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HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO
Form SC 13G
February 14, 2005

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

Schedule 13G

Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Houston Exploration Co
(Name of Issuer)

COM
(Title of Class of Securities)

442120101
(CUSIP Number)

December 31, 2004
(Date of Event Which Requires Filing of this Statement)

Check the appropriate box to designate the rule pursuant to which this Schedule is filed:

Rule 13d-1(b)

*The remainder of this cover page shall be filled out for a reporting person's initial filing on this form with respect to the subject class of securities, and for any subsequent amendment containing information which would alter the disclosures provided in a prior page.

The information required in the remainder of this cover page shall not be deemed to be "filed" for the purpose of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act") or otherwise subject to the liabilities of that section of the Act but shall be subject to all other provisions of the Act (however, see the Notes).

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS, NA., 943112180

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*
(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
U.S.A.

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Number of Shares (5) Sole Voting Power
Beneficially Owned 1,437,655
by Each Reporting -----
Person With (6) Shared Voting Power

(7) Sole Dispositive Power
1,549,691

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

(9) Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person
1,549,691

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
5.49%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS GLOBAL FUND ADVISORS

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*
(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
U.S.A.

Number of Shares (5) Sole Voting Power
Beneficially Owned 158,505
by Each Reporting -----
Person With (6) Shared Voting Power

(7) Sole Dispositive Power
158,505

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

(9) Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person
158,505

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(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.56%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
IA

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS, LTD

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
England

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.

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I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS JAPAN TRUST AND BANKING COMPANY LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization

Japan

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)

0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*

BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.

I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization

England

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

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(7) Sole Dispositive Power

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

(9) Aggregate

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS BANK PLC

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*
(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
England

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power
39,400

(6) Shared Voting Power

(7) Sole Dispositive Power
39,400

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

(9) Aggregate
39,400

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.14%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*

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BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
 I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

 BARCLAYS CAPITAL SECURITIES LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
 England.

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
 0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*

 BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
 I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

 BARCLAYS CAPITAL INC

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

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(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
U.S.A.

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)

0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*

BD

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.

I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS PRIVATE BANK & TRUST (ISLE OF MAN) LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization

England.

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

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(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)

0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*

BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.

I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS PRIVATE BANK AND TRUST (JERSEY) LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization

England

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)

0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*

BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

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(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS BANK TRUST COMPANY LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*
(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
England

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS BANK (Suisse) SA

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*
(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
Switzerland

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

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Person With (6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BARCLAYS PRIVATE BANK LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*
(a) / /
(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
England

Number of Shares (5) Sole Voting Power
Beneficially Owned -
by Each Reporting -----
Person With (6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

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(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
BK

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

BRONCO (BARCLAYS CAYMAN) LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
Cayman Islands

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power

-

(6) Shared Voting Power

-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power

-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

-

(9) Aggregate

-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
OH

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

PALOMINO LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

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(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
Cayman Islands

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power
112,700

(6) Shared Voting Power
-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power
112,700

(8) Shared Dispositive Power
-

(9) Aggregate
112,700

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.40%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
OH

CUSIP No. 442120101

(1) Names of Reporting Persons.
I.R.S. Identification Nos. of above persons (entities only).

HYMF LIMITED

(2) Check the appropriate box if a member of a Group*

(a) / /

(b) /X/

(3) SEC Use Only

(4) Citizenship or Place of Organization
Cayman Islands

Number of Shares
Beneficially Owned
by Each Reporting
Person With

(5) Sole Voting Power
-

(6) Shared Voting Power
-

(7) Sole Dispositive Power
-

(8) Shared Dispositive Power

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(9) Aggregate
-

(10) Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (9) Excludes Certain Shares*

(11) Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (9)
0.00%

(12) Type of Reporting Person*
OH

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS, NA

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
45 Fremont Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
U.S.A

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment
Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).
- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit
Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment
company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940
(15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

Edgar Filing: HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO - Form SC 13G

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS GLOBAL FUND ADVISORS

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
45 Fremont Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
U.S.A

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

(a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78o).
(b) // Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
(c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78c).
(d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment
Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
(e) /X/ Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).
(f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).
(g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).
(h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit
Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
(i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment
company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940
(15U.S.C. 80a-3).
(j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS, LTD

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
Murray House
1 Royal Mint Court
LONDON, EC3N 4HH

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
England

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES

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COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
 442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).
- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
 Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
 1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
 Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
 BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS JAPAN TRUST AND BANKING COMPANY LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
 Ebisu Prime Square Tower 8th Floor
 1-1-39 Hiroo Shibuya-Ku
 Tokyo 150-0012 Japan

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
 Japan

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
 COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
 442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).

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- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
Unicorn House 5th floor
252 Romford Road, Forest Gate
London 37 9JB England

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
England

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR 13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a)(6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a)(19) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b)(1)(ii)(E).
- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000

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ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment
Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).
- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit
Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment
company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940
(15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS CAPITAL INC

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
200 Park Ave
NY, NY 10166

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
U.S.A.

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) /X/ Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) // Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment
Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).
- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit

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- Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
 - (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS PRIVATE BANK & TRUST (ISLE OF MAN) LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
4th Floor, Queen Victoria House
Isle of Man, IM99 IDF

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
England

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR 13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

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- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS PRIVATE BANK AND TRUST (JERSEY) LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE

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39/41 Broad Street, St. Helier
Jersey, Channel Islands JE4 8PU

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
 England

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
 COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
 442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

- (a) // Broker or Dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act
(15 U.S.C. 78o).
- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
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Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
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240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).
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240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit
Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment
company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940
(15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
 Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
 1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
 Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
 BARCLAYS BANK TRUST COMPANY LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
 54 Lombard Street
 London, EC3P 3AH, England

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
 England

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
 COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
 442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
13D-2(B), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A

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- (b) /X/ Bank as defined in section 3(a) (6) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 78c).
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- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS BANK (Suisse) SA

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
10 rue d'Italie
CH-1204 Geneva
Switzerland

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
Switzerland

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

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- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

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ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BARCLAYS PRIVATE BANK LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
59/60 Grosvenor Street
London, W1X 9DA England

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
England

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
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(f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (F).

(g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section
240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (G).

(h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit
Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).

(i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment
company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940
(15U.S.C. 80a-3).

(j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
BRONCO (BARCLAYS CAYMAN) LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
Walker House Mary Street PO Box 908 GT
George Town, Grand Cayman (Cayman Islands)

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
Cayman Islands

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ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO RULES 13D-1(B), OR
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- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
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Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment
company under section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940
(15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
PALOMINO LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
Walker House Mary Street PO Box 908 GT
George Town, Grand Cayman (Cayman Islands)

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
Cayman Islands

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

ITEM 2(E). CUSIP NUMBER
442120101

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- (c) // Insurance Company as defined in section 3(a) (19) of the Act
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- (d) // Investment Company registered under section 8 of the Investment
Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-8).
- (e) // Investment Adviser in accordance with section 240.13d(b) (1) (ii) (E).

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- (f) // Employee Benefit Plan or endowment fund in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(F).
- (g) // Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(G).
- (h) // A savings association as defined in section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J)

ITEM 1(A). NAME OF ISSUER
Houston Exploration Co

ITEM 1(B). ADDRESS OF ISSUER'S PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICES
1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000
Houston Tx 77002-5219

ITEM 2(A). NAME OF PERSON(S) FILING
HYMF LIMITED

ITEM 2(B). ADDRESS OF PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OFFICE OR, IF NONE, RESIDENCE
Walker House Mary Street PO Box 908 GT
George Town, Grand Cayman (Cayman Islands)

ITEM 2(C). CITIZENSHIP
Cayman Islands

ITEM 2(D). TITLE OF CLASS OF SECURITIES
COM

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- (i) // A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15U.S.C. 80a-3).
- (j) // Group, in accordance with section 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J)

ITEM 4. OWNERSHIP

Provide the following information regarding the aggregate number and percentage of the class of securities of the issuer identified in Item 1.

- (a) Amount Beneficially Owned:

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1,860,296

(b) Percent of Class:
6.59%

(c) Number of shares as to which such person has:

(i) sole power to vote or to direct the vote
1,748,260

(ii) shared power to vote or to direct the vote
-

(iii) sole power to dispose or to direct the disposition of
1,860,296

(iv) shared power to dispose or to direct the disposition of
-

ITEM 5. OWNERSHIP OF FIVE PERCENT OR LESS OF A CLASS

If this statement is being filed to report the fact that as of the date hereof the reporting person has ceased to be the beneficial owner of more than five percent of the class of securities, check the following. //

ITEM 6. OWNERSHIP OF MORE THAN FIVE PERCENT ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER PERSON

The shares reported are held by the company in trust accounts for the economic benefit of the beneficiaries of those accounts. See also Items 2(a) above.

ITEM 7. IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE SUBSIDIARY WHICH ACQUIRED THE SECURITY BEING REPORTED ON BY THE PARENT HOLDING COMPANY

Not applicable

ITEM 8. IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

Not applicable

ITEM 9. NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF GROUP

Not applicable

ITEM 10. CERTIFICATION

(a) The following certification shall be included if the statement is filed pursuant to section 240.13d-1(b):

By signing below I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the securities referred to above were acquired and are held in the ordinary course of business and were not acquired and are not held for the purpose of or with the effect of changing or influencing the control of the issuer of the securities and were not acquired and are not held in connection with or as a participant in any transaction having that purpose or effect.

(b) The following certification shall be included if the statement is filed pursuant to section 240.13d-1(c):

By signing below I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the securities referred to above were not acquired and are not held for the purpose of or with the effect of changing or influencing the control of the issuer of the securities and were not acquired and are not held in connection

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with or as a participant in any transaction having that purpose or effect.

SIGNATURE

After reasonable inquiry and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I certify that the information set forth in this statement is true, complete and correct.

February 14, 2005

Date

Signature

Nancy Yeung
Manager of Global Accounting

Name/Title