

THE DRAKE WELL MEMORIAL PARK

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ON AUGUST 27, 1859, Colonel E. L. Drake completed the first well ever drilled for petroleum about two and one-half miles south of Titusville, Pennsylvania. The completion of this oil well marks the beginning of the petroleum industry, not only in the United States but in the world, and Titusville became its birthplace.

From the time Drake completed his well until 1914 various movements originated in the northwestern Pennsylvania oil region to honor Colonel Drake and to memorialize this epoch-making event. In the main, these movements have taken three forms; one proposed to erect a monument to Colonel Drake; a second proposed to preserve and mark the site of the Drake well; and the third contemplated something more than simply marking the site of the well with an inanimate marker.

The first movement realized its goal on October 4, 1901, when a magnificent monument to the memory of Colonel Drake, the generous gift of Mr. Henry H. Rogers, was unveiled and dedicated in Woodlawn Cemetery, Titusville. Within a short time, the body of Colonel Drake was exhumed at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and removed to Woodlawn Cemetery.

The second movement, one for preserving and marking the site of the Drake Well, was inaugurated by Canadohta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Titusville. The first problem in connection with this movement was to secure the land upon which the site of the Drake Well was located. Mr. David Emery, a pioneer oil producer and one of those interested in erecting a suitable monument on the site, had bought the land, and drilled the hole down to the third sand. When tubed the old well produced a few gallons of petroleum a day. Mr. Emery intended to bottle and sell the oil to oilmen and visitors to the town and by charging a dollar a bottle raise a fund to pay for the erection of a steel derrick in the place of the one he was using, and then to

surmount the structure with a bronze bust of Drake. He died before he could execute the idea. It was the intention of Mrs. Emery to complete the work of her husband, but the great flood of June 5, 1892, swept away the derrick and machinery and ruined the well. This was the end of Emery's attempt to commemorate the drilling of the first well by Drake.

About 1908 Mrs. Emery donated to Canadohta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, one acre of land upon which the famous well had been drilled. The Drake Well, however, was near the north edge of the plot and the Chapter felt that additional land to the north of the well should be acquired. In 1910 Mr. Edwin C. Bell and Mr. Frank F. Murray secured from Messrs. James and John Preston and Mr. S. Q. Wilson, a quarter-acre plot of ground adjoining the well site on the north and embracing the old pine tree marker. Also included was a right of way from the public road to the site. When this had been accomplished the plot together with the right of way was transferred to Canadohta Chapter. The Chapter now employed an architect, had drawings prepared for an imposing memorial, and sent out circulars asking for subscriptions. To meet these preliminary expenses a friend of the Chapter had donated \$1,000. Elaborate plans for the memorial were outlined at the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Oil held in Titusville on August 27, 1909. The Canadohta Chapter announced that it had undertaken to raise \$100,000 for a permanent memorial at the site of the Drake Well. It was felt that this was a relatively small amount compared to the great fortunes which had been acquired from oil during the past fifty years. Titusville had already subscribed over \$10,000. The Chapter had originally expected to have the memorial finished and dedicated on this occasion, but the time consumed in formulating plans, the depressed state of the country, the unsettled condition of business in a presidential year, and the death of Mr. Henry H. Rogers, who had promised financial assistance, ultimately caused the leaders to abandon the project.

After plans for the imposing memorial had failed, Canadohta Chapter decided to erect a more modest memorial on the site. The Chapter awarded a contract to Mrs. Ida B. Horner, owner of a granite and marble works, to secure a native boulder, have it properly set, and place thereon a suitable tablet. Mrs. Horner

traveled extensively in the region looking for a suitable boulder. Finally she found one on the Northern Light oil lease between the Jones and Buck properties opposite Boughton, two and one-half miles south of the Drake Well. The stone was about nine feet square and five feet thick at the base; it was eleven feet in height, tapering considerably from the five foot width at the base; and the sides were nearly straight and quite smooth. The boulder weighed approximately thirty tons. A concrete foundation, six feet below the ground and six above, had been previously prepared and upon this the stone was placed. Around the monument were placed smaller stones and shrubbery. On August 27, 1914, Canadohta Chapter placed on the stone a large bronze tablet with a replica in bas relief of the Drake Well and an inscription dedicating the boulder.

Simultaneous with the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution was the movement to memorialize this epoch-making event by something more than an inanimate marker. Furthermore, there was a conviction that it should be done by oil men and it should be actively supported by oil men throughout the nation. The central figure in this movement was Mr. E. C. Bell of Titusville.

Mr. Bell came into the oil region from Maine at the age of twenty-three, almost a decade after the completion of the Drake Well. For a few years he worked as a driller and pumper in the oil field, but this did not appeal to his literary, artistic, and historical taste. Bell, therefore, soon took up newspaper work and printing. At the same time, he became interested in collecting everything and anything pertaining to early petroleum history. During the course of fifty years Bell collected newspapers, oil maps, oil books, early oil leases, account books of oil companies, pamphlets, prospectuses, business directories of towns in the oil region, newspaper clippings, and all kinds of relics—a collection unequalled by any in the United States. This led to the concept of a museum as a memorial for Drake and the Drake Well. The idea was that it should become a national storehouse for all kinds of historical records and relics pertaining to the history of the petroleum industry. Bell's collection would form the nucleus and, from time to time, other things would be added. Ultimately, it would be the largest single repository for materials on the petro-

leum industry in the country, if not in the world. Supported by oil men throughout the nation, this museum would become a living monument to Drake and his famous well. In July, 1911, Mr. Bell announced plans for the Drake Memorial Museum, and made a plea for financial support. Slowly the idea gained strength and money began coming in. Through Bell's leadership, some staunch friends organized the Drake Memorial Association. The purposes of the Association were: (1) to perpetuate and honor the name of Drake; (2) to make the day of Drake's discovery, August 27, a national holiday among oil men through the United States; and (3) to complete and perpetuate the Drake Memorial Museum. The first celebration of Drake Day was held at Titusville on August 27, 1914, when a formal constitution for the Association was adopted and Mr. Bell was formally made trustee of the Museum.

With limited funds and on ground generously donated by Mr. R. D. Fletcher and Dr. George W. Barr, a small brick building was soon completed near the Bell home, just west of Titusville and on the bank of Oil Creek. At the age of more than sixty, Bell did much of the actual construction work himself; he plastered the interior, laid the floors, put in the partitions, and built the fireplace. When it was completed, he deposited his entire collection of historical records and relics in the Museum. His exhibits were so numerous that an adjoining farm house had to be used as an annex in which to store one-half of his collection. The Museum was maintained at very little expense until Mr. Bell's death in 1923. A year or two before his death, Mr. Bell, in order to insure its continuance, donated his entire collection to the City of Titusville and moved it to the basement of the Benson Memorial Library in Titusville. After his death, the Museum was turned over to Mrs. Bell as a home.

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Although the site of the Drake Well had been suitably marked in 1914 through the efforts of Canadohta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, there was no permanent, responsible body for maintaining and preserving the site of the well, which was constantly endangered by the erosion of the high waters of Oil Creek; in 1929, for example, the water washed out the roadway

to the well. Joseph Murray of Titusville visited the well during that summer, saw its condition, took the matter in hand and, with the assistance of the oil region newspapers and others, raised \$1,423 to build a temporary dike and restore the road, all of which was done.

Those aware of the historical significance of the Drake Well agreed that permanent protective measures for preserving the site and dedicating it as the birthplace of the petroleum industry should be taken. Furthermore, they believed that this should be done by the petroleum industry as a whole. The American Petroleum Institute of New York City, therefore, seemed to be the logical body to sponsor such a project. A number of public-spirited and historically-minded citizens in and around Titusville employed an engineer, who surveyed existing conditions, made plans and estimates for constructing a permanent retaining wall and, in conjunction with an architect, formulated plans for creating a park and building a caretaker's house and a museum with a library. The idea for the museum was to have a home for Bell's unrivaled collection, and for other materials which might be added in the future. It was designed to be the best single center for research and study of petroleum history. Upon its completion, the engineer's report was presented on January 8, 1931 to the Board of Directors of the American Petroleum Institute, and they were asked to underwrite the project. After consideration the Board agreed to the plan upon the following conditions: (1) that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should take title to the site of the Drake Well as an historical park and appropriate an annual sum for its proper maintenance; (2) the Venango County Commissioners should build an improved road from the county line to the Park; (3) the City of Titusville should pave the highway from its existing paved streets to the Venango County line to connect with the county road to the park; and (4) the local trustees should acquire and secure the donation by citizens of the Oil Creek region of such additional land as would be necessary to provide adequate acreage for the park. The American Petroleum Institute appointed the following committee to cooperate with various agencies in executing the program: W. R. Boyd, Jr., Chairman, Chas. L. Suhr, W. M. Irish, L. W. Young, and Christy Payne. Moreover, the Board of Directors voted to raise \$60,000 and place it in the hands of the local trustees to execute the plan—

to construct a retaining wall, clear the ground, excavate and drain the area, construct and furnish a caretaker's cottage, and to provide for the museum with a library. Mr. S. Y. Ramage of Oil City, Hon. A. R. Wheeler of Endeavor, and Mr. James H. Caldwell of Titusville were asked to serve as local trustees in carrying out the plan. These men accepted the responsibility but, owing to the illness of Mr. Wheeler, Mr. John H. Scheide of Titusville was appointed a fourth trustee. Work on the project started at once.

Through the efforts of Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Ramage a bill was introduced in the state legislature of Pennsylvania in 1931 providing for the Commonwealth's acceptance of the property and it was approved on April 10, 1931. The law specified that the Commonwealth would accept from the American Petroleum Institute not less than one-half and not more than thirty-five acres, with improvements thereon, on the left bank of Oil Creek in Oil Creek Township, as a park to be officially known as the Drake Well Memorial Park. Upon the Commonwealth's assuming control, the law provided that the Pennsylvania Historical Commission should have full power to manage and supervise the park. The Department of Forests and Waters, however, was to cooperate at all times with the Commission in developing the forest resources. The Act of April 10, 1931 was amended on June 22, 1931, in order that land for the park might be acquired not only in Oil Creek Township, as originally provided, but also *in Cherry Tree Township or both.*

The local trustees were able to secure at that time for the park approximately twenty-four acres of land. This included the land on which the actual well and monument stood, which was donated by Canadohta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, seven acres of land which were given by the heirs of Susan A. Emery through the efforts of Mrs. Lena Emery Brenneman; and the rest was purchased from the John Preston estate from funds provided by local subscription together with a gift of \$1,000 made by Canadohta Chapter.

Under the supervision of the local trustees, a 2,000 foot dike was constructed along the east bank of Oil Creek; the area was drained and filled; water, gas and electric lines were run into the park; the approach to the park was widened; a caretaker's house

and museum were built; and the grounds were landscaped under the direction of Mr. Roscoe F. Fertig of Titusville.

The Drake Well Memorial Park is located in a beautiful valley through which Oil Creek flows, and on either side rise high, forest-covered hills. The effect is to create the impression that one is in a great outdoor amphitheater. The Museum is a small, one-story, colonial brick and stone structure about twenty by seventy-two feet in dimensions. It is located on the north side of an oval grass court facing south. The central room is about twenty by sixty feet and is used primarily as an exhibit room. Modern steel display cases not only provide facilities for exhibiting records and other items, but provide facilities for storing documents. In the west end there is a library room about twelve by twenty feet; this is provided with steel shelving for books and newspaper files. A large combination-lock safe serves as a depository for important manuscript collections. In the east end are the furnace room and two toilet rooms. The building is heated by a vapor heating system which burns gas as fuel.

To the east of the Drake Museum and facing the oval grass court is the caretaker's house. To the south and facing the court is the monument placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In March, 1934 the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the park and appointed Mr. A. C. Brown, caretaker. Bell's collection of relics and historical documents, having been previously transferred by the City of Titusville to the Commonwealth, were placed in the Museum and arranged. On August 27, 1934, at the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the drilling of the Drake Well held in Titusville, Governor Gifford Pinchot formally accepted on behalf of the Commonwealth the Drake Well Memorial Park. In accepting the park, Governor Pinchot said, "If ever anything were worthy of being set aside and preserved as a permanent monument, it is the birthplace of the oil industry. All Pennsylvania is proud of this little piece of ground which was the beginning of a gigantic industry that has given work and happiness to so many thousands of our people. It is truly historic soil."

After visiting the Drake Well Memorial Park in 1934, Miss Ida M. Tarbell, the distinguished journalist and historian, said, "As for the Museum with the Library I feel it should be made a living center, a place where the documents of the history and

growth of this our most typical American industry should be housed and kept growing, a place for students as well as for visitors. Not only Titusville but the whole of Oildom is to be congratulated on this beautiful memorial with its fine possibilities for future usefulness."

On April 24, 1935, the state legislature passed an act relative to the Drake Well Memorial Park which did three things: (1) it provided that land could be acquired for the park *on either or both banks of Oil Creek* instead of only on the left bank; (2) it increased the amount of land which could be acquired from thirty-five to one hundred and fifty acres; and (3) it transferred the management and supervision of the park from the Pennsylvania Historical Commission to the Department of Forests and Waters. So far as it is known, the reasons for the change in control were threefold: (1) the Pennsylvania Historical Commission at that date did not have sufficient funds to provide adequately for the park; (2) the Commission did not have the facilities to care for a park; and (3) the Commission was not involved in museum or library work. Since April 24, 1935, therefore, the Drake Well Memorial Park has been under the control of the Department of Forests and Waters.

On March 16, 1937, the state legislature passed another law providing that not more than five hundred acres of land could be acquired for the Drake Well Memorial Park. At the present writing there are slightly over two hundred acres in the park.

MATERIALS IN THE DRAKE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

The Drake Museum and Library in the Drake Well Memorial Park is a treasurehouse full of all sorts of historical records and relics pertaining to the early history of the petroleum industry. Edwin C. Bell's famous collection forms the nucleus to which a wide variety of materials have been added constantly since 1934. Most of the materials have recently been catalogued by the WPA and a card index is now maintained in the library. No printed descriptive bibliography is available, but there should be one. While a complete description of everything in the Drake Museum and Library is impossible in this article, attention is called to some of the more outstanding items or collections.

The largest and most important single collection of manuscripts

is the Townsend Collection of papers, letters, and records relating to the organization of the Seneca Oil Company and the drilling of the Drake Well. The papers had been kept by James M. Townsend of New Haven, Conn., the leading spirit in the Seneca Oil Company, and were given to the Drake Museum in 1934 by his nephew, H. H. Townsend of New Haven. The minute book of the Seneca Oil Company, covering the period from March 19, 1858 to March 7, 1864, the Ledger, original leases and deeds, E. L. Drake's reports to the Company, letters of Drake, J. M. Townsend, William A. Ives, Asahel Pierpont, George H. Bissell, J. G. Eveleth, Anson Sheldon, and others, and various financial statements are among the more important papers in the collection.

Supplementing this material are some fifty letters belonging to Dr. Francis B. Brewer, relating primarily to the organization of the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company of New York, the first petroleum company organized in the world. They were given to the Drake Museum in 1941 by the late Mrs. F. B. Brewer of Westfield, N. Y. and her son, George E. Brewer of Erie, Pennsylvania. These letters cover the period from September, 1854 to December 12, 1855; they were written to Dr. Brewer by Albert Crosby, Eveleth, Bissell, Sheldon, Samuel Brackett, and many others. Most of the knowledge we possess about the organization of this first petroleum company comes from these letters.

The third largest manuscript collection is made up of letters which belonged to George H. Bissell, one of the lawyers who organized the first petroleum company. There are eighteen of these, written by Professor Benjamin Silliman, Jr., Anson Sheldon, George H. Bissell, A. Pierpont, E. L. Drake, and others. They admirably dovetail into the letters of the Brewer Collection and further illuminate our knowledge about the first petroleum companies. These letters were presented to the Museum in 1942 by Judge Pelham St. George Bissell of New York City, the grandson of George H. Bissell.

The latest manuscript addition is composed of eleven letters of E. L. Drake, written between February, 1864 and October, 1866. These were presented to the Museum by Mr. Homer Pastorius of Titusville during the summer of 1942. These letters relate primarily to the activities of Colonel Drake after he left Titusville.

There are many other manuscripts of a miscellaneous but important character: Colonel Drake's story of the Drake Well,

written about 1870; the early records of the oil exchanges in Oil City and Titusville; the contract between S. M. Kier of Pittsburgh and E. L. Drake, dated November 14, 1859, for the sale of oil; and the hotel registers of the old Moore House and American Hotel in Titusville and the Bonta House at Pithole. The Museum also has many stock certificates of early oil companies, oil company reports, early oil leases, oil well records, account books, and a large and valuable collection of early maps showing the presence of petroleum in the United States.

The Drake Museum has the largest and most valuable collection of early newspapers of the oil region. Even though there is not a complete file of the different papers, they are, nevertheless, important because of their scarcity, and the fact that many of them cannot be found in any other library. Originally they were in very poor condition and many were unbound, but in recent years the WPA has repaired them and bound them in temporary form.

There is a fairly complete file of the following newspapers for the dates indicated:

Titusville Morning Herald 1866-1881
Titusville Weekly Herald 1866-1878
Titusville Daily Courier 1870-1874
The American Citizen (Titusville) 1886-1893
The Bugle (Titusville) 1897-1901
The Evening Courier (Titusville) 1899-1911
The News (Tidioute) 1901-1917
The Weekly News (Tidioute) 1875-1900
The Venango Spectator (Franklin) 1864-1897

There are odd issues of the following newspapers; the dates for each vary, but most of them fall within the period 1865-1880:

The Petroleum Centre Daily Record
New York Daily Tribune
New York Weekly Tribune
The World (New York)
Pittsburgh Commercial
Pittsburgh Christian Advocate
The Greenville Advance
The Conneautville Courier
Oil City Derrick
The Oil City Call
Oil City Daily Times

Oil City Weekly Times
Oil City Weekly Register
Linesville Leader
The Venango Citizen (Franklin)
The Crawford Journal (Meadville)
The Crawford Democrat (Meadville)
Meadville Republican
Olean Weekly Advertiser
The Harrisburg Daily Patriot
Harrisburg Daily Telegraph
Erie Morning Dispatch
Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser
The Baltimore Gazette
Sunday Republic (Philadelphia)
Sunday Tribune (Philadelphia)
North American and United States Gazette (Philadelphia)
Steck's Philadelphia Guide and Strangers Paper
The Times (Philadelphia)
The Press (Philadelphia)
Pithole Daily Record
Petroleum Reporter (Titusville)
Titusville Sunday Morning News
Titusville Gazette and Oil Creek Reporter
Republic (Titusville)
The Petroleum World (Titusville)
Pomeroy's Democrat (New York)
Forneys Weekly Press

Among the many books, there are reports of the United States, Pennsylvania and West Virginia geological surveys; early histories of petroleum; city directories of such oil towns as Oil City, Franklin, Titusville, Bradford, and Pithole; and personal accounts of early days in the oil fields. In most instances, it is exceedingly difficult to find these books in any other library. Some of the more important books, now scarce and out of print, are as follows:

- J. T. Henry, *The Early and Later History of Petroleum, with Authentic Facts in Regard to its Development in Western Pennsylvania*, 1873.
 James Dodd Henry, *The History and Romance of the Petroleum Industry*, 1914.
 John J. McLaurin, *Sketches in Crude-Oil*, 1896.
 F. W. Beers, *Atlas of the Oil Region of Pennsylvania*, 1865.

- William Wright, *The Oil Regions of Pennsylvania*, 1865.
J. H. A. Bone, *Petroleum and Petroleum Wells*, 1865
Andrew Cone and Walter R. Johns, *Petrolia: A Brief History of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Region, Its Development, Growth, Resources, Etc., from 1859 to 1869*, 1870.
S. J. M. Eaton, *Petroleum: A History of the Oil Region of Venango County*, 1866.
Edmund Morris, *Derrick and Drill*, 1865.
Charles C. Leonard (Crocus), *The History of Pithole*, 1867.
George W. Brown, *Old Times in Oildom*, 1911.
Derrick's Hand-Book of Petroleum: A Complete Chronological and Statistical Review of Petroleum Developments from 1859-1899, 1898.
Alfred Wilson Smiley, *A Few Scraps, Oily and Otherwise*, 1907.
Charles A. Whiteshot, *The Oil-Well Driller*, 1905.
Samuel P. Irwin, *The Oil Bubble*, 1868.

About 1860, when the excitement was running high over the Drake Well, John A. Mather established a picture gallery in Titusville and became the pioneer photographer of the Pennsylvania oil region. Mather followed oil operators everywhere, and whenever new strikes drew oilmen together he followed with his camera. Mather spared no labor in quest of scenes. His wagon in which he prepared his plates was a familiar sight. In time he acquired the most remarkable collection of oil field photographs in the United States. Through the efforts of Edwin C. Bell, after Mather's death, the Drake Memorial Association purchased the negatives for \$100. These negatives were a part of the Bell Collection which was placed in the Drake Museum in 1934. Altogether there are 3,274 of them in the Museum; of these 2,229 have been identified and labeled; and 1,045 remain unidentified. Some of the negatives have deteriorated, but most of them are still in good condition. These negatives constitute the most interesting and finest collection of contemporary views of the oil region to be found in this country. One might venture the statement that no other part of our country and no other industry has been so fortunate in having a photographer to capture contemporary events. New films should be made of these negatives as rapidly as possible; they are of glass and are easily broken, and the emulsion on the negatives is crumbling.

There is not a complete file of any periodical; instead, there is a miscellaneous collection of periodical literature containing contemporary accounts of the early oil days. For example, there are copies of *Harper's*, *Century*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Nation*, *Every Saturday*, etc. There were two early petroleum magazines, the *Petroleum Monthly* and the *Petroleum Age*, the issues of which are now very scarce. The Drake Museum has several issues of these periodicals; the back files of these journals should be located and acquired.

Important in showing the development of lamps from ancient to the present time is the collection assembled by the late P. C. Boyle of Oil City. It includes a few very old grease-burning lamps, many types of candlesticks, candle-burning lanterns, lamps for burning camphene and other burning fluids, and many types of kerosene lamps. It is said to be one of the finest collections of lamps outside the British Museum.

On display in the Museum are all sorts of oil well tools such as rod elevators, tubing elevators, tubing tongs, pipe tongs, and wrenches. There are a few things, like the working barrel and wooden sills, which came from the Drake Well. Especially interesting are several miniature models of methods used to drill and pump early oil wells.

Among the miscellaneous items are: two iron safes, one of which belonged to John Bennehoff and the other to "Coal Oil Johnny"; personal articles used by Colonel Drake—his spectacles, toothbrush, high black silk hat, liqueur set, wallets; and the reclining chair in which he spent the last years of his life.

There is the John F. Carl collection of more than 2,000 oil sands from Pennsylvania wells collected by him while a member of the State Geological survey.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

While advances had been made toward achieving the goal set by Mr. Bell and those associated with him, experience with the Drake Well Memorial Park in the past eight or nine years revealed a number of difficulties in the way of attaining that goal. There were three fundamental problems: (1) the lack of adequate financial support; (2) the fact that the Department of Forests and Waters, while able to care for the grass, trees, shrubs, and physical

properties, did not have anyone on its staff trained to administer a library and museum and handle historical records; and (3) the lack of a trained director in the museum and library; and a program. In order, therefore, that the Drake Well Memorial with its Museum and Library might become more serviceable and useful to the people of the Commonwealth and the Nation, and to the petroleum industry, the General Assembly passed a law and the Governor approved it on June 1, 1943, which improved the administrative organization and increased the financial support. The law marked another significant step in making the Museum and Library the best center in the United States for research and writing on the early history of the petroleum industry. Among other things, the Act provided that: (1) the administrative control of the Drake Well Memorial Park should be transferred from the Department of Forests and Waters to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission; (2) the American Petroleum Institute should appoint an Advisory Board of seven members, who should have power to make recommendations to the Commission for the improvement, care, maintenance, and enlargement of the property; (3) the Advisory Board might accept gifts of money or securities for endowment purposes; (4) the sum of \$20,500 was appropriated for the operation and maintenance of the property for the biennium; and (5) for the appointment of a Curator and a Librarian.

In accordance with the law, the American Petroleum Institute on July 30, 1943, appointed the following members of the Drake Well Memorial Advisory Board: Charles B. Stegner, Joseph M. Bloss, William H. Scheide, and Edgar T. Stevenson of Titusville, Pennsylvania; Parke A. Dickey of Bradford, Pennsylvania; Edward P. Boyle of Oil City, Pennsylvania; and Paul H. Giddens of Meadville, Pennsylvania. The first meeting of the new Board was held in the library of the late John H. Scheide of Titusville on July 30, 1943; Mr. Stegner was chosen Chairman, Mr. Bloss, Vice Chairman, and Mr. Scheide, Secretary. The Board then recommended to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission that Paul H. Giddens, Professor of History and Political Science, Allegheny College, be appointed Curator, and this was subsequently done by the Commission.

Since the passage of the new Act in June, 1943, the Drake Well Memorial Advisory Board has embarked upon a program designed to develop the possibilities of the Drake Well Memorial to the fullest

possible extent. It involves (1) the locating and gathering of additional materials—maps, company records, newspapers, books, photographs, letters, diaries, lamps, oil well tools, pamphlets—relating to petroleum history; (2) the erection of a replica of the Drake Well on the site of the original well; (3) the making of an inventory of everything in the Museum and Library and the ultimate publication of a complete catalog; (4) the gradual reproduction of the Mather photographs in order that they may be permanently preserved; (5) the maintenance of the physical property in good condition; (6) the preparation of slides from original photographs for the purpose of giving illustrated lectures on the early development of the petroleum industry; (7) the dissemination of accurate and reliable information about the early history of the petroleum industry; (8) the maintenance of an interesting and attractive museum; (9) a modest publicity program designed to acquaint oilmen and the general public with the contents and value of the materials in the Museum and Library; and (10) the formulation of plans for the enlargement of the Museum and Library in the post-war period.

The Drake Well Memorial is an excellent example of a new and unique type of institution now developing in the United States. There are few institutions comparable to it. It is not simply a park for recreational purposes nor is it a park with a museum, it is a state park with a special museum and library located right on the spot where a significant historical event occurred; it is a place for the depositing of materials relating to the history of the petroleum industry and for the study of these materials. The potentialities for such an institution are great. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which has been an immense beneficiary of the petroleum industry, has shown its gratitude for one of the substantial factors in its development by providing funds to make the Drake Museum and Library of utmost service to the people of Pennsylvania, the United States, and to the petroleum industry.

Since the opening of the Drake Well Memorial Park in 1934, about eight hundred to a thousand people from all parts of the country have visited the birthplace of the petroleum industry each Sunday and holiday during the summer season; and as many as fifteen hundred have come on some Sundays and holidays. *No less than fifty thousand people per year have visited the park during normal times.* Moreover, a steadily increasing number of

scholars and research workers have utilized the library and research materials in preparing books or articles on petroleum history. Offhand the writer can think of at least a half-dozen books which have appeared since 1934, all of the authors of which have consulted the resources in the Drake Museum and Library. Furthermore, as the general public has become better acquainted with the facilities of the Drake Museum and Library, more and more gifts of letters, photographs, relics, newspapers, account books, diaries and other materials have been made. It is a reasonable expectation and hope that the Drake Museum and Library, with proper financial support and leadership, will continue to grow, as Mr. Bell and others dreamed, and will gain increased recognition as a center for research and study of petroleum history.