

PRIMARY RECOVERY

Oil, water and gas existed under high temperature and high pressure when the first well was drilled into the oil producing formations. Because of the high gas pressure, the Continental #1 State "J-2" well was a good well when it was drilled in 1938. The oil, along with some water and gas, was pushed out the well bore by the pressure of the gas. As more wells were drilled, the pressure decreased and pumps had to be installed on the wells.

With the decreased reservoir pressure, a large amount of oil was trapped in the pore spaces of the reservoir rocks. The diagram shown below represents the pore spaces in the reservoir at different times during the life of the field. The original condition of the reservoir at the time of discovery is shown in Figure (a), with only oil and water filling the pore spaces. It is seen that as oil is produced, gas bubbles, water, and the small pore spaces prevent recovery of 80% of the oil in place. At this point, as shown in Figure (b), a large amount of oil remains trapped in the reservoir.



SECONDARY RECOVERY

Two natural forces provide the energy necessary to move oil from the reservoir to a producing well. One is the expansion of the gas that is dissolved in the oil (solution gas drive) and the second is the movement of water which displaces the oil (water drive).

Generally speaking, a reservoir that has a water drive (natural or man-made) will yield significantly more oil than if subjected only to a solution gas drive. When it is determined that a reservoir is primarily producing by gas expansion, consideration is given to supplementing the solution gas drive with the injection of water to recover additional oil.

A water injection program, also referred to as secondary recovery, requires pressurized injection of water through selected wells into the oil-bearing reservoir. The injected water forces the oil to the surrounding producing wells where it is pumped to the surface. Following a water injection program, a large portion of the original oil is recovered as shown in Figure (c).

