

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
APR 13 1972	

(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance

Nellie Johnstone No. 1

found in other Oklahoma fields. The well was "shot" between 1,303 and 1,320 feet on April 15. With a suitable crowd on hand, Mrs. Jennie O. Morton, stepdaughter of Keeler, dropped the "go devil" which set off the nitroglycerine shot, sending a plume of oil up and over the wooden derrick. Oklahoma's first commercial oil well had come in.

(Curiously, this was in Indian Territory, on the extreme western boundary of the Cherokee country. Across the 96th Meridian lay the Osage reservation and in October, only a few months after the Cudahy success, the Wilkey No. 1 came in, about two miles to the northwest. It was, thus, the first producing oil well in Oklahoma Territory.)

The well was named for Nellie, the daughter of William Johnstone, one of the three original partners in the Cudahy well. The well was the first of 13 drilled on the territorial land allotment assigned to her as a Cherokee citizen. By the time it was finally abandoned in the mid-1950s, the Nellie Johnstone No. 1 had produced approximately 100,000 barrels of oil.

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <u>Oklahoma</u>	
COUNTY: <u>Washington</u>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<u>APR 13 1972</u>	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Nellie Johnstone No. 1

AND/OR HISTORIC:
First Commercial Oil Well in Oklahoma

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Johnstone Park

CITY OR TOWN:
Bartlesville (NE/4 NE/4 NE/4 Sec. 12, T 26 N, R 12 E)

STATE <u>Oklahoma</u>	CODE <u>40</u>	COUNTY: <u>Washington</u>	CODE <u>147</u>
--------------------------	-------------------	------------------------------	--------------------

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Bartlesville

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:
Bartlesville

STATE:
Oklahoma

CODE:
40

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
Bartlesville

STATE:
Oklahoma

CODE:
40

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Oklahoma City

STATE:
Oklahoma

CODE:
40

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: <u>Oklahoma</u>	COUNTY: <u>Washington</u>	ENTRY NUMBER <u>APR 13 1972</u>	DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

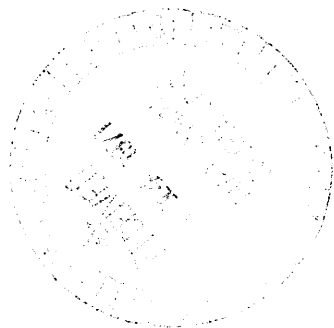
7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original wooden rig had stood over a "dry hole" near Sapulpa. The chore of moving it 70 miles overland to Bartlesville in 1897 had required two weeks. The famed derrick was reconstructed at least once before its abandonment in the mid-1950s. In 1963, after abandonment and with growing awareness of its importance to the petroleum scene in Oklahoma, another pains-taking reconstruction was undertaken, this time with long-lasting redwood timbers.

The derrick, drilling floor and entire rig scene is a faithful reproduction of the original. Adding interest is a display of other early-day tools and equipment. Now in Johnstone Park, on landscaped grounds behind a protective fence, the Nellie Johnson No. 1 rig today stands as an altogether fitting monument to the tremendous contribution the petroleum industry has made to the growth and development of Oklahoma.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1897 to present

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The official Oklahoma Historical Society marker beside U. S. 75 in Bartlesville pretty well tells the story.

Oklahoma's First Commercial Oil Well

Nellie Johnstone No. 1, first commercial oil well in Indian Territory completed April 15, 1897, by the Cudahy Oil Co., on south bank of Caney River. Site is 3.1 mi., N. W. of this marker.

Until the Cudahy well came in there was no conclusive evidence that oil could be found in commercial quantities in the Indian Territory. Springs that yielded crude oil had long been known - and used - by Indians as primitive health resorts. Traces of oil were found in wells dug for salt near the Grand River as early as 1859. According to veteran oilman Frank F. Finney, Sr., "A few shallow 'post holes' near Chelsea produced oil which was sold locally for cattle dip and axle grease." And a showing of oil and gas found in a test drilled to 1400 feet on Choctaw land about twelve miles west of Atoka in 1889 was sufficient to qualify the "Old Faucett Well" as the state's first producer (and National Register status for it has been requested). But the Bartlesville well, says Finney, "is on a firm historical basis with valid records as the first well in present Oklahoma of substantial proportions and from which pipeline sales were made."

The "first" well didn't happen over night. George B. Keeler, a pioneer merchant in the small settlement of Bartlesville, had noticed an oil seep along Caney River as early as 1875. He finally interested William Johnstone and Frank Overlees in the project. Work actually began when a contract was arranged with Cudahy, the large meat packing firm of Omaha, Nebraska, which had already drilled several wildcat wells in Indian Territory, all unsuccessful.

Cudahy hauled tools and derrick to Bartlesville and spudded in the well in late January 1897. In April oil was struck in the formation later known as the prolific "Bartlesville sand," subsequently

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Finney, Frank F., Sr., "The Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. 37 (1959), pp. 149-161.
 McDowell, Alene D., An Interview, Oct. 20, 1937, Indian-Pioneer History, Grant Foreman Collection, Vol. 35, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	36°	45'	23"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	95°	58'	19"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: Sept. 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: State Liaison Officer for the [Property]

Date: 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/13/72

ATTEST:

William Stinchcomb
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: APR 13 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS