Historical Perspectives on Business Enterprise Series
OIL BARON
OF THE
SOUTHWEST

Edward L. Doheny and the
Development of the Petroleum
Industry in California and Mexico

Martin R. Ansell

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
COLUMBUS
For my father, Raymond M. Ansell, who I know would have been proud to see this book finished, and to my son, Isaac M. Ansell, who I hope will be equally generous when he’s old enough to read it.
CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

1 Early Years in the West 7
2 Oil and Railroads in Southern California, 1892–1902 23
3 The Birth of the Mexican Oil Industry, 1900–1910 52
4 Return to California, 1908–1912 87
5 Creating an International Oil Company, 1912–1915 105
6 The Pan American Petroleum & Transport Company, 1916 130
7 The Vision of Peace: Fuel Oil for the War 147
8 Promoting an Oil Policy for Mexico, 1917–1920 162
9 Domestic Politics and International Relations: Ireland and Japan, 1920–1921 180
10 Salt Water and Revolution: Mexico, 1921–1923 196
11 The Bark of Political Wolves: Doheny and the Oil Scandal 212

Conclusion 238

Appendix A Production and Sales of the Mexican and Huasteca Petroleum Companies, 1901–1914 245
Appendix B Oil Production and Exports for the Mexican Petroleum Industry, 1916–1924 246
Appendix C  Companies Owned and Controlled by the Pan American Petroleum & Transport Company at Its Incorporation, 1916 250

Appendix D  Relative Sizes of the Largest American Oil Companies by Total Assets 252

Notes 253

Index 295
Because the subject of this book was a controversial historical figure who left few trails to follow, tracking him down proved to be a singularly independent effort. Having said that, however, no one succeeds without help. Over time, there have been a host of unsung heroes in the form of researchers and archivists from around the country who had a hand in digging out bits of information that appeared to have no connection to Doheny upon first discovery but formed crucial links later on. In particular, I would like to thank Connie Menninger of the Kansas State Historical Society, who made numerous forays into the records of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad to discover new material. Several members of National Archives staff, especially Fred Klose and Laura McCarthy of the Pacific Coast Branch, were very helpful in extracting long-buried legal cases that filled out a significant part of the story. And Monsignor Francis Weber of the Archival Center of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles rescued the final scraps of Doheny memorabilia from the auction block and made them and himself available to me on numerous occasions. The maps in the book were drawn by Joe Sambataro. Having begun this project as a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin, I owe a debt of gratitude to Lewis Gould, who oversaw the initial work with an even hand, a long rope, and consistent encouragement. When it was completed, he was also instrumental in persuading Mansel Blackford, the co-editor of this series, to take a look at an excessively long dissertation masquerading as a book.

Above everyone else, however, I owe the success of this work to my wife, Carol. She not only endured a project that lasted years beyond what
I anticipated, but she read innumerable versions of chapters, argued points, and made essential contributions at every step of the way, all the while pursuing a career of her own. And during her only hiatus, I can vividly recall several weeks when she sat with our newborn son on one side and a stack of my pages on the other helping me edit the final draft of the manuscript. Love is the only thing that accounts for such effort, and I will always be thankful for it.