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## The Myles Companies—From Salt to the Short-Lived First Pine Prairie, Louisiana, Oil Boom

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### ABSTRACT

**“It runs for Myles,” a slogan for the Myles Salt Company, advertised one of the many products produced in the first half of the 20th century by this New Orleans–based company. Table salt, perfumed bath salts, livestock salt, ice cream salt, and various grades of rock salt were produced by the Myles Salt Company until the company was acquired by Morton Salt in 1947. Frederick F. Myles (1851–1915) and his brother Beverly B. Myles (1855–1930) organized and operated successful Louisiana land (mineral) and salt companies during the late 1800s and early 1900s, including mines at Avery and Weeks Island salt domes, Iberia Parish.**

**The Myles Mineral Company was organized with \$500,000 of capital stock in 1909 to “develop gas and oil land.” The brothers acquired land at the Pine Prairie Salt Dome in Evangeline Parish, and after evaluating and dismissing the potential for salt mining there, decided to drill for oil. The Myles Mineral Company drilled their first well at Pine Prairie in 1909, which encountered oil shows before reaching salt at a depth of approximately 600 feet. The Myles No. 8 Myles, drilled in 1912, was the discovery well for the Pine Prairie Oil Field. The well tested at an estimated 1000–1200 barrels of oil per day at a depth of 1225 feet, but it and subsequent wells quickly sanded up. Local newspapers reported an oil boom for the area and many prominent oilmen and oil companies, including the Producers Oil Company, Gulf Refining Company, Sun Oil, and Standard Oil, rushed to Pine Prairie to lease and drill, with little success. Commercial oil production was not established in the field until 1941.**