

Milestones in the Oklahoma Oil and Gas Industry (1859-2006)
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Pre-1859

Oil seeps, known to Indians as 'medicine springs', identified in the Indian Territory.

1859

First subsurface oil recovered, unintentionally, in salt well drilled near Salina in Mayes County.

1889

The first intentional oil find made near Chelsea in Rogers County. Its production of one half barrel per day is used as 'dip oil' to remove ticks from cattle.

1897

The Nellie Johnstone #1, the first commercial well drilled in Oklahoma, discovers the Bartlesville-Dewey Field in Washington County.

1900

University of Oklahoma School of Geology founded by Charles N. Gould.

1903

First commercial use of natural gas begins at a brick plant in Tulsa.

1905

Glenn Pool oil field is discovered near Tulsa in Creek County. This field helps push State production from 4,000 to more than 22,000 barrels per day. Owned in large part by Henry Ford Sinclair, it became central in the formation of the Sinclair Oil Company in 1916.

1906

Oklahoma Natural Gas Company is formed to deliver gas to Oklahoma City.

1907

Oklahoma and the Indian Territories become the State of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma becomes the largest oil-producer, with Tulsa claiming the title of "Oil Capital of the World."

1908

The Oklahoma Geological Survey is established by mandate of the State Constitution, with Dr. Charles N. Gould becoming its first director.

1910

E. W. Marland founds Marland Oil Company, which merges with Conoco in Ponca City in 1929.

Oklahoma Natural Gas Company installs the first compressor on a natural gas pipeline.

1912

Cushing Field is discovered in Creek County. By March 1914 the field is producing 50,000 barrels per day, or one quarter of total State production.

Henry L. Doherty consolidates operations in Bartlesville, forming what will become Cities Service Oil Company.

1913

Healdton Field is discovered in Carter County. Producing more than 65,000 barrels per day in 1914, it eventually produces 360 million barrels.

The first dual completion is made in Wicey Field, south of Tulsa.

1915

The first market-demand proration law takes effect in Oklahoma, but does little to curb overproduction and ruinous price slumps.

1916

Kinta Gas Field is discovered in Haskell County. Peak production, which occurred in 1971, was 450 million cubic feet per day.

Garber Field is discovered in Garvin County. This field is the first investment in the petroleum industry made by Herbert H. Champlin, founder of Enid-based Champlin Petroleum Co.

1917

Phillips Petroleum Company is established in Bartlesville by Frank and L. E. Phillips. A gas repressuring operation in Nowata County is installed, making it the first secondary-recovery operation in the Southwest.

Southwestern Association of Petroleum Geologists is established, which in 1918 becomes the American Association of Petroleum Geologists.

1918

The Oklahoma part of Guymon-Hugoton Gas Field, the largest in North America, is discovered in Texas County. Ultimate recovery for this field is estimated at 70 trillion cubic feet.

1920

Burbank Field, where production will peak in 1923 at 72,000 barrels per day, is discovered in Osage County.

Halliburton Oil Well Cementing Company, headquartered in Duncan, is founded by Erle Halliburton.

1921

Lloyd Noble enters the oil industry and establishes Ardmore-based Noble Drilling Company.

First field tests of the reflection seismograph are conducted near Belle Isle, a suburb of Oklahoma City.

1923

The Greater Seminole Field is discovered. This prolific area, centered near Bowlegs in Seminole County, will eventually include 6 major oil fields that will produce 1.3 billion barrels.

1924

Introduction of rotary drilling to Oklahoma. This technique requires fluid in the wellbore, facilitating pressure control and reducing the frequency of blowouts.

1925

Phillips Petroleum invents the fractionation process to remove previously wasted liquid hydrocarbons from natural gas.

1927

State oil production peaks at 762,000 barrels per day.

1928

Oklahoma City Field is discovered and soon becomes the nation's largest oil producer.

Oklahoma Corporation Commission issues the first statewide proration order to reduce production and elevate oil prices.

1929

Oklahoma Corporation Commission orders a statewide, 30-day shutdown of production.

Wilburton Gas Field is discovered in Pushmataha County. The field reached peak production of 400 million cubic feet per day in 1990 and has produced over two trillion cubic feet.

James L. Anderson and Robert S. Kerr form Anderson & Kerr Drilling Co. in Ada, Oklahoma. In 1946, under the direction of Robert S. Kerr and Dean A. McGee, it becomes Kerr-McGee Oil Industries Inc.

1930

The "Wild Mary Sudik", a development well in Oklahoma City Field, blows out. The most famous blowout in the history of the State, the well flowed an estimated 20,000 barrels per day. Strong winds blew oil as far as Norman, 11 miles south. South Earlsboro Field, in Seminole County, is discovered through the use of reflection seismography.

Mocane-Laverne Gas Field is discovered in Beaver County. Eventually becoming the second largest gas field in the State, the field will reach peak production in 1967 at 700 million cubic feet per day.

1931

The first water-flood operation is started in Oklahoma in Rogers County.

Widespread acceptance of the method by operators did not occur until 1935, when water-flooding produced about 50,000 barrels of oil.

Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray uses the Oklahoma National Guard to shut down all oil production in order to raise prices to \$1 per barrel.

1933

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission issues "Rules of Practice and Procedure for the Conservation of Oil and Gas".

1935

Interstate Oil Compact Commission is created with headquarters in Oklahoma City. The commission is designed to curtail U.S. oil production to match demand, thereby reducing price volatility.

Oklahoma passes the first well-spacing law to regulate spacing unit size.

1955

The Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association is founded in Oklahoma City.

1963

Oklahoma natural gas production exceeds oil production in energy equivalency.

1970

Combined oil and gas production in the State peaks at 1.44 million barrels of oil equivalent per day.

1974

The world's deepest well, the GHK Bertha Rogers #1-27 in Washita County, is drilled to 31,441' where it encounters molten sulfur in the Arbuckle Formation.

1978

The Natural Gas Policy Act takes effect, deregulating prices and allowing them to increase with demand.

1981

The average annual price of Oklahoma crude reaches a high of \$35.18 per barrel.

1982

Drilling activity in the State reaches an all-time high with more than 12,000 well completions.

1983

The average annual gas price in Oklahoma reaches a high of \$2.80 per thousand cubic feet.

1990

State gas production peaks at 6.2 billion cubic feet per day.

1995

The average annual price of Oklahoma natural gas reaches a modern low of \$1.43 per thousand cubic feet.

1996

The first large-scale enhanced oil recovery operation in the State using carbon dioxide is started by Mobil in Postle Field in Texas County. In 1999 this project increased field production 8,000 barrels per day.

1997

Potato Hills Gas Field is discovered by GHK in Latimer County. Reaching peak production in 2000 at 120 million cubic feet per day, this field is the largest Oklahoma discovery in decades.

1998

The average annual price of Oklahoma crude reaches a modern low of \$13.12 per barrel.

2005

The average annual price for Oklahoma gas reaches an all-time high of \$7.00 per thousand cubic feet.

The gross value of Oklahoma oil and gas production reaches an all-time high of over \$15 billion, the bulk of this from natural gas.

2006

The average annual price for Oklahoma oil reaches an all-time high of \$62.84 per barrel.