

## FOREWORD

The Colorado School of Mines is observing its centennial year in recognition of the February 9, 1874, signing of the bill appropriating Colorado Territory funds for the construction of its first building. In that same year, the March 1874 issue of *Scientific American* contained the following news item: "About 800 miles west of Omaha the Union Pacific Railroad crosses the Green River, and the approach to the river is for a considerable distance through a cutting node in rock. During the construction of the road some workmen piled together a few pieces of the excavated rock as protection for a dinner fire and soon observed that the stone itself ignited. The place thereafter became known as Burning Stone Cut. The general superintendent of the railroad, Mr. T. E. Sickels, has caused analyses and experiments to be made with this substance, which proves to be a shale rock rich in mineral oils. The oil can be produced by distillation in abundant quantities, say 35 gallons to the ton of rock. The oil thus obtained is of excellent quality."

Despite the above knowledge and that the first patent on oil shale processing was issued in 1694 (English Patent No. 33), the Seventh Oil Shale Symposium was held in anticipation of the United States being on the threshold of the commercial production of oil from oil shale. This is not the first time oil shale supporters have felt "the time has come" for shale oil to contribute to the energy needs of their country. In view of the decreasing reserves of petroleum and natural gas in the United States and our increasing energy requirements, there are many reasons to believe that now the circumstances are in favor of the development of a shale oil industry to supplement the liquid and gaseous fuel needs of the country.

It is the purpose of this Seventh Oil Shale Symposium to contribute to the development of this industry by providing a forum at which the problems and achievements of the workers in this field can be discussed and disseminated. I wish to express appreciation to the authors and participants who through their work and presentations establish the value of this symposium.

DR. JAMES H. GARY  
*Vice President for Academic Affairs*  
*Colorado School of Mines*