

# Red Adair

The Story of an Oil Well Firefighter



Maureen Haselhurst

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# Introduction

The heroes of ancient legends fought monsters and fire-breathing dragons. This book tells the true story of a 20th-century hero who fought a new kind of dragon – fiercely burning oil wells.

Our lives would be very different without oil. Modern-day transportation and industry both rely heavily on oil and other petroleum products. In fact, if people hadn't discovered oil, many believe that technology as we know it would be impossible.

Unfortunately, as useful as oil is, it can also be terribly dangerous for people who live close to wells, and for the environment. For example, sometimes an oil well can catch on fire; this is known as a wild well.

The hero in this book has faced incredible danger while fighting wild wells all over the world. His name is Red Adair.



SAMPLE

A raging wild well

# Red Adair - Fact File

## Red the Boy

**Name:** Paul Neal Adair

**Date of birth:** June 18, 1915

**Place of birth:** Houston, Texas

**Family:** Three sisters and four

brothers, very poor

**Description:** Small, thin, red hair

**Education:** Left school at

14 with good grades

**Interests:** Sports,  
including football,  
swimming, baseball

**Job:** Delivery boy

**Ambition:** To become  
a football coach

**Impossible dream:**

To fight wild wells



Red with his mother and  
one of his brothers



Red Adair wears distinctive red coveralls

## Red the Man

**Married:** Kemmie Lou Wheeler  
in 1939

**Children:** Jimmy and Robyn

**Grandchildren:** Paul Wayne,  
Sunny, and Derrick

**Description:** 5 feet 6 inches tall  
(1.7 m), muscular, red-gray hair

**Interests:** Racing cars and  
powerboats. Also supports  
many children's charities.

**Job:** Wild-well fighter

**Impossible dream:** Accomplished.

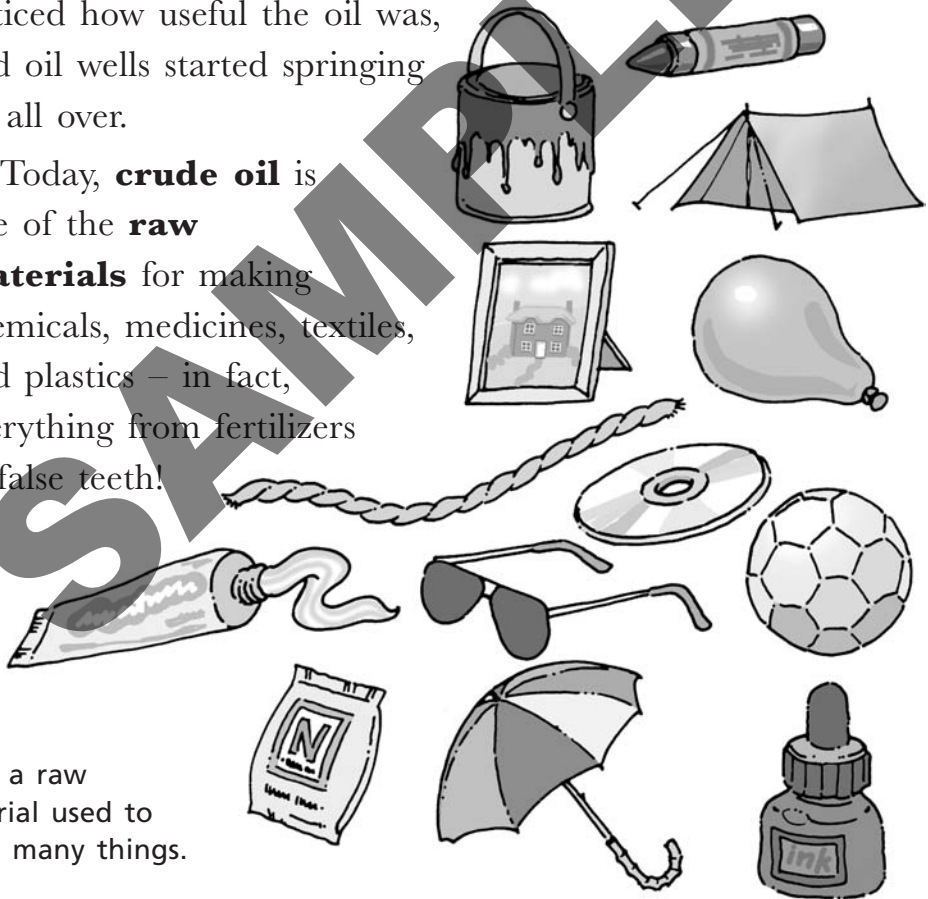
He has fought more than 2,500  
wild wells worldwide.

# Oil and Oil Wells

Oil is a sticky liquid that lies in vast underground lakes far below the surface of the Earth. For many thousands of years, people had noticed places where oil seeped out of the ground.

Then, in 1859, a man named Colonel Edwin Drake drilled the first well in Pennsylvania. Other people noticed how useful the oil was, and oil wells started springing up all over.

Today, **crude oil** is one of the **raw materials** for making chemicals, medicines, textiles, and plastics – in fact, everything from fertilizers to false teeth!



Oil is a raw material used to make many things.