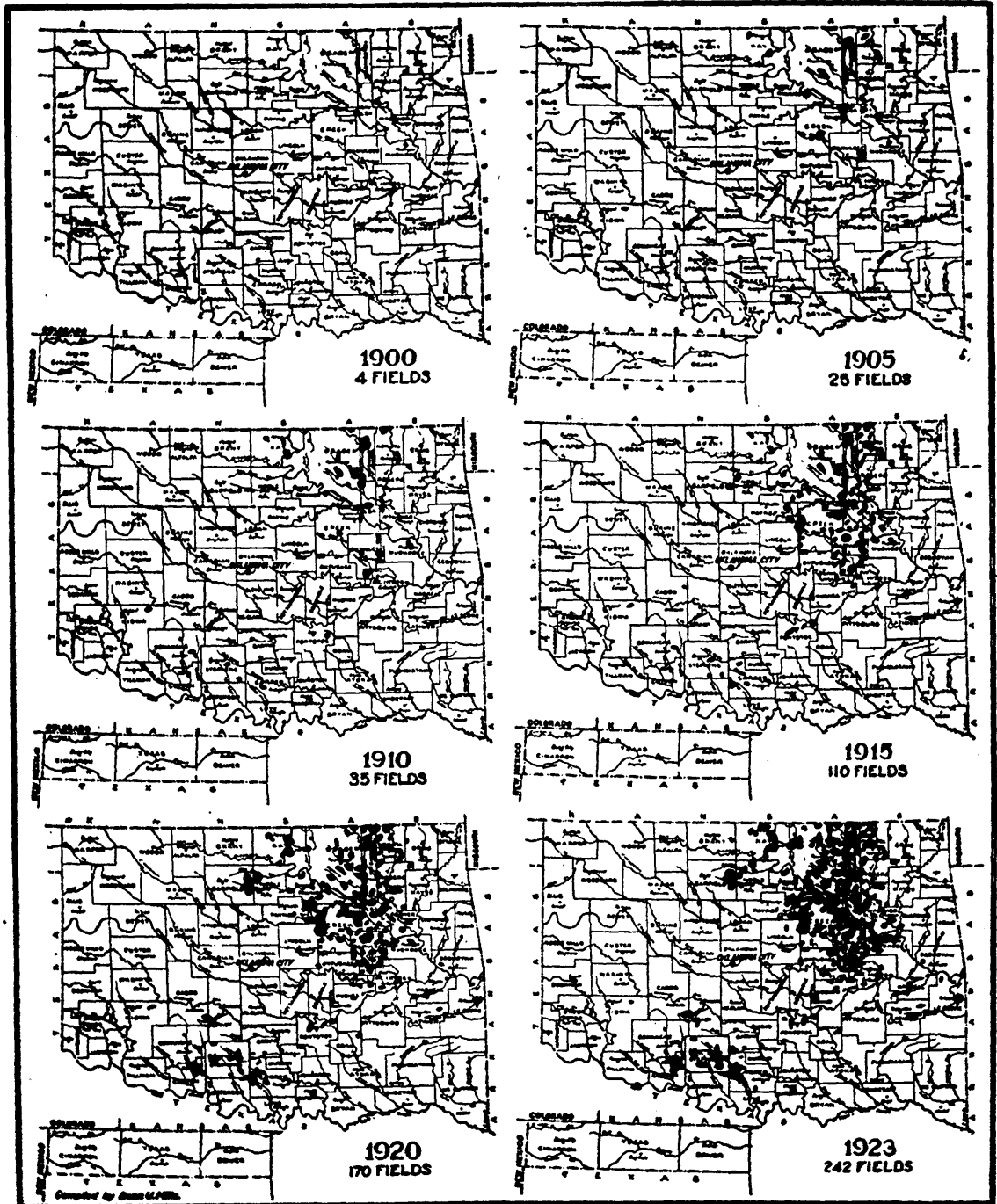


FIGURE IV. Map of Oklahoma showing oil fields.



**XXI. A SUMMARY OF OIL PRODUCTION IN
OKLAHOMA BY YEARS****BESS MILLS-BULLARD****From the Bureau of Economic Geology, Norman, Oklahoma**

Since 1917 and until 1923 Oklahoma has held first place among the States for the production of crude oil. From her beginning in 1891, when but thirty barrels were produced for the market, production has increased considerably each year. During the period between 1891 and 1923, covering 32 years, the total production has been over a billion and a half barrels of oil.

In 1891, when the first oil operations were under way in Oklahoma, to 1896, a period of five years, the total output was only 531 barrels. Then came a marked and rapid increase in oil production. In 1897 the yield was 625 barrels; up to this year but 27 wells had been drilled in the entire state and practically all the activity was confined to the Cherokee Nation. However, several tests were made in the extreme western part of the state early in this period. The largest field at this time was near the town of Chelsea in Nowata County, having 16 wells ranging in depth from 350 feet to 1,200 feet and producing a dark heavy oil. From here the activity extended southward. At Muskogee, a well was brought in at a depth of 1,100 feet which yielded a light greenish oil, 38° Baume; this was the highest grade of oil produced to date. A duster was drilled near Eufaula in McIntosh County at a depth of 2,780 feet; this was one of Oklahoma's first dry holes. From 1898 to 1899 very little drilling was promoted because of the land and lease complications and entanglements with the Department of Interior at Washington, D. C.

In 1900 activity was again resumed. Four definite fields were established and the production for that year was 75,000 barrels. Compare this figure with 420,000 barrels which are produced daily in the state today. It was known at this time that numerous springs and water wells gave evidence of the presence of petroleum. Asphalt in liquid as well as in solid form was found in scattered localities over Oklahoma. In 1901 the Red-Fork-Tulsa area came in with its big initial production; in 1903 the Bartelsville pool and several others in that general vicinity were opened. The wells in these newer fields produced a product of such superior quality that the future of the industry in Oklahoma gained high esteem among the oil men from the Pennsylvania region. However, these wells were not big producers compared with those of today. Of the 100 wells brought

in in 1903, only 3 produced as much as 110 barrels per day.

In 1905 the Glenn Pool area was brought in. The nearest pipe line in the State at this time ended at Bartlesville and the immense quantities of oil produced in the new field was stored in earthen vats. It was not until this time that wells of great size were known, and only when a phenomenal well in the Glenn Pool area produced 40,000 barrels per day, that production of quantity was sought. Oil sold for about 40c per barrel and thousands of barrels were sold at 25c under private contract. 1905 saw the establishment of 25 fields for the state and a total production of 8 millions of barrels of oil.

As early as 1906 Oklahoma lead Kansas in the number of wells drilled and very soon in the amount of production. Pipe lines were extended through the State from Kansas to the Gulf of Mexcio. The drill continued to reveal large wells in all parts of Oklahoma; this was a period of testing and wild-cattng all over Oklahoma and 10 new fields were brought in. During 1910 35 fields were defined and established in the state and production for that year was 52 million barrels.

In 1912 the Cushing field was discovered but not until 1914 did it reach its high production, when it turned into the market 22 million barrels of crude oil. In 1913 there were some 635 completed wells in Oklahoma, of which 494 were oil producers, 52 were gas wells with only 88 failures or dry holes. In 1915 production in vast quantities poured into pipe lines from every section of the state totalling 117 million barrels, and the state of Oklahoma was producing one-third of the oil of the world. At the end of this period 110 fields had been established in the state.

The years from 1916 to 1920 were years of steady drilling, producing, refining and marketing of crude oil in Oklahoma. By the end of 1916, 9,100 wells had been completed in the state of which seventy-five percent (75%) were productive. During this period the number of fields increased by only 60 or a total of 170 producing areas, and at the close of 1920, after two decades of producing, Oklahoma had produced one billion barrels of oil valued at one billion dollars.

In 1921 there was a jump in production from 113 million barrels to 149 million barrels produced in 1922; this was the greatest increase in production for one year that has been recorded in the history of oil development in the state. In 1922 there was a total of 6,148 completed wells; new producing areas were being established almost daily while many of the oil

areas were extended. Despite the business depression which was greatly felt in the oil industry in 1923, Oklahoma broke all of her previous production records with 161 million barrels of crude oil. By this time a total of 242 oil fields had been established in Oklahoma.