A VISIT TO THE OIL REGIONS OF PENNSYLVANIA IN 1865

AMASA M. EATON

Late in August, 1859, the startling news that Colonel Edwin L. Drake had struck oil on Watson's flats reached Titusville, Pennsylvania. Immediately the village was wild with excitement. Men jumped on horses and galloped away down the valley of Oil Creek to secure land for drilling purposes. Farm after farm was either leased or purchased and within a short time all the available land in this narrow valley had been taken up. Hurried preparations were made for erecting derricks and sinking other wells. Within a few days William Barnsdall, Boon Meade, William H. Abbott, and Henry R. Rouse were drilling a second well, while a third was being bored by Brewer, Watson & Company. As new and more sensational wells, like the Funk, Empire, Phillips, and those on the Schaffer, Miller, Tarr, and Blood farms, were developed, excitement increased and the bustling activity assumed boom proportions. In fact, the news of Drake's success was the signal for a mad rush of speculators, promoters, operators, laborers, and adventurers to Oil Creek, a rush comparable to those to California in 1849 and to Carson City and the Pike's Peak region in 1858 and 1859; and the valley became the most important region in drilling for oil in the succeeding years.

In the meantime, however, little tributaries that flowed into Oil Creek on either side, which had been neglected heretofore, began to attract attention. Although small and insignificant as a stream, Cherry Run was the most important branch of Oil Creek. Having its source some six to eight miles above Plumer, the stream wound its way to Rouseville on Oil Creek.

1 The "Diary" was purchased from a second-hand book dealer in Albany, New York, by Mr. Alexander C. Robinson of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, who presented it to the Sewickley Public Library. A film reproduction has been made by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Ed.
through a deep and heavily wooded gorge, which was never over two hundred yards in width and from which the hills rose abruptly. Prior to 1864 the valley of Cherry Run was almost entirely neglected by oil operators because it appeared to be of little or no value as oil territory, and the land was held at comparatively low prices. It was estimated that fifty thousand dollars would have been an enormous price for the whole valley from Rouseville to Plumer. In May, 1864, however, Taylor & Rockwell opened a new well on Cherry Run that flowed about fifty barrels per day. A month later James Reed put down another well and at about 610 feet struck oil. At first this well flowed about two hundred barrels per day but later the flow increased to three hundred. Other wells in the neighborhood began flowing, the excitement became tense; the rush was tremendous, and shortly every foot of property from Rouseville to Plumer had been leased or purchased at fabulous prices. Soon every portion of Cherry Run from its mouth for a distance of ten to twelve miles was thickly covered with derricks and engine houses and was busy with the movements of workmen. Early in 1865 it was estimated that at least 186 derricks had been erected in this area. The struggle to get property was so intense that by 1865 land had been purchased or leased for some distance above Plumer, though little development had taken place; possibly fifty derricks had been erected.

In connection with the oil developments on Cherry Run, the "Diary of a Visit to the Oil Regions, Pennsylvania, 1865" is most illuminating and important: it presents a realistic picture of the operations on the east branch of Cherry Run, a region whose history has been vague and obscure; it gives an insight into the speculative activities of the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company; and finally it is the most valuable available source of information about the origin of an early oil town, Wages- farth City, of which very little is known. Incidentally, significant observations are made by the diarist concerning the developments in 1865 on Oil Creek and the west branch of Cherry Run, at Pithole, and along the Allegheny River below Franklin.

Incorporated under the laws of New York on February 20, 1865, with a capitalization of five hundred thousand dollars, the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company of New York City purchased three days
later a farm on the east branch of Cherry Run for the amount of its capital. Apparently the company, spurred on by the meteoric rise of Pithole, wanted to drill for oil, lay out a city, sell building lots, and lease the remainder to other oil operators. A superintendent by the name of James M. Lange was hired, and immediately he proceeded to carry out these objectives. Early in October, 1865, a committee of the company was sent to Titusville to inspect the operations, and while on this journey one of the committeemen kept a record, the "Diary of a Visit to the Oil Regions, Pennsylvania, 1865." As a result of the committee's visit, the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company on October 24, 1865, leased certain lots within the farm to Conrad Wagefarth of Meadville, Pennsylvania, and Charles L. Salisbury of New York City. Lots were also leased to other individuals in 1865, 1866, and 1867. By July, 1867, the story of this speculative enterprise, like that of so many others of that day, had come to a tragic end. The company went into bankruptcy, made an assignment to Isaac M. Andrews, and on December 30, 1867, at the courthouse in Franklin, Pennsylvania, the sheriff sold its goods, chattels, and lands. According to the record, the farm, which brought $7,000 in 1864, $15,000 on January 14, 1865, $33,333 two days later, and $500,000 on February 20, 1865, was sold to Jonathan Watson for $5,015! On April 2, 1924, the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company was dissolved by a proclamation of the governor of New York.

Seventy years after the committee's western journey to Titusville, the original diary comes to light, but no name is attached to the document. In the diary, however, reference is made to leaving Providence, Rhode Island, for New York, where the author joins three other gentlemen, to their arrival in Titusville, and to an overnight stop at the Moore House on October 10, 1865. An examination of the Moore House register, now in the Drake Well Museum in Titusville, reveals that Amasa M. Eaton of Providence and Charles H. Green, David Seaman, and Charles L. Salisbury, all of New York City, were registered together on that night. Since all of them were from New York except Eaton, it seems probable that the latter was the one who kept the diary. Moreover, throughout the diary, mention is made of the activities of Green, Salisbury, Seaman, and "I," which also indicates that Eaton was the writer. Final proof, how-
ever, lies in the fact that two surviving children of Eaton as well as a long-time friend of the family have recently identified the style, language, and handwriting as that of Amasa M. Eaton.

Born in Providence on May 31, 1841, Eaton received his early education at home under tutors and then studied in Europe three years before entering Brown University, from which he was graduated in 1861. After serving three months in the Civil War with the First Rhode Island Volunteers, he entered business as a dealer in oils, forming a partnership with William M. Bailey, Jr., a close friend and neighbor, with offices on South Water Street in Providence. Apparently the firm was a small oil concern, possibly one of the many ruined when the Standard Oil Company gained its control over the oil business. In any event, there is good reason to believe that the firm was short-lived and a financial failure. Very little seems to be known about the business activities of Eaton during this period. Apparently he had money for investment purposes and was interested in many money-making schemes. Among other things he was a large stockholder in the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company. At the age of twenty-four he made the trip from New York City to Titusville with the company committee and kept the diary. That he did not remain long with the firm of Bailey & Eaton or the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company is evident; for, after his marriage in 1873, he took up the study of law at Harvard, where he was graduated in 1877. He was admitted to the Rhode Island bar in the same year and practiced during the rest of his life in Providence. Eaton came into notice nationally while practicing in Washington in connection with the French spoliation claims. He was especially prominent on account of his efforts in securing the passage in various states of the "Negotiable Instruments Act.” Over a score of articles, legal or historical in character, came from his pen. His membership and activity in the Rhode Island Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Rhode Island Horticultural Society, the American Historical Association, the American Bar Association, the National Municipal League, the Rhode Island Historical Society, and the Metropolitan Park Commission of Providence indicate the diversity of his interests. He died on October 3, 1914.
The writer is grateful to two surviving children of Amasa M. Eaton, Mrs. Frank D. Watson of Haverford, and Mr. William D. Eaton of Boston, and to Mr. Edwin F. Cary of Providence for their aid in helping piece together this fragmentary story about the oil business of their father and friend. Acknowledgment is due Miss Nancy C. Morrow of Oil City, Pennsylvania, for her assistance in checking certain legal records.

Allegheny College

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DIARY OF A VISIT TO THE OIL REGIONS PENNSYLVANIA 1865

Oct. 7—1865. Left Providence in propellor Electra at 5 P.M. Arrived in N. Y. at 6½ next morning. No bus running to South Ferry, so I walked down. Had to wait about ½ an hour for ferry boat. Then in Brooklyn, had to wait ½ hour for car. Conductor took me about 2 miles beyond Franklin Av. having forgotten I wanted to get out there, so had to take another car to get back again. Finally got to Amasa's house at 9½, they having finished breakfast & concluded I was not coming. Amasa wanted me (by letter recd last Saturday) to bring in all his remaining securities, or, as I understood it, $200 instead, And I have so done. Discussed the point somewhat with him. Mr Green called & stayed till near 4. All ready to start tomorrow. In the evening Josh & I went to hear Beecher preach. He has a miserable church—ugly, uncomfortable & poorly ventilated. Well packed. Organ a poor one, I thought, & poorly played. Beecher spoke through his nose, on resolutions. Said nothing in particular new, so Josh & I soon left.

1 Dr. Giddens is assistant professor of history and political science in Allegheny College, Meadville, and has done considerable research on the history of the oil industry in Pennsylvania. Ed.

2 This refers to the house of Amasa Mason, a cousin of Amasa M. Eaton with whom the latter frequently visited. Mason was probably connected with the firm of Bailey & Eaton of Providence.

3 Charles H. Green of New York was the treasurer of the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company.

4 The Great American clergyman, Henry Ward Beecher, was at this time pastor of the Plymouth Church of Brooklyn.
Monday October 9th 1865. Waited some time for Amasa & finally went to town alone. Josh having gone early. Called with him on H. Castellaw, who wishes to make an arrangement, in connection with F. Holman & Co. Augusta, Ga. Josh has been to his references & they both represent him, or rather Holman as reliable & honest. Had $50,000.00 & plantation before the war. Has plantation now. So I told Castellaw we would make the same arrangement with them we had made with Easton, Winaus & Montgomery of Mobile & would ship oils to parties on their orders at their risk & cost—& upon their remitting us amount of bills, we to pay to Castellaw here, a commission of ten (10) cents per gallon. Castellaw said that was all right, & wanted us to write out the arrangement for both parties to sign—which I did, & sent to Willie for him to finish, later in the day.6

Finch has met with an accident.7 Was thrown out of his buggy yesterday & broke his right collar bone. Amasa went up to see him—& I was going with him, only I had so much to do I had no time left. He is doing well, & will escape with a few weeks confinement in the house. Green & I bought a basket & had Kurtz fill it up with partridges, etc. for us to take with us. Called, with Mellen at Mixer Whitman & Co's, but none of the firm were in. Met something new to me. Seal Oil, almost white, sweet, abundant in quantity, winter strained, thick, same price as whale oil (now $1.85) generally cheaper. I think we can with advantage substitute it for whale. One of M. W. & Co's men today bought some candles from us @ 40 cents less 5 p. c. for cash. They want to know if we will sell to them 2½ p. c. better than to any one else & I wrote to Willie about it. Amasa asked why I had not brought on the securities he asked me to? I said, because I understood from his letter that if I would loan him $200, he would not want the securities. But he says he wants the bonds etc. so that he can settle the remaining bills due, by paying them in bonds or stocks, instead of in money. But I do not think this would be the right way for me to settle my accounts. If he wishes to, he can see Perkins etc. & make some arrangement with them which I will

6 "Willie" probably refers to William M. Bailey, Jr., a member of the firm of Bailey & Eaton.

7 Marcus A. Finch of New York was president of the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company.
carry out upon my return. There will be some surplus after paying all
bills due—and Amasa wants to have it arranged so that he can have
this—before he gets it—really, (a cardinal fault.) To accomodate him,
I loan him $200, for which he gives me his note, agreeing that I am to
take it out of the first money coming to me from sale of stocks, at that
time surrendering this note & taking Fanny's receipt for the same, as
paid her. 8 Also I accept his draft upon me as Trustee for $500 30 days,
which he is to get discounted at Tuckers—& it is not to go to Providence.
Upon my return & when it becomes due, I am to meet it from his trust
fund in my hands. Mellen & I rode to the Chambers St. Ferry, where
we met Green, & Saulsbury & Seaman. 9 Rode all night on Erie Railroad.

Tuesday October 10th 1865. 20 minutes behind time. Breakfast at 10
at Hornellsville. Then rode till 2 to Salamanca. Changed cars & rode to
Corry on the Atlantic & Great Western. Arrived there at about four
oclock. Made our dinner out of our basket. Cars did not start till after
6—& just as we started off another train came in, but they did not wait
to connect! Miserable management. Cars full, people standing up in the
passage way. Arrived at 8½ at Titusville 27 miles from Corry! Walked
to the Moore House where we found they were expecting us & had a
room ready with two beds.

Wednesday October 11, 1865. Slept all night till quarter to five.
Foggy & damp. Breakfast, consisting of beefsteak thoroughly cooked—&
coffee without milk—the cow not being up yet. They brought some milk
in though just as we were getting through. Bill, 4 of us, $10.00. Walked
down to the depot. Such roads! Every one only cares to make money as
fast as possible from some oil well & then leave for “the States,” as they
call it here. Waited about an hour in the damp drizzle when finally a
train came along. Everybody scrambled into the one 2d class car, al-
though we could find no one who knew where the train was going. We
scrambled in with all the rest, into the dirty car full of tobacco smoke—&
after sundry efforts at opening the window, resigned ourselves to our
fate. We are unmistakeably in Oil-dom! Derricks are to be seen on every

8 Fanny was the wife of Amasa Mason.
9 David Seaman is listed in the New York directory for 1865 as residing at 18 East
Twelfth Street. In the same directory for 1868, Charles L. Salisbury is listed as an agent
located at 614 Broadway. The firm of Salisbury & Smith, agents, also have the same address.
side, looming up in the fog, most of the wells apparently being idle. Occasionally the moving walking beam & smell show there is some oil left here yet. At Millers Farm saw the tube just laid to conduct oil from Pithole, & which crosses our Farm. Arrived at Schaffer’s Farm finally & found a son of Lange, our Superintendent, waiting for us with horses. He expected us last night, & had kept rooms for us. The horses are good—or much better than I expected to find. Started off soon, each one carrying his bag as best he could. Forded Oil Creek, & went over the hills to our Farm, over such roads as it would be difficult to find outside of Petrolia. And here we are at last! The road ends right by the side of a primitive rough board building. We found a lean to, with two large bunks was built yesterday for our especial accommodation. We are on a slight hill side, looking over a depression, constituting a valley with flat bottom, running through our farm, and which is the boring territory. Immediately below us, in a straight line with the road is well No. 1—with 2 sets of tools & rope fast—750 feet deep. Yesterday they finished boring out the rope & got out one set of tools & broke their “jar” trying to get out the other set. They say now they will succeed in getting the well clear. Mr. Lange made his appearance, hands all oil, with a piece of broken sucker rod belonging to well No 2. He gave it to one of the men to repair, & returned with us to well No. 2 which is situated lower down. This morning at 3½ considerable oil came out. They had just broken the upper portion of the sucker rod (the rod that lifts the upper pump valve & oil) & when they took it out, the oil flowed for a few moments & spirted up on the derrick. In about ½ an hour the rod was

10 The farm of the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company can be located accurately on J. T. Lloyd's Map of the Great Oil Region of Allegheny River, Cherry & Cherry-Tree Runs, and Pithole Creek; in Cornplanter, Cherry-Tree & Allegheny Townships, Venango County, Pennsylvania (New York, 1864). A copy of this map is in the Drake Well Museum in Titusville, and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania has a photostatic copy. On this map the farm is in the form of a parallelogram, along the west side of which runs a road, and across the face of the tract appear the names of former owners, J. L. Carnaghan and Cornelius Graham. It was about two and one-half miles northwest of Pithole; the pipe line from Pithole to Miller’s farm is supposed to have crossed it. Moreover, the east branch of Cherry Run rises on the farm; the two branches unite a short distance below the farm.

11 James M. Lange was the superintendent for the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company.
repaired, connected, & they began pumping again. We could plainly see the gas coming out of the end of the tube over the tank. Soon the oil began to come, & increasing very rapidly in flow, spirited out in great force—for a minute perhaps at the estimated rate of 800 to 1000 bbls. per day. It sputtered & splashed, diminished in quantity, then came mixed with water, then ceased altogether. A steady stream of gas is visible coming out of the tube. Occasionally the engine works very hard, caused by increased upward pressure of the gas, which presses up faster than the pumps allow it to flow out. The well is 774 ft 2 inches deep. Seed bag down 485 feet, tubing 745 feet. For three hours or more there came nothing but gas, then oil as before—& thus it alternates. Began pumping Sept. 10. Delayed somewhat by accidents. Lange reckons in all he has pumped 14 days. He has sold 108 barrels at $5.00 & has now enough on hand (at least fifty barrels) to enable us to estimate the amount of oil produced up to the present time at one hundred & sixty barrels or eleven barrels & 42/100 per day. This is exactly it, & yet I hear our well called by those around here a “thirty to forty barrel well”!! Such is Petrolia! And this is about as near as they generally come to the truth. It is Lange's intention to keep on pumping, say for a month longer, to see if he cannot make this a flowing well. His idea is that by pumping he can open the oil crevices & let the oil out. If the well does not then become a flowing well or produce abundantly—say 40 barrels, he will take out the present tube & put down a tube of one inch diameter. (The one now down is of two inches diameter.) He thinks we shall then have a flowing well—or that we should if he were to do this now, but he wants first to see if he cannot make it flow with the present tube in. Everybody here & those passing through think the same—& the Committee therefore deem this the best course.12 Wagefarth made his appearance at last, just as they were beginning to pump.13 Had dinner before 12. Very good fare—much better than I expected. Lange is very vigilant—hardly anything

12 Green, Seaman, and Eaton apparently composed the committee sent by the company to investigate conditions on the property.

13 Conrad Wagefarth lived in Meadville. The meager information available seems to indicate that he was a migratory and reckless oil and mining speculator. In the early days of the oil boom he was one of the owners of the Story farm on Oil Creek. Between 1863 and 1867 numerous suits were filed against him in Crawford County. His connection with the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company is not altogether clear.
seems to escape him. He ran into the engine house & told them to go slower, when the upward pressure of the gas became greater. He does not use the gas under the boiler for fear the increased pressure incidental to its confinement will diminish, or perhaps stop entirely the flow of oil—as has been the case in other wells. After dinner to the well again. Has not run any since we were here before dinner. Mr. Lange then explained to us how the farm has been surveyed & laid out. The general form of the farm is that of a parallelogram with a main road running along the west side. Small building lots 100 x 33 ft. front are staked off all along this road. The remainder of the farm is divided into acre lots, leaving a few fractional parts of acres. The whole farm is covered with good sized trees. Oak & chestnut principally. Underneath is a growth of young trees on the highest parts, and of black alder in the lowest. The lots are all marked by cutting down the brush & small trees along the lines of division & at each corner is a stake driven in cornerwise—(Surveyor's style) with the number of the lot on each face, corresponding to the lot towards which that side is turned. Upon returning to the well after looking over some of the best lots, found it (or “her” as they call it here) pumping vigorously again. At times the oil comes faster than the pump can bring it up—that is, it flows—and flows rapidly for a moment. While sitting in our caboose some strangers came along & made some enquiries about our well, saying finally they supposed it was a 30 to 40 Bbl. well. Green said yes, for which I afterwards took him to task—and Seaman coincided with me—but Green tried to defend himself. A safe rule, I find, is to divide the estimated production of any well by 3, unless you have good reason, from knowledge of the parties, or other cause, to divide only by 2. To do less than this would not answer. Lange showed us the 15 lots he would recommend the Co. to reserve—and we agree with him—and reserve Nos. 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 116, as marked on the Co's map of the farm. Wagefarth & Saulsbury then took the map & rode over the farm on horseback to make their selection of 20 lots. In the evening they announced their selection to be the following: Lots, nos 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 43, 42, 41, 40, 39, 62, 63, 64. From the above, Messrs. W. & S. select their 10 lots as follows, Nos.
1, 3, 9, 11, 13, 15, 43, 41, 39, 62. They also choose for their building lots Nos. 117, 88, 89, & 90, & small building lots Nos. 105 to 120, both inclusive, which makes their 5 acres of building land.\(^4\)

All these lots are as numbered on the Co's map, before mentioned. Although we had the right to choose their building lots, we decided to give them the above, for which they manifested a preference. The Committee talked the matter over & concluded it was best to treat them very liberally in the matter. Before dinner we had a discussion about the name of the place. I wanted to name it simply Graham or Blakely after former owners, but Green more particularly, & Seaman too want to name it Carnahan City! What an absurd name! A former owner was named Carnaghan, but they say they do not propose to name it after him, but to name it Carnahan as it has long been known by that name.\(^5\) Upon enquiring of Lange, he says it is not known by that name at all, & that no one knew where “Carnaghan Farm” was, when he first came here last spring! But Green says that Finch too thinks they had better name it “Carnahan City” so I yield, not wishing to be factious. Most all the names here are barbarous—& ours is only in keeping with the rest. Perhaps it is as well to give it this name—on the principal that the most homelyist-name is the best! It certainly would be difficult to find a more vulgar one—“Carnahan City”! Why not say Boston City or Providence City! When we turned to Lange, he seemed to think we ought to have asked him before, & suggested “Wagefarth City.” This is indeed worse than Carnahan City! Wagefarth himself advocated it, but the proposition met with but small favor, & was soon dropped. I begin to see that Lange wants to be consulted—made much of—etc. Greene and I in upper bunk, Seaman and Saulsbury in lower—& Wagefarth upstairs.

I did not quite finish Wednesday, Oct. 11. In the evening we all got together & wrote out a mem. of selection of lots of which we made 2 copies, one for each, both signed by the Committee & by Wagefarth & Saulsbury. I am not particularly pleased with Wagefarth. Speaks reck-

\(^4\) On October 24, 1865, the New York & Chicago Petroleum Company leased to Conrad Wagefarth and Charles L. Salisbury the land here indicated. Venango County Archives, Deed Book 61, p. 6.

\(^5\) Lloyd's map shows the name of J. L. Carnaghan written across the farm.
lessly at times. On the matter of the purchase of this property, he says he bought it for himself & Finch & [blank in MS.] in joint apc. [sic] for $15000! Heifer Island in the same way at $10000 & Steiner at $5000! Finch had half the profit of these sales at $3333 $20000 & $10000 respectively! He also says that he sold to Lange part of his interest in Elk River leases at price which he paid Finch—$30000 for 1/5! And he agrees to show us Finch’s apc, against him, signed by Finch, in settlement, in Franklin, & will take his affidavit to these facts! After this who can I believe? This P.M. just before Sunset, we went to the upper end of the farm, where W. & S. propose taking their building lots.16

_Thursday, October 12._ Up as soon as light. Cloudy & raining a little. I have caught cold. Climbed up to the top of derrick over well No. 1—& carved my name there. Then came down the rope hand under hand, to the astonishment of the rest. After breakfast Wagefarth & Saulsbury took the map, & went on their lots to locate their wells. After a visit to the well (Lange has named it “Green Well” & the name is on the derrick) Green, Seaman, Lange & I walked to some of the adjoining farms & wells. The “Nell Well” had a tank full of water, was pumping, & there was perhaps half a barrel of oil on the surface of the water. The “Benton Well” was pumping, they said 35 bbls. Lange said 9 to 10. My rule is a good one I think! These are on the West Branch of Cherry Run. Other wells are doing nothing. Some are abandoned, some not down deep enough, some with tools stuck etc. The more I see of it, the more I am convinced of the great risk of this oil business. Lange says that there are 3 “mud veins” here & only 1 in Oil Creek. These are, I suppose, veins of soft clay which ooze out above the tools, & thus prevent their withdrawal. This accounts for the great number of abandoned wells with tools stuck, below us. Some of them have a “hardware shop” in them, as they call it. I am told that from here down to Plumer, hundreds of wells have been sunk the last winter, spring, & summer, & that none of them have struck oil. We are on the East Branch of Cherry Run, which in fact rises on our farm. The two branches unite, but a little way below us. We conclude that we have a good property by luck & no thanks to Finch, our own judgment or any one or anything else! We told Lange to direct

16 The letters “W” and “S” used frequently hereafter refer to Wagefarth and Salisbury.
all letters etc. to Green, the Treasurer of the Co. Does Lange suspect Finch? He said, "After what you have said gentlemen of a certain person, I will direct to Mr. Green." We had spoken of not having seen some letters which Mr. Lange spoke of, as having sent to Mr. Finch. When he said the above, we excused Mr. Finch's delinquency on the ground of the great amount of business etc. he has to attend to but I think Lange suspects something. He is very keen—and we are forming a favorable impression of his abilities. Another visit to the well on our return. Gas in great abundance. W. & S. returned. They have decided to bore on lots 78, 3—and tell us they have bought 2 stationery engines, 16 horse power each for $1600 cash—and are going right ahead. W. & S. on horse back, the rest of us on foot, we then, map in hand, went to the upper end of the farm, & followed about the boundary line back to the house again. A question is now raised between us as to whom belongs the wood on the building lots, both claim it. We decide that W. & S. shall clear the lots, & we will decide between us in N. Y. who it shall belong to, & the party so taking it shall pay the cost of cutting it. Another visit to the well on our return. We are unlucky. Nothing but gas when we go there, although we can see, by the rise in the tank that oil has been running. Early dinner. The fare here is good. Meat alone not well cooked. Two strangers came along & enquired for Mr. Lange. We found out that they were Webbs supts. & were trying to get a plank road through from Pithole to Schaffer Farm, which will run through our farm. The man boring our wells, Mr. Poor, objects to their crossing his land, unless he is paid $200 for damages. This they flatly refuse to do, & say they will abandon the enterprise sooner than do it. Every man's consent is secured except this man's. It will be a great thing for our Co. if this road is built, so Green & I had a talk with Poor, but found him stubborn. Finally Wagefarth talked to him, & came back to us saying it was all right; but did not tell us what arrangement he had made. We agreed with S. that the Co. would pay 2/3 & W. & he 1/3. The supts. speak highly of Lange, saying he is "the best Supt. on the Creek" & evidently think he is pretty sharp. We asked them to stay to dinner, which they did—and then, all of us, on horseback went up the road to see where the proposed road would run. We could not definitely fix it, but left that for Lange.
to do, & the Supts. rode off thanking us, & saying that but for us the road would have been abandoned. We concluded now that we would go over to Pit Hole, only 2½ miles off. So Lange returned, & on we went, Wagefarth leading, as he knew the way. Dismounted at Pit hole & walked around among some of the Great Wells. One Thousand Barrels per day! It is enough to give one the oil fever! Wagefarth insisted on our going in at one of the offices to see some of his friends. They began smoking & drinking, & after a few minutes I proposed we should start. So we mounted our horses, but Wagefarth would not start. We went on to the hotel & met Saulsbury, who had lost us & did not go into the office with us. Wagefarth not making his appearance, Saulsbury went back for him & soon they came along. Wagefarth on the run. Off we started after him, but I concluded soon to let them go & to wait for Saulsbury who alone was behind me. "Wagefarth’s drunk" says he "damn him, let him go." I yelled out in vain to Green & Seaman to hold up, thinking Wagefarth would be less likely to race home if no one were after him, but on they went, thinking I suppose that someone ought to keep up with him to take care of him. It is [a] wonder to me how he kept his seat in such a condition & over such a road—but keep it he did, & arrived home long before us. Saulsbury & I went along leisurely, & when we got to our cabin, found W. busily engaged playing euchre, & apparently as sober as any of us. Paid another visit to the well, which was not doing much. In the evening we finished up all there was left that we could think of. I wrote out a mem. of what we authorized Mr. Lange to do. We looked over his apcs. etc. & found them correct. Wagefarth told me, upon my asking him, that Steiner cost $5000 & that M. Finch & Wm Finch & he operated on joint apc. M. Finch had ½ the profit W. F. ¼ & W. ¼! Also that he sold an interest in Elk River leases to Lange for same price as he paid! Have we all been completely deceived in Finch? After we had done all our work, I played a game of chess with Lange & beat him. I find that he is well educated. I heard him humming various opera airs. He also speaks French & Italian, but with a poor accent. Says he can speak Hungarian & German & understands Latin, & can keep all his Apcs. by double entry when we wish it. I think he is an excellent Supt.
If the time ever should come that we receive large sums of money, it may be best to have some one over him. At present I do not think it would be best.

_Friday, October 13th_ Awake at day break. Wagefarth & Saulsbury took breakfast & started early for Plumer on horseback. Green wanted to go with them, thence to Franklin, but Seaman & I preferred to ride back to Schaffer, thence by boat. Heavy white frost—& some ice. After breakfast we went for the last time to the well—& after waiting some time, were well rewarded by an abundant flow of oil, lasting probably 10 mins. Lange urged our naming the place after Wagefarth, saying he (W) was very sore over it, & wanted it named so very much. We discussed the matter a long while. Bade Lange good-by & started off on horseback to Schaffer Farm again, little Lange on a small sorry looking mare belonging to the Co. going with us. We again discussed the name of the place, & finally decided, purely as a matter of policy, as being for the best interests of the Co. As probably Wagefarth will take great interest in it now, & will push it ahead, to name the place _Wagefarth City_ & sent back word by Sigismund to Lange to that effect, when S. left us at Schaffer Farm. Had a very good dinner for $1.00 each. Prices so far have not been as high as I anticipated. We went from this place to Oil City in a flat boat, hauled down the creek by, for the first few miles, 2 horses, & then as the water was deeper by 1. A style of travelling I never tried before, & hope never to have to again. Along you go, helter skelter, scraping over the bottom, into other boats, against rocks etc. It is a wonder how the horse managed not to fall down. I thought he was going to two or three times. However this mode of travel gave us a good chance to see all the wells etc. on both sides. Our “Capt.” was quite intelligent & gave us much information about the different wells as we went by them. It took us 4 hours to reach Oil City, 10 miles from Schaffer Farm. We hurried on shore, & after a quick walk of about ¾ of a mile, reached the depot just in time to take the train to Franklin. Waited there a few minutes when the train from Cherry Run came in, & we found Wagefarth & Saulsbury. Told W. what name we decided to give our place, whereat he was very much delighted. Walked to “Greenes” Hotel.
Supped, & went to our room with 3 beds & Green entertained us for some time with an account of his doings on the lower Mississippi, buying cotton in 1862 or 1863.

Saturday October 14. After breakfast got 3 fair saddle horses & started off to see "Heifer Island." Who should hail me as we were galloping along, but Phillips who was in College with me, & whom I also met last winter at the depot in Pittsburgh? He is selling oil lands etc. The scenery is very fine. High hills arise from the crooked river, thickly wooded & now in the full glory of their fall colors. The road was good except, the last ½ mile when we turned off from the main road & took a path through the woods & down the steep hillside to the river. Our island consists of a long narrow bar, about ½ a mile long. The water is now very low, & 4 islands are visible. The main island is perhaps 7 feet higher than the present water line & there are a few low bushes on it. In high water most all of our land is overflowed. But abutments etc. can be put up, so that we should have about 16 acres, in case the land should become valuable enough in case of finding oil, to warrant us in making the outlay. Hired a man & boat to take us from one island to the other, to the wells on the shore & to Foster Island. Green & I walked over the island furthest down stream, which is merely a bench of stone & gravel. Then went on to the main island. They have recently struck a flowing well on each side, one of 35 bbls, so called, the other of 80 bbls. so called. A large scow of empty barrels came along, hauled upstream by seven horses, & towed us about ½ a mile to Foster Island, the island immediately above ours. This island is higher than ours, & is covered with trees, mostly butternut. The ground was well covered with

17 This college friend may have been either Oliver Ormsbee Phillips of Pittsburgh, who was a student at Brown University from 1858 to 1860, or Duncan Clinch Phillips, a graduate of Brown in 1861, an officer in the Civil War, and later a window glass manufacturer of Pittsburgh. Information received from Brown University indicates that the latter was interested in the oil business.

18 Foster Island, which was about half a mile to the east of the company's islands, can be located in Frederick W. Beers, *Atlas of the Oil Region of Pennsylvania, 9* (New York, 1865). It was about six miles directly south of Franklin between East Sandy Creek and Big Sandy Creek. On account of the supposed possibilities for oil the islands in this region were sought after with great eagerness and purchased at extraordinary prices.
the nuts. We walked up to the well, & in reply to our questions, were told that, "she" produced 53 bbls a day, partly by pumping & partly by flowing. Green then asked the man in charge privately to tell him the truth about the matter, saying that he was an original stockholder & had a right to know the truth. The man adhered strictly to what he had said. We then went down stream to the opposite side where the so called 80 bbl. well is. It runs about 3 minutes & then runs about the same length of time. I estimated its yield at 40 bbls, whereat Green & I had a long discussion, he wanting to know why I don't call it 1 bbl. Seaman was on my side. Crossed the river to where our horses were, mounted our horses & returned to Franklin, about 6 miles, & got there in time for dinner. We saw a "grab" an instrument designed to get out tools stuck in any well, on the table in the office. We were very much pleased with it & bought one & sent it to Lange to take out the tools in well No 1. We hunted up the inventor & found him to be a very intelligent man. He described to us the mysteries of the hazel stick, & showed us how to locate a well thereby wherever we wish. It is twisted by lifting the little finger, when nothing can prevent its twisting. If there be any truth in it, why is it that it indicates oil, water, copper, silver, gold etc.'according to the wants of the community? And would any one sell his knowledge of the locality of a 1000 bbl. well for $10 or $100? This man (A. H. Campbell Greene's Hotel, Franklin, Venango Co. Pennsylvania) is to send us estimates of the cost of boring two wells with a stationery engine of 25 horse power, & including also the cost of necessary abutments etc. Returning to the hotel, found a note from the man in charge at Foster Island, saying that he had misrepresented the matter, & that the production is 15 bbls! I laughed considerably at Green, at his "Quixotic attempt to find out the production of a well." I tried to find out where Philips was, but did not succeed. Took the 6:10 P.M. train for Meadville. Found Wagefarth expecting us at the depot, as Green had told him we should pass Sunday with him. He had two of his little boys with him & a horse & waggon. Took us to his house, about a mile from the depot.

_Sunday Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> 1865._ Cloudy. I am pleased with Wagefarths
family. His wife is a very pleasant woman. He has 6 boys—2 or 3 of whom play on the piano. I should not think him a dishonest man from his frank manner, but should not consider him entirely reliable. But I may be mistaken. During the day he had out Rhine wine & whiskey & was continually pressing us to drink & drinking himself & proposed various other drinks. But we were not a drinking crowd. Green sympathised with him occasionally, Seaman less, & I not at all. We talked over Finch with him at considerable length. He got out his papers, but could not find among them his account with Finch. He has said that he will show us Finch's account with him, consisting of debits & credits & signed by Finch. He found a copy of the debit side, but the credit side, which is what we want to see, he could not find. Green tells me that it is signed in settlement, with a bal. of $11000 due from Wagefarth. This Wagefarth declines to pay on the ground that Finch was dishonest in some charges. Hence the lawsuit brought by Finch against Wagefarth to recover this balance. I am told that Finch will make a great show over it, but will not finally allow it to come to trial. Time will show. Wagefarth tried to dicker with us, & to sell some of us some oil leases, gold mining properties, etc. but did not meet with much success. After lunch, which really was dinner, we walked down into the city & hunted up Wagefarths lawyer. We all went to his office, & hunted over the papers of Wagefarth he had in his possession to find that account, but could not find it. Wagefarth concluded he must have left it with another lawyer in Franklin. He is to send for it & bring it with him to New York when he comes, which will be in a few weeks. Wagefarth says that he owned at one time the Storey Farm on Oil Creek & sold it for $25000. It is now estimated to be worth $1000000 & paid an income last year of 1600000! He bought a lease once for $225 & not thinking much of it, sold it soon at the same price. It is now worth $5,000000! These are the things you hear of. In other cases, where there is only a loss, nothing more is heard of it. The experience of the last week has taught me the need of even greater caution than I have exercised in these matters. By great good luck, we have two very valuable pieces of property. We probably should not be so lucky again. Walked back to Wagefarth's
again. Green & I took a nap. Dinner at 6½. Green amused us during the evening with reminiscences of his travels in S. America. Four young ones asleep on the sofa & floor & Wagefarth do. in a chair! Seeing he was so tired & sleepy, we left him at about 11 & walked down to the depot. Train came along at 1. We had 3 berths in the sleeping car, having telegraphed for them this afternoon.

_Monday Oct. 16th 1865._ Rode all day in the cars. I did not feel very well during the morning. Arrived at New York at 10:10. During the course of the day we indulged in some political squabbling, Seaman & I taking ground against Green, who is a Democrat.

Walked to the Stevens House, but found it full, so had to walk back to the Astor House again. A fire was raging near the beginning of Broadway, & several engines passed me. Most of the steam fire engines are now drawn by horses here I see. It used to be considered by the "Dimokrats" here that only men were capable of drawing steam fire engines—and that horses were for other purposes.

And it is now thought by the same party that only white men are fit to vote!

_Tuesday Oct. 17—1865._ Met Green at his office at 11, with Amasa, Seaman & Jones. After considerable discussion we decided to wait until Wagefarth comes to N. Y. & then to examine the account. If our suspicions prove correct, then we will go to Finch & ask him to explain if he can. If he cannot I shall insist that he resign his position. But we may all be entirely mistaken—and I hope sincerely we are. I discussed with Green the proposition for a loan made Bradley by the N. Y. & P. Pet. Co. I told him that I considered it too liberal. He asked if I would make the loan. Told him I might possibly, & wrote the following—"Upon receipt by Mr. Eaton of estimates made by Mr. Campbell Mr. Eaton will make a proposal by means of which he will be enabled to make a loan to the Co." which was not definite enough for Green. He wanted to know if I would loan the money to the Co. if he would place 4 to 5000 shares of N. Y. & C. Pet. Co. for me @ $4.00. But I

19 This might possibly be the New York & Providence Petroleum Company, organized on March 11, 1865, under the laws of New York, with a capitalization of $300,000.
do not feel disposed to sell at $4.00. I want at least $5 & would prefer $6.00. I told him not to refer Bradley to me in regard to the propriety of the loan, as I might now possibly make the loan myself, & of course can not be expected to work against myself. Amasa has bought some stock @ $2.50. Some has been sold Watson at $5.50 & $6.00. What knowledge has he that we have not? Josh dined with me. Cautioned him against Saulsbury, saying that he is a very pleasant agreeable fellow, but that I should be careful how I had any business dealings with him. He defended him. Amasa is not at all pleased with Saulsbury, & I rely considerably on his judgement of men. Returned home by propeller. Med [sic'] Ned Wheaton on board, who is engaged in buying & selling petroleum stocks & lands, & boring. He says the value of a well is now about $2300 a barrel, having decreased as it has become known that the wells are not lasting, although the price of oil has risen. Creeks in counties adjoining Venango are now being developed. I think a great deal of money can be made in a very safe way, by carefully selecting oil territory in adjacent counties & holding it.