

P140369730

# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUL 30 1976  
DATE ENTERED DEC 9 1977

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

ITIO and Foster Petroleum Company No. 1 Oklahoma City

AND/OR COMMON

Oklahoma City Discovery Well

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SE 57th Street and ITIO Blvd.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Oklahoma City

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oklahoma City

40

Oklahoma

109

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

VICINITY OF

Oklahoma

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Oklahoma County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Special ITIO No. 1 Survey

DATE

1976

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

When the Oklahoma City Discovery Well blew in on Dec. 4, 1928, it culminated successfully an effort that had begun almost with the founding of the city on April 22, 1889. The first builders included men from the new oil fields in the East and they dreamed of tapping similar underground wealth here in the frontier West. And so it was that within a year the first "boring for oil" began in what is now downtown Oklahoma City. It was at the same time a solemn occasion -- for "a priest made a speech and wished the drillers success" -- and a festive one. The crowd, according to the same early-day chronicler, "made merry with a bounteous picnic" ... and public-spirit citizens were asked to "make subscriptions" to the venture. The attempt was also a failure, as were the score of attempts that followed.

Then came the 1928 discovery and the frenzied development of the field that followed. This, however, was not the traditional oil boom that by this time had become a familiar phenomenon through Oklahoma and Texas. The state's largest city was only a few miles away. There was therefore no need to throw up a rag-tag shanty town to accommodate the flood of oil field workers and the army of gamblers, con men, prostitutes, and assorted riff-raff that inevitably followed.

The Discovery Well, after its initial blow, settled down to producing around 5,700 barrels a day. Accumulated production from the Arbuckle Limestone totalled 1,002,747 barrels before that zone was depleted. "It produced gas from the Layton sand for a period of time, and for the last several years was used as gas storage well in the Layton," according to Harvey M. Bynum, retired senior landman for Cities Service Oil Company, which turned over the well to the Oklahoma Historical Society in 1971.

Cities Service plugged the Oklahoma City No. 1 before deeding the site to the Society. The casing was left in the hole, with the wellhead fitting. Also on the site, protected by a fence, are the four concrete piers on which the rig once stood. An on-site plaque will shortly identify it as "Oklahoma City No. 1, Discovery Well." A large granite marker containing information on the Oklahoma City Field was placed at the south entrance to the State Capitol in 1968, the 40th anniversary of its opening. Also presented to the Oklahoma Historical Society by Cities Service was the original log of the Discovery Well, a linen tracing or map of the tract, and the original daily drilling report or file on the well.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1928 to 1971

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Coming in with a roar that could be heard several miles, the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil and Foster Petroleum Companies' deep well south of Capitol Hill, blew in at 3 o'clock Tuesday afternoon.

A half-hour later it was still running wild, and oil was being sprayed as far south as the section-line road, spattering automobiles and venturesome curious folk who ventured close enough to get a view or a kodak picture.

The well was estimated good for 5,000 to 6,000 barrels a day by company officials and drillers. However, no attempt was made to take a gauge, because of the volume of oil and gas.

Drillers are of the opinion that the gas blew out the bridge. The tools are lodged at top of the hole. The bridge has been hung at 2,500 feet since Thursday noon, when concrete was drilled through at 6,356 feet. Total depth of the hole is 6,402 feet, in the Simpson sand.

Housing around the derrick floor was damaged when the gusher blew in, but none of the workmen was injured. There were but a few workmen on the lease at the time.

Thus did at EXTRA put out by the Oklahoma City Times the afternoon of December 4, 1928, announce -- under the banner CITY WELL HURLS 'LIQUID GOLD' HIGH OVER OIL DERRICK -- discovery of the Oklahoma City Oil Field. The frenzied development that followed profoundly affected, not only Oklahoma City and the State of Oklahoma, but the entire petroleum industry itself.

The wildcat was being drilled on a lease block of about 10,000 acres adjoining the city some six miles southeast of City Hall and the State Capitol. It had shown gas production up the hole and oil in the Arbuckle Limestone at about 6,500 feet. Pressure had blown the tools up the hole when the plug was drilled. Some years later veteran Daily Oklahoman oil editor Claude Barrow recalled what happened next?

At about 3 o'clock, there was a seepage of gas from the hole, then what sounded like a low growl. Some one yelled "Look out!" and a few moments later the well cleaned itself of tools, wire line, mud, water and a gusher of oil.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Barrow, Claude, "Gusher 32 Years Old Today," The Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 4, 1960  
 New, Deacon, "State to Get Discovery Well," The Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 5, 1971  
 --- Miscellaneous material, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	6,3,9,7,2,8	730	3,9,1,9		B			
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C						D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

February 1976

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

STATE

Oklahoma

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Kent Ruth*

TITLE

*Harry L. Newberry Jr.*

DATE

*Mar. 1, 1976*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

ATTEST:

*Charles [Signature]*

DATE

*12/19/77*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*12.5.77*

~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

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ITIO and Foster Petroleum Company No. 1 Oklahoma City

Within minutes the news was being circulated with a guess that the well would make 5,000 barrels of oil a day.

Ten days later, when deepened to 6,624 feet, the well gauged 6,564 barrels a day.

Roads to the lease were blocked with traffic within an hour. Men, women and boys with bottles were scooping up oil from the lease. "Our well" had become a pool-opener, and the boom was under way before daybreak.

The ITIO hired a city planner to aid the chamber of commerce in providing for municipal expansion. Within a week the slogan was "300,000 by 1930." Twenty-one locations were staked on the structure within a week, most of them on 10-acre spots.

The Discovery Well, in its first 27 days, produced 110,496 barrels of oil at \$1.56 a barrel. By the end of the third month the price of crude, now competing with that from the Greater Seminole Field brought in a few years earlier, had sagged to \$1.25 a barrel. But development continued. In 1929, the Oklahoma City Field produced 8,709,727 barrels from 53 producing wells. There had been no dry holes and at year's end 161 more wells were being drilled. The glut of oil, however, was bringing concern. In September 1929 the field had been shut down for a month, to give demand a chance to catch up with supply and thus stabilize wildly fluctuating prices. In October the state was beginning to move hesitatingly into the regulatory/conservation field.

\* \* \*

The Oklahoma City Field has been called "one of the greatest oil discoveries in history." It has been the state's most prolific multi-pay oil and gas field, the nation's sixth most productive field. To date it has produced more than 730 million barrels of oil.

This kind of sudden wealth could not fail to have varied and wide-spread consequences. The glut of oil might understandably depress per-barrel prices. But not so the enthusiasm of Oklahoma Cityans in and out of the petroleum field. "Depression gripped the nation," Barrow wrote, "but there were 12,000 persons employed in the city field. The only soup line here was the long-established function of the Salvation Army." By the sheerest of coincidences the same edition of the Oklahoma City Times that carried the story of the discovery well ran a small item adjacent to it that reported the signing that day of a contract between the City of Oklahoma City and the Rock Island Railroad to remove the line's tracks from the center of the downtown business district. The Frisco Railway promptly followed suit and the right-of-way of the two lines was converted into

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a new Civic Center. While the rest of the country slipped into the Great Depression Oklahoma City saw two new "skyscrapers" being built and a general building boom under way.

Equally remarkable, and perhaps even more significant, was the effect the Oklahoma City Field was having on the petroleum industry itself. Conservation of oil and gas had come to Oklahoma, rather hesitatingly, through voluntary proration in the Greater Seminole area. But efforts to establish a similar program, together with wider well spacing, were widely resisted in the hectic development of the city field as it spread west and north across the city limits toward the downtown and Capitol districts. When the state did establish an initial conservation program it was invalidated by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1931.

Gov. William J. Murray then took over policing of the industry with emergency orders and the national guard. In August he shut down 3,100 wells in the state and the order was not lifted until October 10. On October 8 the Oklahoma City field produced 630 barrels of oil. Three days later it hit 370,685 barrels a day. The price of crude was \$1 a barrel officially, but some of it sold for half that. On June 21, 1932, the governor took full control of proration and regulation of the field and martial law prevailed. A special detachment of the national guard, under Lt. Col. Cicero I. Murray, his cousin, guaranteed enforcement of the Corporation Commission's conservation orders and soldiers with fixed bayonets patrolled the lease lines. Finally on April 10, 1933, the Oklahoma legislature passed and the governor signed a new oil and gas conservation act, the first such comprehensive statute passed by any oil-producing state. Regulation of the field was turned back to the Corporation Commission and orderly development resulted.

Impact of the Oklahoma City Field on the petroleum industry as it pertained to city planning was also impressive. Engineering changed the methods of drilling and testing wells. This made possible the directional drilling of two productive wells underneath the Oklahoma Capitol itself, and three under fashionable Lincoln Terrace residences. Safety, meanwhile, was being extended from headquarters office to the lease itself. Gradually fire hazards were reduced and the field saw no more spectacular blow-outs like the "Wild Mary Sudik," whose 11-day rampage attracted attention around the world. Too, the physical waste of oil was halted. Zoning in residential sections was accepted by all concerned - the oil companies, city planners, and insurance companies. The state's 1933 conservation act became the model for other states. And out of the awareness of common problems came finally the Interstate Oil Compact, headquartered in the shadow of the Capitol. It was sponsored, understandably enough, by Gov. E. W.

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Marland, the first of a procession of oilman-governors (Robert S. Kerr, Roy J. Turner, Dewey Bartlett) ... and approved by Congress.

\* \* \*

The Oklahoma City Field spread until some 16,000 acres had been proved productive. In all, 1,658 wells were drilled, with 1,545 of them producers. Eight separate sources (zones) of oil and gas had been found, from 18 different depths, varying from 3,100 feet to 6,700 feet. One well was drilled to 8,344 feet to penetrate granite. Engineers estimated the reservoir contained 1,208,320,000 barrels of oil. More than 730,000,000 barrels of this has now been recovered and the field is still producing, though on a greatly reduced basis.

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Oklahoma	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

Oklahoma City Discovery Well

No. 7. Description

The site as it now exists is shown in Photo No. 2. This is the immediate drilling site, as indicated by the four massive concrete pilings on which the drilling rig once stood. The "Christmas tree" (system of regulatory valves atop the hole) stands in the center of the derrick site. A woven-wire fence now surrounds the site. Because of these remaining indications of a one-time active drilling location we believe the answer to the questions, "Has it retained historic site integrity?" to be "Yes."

Obviously the steel drilling rig, platform, and machinery have been removed. Obviously the trees growing up on the site add nothing to site integrity, nor does the dog house (to the left of the Christmas tree) which a nearby property owner moved onto the site, evidently believing the Oklahoma Historical Society had erected the fence for his convenience. He has been told to remove the dog house and a general clean-up of brush and weeds has been ordered.

This area was once a forest of steel drilling rigs. Most of them have now been scrapped, so in this sense appearance of the site in 1929 has been altered drastically. Modest frame houses now stand to the south and east of the well. It is for this reason that these remaining evidences of such an important discovery well as the ITIO and Foster No. 1 are being preserved and why the additional protection of National Register status is being sought.

