

Drake Well Museum

Titusville, PA

The first commercial oil field in the World was (and still is) located in north-western Pennsylvania. The oil and refining industry started just outside Titusville, PA, where the Drake Well Museum is located today.

The museum is located on the outskirts of Titusville, on the banks of appropriately named Oil Creek. Today Oil Creek State Park is a very nice recreational area featuring fly fishing, hiking and biking on the Oil Creek trail, and the Oil Creek and Titusville Scenic Railroad. The museum features a visitor center with well-done exhibits and an open-air museum that documents the technologies used to bring the oil to the surface.



Inside the reconstruction of the original Drake Well (shown at top) is a working steam engine using steam from a restored boiler. Throughout the rest of the extensive outdoor display area, visitors can see how the technologies for bringing oil to the surface were designed and operated over the years that the industry flourished in northwestern Pennsylvania.



This more modern “rig” is typical of the hundreds of wells that proliferated throughout the north-western Pennsylvania oil fields in the late-Nineteenth and early-Twentieth centuries.



The pictures at left and below illustrate the complex system of connecting rods and linkages that allowed a single engine to power several pumps.



This structure is a reconstruction of the train station that served the oil boom town of Petroleum Center, between Titusville and Oil City. It now serves the scenic railroad. Today, Petroleum Center has almost completely disappeared; only a few foundations remain to mark the site of a town where thousands once lived and worked. Once a horribly polluted area, the verdant woods and clear waters of Oil Creek bear testimony to the remarkable recuperative powers of Nature.

<https://www.drakewell.org>