



# **Natural Gas Industry in Appalachia: A History from the First Discovery to the Maturity of the Industry**

*David A. Waples*

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The large scale, practical uses of natural gas were initially introduced by innovators Joseph Pew and George Westinghouse for the steel and glass industries in Pittsburg, and local gas companies evolved from individual wells to an interstate supply network acquired by Rockefeller's Standard Oil interests. Natural gas is now a prevalent part of American markets and is filling the critical void left by a lack of new coal, oil, and nuclear power facilities. This vital American enterprise, however, began in the Appalachian states as an accidental and underestimated byproduct of the oil rush of 1859. This book explores the evolution and significance of the natural gas industry. Early chapters discuss the first natural gas discoveries in the 1800s, the way in which entrepreneurs used the fuel, the consequent displacement of the manufactured gas industry, and the expansion of the Appalachian natural gas network - largely initiated by Standard Oil interests - into major regional markets. Later chapters discuss the growth of the Appalachian drilling industry, the first wooden and metal pipelines, the development of gas compressor engines, the pioneering of gas storage fields, and the genesis of gas marketing for lighting, heating, cooking, and industrial use. The concluding chapter describes the growth of the Appalachian natural gas industry since its major source of supply shifted from local wells in the 1950s to new discoveries of natural gas in the southwestern United States and the Gulf of Mexico. The conclusion also describes the impact of gas shortages and the government regulation that affects the industry to the present day.

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