

Ryder Scott is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. Ryder Scott Company Petroleum Engineers began operations in Bradford, PA, in 1937. Formerly an oil producer in the early to mid-1930s, Ryder Scott became the first engineering firm and research laboratory in the world devoted to solving waterflood problems.

Harry M. Ryder and **David Scott Jr.** formed the partnership after being asked for technical assistance by producers that had noticed the success of Ryder Scott-engineered waterfloods in the Bradford field. The firm originated several techniques. **Donald T. May**, the first employee, pioneered chip-coring analysis to



provide accurate petrophysical data from a single plug of sand. Ryder, an electrical engineer, developed selective shooting of nitroglycerin for open-hole completions. Ryder Scott also used a modified five-spot well pattern.

The firm continued to implement the best techniques under total engineering control to slow the production decline in the Bradford area during the 1940s. That included selective plugging in zones of water inflow and improvements in core acquisition, logging, completion practices, injection waters and

Photo above – Wichita Falls office in 1950s.

Photo right – Donald T. May, back row, second from left, and former president John F. Buckwalter, row above front row, second from right, appear in photo of undetermined vintage.

pressures, well spacing and oilfield equipment.

With the Bradford area's inevitable decline in the 1950s, Ryder Scott moved to Wichita Falls, TX, to design successful secondary recovery projects. **John Buckwalter** became president in 1956, managing the Wichita Falls office and laboratories. Under Buckwalter's leadership, Ryder Scott expanded geographically to a wider physical presence than at any time in its history.

The firm had offices in Houston, Midland, Shreveport (Louisiana), Buenos Aires and an outpost organization in Caracas, Venezuela. Ryder Scott also had oilfield projects on six continents. A detailed history, "Buckwalter: 'Parachuter' with bold vision in 'Mad Men' age," was published in the March 2012 *Reservoir Solutions* newsletter at <https://www.ryderscott.com/wp-content/uploads/news-2005-mar.pdf?r=false>

In the late 1960s, **Ray Cruce** guided the evolution of Ryder Scott as it intensified its business and technical focus on independent petroleum reserves estimations. In 1967,

the firm moved from Wichita Falls, TX, to Houston after acquiring Robert W. Harrison & Co. known for its reserves evaluations.

The "marriage" of Ryder Scott and Harrison formed the basis for the new firm that grew rapidly and became known for its advanced skills.

Cruce's background was primarily in reserves estimations. He sensed greater opportunities for that type of work, so he began contacting financial institutions after becoming chairman of the board and president in 1972. New York investment bankers and commercial lenders, keen on reducing risks in reserves-based lending, listened to Cruce. They became convinced that third-party certification was the best method of establishing a reasonable value for petroleum properties used as collateral.

Reservoir evaluations became the mainstay of the firm as bankers recommended to their clients that they obtain reports from reputable consultants as prerequisites for loans. Ryder Scott's name became a standard on most bankers' lists of qualified evaluators.

While Cruce had built Ryder Scott's business through face-to-face meetings over several decades, the next CEO **Ron Harrell** continued that approach while supplementing it with modern public relations methods. With Harrell at the helm as president in 1998 and CEO in 2000, Ryder Scott reached wider audiences as its global business grew.

He made 5 to 10 appearances every month, delivering presentations on oil and gas appraisals, reserves definitions and estimates and other topics. Harrell was also a leader in the Society of Petroleum Engineers, serving on the society's Oil and Gas Reserves Committee that drafted revised reserves definitions in 1997. He had a direct influence on how those standards were drafted.

Harrell also chaired the 1999-2000 SPE reserves committee.

Today, under the leadership of CEO **Don Roesle**, Ryder Scott bears little resemblance to the core-analysis laboratory of the 1930s. However, the firm still retains the principles of its founders — that oil and gas projects be evaluated and engineered to the highest professional and ethical standards.

A more complete history was published in the March-May 2012 *Reservoir Solutions* newsletter at <https://www.ryderscott.com/wp-content/uploads/312nsltr.pdf>. Previous articles on Ryder Scott's history are also published in prior newsletters.

Ryder Scott is 80 years old



Photo right – Corporate offices today - Houston, Texas

1937 – Incorporated in 1937 in Bradford, PA. Formerly an oil producer.

1940s – First lab in world devoted to waterfloods. Moved to Wichita Falls, TX.

1950s – Maintained five offices. Projects on six continents.

1960s – Spun-off businesses, acquired consulting firm, moved to Houston.

1970s – Conducted 700th waterflood study. Big growth in reserves studies.

1980s – Opened Denver office.

1990s – Opened Calgary office. Study of Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserves.

2000s – Age of SOX; Major reserves studies for compliance with U.S. SEC.

2010s – Business shaped by emergence of shale plays, industry slump.

