by shooting on October 10, 1937.
- George Bernard Shaw is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature December 10.
- Karam Chand and Kartari Chand tie the knot in India December 11. The Chand's marriage lasts 90 years and 291 days, and is the longest marriage recorded. Karam Chand passed away in 2016 and Kartari in 2019.
- Communist politician Benjamin Gitlow is pardoned by New York Governor Al Smith December 11. Gitlow was convicted for publishing a manifesto calling for the overthrow of the U.S. government, which Governor Smith characterized as a "political crime" upon issuing his pardon.
- The Qaja dynasty, which had ruled Iran since 1789, comes to an end December 12 when the country's Parliament declares General Reza Khan Pahlavi Prime Minister and installs him as Shah of Iran.
- The Fascist government in Italy signs a secret pact with Britain December 14. The pact is designed to reinforce Italian dominance in Ethiopia.
- The national service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega is founded at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania December 16.
- U.S. Army Colonel Billy Mitchell is convicted on eight charges of insubordination December 17. Mitchell was critical of military leaders for investing in battleships and had argued for greater investment in air-based defenses.
- Reichstag President Paul Löbe speaks out in favor of partial prohibition in Germany December 19.
- George Edwin Taylor passes away December 23 at the age of 68. Taylor was the first African American presidential candidate, running for the highest office in the United States as nominee of the National Negro Liberty Party in 1904.
- Law No. 2263 is passed by the Italian parliament December 24. The law states that the decisions of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini and his government were not subject to legislative review and could only be overruled by order of King Victor Emmanuel III.
- A Christmas story published in the London newspaper The Evening News December 24 identifies a children's character as "Winnie-the-Pooh" for the first time. The character had previously been referred to as "Edward" in a poem published in Punch magazine in 1924.
- The Turkish government passes a law identifying the Gregorian calendar as the official calendar for all government affairs December 26. The use of the Islamic calendar in government affairs also is banned.
- The Japan Sumo Association is founded December 28.
- The first attempt at a global New Year's celebration is made via international radio December 31. Musical entertainment and greetings from various consuls general from an assortment of foreign countries are sent from New York.

## Legal Notice

(First published in the Plainville Times, November 27, 2025) 2t

### Charter Ordinance No. 18

A CHARTER ORDINANCE EXEMPTING THE CITY OF PLAINVILLE, KANSAS FROM THE PROVISIONS OF K.S.A. 12-1651 RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF AN OFFICIAL CITY NEWSPAPER AND PROVIDING SUBSTITUTE AND ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

WHEREAS, the City of Plainville, Kansas is a city of the third class duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, K.S.A. 12-1651 applies to the City, but its provisions expressly apply only to cities of the second and third class, and are therefore not uniformly applicable to all cities; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the City determines that it is in the public interest to exempt the City from K.S.A. 12-1651 and to provide substitute and additional provisions as set forth in this ordinance, contingent upon approval by public referendum;

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF PLAINVILLE, KANSAS:

SECTION 1. The City of Plainville, Kansas by the power vested in it by Article 12, Section 5 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas hereby elects to exempt itself from and make inapplicable to it the provisions of K.S.A. 12-1651 and amendments thereto and to provide substitute and additional provisions as set forth in this ordinance. This state statute is applicable to the City but is not

applicable uniformly to all cities throughout the state of Kansas.

SECTION 2. The Governing Body shall designate from time to time by motion a newspaper or the City website, www.plainvilleks.com, or both as the official newspaper of the City for publication of legal notices, advertisements or publications of any kind which may be required to be published in the official city newspaper by the laws of the State of Kansas, United States of America or the City of Plainville.

SECTION 3. Any newspaper that is an official City newspaper on the effective date of this ordinance shall continue to be an official City newspaper until such time as the Governing Body may adopt a resolution providing otherwise. Any publication in any newspaper or on the City's website made when that newspaper or the City's website was an official City newspaper shall be valid notwithstanding a subsequent resolution by the Governing Body changing the designation of the official City newspaper.

SECTION 4: This Charter Ordinance shall take effect sixty-one (61) days after final publication, unless a sufficient petition for referendum is filed pursuant to Article 12, Section 5 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas, in which case this Charter Ordinance shall become effective upon approval of a majority of the electors voting thereon.

Adopted by the Governing Body This 18<sup>th</sup> Day of November, 2025.

ATTEST:

Quentin Meyers, Mayor

Jim Mesecher, City Clerk

BOARD VACANCY NOTICE (Published in the Plainville Times, December 4, 2025) 1t

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the provisions of K.S.A. 25-2022, of a vacancy in the membership of the Board of Education of Unified School District No. 269, Rooks County, Kansas, and that such vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Education for the remainder of the unexpired term not sooner than fifteen (15) days following publication of this notice.

Such vacancy exists by reasons of the resignation of Cody Pieper, District 3.

By order of the Board of Education, Unified School District No. 269, Rooks County, Kansas, October 1, 2025.

*Kristen Hemmell*  
Clerk, Board of Education

Letters of interest may be sent to: USD #269 Board Clerk; P.O. Box 38; Damar, KS 67632. Applications should be submitted by October 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. to be considered.

Welcome to the third annual  
Cowboy Christmas Poetry Gathering  
Howdy Howdy to one and all  
It took a lot of work to get us here  
And now you are about to have a ball

We know you'll enjoy the stories  
And check out the Christmas trees  
We know you're gonna be happy  
Cause we waived all the entry fees

Yes, the show, food and fun  
Displayed in a wide variety  
Is brought to you for free  
By the Rooks County Historical Society

Our sponsor, the Cottonwood Ranch  
Our trusty old Cowboy friends  
Have been with us from the start  
And our appreciation again extends

To those who believe in us  
Enjoy our Christmas cheer  
You come from near and far  
But don't let us disappear

While we do this for no fee  
We ask for your support.  
Fundraising is hard these days  
And we don't want to resort to extort

Free will donation is our request  
To help keep the society with us  
Maybe not forever,  
but at least until next Christmas.

The sound of spurs, stories, and old trail songs will fill the Western Kansas Reading Room as the Rooks County Historical Society hosts its Third Annual Cowboy Christmas Poetry Gathering at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7. The program will be held on the museum campus at 921 South Cedar St. in Stockton.

**BEST OF KANSAS Holidays**

Kansas Press Association

Nominate your favorite here:  
<http://extra.ljworld.com/Best-of-Kansas/>

there's a **bee** champion at every school.

Enroll your school in the Scripps National Spelling Bee before December 31.

Visit [spellingbee.com/enroll](http://spellingbee.com/enroll) to learn more!

Sunflower State Spelling Bee

School Bee Deadline: January 31, 2026 schools advance to county level  
Final State Bee: March 21, 2026  
Learn More At: [kspress.com/competitions/sunflower-state-spelling-bee](http://kspress.com/competitions/sunflower-state-spelling-bee)

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