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Billings Oil pioneer donates oil and gas field files to UM Library

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John Wight of Billings, a Montana oil and refinery pioneer, has donated 37 feet of archival materials to the University of Montana archives. The various files and papers document the development of the oil and gas industry in Montana. UM Archivist Dale Johnson said almost no other material is available to the historian on oil development in Montana. "Anyone doing research on the history of the oil and gas industry in Montana will find Wight's files invaluable," Johnson said. "Wight was an independent developer and operator in Montana and Wyoming from 1919-1965. He was instrumental in common carrier-tariff disputes with major gas companies on behalf of small, independent owners and operators over a period of three decades."

Among his holdings, Wight owned oil refineries at Shelby and in Big Horn County, Mont.

Johnson said Wight's records show that his promotional efforts resulted in millions of dollars in taxes to the State of Montana from oil and gas royalties.

In addition to his oil interests, Wight also was a Montana homesteader, conservationist, and cattle and sheep rancher. He moved to Montana from South Dakota in 1917 and has lived in Billings since 1926.

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