

# CHALMETTE REFINING

1915-2015

*One Hundred Years of Energizing Parish Pride*



A 1920s view through the Pakenham Oaks facing the de la Ronde Plantation ruins.

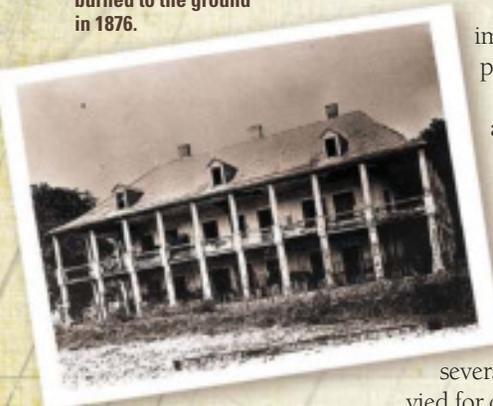


The Pakenham Oaks today.

# EARLY BEGINNINGS



The de la Ronde Plantation circa 1866. It is said to have burned to the ground in 1876.



At the turn of the 19th century St. Bernard Parish's economy was based upon its rural roots: the labors of early Isleño farmers led to cotton and sugar plantations, and finally truck farming. Since New Orleans opposed having refineries within city limits, early refiners began constructing facilities both above and below the city. Industries began to locate to this area taking advantage of the proximity to the port of New Orleans and the Southern Rail lines, and access to the Mississippi River.

The refinery rests on the historic site of what was one of the most important plantations south of the city of New Orleans. The property belonged to Pierre Denis de la Ronde.

De la Ronde had great economic plans for his lands, including an attempt to make Lake Borgne a major port. He intended to construct a canal from Lake Borgne to Lake Pontchartrain at the terminus of which he envisioned the construction of a city named Paris. Access to this town was proposed to be by way of a modern road, which he called "Paris Road". Today, only Paris Road in Chalmette remains of his ambitious scheme.

The de la Ronde plantation played an important role during the War of 1812. The property itself changed hands several times throughout the conflict Americans and British soldiers vied for control over the area. At the time of the famous January 8, 1815 battle, it occupied a central role in the action, with the home acting as the forward headquarters for General Edward Pakenham and as an emergency frontline hospital for the British wounded.

Presently, the only remnants of this historic plantation are several small piles of red bricks that lie in the median in front of the refinery's main gate. The double grove of stately oak trees planted by Denis de la Ronde thrives to this day alongside the refinery.

Over time the land was purchased by a series of individuals and was used for a variety of agricultural ventures.



The de la Ronde Plantation as it looks in 2015. The ruins lie in the median in front of Chalmette Refining's main gate.

One of the first industries to arrive in St. Bernard Parish was the Morris Company's stockyards and abattoir. Soon thereafter, the American Sugar Refinery opened. Standard Oil looked first at St. Bernard in 1908 to open a refinery, but would eventually open its doors in Baton Rouge in 1909. A shipyard also opened in Violet, which constructed a variety of vessels, including oil tankers.

The first refinery in St. Bernard Parish was the Indian Refinery located on the Mississippi downriver from the present Chalmette Refining. Little is known about this refinery other than it being a primitive venture likely producing little more than kerosene. This fuel had recently replaced candles and whale oil for household and business lighting. Over time the value of other "by products" would be recognized. With the onset of the automobile industry, gasoline, once unwanted, became a commodity that would eventually eclipse the value of kerosene.

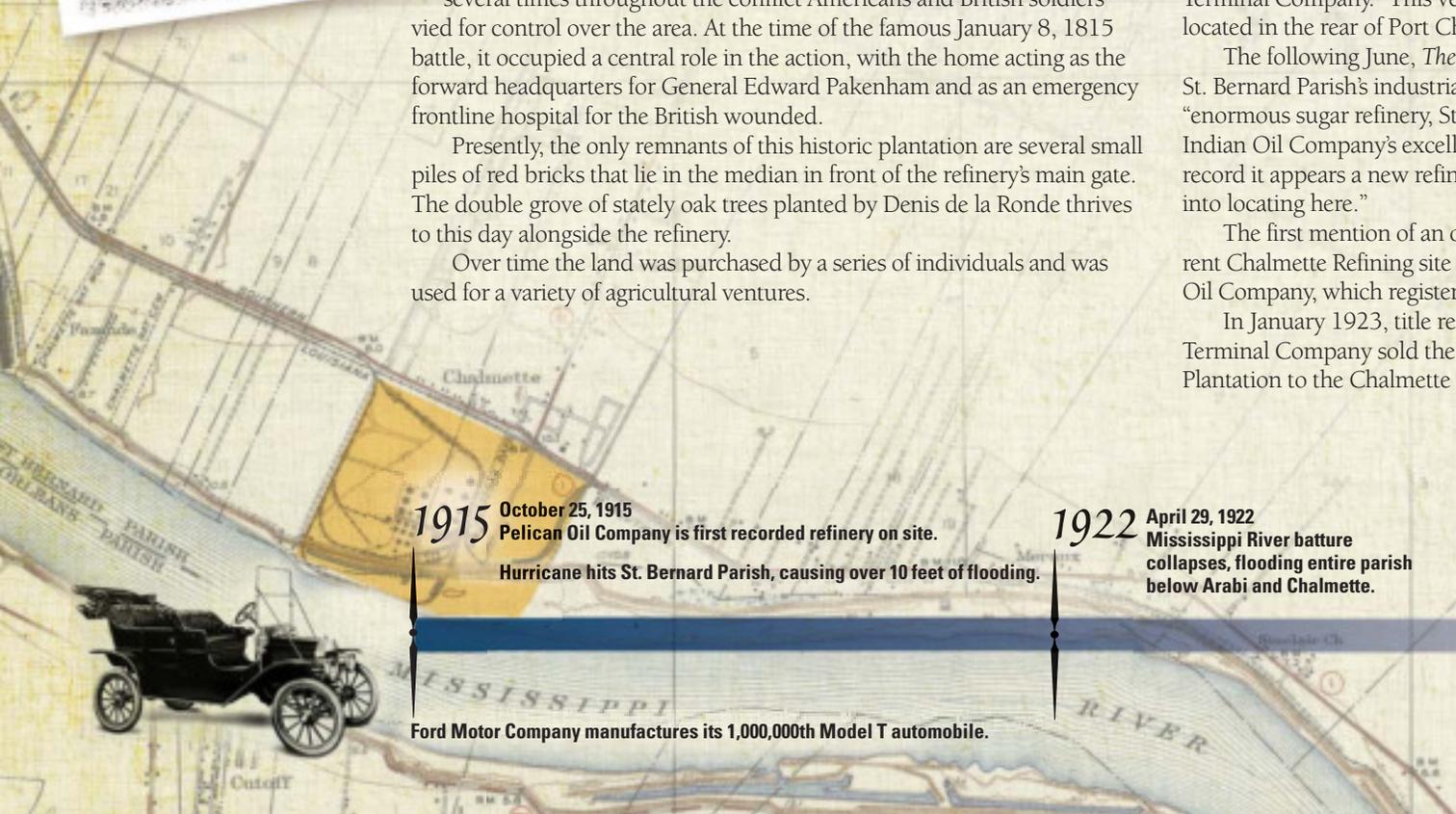
On August 30, 1913, the local paper, *The St. Bernard Voice*, announced that a new industrial enterprise would soon locate to the region. Accordingly: "The promoters are Baltimore capitalists, who have practically completed their plans and have closed the deal for a site with the New Orleans Terminal Company." This venture is described as an oil refining plant to be located in the rear of Port Chalmette and employ many people.

The following June, *The Voice*, commenting on progress in St. Bernard Parish's industrial base, discussed the construction of the "enormous sugar refinery, Standard Oil's distribution center, and the Indian Oil Company's excellent plant. From the record it appears a new refinery may be looking into locating here."

The first mention of an oil refinery on the current Chalmette Refining site refers to the Pelican Oil Company, which registered in Louisiana on October 25, 1915.

In January 1923, title records indicate that the New Orleans Terminal Company sold the land comprising the Battleground Plantation to the Chalmette Oil & Refining Company. One would

The first refinery in St. Bernard Parish, the Indian Refinery, was downriver from what is now Chalmette Refining and produced kerosene.



**1915** October 25, 1915  
Pelican Oil Company is first recorded refinery on site.  
Hurricane hits St. Bernard Parish, causing over 10 feet of flooding.

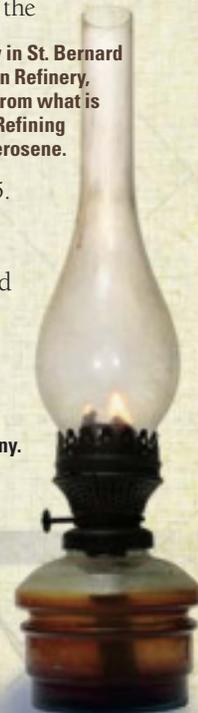
**1922** April 29, 1922  
Mississippi River bature collapses, flooding entire parish below Arabi and Chalmette.

**1923** Pelican Oil is sold to the Chalmette Oil & Refining Company.

May 5, 1923  
Industrial Canal is first used.



Ford Motor Company manufactures its 1,000,000th Model T automobile.





Chalmette Petroleum Corporation employees with their dog on July 22, 1930.

suppose, therefore, that the rail company owned the land Pelican Petroleum had conducted its operations on since 1915.

# CHALMETTE PETROLEUM CORPORATION

 The refinery, in fact, had been purchased by the Vaccaro Brothers, who in turn renamed the facility from Chalmette Oil & Refining Company to Chalmette Petroleum Corporation in 1924.

Joseph Vaccaro was born in Contessa Entellina, Sicily in 1855. He arrived in the United States in 1867 and moved to New Orleans where he sold produce. His brothers, Felix and Luca, would arrive soon after with their sister, Maria. In 1899, the brothers founded Vaccaro Brothers & Company. Maria would later marry Salvadore D'Antonio who also became a vital part of the family business.

The business, up until this time, concerned transporting oranges and lemons from St. Bernard and Plaquemines by lugger to the French Market. But a sudden and devastating freeze in the winter of 1899 killed the citrus harvest forcing the Vaccaros to reconsider their options.

Desiring never again to be victims to cold weather, they adapted their business and embraced a new opportunity. They traveled to Honduras and began importing bananas. Thus began the Standard Fruit Company. The company transported bananas by schooner, but when steamships arrived, the Vaccaros adjusted to the new technology and purchased steamships. By 1911, they had ships specially designed and constructed for the growing business.

**1924** The Vaccaro Brothers of the Standard Fruit Company purchase the refinery and rename it Chalmette Petroleum Corporation.



This is where bananas and oil cross paths. The ever-growing business required many trips with numerous ships crossing the Gulf of Mexico. The availability and price of fuel oil became a budget issue. Thus, to secure that essential resource of fuel oil for their growing fleet, the Vaccaros purchased the refinery.

In a short time, the Vaccaro refinery would merge with Louisiana Oil Refining Company, a subsidiary of the Invincible Oil Corporation belonging to E.R. Radcliff of Shreveport. The combined value of this new venture was \$1,000,000.

In 1926, Standard Fruit Company changed its name to Standard Fruit and Steamship Company. Chalmette Petroleum continued operations and expanded shipments of oil to Central America. In December of 1927, the refinery experienced a near disaster when a fire broke out in the condenser pump that threatened the entire plant. Quick work by employees and local firemen forestalled disaster. After twenty minutes of "hard struggle" the fire was under control and the facility saved from destruction.

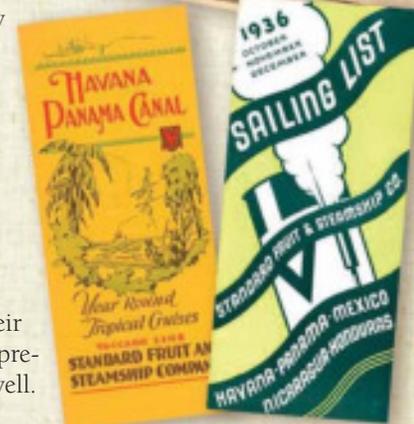
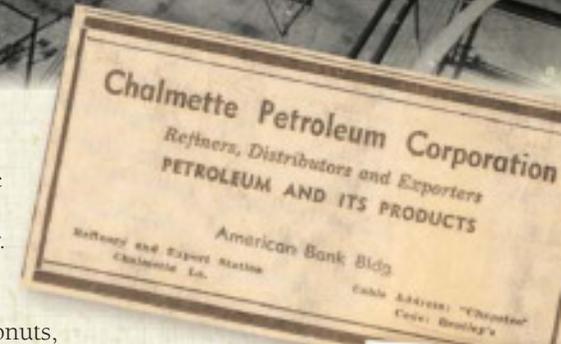
By 1935, they had thirty-five ships moving bananas, coconuts, and oil. They also carried an assortment of passengers housed in specially outfitted staterooms that D'Antonio had incorporated into the design of his ships. Standard Fruit now possessed a fleet that ran a regular sailing schedule between New Orleans and ports in Central America, especially Honduras, moving produce, oil, and passengers. Their fleet consumed much fuel, and it came from the Chalmette facility.

In 1937, *Life Magazine* referenced the growth of the petroleum industry mentioning Chalmette Petroleum Corporation as one of 127 refineries in America and Canada providing 10,000 jobbers and 100,000 dealers with "Ethyl" and "best Grade" of gasoline.

While the Vaccaros were building their businesses in New Orleans, other entrepreneurs were amassing their fortunes as well.



**1926** Chalmette Petroleum expands shipments of oil to Central America.



**1927** Condenser pump fire threatens entire refinery.

St. Bernard levee is exploded to alleviate high stage of the Mississippi River, flooding the parish once again.

# BAY PETROLEUM COMPANY



Charles Ulrick Bay was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Norway by President Harry Truman on June 6, 1946. A resident of New York, Bay had founded Bay Petroleum in the 1930s before becoming a high-ranking intelligence official in the Office of Strategic Services (a precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency).

 In 1937, New York investor Charles Ulrick Bay founded the Bay Petroleum Company soon after he had purchased the McPherson Refinery in Kansas (1934).

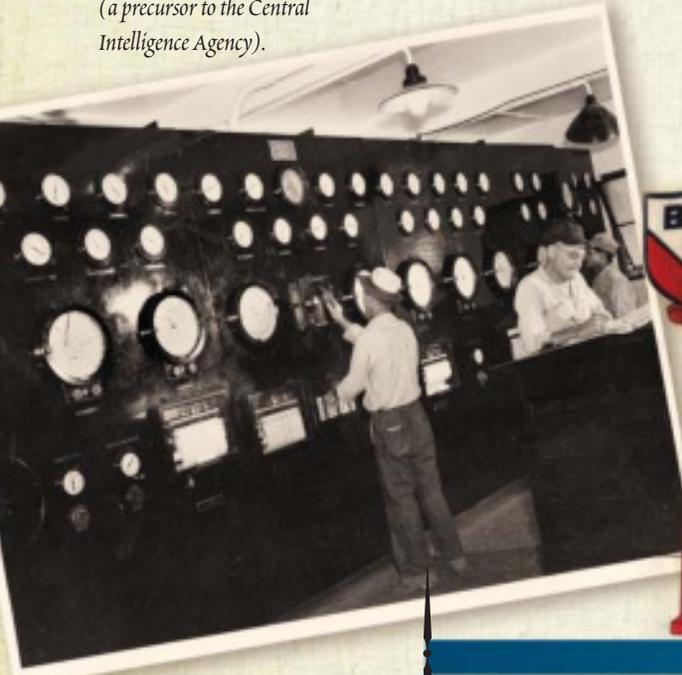
According to the *Oil and Gas Review*, Bay Petroleum acquired Chalmette Petroleum Corporation in 1944, which increased his holdings. Bay purchased the plant in October for approximately \$350,000 plus inventory. Plant capacity at that time was about 7,500 barrels per day.

Bay operated the plant as a wholly-owned subsidiary until 1951 when it was officially rebranded Bay Petroleum Company. Under his control, the Bay refinery experienced two major expansions of the crude and cracking units. In 1952, he completed a 5,500 barrels-per-day

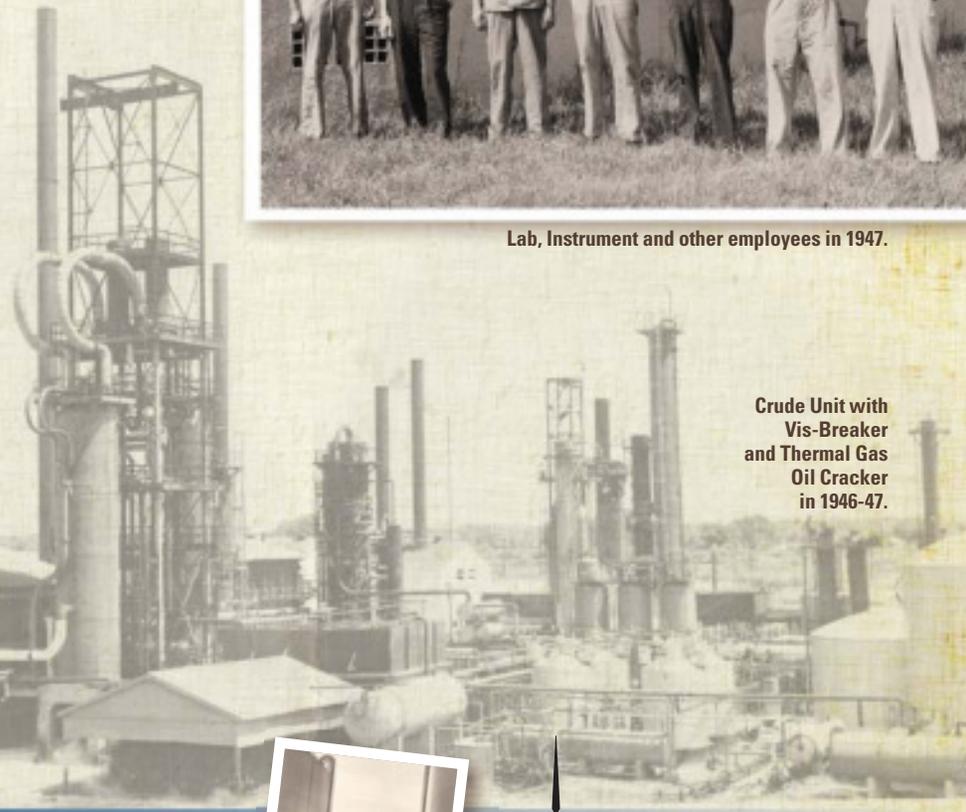
catalytic cracking unit. At its peak, the plant produced 18,000 barrels per day and employed 1,100 workers.

Bay maintained possession of his company until June 1955, when it was purchased by the Tennessee Gas and Transmission Company.

Control Room in 1946.  
Gus Perez at board.



Lab, Instrument and other employees in 1947.



Crude Unit with Vis-Breaker and Thermal Gas Oil Cracker in 1946-47.

1937 Bay Petroleum Company is founded.

1944 Bay Petroleum acquires Chalmette Petroleum Corporation.



1951 Chalmette Petroleum Corporation is rebranded Bay Petroleum Company.

## Safety Through the Years

One of the most drastic changes in the oil and gas industry over the past century has been the growing emphasis on safety. From personal protective equipment (PPE) to safe work practices, continually evolving standards are driving injury rates down. Also, the facility now has a number of behavior-type programs that have made a considerable difference.

Work gloves are often considered to be the first form of personal protection equipment created. Not much has changed in the design of work gloves since first introduced centuries ago. Homer, born somewhere between the 12th and 8th century B.C., wrote of a man named Laertes who wore gloves to tend his garden.

Safety gear, such as hard hats and steel-toe boots, were inspired by World War I military combat uniforms before they became requisite equipment on the job site. The first hard hats, patented in 1919 by the E.D. Bullard Company, were called "hard-boiled hats". Made of steamed canvas, glue and black paint, they were created shortly after the war to improve industrial safety. The first project that required the use of a hard hat among construction workers was the building of the Hoover Dam in 1931.

Following World War II, labor unions played a key role in improving work safety.

Economic expansion of the 1960s resulted in rising injury rates.

Congress responded by establishing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 1970.

Since then, there has been a continuous reduction in work injuries.

In the 1980s the only safety gear required on site in Chalmette were hard hats and safety glasses. Flame retardant clothing was introduced in the 1990s, and earplugs and gloves were available, but not required.

Today, workers are required to wear fire retardant clothing, steel-toe boots, hard hat, safety glasses, ear plugs, gloves, and a H2S monitor while working in refinery units. Depending on the job site, additional items such as a face shield, double hearing protection, or additional personal protective equipment may be required.

From building emergency response teams with on-site EMTs to investing in more reliable and state-of-the-art equipment, Chalmette Refining has made great strides toward maintaining a safe workplace. Keeping up with, and often staying ahead of, OSHA requirements is of paramount importance. Today, safety issues are aligned with the refinery's best practices, an effort that has recognized Chalmette Refining as a pacesetter.

Personal protective equipment is part of every task. Here an employee prepares to climb a vessel during a drill.

Additional personal protective equipment may be required for certain jobs.



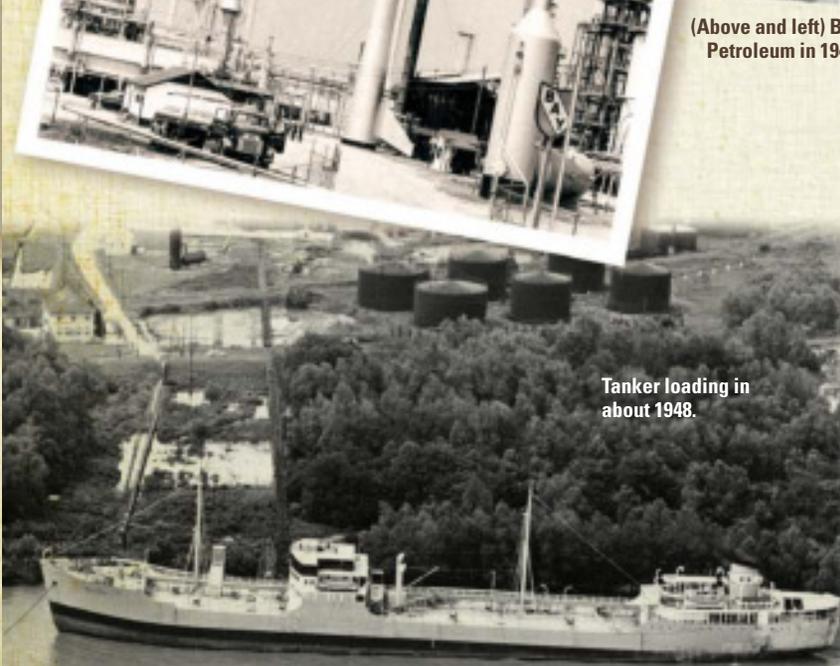
Before the present safety standards workers ride in the back of a pick-up truck in 1983.



Additional personal protective equipment may be required for certain jobs.

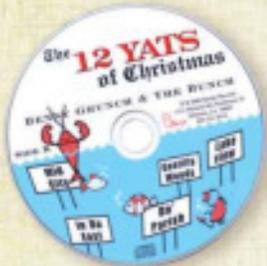


(Above and left) Bay Petroleum in 1946.



Tanker loading in about 1948.

1952 Expansion of new catalytic cracking unit is completed.



The Tenneco Refinery became such an institution in the metro area that local musician Benny Grunch even mentioned it in his Christmas song, "The Twelve Yats of Christmas":

*I used'ta be at Kaiser now  
I'm woikin down'da  
street at'da Tenneco  
Chalmette Refinery.*

# TENNECO



The Tennessee Gas Transmission Company purchased Bay Petroleum in 1955. In June 1956, a catalytic reforming unit was added on-site boosting the refinery's competitiveness. Also added at that time were additional oil tankage, a new office building, a rerun unit, a vapor recovery system, and bottleneck removal equipment.

Again in 1959, a major expansion and modernization program was started. This expansion replaced the old 24,000 barrels-per-day crude unit with a new one having a capacity of 35,000. The catalytic cracking unit expanded from 9,000 barrels per day to 18,000. The catalytic polymerization unit was also replaced with a new 2,500 barrels-per-day alkylation unit. As a component of this modernization program the number of storage tanks was increased, wharf capacity expanded, and a new API separator and waste disposal system was installed. Accomplishing these tasks required additional cooling, water, power, and steam capacity. These improvements stepped up the refinery's capacity and efficiency and modernized its systems.

In 1960, Tenneco Corporation was formed to coordinate the operations of the subsidiaries of Tennessee Gas. In February 1961, the company underwent a corporate restructuring, which placed Tennessee Gas & Bay Petroleum under the managerial control of the new company — Tenneco. In April



A console in Central Control circa 1984.



**1956** Major expansions and improvements were made throughout the refinery. This investment continued through the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

**Workers are dwarfed by one of the two huge reactors hoisted into place at the new Hydrocracker. The \$6 million project took place in 1987.**

1966, Tenneco officially assumed control of all of Tennessee Gas' assets.

Expansion continued. Along with equipment improvements for production in the refinery, additional shop facilities were constructed with the means to generate greater efficiency among the maintenance personnel. Within a year a 2,400 barrels-per-day aromatics petrochemical plant was started and completed.

Between 1961 and 1965 three old 150 psi boilers were replaced while management incorporated an automated in-line gasoline blending system. This period also witnessed the construction of a field office building inclusive of changing rooms and space for a future laboratory. Tenneco's Chalmette facility was growing and increasing capacity and efficiency while improving working conditions.

Later in 1965 the refinery received approval for what would become the largest expansion and modernization in the plant's history. Total investment in the plant doubled as the entire facility was upgraded to meet the demands of a growing market.



**1955** Tennessee Gas Transmission Company purchases Bay Petroleum.

Bay Petroleum is renamed Tenneco Refinery.

**1966** The Colonial Pipeline delivers its first fuel shipment from the Gulf Coast to the East Coast.

In late 1967, the first of the new units, a 400 ton-per-day delayed coker came on stream upgrading vacuum tower bottoms. This was followed by a 14,000 barrels-per-day hydrocracker to increase cracking capacity as well as a 26,000 barrels-per-day reformer. The crude unit was extensively modified to increase its capacity to 80,000 barrels per day, and a light ends plant was constructed to handle the butane and lighter streams coming off of the crude unit. A hydrogen plant was planned and completed by 1968.

More improvements were added over the next five years to accommodate the ever-growing demands of an expanding petrochemical industry.

The next major expenditures would be generated by efforts to satisfy new federal mandates concerning the Clean Air and Water Act as well as requirements by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). At the same time, additional employees were hired to man whole new departments required by this legislation.

In the midst of all of these improvements a new subsidiary called the Tenneco Corporation was formed to oversee operations of these new acquisitions. In 1966, the refinery was renamed Tenneco Refinery.

The Bureau of Mines issued its 1968 Year Book on refineries in Louisiana. The Chalmette Tenneco Refinery elicited these comments:

“Tenneco Oil Co. completed a 2-year expansion program at Chalmette. New process units were installed and existing units were expanded,

modified, or converted. Capacity was increased about 40 percent to 80,000 barrels per day. A new coker upgrades No. 6 fuel oil into middle distillates, naphtha, and gas oil. Solid coke is produced for use in electrodes.

Tenneco, along with Murphy Oil Co., completed arrangements to build a common carrier products pipeline from the Tenneco plant in Chalmette, to Collins, Covington County, Mississippi. Petroleum and petrochemical products from Tenneco’s Chalmette refinery and Murphy’s Meraux refinery will be piped to Collins, where the



Expansions and investment continued throughout the time Tenneco owned the facility.



Expansions and improvements continue. 1968 Capacity increases to 80,000 barrels per day.

Tenneco and Murphy Oil Co. complete pipeline to carry products from both plants to Mississippi pipelines.



line will connect with terminals of both Plantation Pipeline and Colonial Pipeline Co., which transport products from Texas and southwest Louisiana refineries and chemical plants to markets in the New York area. Completion is scheduled for 1969.”

In 1978, the refinery began the transition to processing lower grades of crude from Venezuela and Mexico.

In the 1980s, the Chalmette Heavy Oil Processing Project (CHOPP) was put in place to refine low-priced, heavy, high-sulfur, foreign crude oils. In the memoir, “Built From Scratch” former Tenneco employees stated, “The project encompassed new world-class fluid cracking, coking, alkylation, and hydro-treating that would allow production of 80,000 barrels per day of gasoline and 40,000 barrels per day of jet and distillate fuels plus 7,000 barrels per day of aromatic petrochemicals.”

The \$600 million expansion allowed the refinery to process at least 120,000 barrels per day of crude. The project was completed in 1984 and processed 157,000 barrels per day of lighter crude oil.



1978 Transition begins to process lower grades of crude from Venezuela and Mexico.

1980 Tenneco begins a \$350,000 restoration of the Pakenham Oaks.

\$600 million CHOPP expansion starts and is completed in 1984.



In 1984, Tenneco’s Alvin Jones (kneeling at left) pushes the start button for the Cat Feed Hydro Treater. Also present were Huey Seyfarth, Dave Kim, Gus Sigur, Dewayne Weber, and Dale Landrum.

## In the Community

**A**t Chalmette Refining, not only do we strive to make quality products that you use every day, such as gasoline, we also strive to be a good neighbor – through volunteering and community outreach.

Employees and contractors are encouraged to volunteer in the community, whether it is at their child's school or for their favorite charity. Volunteerism has been a long standing value. You will see our volunteers at a variety of events assisting an assortment of nonprofits, such as The St. Bernard Project, where we help rebuild homes; the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, where we support the participants; and local schools, where we perform science experiments and inspire our youth.



(Left) Chalmette Refining and the ExxonMobil Foundation donated \$500,000 toward the St. Bernard Health Center after Hurricane Katrina.



Refinery engineers visited Chalmette High School in 2015 to talk about various careers at the refinery.



Chalmette Refining and the ExxonMobil Foundation donated funds to help build the Chalmette High School Cultural Arts Learning Center.

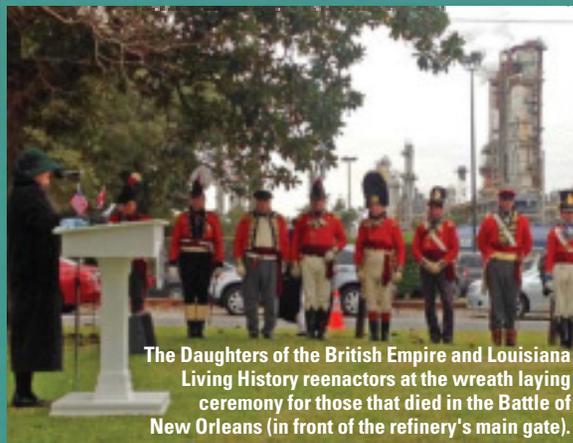


(Right) An employee poses as the Grinch for the Christmas with Character parade and party.



Dave Parsons, founder of Parsons Dance Company, and students of the New Orleans Ballet Association (NOBA) after school program.

(Below) Employees donate their time at a STEM-Saturday event with future engineers and operators.



The Daughters of the British Empire and Louisiana Living History reenactors at the wreath laying ceremony for those that died in the Battle of New Orleans (in front of the refinery's main gate).

(Right) Employee volunteers to prep a St. Bernard Project home before painting the walls.



(Left) Chalmette Refining co-sponsors the Wally the Turtle Shelter-in-Place play for all K-3 students in St. Bernard Parish.

(Below) Chalmette Refining volunteers are all smiles at the Arc of St. Bernard's clean-up day.



# MOBIL OIL REFINERY CHALMETTE

 In 1988, *The New York Times* reported: "The Mobil Corporation said it would pay \$650 million, plus additional consideration for working capital, to buy Tenneco's modern crude oil refinery in Chalmette, Louisiana. Analysts said that, unlike those who had purchased the oil and gas reserves, Mobil believed that oil prices would remain low for a long period, giving it a chance to make higher profits from refining than from exploration and production. Crude oil is the major feedstock for refineries."

Thus, with a stroke of a pen, Tenneco Refinery in Chalmette became Mobil Refinery in Chalmette.

The Tenneco brand was replaced with the flying horse of the Mobil Oil Corporation. Mobil had a deep pedigree in American oil. After the federally mandated break-up of the Standard Oil trust in 1911, the Standard Oil Company of New York (Socony) was established. In 1920, the company's president, Henry Clay Folger, registered the name "Mobiloil" as a trademark.

After a long and complicated series of acquisitions and name changes, finally in 1963 the company settled on one name "Mobil" and created a new logo to represent the change...the flying horse. However, the one word name "Mobiloil" continued as an identifier until the 1970s.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Mobil was among the largest producers of gasoline and motor oils in the United States. For a number of those years it actually achieved the number one position.

A change in automotive technology improved Mobil's economic status and market position. Car manufacturers began the transition from carburetors to fuel injection technology. This required a cleaner-burning gasoline to prevent clogs and the resultant engine problems. Mobil's high



detergent fuel, Super Unleaded, branded in the 1980s, proved the best possible fuel for fuel injection. This catapulted Mobil to the top.

Mobil began to expand and purchase refineries to meet new demand and moved their headquarters from New York to Fairfax, Virginia in 1987.

In 1988, the Mobil Oil Corporation logo appeared on the site, and change once again arrived in St. Bernard Parish.

Mobil operated the refinery as a sole entity until 1997 when it sold 50 percent interest in the refinery and pipeline assets to PDV Chalmette, Inc., a subsidiary of Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), the Venezuelan state-owned oil company. They renamed the new corporation as Chalmette Refining, LLC, and Mobil became the operator of the facility.

The deal proved to be mutually beneficial. Venezuela possessed high-sulphur-content oil and the refinery in Chalmette was designed to handle that oil. Since 1973, "sweet crude" lacking sulphur that came from the Arab nations diminished in volume. The refinery altered its processing to allow use of "sour crude" with high sulphur content. This partnership made sense because Venezuela has vast sour crude reserves.

Mobil operated the Chalmette facility for a little over ten years.



1997 PDV Chalmette, Inc. purchases 50 percent interest in the refinery, and the new corporation is renamed Chalmette Refining, LLC.



**Mobil**



1989 Valdez Oil Spill: As a result of this disaster, Exxon created the Operations Integrity Management System (OIMS).

1988 Mobil Corporation purchases the Tenneco Refinery.

# EXXON MOBIL



**In 2015, Chalmette Refining has 500 employees and 500 contractors.**

### 2015 Refinery Capacity



- 189,000 barrels of crude oil per day.
- 0.9 billion gallons of gasoline per year.

### 2015 Economic Impact

- Largest private employer in St. Bernard Parish.
- Secondary employment: 5,508 people.
- Direct spending: \$459.5 million.
- Secondary spending: \$371 million.
- Total economic impact: \$840.5 million.

On December 1, 1999, financial news broke once again regarding a major merger among giants in the petroleum industry. Exxon Corp. and Mobil Corp. confirmed their plans to merge on that Tuesday in a historic \$80 billion deal that reunited fragments of the old Standard Oil monopoly. This merger created a corporate entity that eclipsed some of the richest oil-producing nations in the world.

According to the arrangement, the merged company would be called Exxon Mobil Corp. The announcement also stated that the business would maintain both the Exxon and the Mobil brands on products as well as making the new company's headquarters in Exxon's corporate home of Irving, Texas.

According to a CNN business report at the time of the announcement: "At a joint news conference, Exxon Chairman and Chief Executive Officer



Lee Raymond and Mobil Chief Executive Lucio Noto said the deal would allow the companies to compete more effectively in the face of sharply lower oil prices and higher costs for finding new oil reserves."

The report went on to state: "Today's announced combination

The Lab underwent an \$11 million facelift that was completed in 2007.

In 2005, the Waste Water Treatment plant underwent a \$50 million project to upgrade the facility.



does not mean that we could not survive on our own." Mobil's Noto said, "...this is not a combination based on desperation, it's one based on opportunity. But we need to face some facts. The world has changed. The easy things are behind us. The easy oil, the easy cost savings, they're done. Both our organizations have pursued internal efficiencies to the extent that we could."

On November 30, 1999, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) approved the now \$81 billion merger by a 4-0 vote after an 11-month review process, one of the longest in history.

Exxon and Mobil were at the time the largest and second largest U.S. oil producers with combined annual revenue of \$193.1 billion and production of 2.5 million barrels of oil per day. At the time of the merger their combined market value was \$237.53 billion, making ExxonMobil the third largest company in the world.

Financial reports indicated that the two companies combined possessed nearly 21 billion barrels of oil and gas reserves on hand, enough to satisfy the world's entire energy needs for more than a year. ExxonMobil now occupied a position only behind Saudi Arabia and Iran in terms of output.

Chalmette Refining, LLC, a stand-alone corporation owned jointly by ExxonMobil and PDVSA, and operated by ExxonMobil, now owned the refinery.



# ExxonMobil



**1999** Exxon Corp. and Mobil Corp. merge. Chalmette Refining is now jointly owned by ExxonMobil and PDVSA and operated by ExxonMobil.

**2005** Hurricane Katrina devastates St. Bernard and metro New Orleans. Chalmette Refining is largely spared and aids the community in innumerable ways. All employees are affected, with many losing their homes.

October 8, refinery employees and contractors achieve an unprecedented milestone by safely working 1,000 consecutive days without a lost time incident.

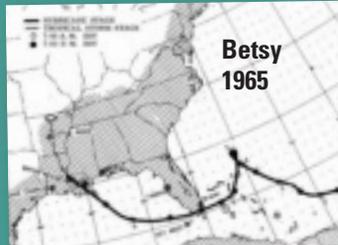
**2015**

## Hurricanes & The Refinery Are No Strangers

**O**n October 25, 1915, St. Bernard sustained considerable damage and loss of life when a sudden storm struck the area. The *St. Bernard Voice* reported, "It was the fiercest hurricane witnessed in St. Bernard, and it left death, destruction, desolation, and destitution in its path. Everything was devastated and many were prostrated while the ground was strewn with fences and trees." Over ten feet of water crossed the road in lower St. Bernard while flood waters drove into the upper parish.

### 1965

Fifty years later, in 1965 St. Bernard Parish and the Tenneco Refinery came in contact with another hurricane, Betsy! Production was reduced, but the plant did not sustain severe damage and was soon back in full production. The flooding in the parish occurred on the other side of Judge Perez Drive. The refinery only suffered minor wind damage.



**Betsy  
1965**

### 2005

August 29, 2005. Hurricane Katrina forever shaped the lives of the people who lived and worked in St. Bernard Parish.

Six hundred twenty-five employees worked at the refinery at the time of the storm. When Hurricane Katrina struck, two-thirds of the employees lost nearly everything they owned.

Chalmette Refining's Katrina story is one of great triumph. The first order of business was locating its people and ensuring their safety. Two days after the storm passed, a small group came by helicopter to assess the damage. Although the property was dry, it was evident that water had come and gone and, with the high winds, left substantial damage in the field. It was, by no means, going to be an easy effort.

Because of the refinery's proximity to the river (the highest

**St. Bernard Parish and refinery fire departments shared resources after Katrina.**



point in the parish) the Administration Building was left intact and would soon play host to parish officials, government staff with their families and pets, and medical and military personnel.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department took over the refinery's firehouse on Paris Road to use as a home base. All 10 of the parish's firehouses were underwater, and their radio systems were flooded.

The firehouse became the center of a massive coordination effort, where search and rescue parties from all around the country convened. Some 300 firefighters were living at the complex along with 30 fire apparatus vehicles. Using welding machines from the refinery, they established electricity and were able to back flush river water for flushing toilets. President Bush, Governor Blanco, and New Orleans Mayor Nagin met with St. Bernard Parish government officials in the refinery manager's office to discuss rescue and recovery efforts.

Meanwhile, new responders began arriving at the refinery, including a National Guard troop from Georgia. Several doctors and nurses from the flooded Chalmette General Hospital established a medical triage unit in the Administration Building's lobby.

By mid-September, power was restored to the Administration Building, its three floors still occupied. On October 12, power returned to the entire refinery. The parish government personnel continued to live and work from the building for six weeks. And the St. Bernard Fire Department, supported by outside agencies, operated out of the firehouse for six months.

Those employees able to work reported to duty. They arrived by bus from the Baton Rouge ExxonMobil Chemical Plant then later from several other locales outside of New Orleans. The ride was painfully long, the conditions were poor, and what they faced upon arrival each day was daunting. Many were unaware of the status of their homes, fearing the worst (a fear that was later realized for most). Left without many options, their minds were on work but their hearts were buried in the muck that claimed their homes. It was, for many, the most



**Katrina flooded all of St. Bernard Parish.**

difficult time of their lives.

Although scarce, temporary housing was found for employees who needed it most. On the refinery grounds, a tent camp was set up with sleeping trailers for those who stayed on site. Contract labor was brought in, and many employees from other ExxonMobil refineries aided in the effort. As the water receded, more and more employees convened at the refinery. Slowly but surely, Chalmette Refining came to life.

By November 8, 2015, Chalmette Refining resumed normal operations.

### 2012

In 2012, all eyes were on Tropical Storm Isaac as it made its way across the Caribbean and into the Gulf of Mexico. In preparation for hurricane season, Chalmette Refining executed its Hurricane Emergency Response Plan. The site plan was meticulously followed and worked in conjunction with St. Bernard Parish, state, and corporate plans.

Fifteen employees and five contractors remained on site to manage the storm's impact on the refinery. In addition to monitoring the rainfall and processing the water, personnel ensured that the boilers were running and the utilities were in working order. All of these actions were performed without exposing employees to the 58 mph winds that tore through the site.

With a firm focus on safety, the team managed to ride out the storm without any injuries. Hurricane Isaac produced 80 mile-per-hour winds, an 11-foot storm surge, and an estimated \$2.72 billion in damage. And nearly half of the state's energy users experienced power outages.

While the Damage Assessment Team began working through their checklists, the Restart Team began discussing how to get the refinery back up and running. A plan for start-up was mapped out and began the Friday after Hurricane Isaac passed.

By following its emergency plan, Chalmette Refining weathered the storm safely. The effectiveness of the plan was tested, and those responsible for its execution were diligent about running through the steps carefully.

**After Katrina, government agencies set up base at the refinery including FEMA and the National Guard.**



## NEW FRONTIERS

 On June 18, 2015, PBF Energy Inc. announced that a subsidiary would purchase Chalmette Refining, LLC and related logistics and assets for \$322 million from ExxonMobil and PDV Chalmette, LLC. At the time, the refinery had approximately 530 employees and a capacity of 189,000 barrels per day. Nearly 500 additional people worked at the plant under contract.

According to the PBF Energy website: “(NYSE: PBF) is one of the largest independent refiners in North America, operating, through its subsidiaries, oil refineries and related facilities in Delaware City, Delaware; Paulsboro, New Jersey; and Toledo, Ohio. Our mission is to

operate our facilities in a safe, reliable and environmentally responsible manner, provide employees with a safe and rewarding workplace, become a positive influence in the communities where we do business, and provide superior returns to our investors.”

The acquisition of Chalmette Refining will establish a Gulf Coast presence for PBF Energy and increase the company’s refining capacity to more than 725,000 barrels per day.

Chalmette Refining has become an institution in St. Bernard Parish since its humble origins as a corporation called Pelican Oil Company in 1915. Today, it qualifies as a mid-sized oil refinery occupying over 400 acres of land along the Mississippi River. The refinery is St. Bernard Parish’s largest tax payer, and employees devote their time and talents for community projects.

As one century ends, a new chapter begins. The name of the refinery will change but the people of Chalmette Refining will continue to run a successful, safe, and environmentally friendly facility. Like the historic Pakenham Oaks, the people stand as a symbol of commitment to preserving the quality of life for St. Bernard Parish.



Chalmette  
Refining Company



## References:

Local company publications produced over the last century, including: *Oily Times*, *The Refiner*, *Tenneco Strike Bulletin*, *The Branch*, and *The Oaks*.

*Tenneco Oil Processing and Marketing: 25 Years of Progress*  
*ExxonMobil: 125 Years of History*  
*The Chalmette Refinery (Tenneco Publication) Built From Scratch:*

*The Energy Companies of Tenneco*  
*The St. Bernard Voice*  
*The Times-Picayune Life Magazine*  
*Oil and Gas Review*  
*Bureau of Mines 1968 Yearbook*  
*The New York Times*  
*CNN*  
*The St. Bernard Parish Clerk of Court's Office*

## Photo credits

Cover (Page 1)  
Chalmette Petroleum Corporation Employees – 1930 – Refinery Archives.

View of the Refinery from the Westbank of the Mississippi River – Photo by Roger Evans, Chalmette Refining employee.

Page 2  
View of the de la Ronde Ruins Looking Through the Oak Trees – 1920s – Courtesy of the Louisiana State Library.

Page 3  
Current photo of the Facility Looking Through the Pakenham Oak Trees – Photo by Douglas Toussaint, Chalmette Refining employee.

Page 4  
De la Ronde Plantation – circa 1866 – Courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum.

De la Ronde Ruins Today – Photo by Douglas Toussaint.

Map – 1939 United States Geological Survey map courtesy of Louisiana State University Cartographic Information Center.

Page 5  
Chalmette Petroleum Corporation Employees – 1930 – Refinery Archives.

Photo of the Refinery – Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

1939 – Chalmette Petroleum Corporation Advertisement.

Standard Fruit & Steamship Brochures – circa 1924 – Collection of Björn Larsson – [timetableimages.com](http://timetableimages.com).

Vaccaro Brothers Ships – circa 1927 – Courtesy of Camino Real. *Cronicas de la Historia De Honduras* – [cronicasdehonduras.blogspot.com](http://cronicasdehonduras.blogspot.com).

Page 6  
Charles Ulrick Bay Photo courtesy of the United States Embassy, Oslo, Norway.

Control Room Photo with Gus Perez at Board – 1946 – Photo by K.O. Stowell, Refinery Archives.

Employee Group Photo Lab, Instrument & other Departmental Employees – 1947 – Photo by K.O. Stowell – Refinery Archives.

Inset Photos – 1947 – Courtesy of University of Louisville Archives & Special Collections.

Background Photo – Crude Unit with Vis-Breaker and Thermal Gas Oil Cracker – 1946-47 – Refinery Archives.

Page 7  
Aerial Photo of the Refinery – 1946 – Photo by K. O. Stowell – Refinery Archives.

Inset photo – Refinery with Bay Sign – 1956 – *Tenneco Oil Processing and Marketing: 25 Years of Progress*.

Tanker Loading at Refinery Docks – 1948 – Photo by K. O. Stowell – Refinery Archives.

Candelabra Flare Photo – 1983 – Refinery Archives.

Tenneco Safety Memorabilia – Photo by Roger Evans.

Employee photos by Roger Evans and Douglas Toussaint.

Page 8/9  
"Twelve Yats of Christmas" lyrics and CD courtesy of Benjamin "Benny Grunch" Antin.

Tenneco Signage used with permission from Tenneco, Inc.

All Other Photos – Refinery Archives.

Page 10  
NOBA Photo – Courtesy of New Orleans Ballet Association.

Grinch Photo – Courtesy of Karen Turni Bazile.

All Other Photos by Employees (when known): Douglas Toussaint, Elizabeth Ellison-Frost, and Patrick Trahan.

Page 11  
PDVSA Logo used with permission from Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A.

Other Photos – Refinery Archives.

Employee Photo by Roger Evans.

Page 12  
Photos by Roger Evans and Douglas Toussaint.

Photos of Exxon Valdez – circa 1989 – ExxonMobil archives.

Page 13  
Hurricane Betsy Map – NOAA.gov.

Photos by Douglas Toussaint.

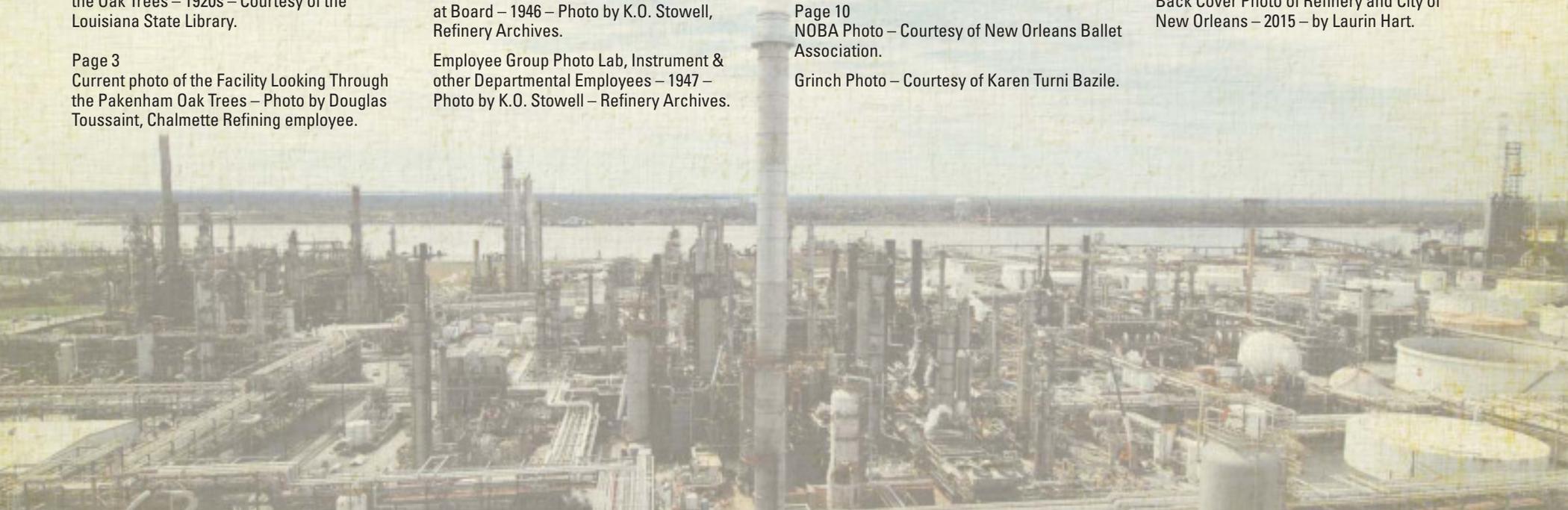
St. Bernard Parish Photo – Refinery archives.

Page 14  
Photo by Roger Evans.

Chalmette Refining Company logo used with permission from PBF Energy, Inc.

Page 15  
Photo by Roger Evans.

Back Cover Photo of Refinery and City of New Orleans – 2015 – by Laurin Hart.



# CHALMETTE REFINING, LLC

500 West St. Bernard Highway

Chalmette, Louisiana 70043

(504) 281-1212

