



# Drilling Ahead: The Quest For Oil in the Deep South, 1945-2005

*Alan Cockrell*

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The discovery of oil in Tinsley, Mississippi, in 1939 captivated the South and has deeply affected the region ever since. At the end of 1940, over 133 wells were flowing, and speculators were drilling holes and staking claims all along the Gulf Coast and its immediate environs. Consequently, the region's economy, ecosystems, and politics have been shaped by black gold since the end of World War II.

Alan Cockrell, a petroleum geologist, provides an insider's account of the science of oil hunting, the political processes that help or hinder it, and the advances in technology that make it all possible. This book documents the ways in which wars, foreign competition, governmental regulation, and new business models affect oil exploration, and what that means to the South's people.

Just as significantly, Cockrell provides compelling commentary on the people who hunt for petroleum, from pioneering wildcatters such as Chesley Pruet to savvy geologists focusing on science and technology. *Drilling Ahead* documents the triumphs and travails of oil hunters. Mavericks, underworld characters, professors, lawyers, and environmentalists have all played major roles in the South's oil production.

A fascinating study of corporations, economies, and people, *Drilling Ahead* is a compelling, opinionated narrative as well as an exhaustively researched history.

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