



FIGURE 3

The discovery well of the first Texas oil field. This well was drilled at Oil Spring by the Petroleum Prospecting Company in 1886.

been estimated at about 250 or 300 barrels per day, and Mr. Hitchcock started immediately for Nacogdoches to advise his company in New Orleans. Contemporaries report that in his effort to reach the telegraph office before it closed, he rode his horse so hard that it fell exhausted upon reaching Nacogdoches. The owners were totally unprepared for the flow of oil. The production spread over the ground and was not recovered. The well did not continue to flow after the first day and was later completed as a small pumper. This test was located a few hundred feet from the oil spring and not far from a well about 60 feet deep which had been dug by hand and boarded up with slabs some fifteen or twenty years before.

One of the first drillers in the field was D. S. Criswell, of South Oil City, Pennsylvania. Knowing the importance of this discovery, he assembled twenty-three leases totaling 4,441-3/10 acres and assigned them to Sylvenus M. Eugg of El Paso, who in turn conveyed them to the Lubricating Oil Company of New Orleans, on October 31, 1887. They were reconveyed to Eugg on November 10, 1887, and again assigned to the New Orleans company on February 13, 1888.

This first Texas oil field resulted in the formation of at least four companies: Petroleum Prospecting Company, Edgar Farrar of New Orleans, president, and William H. Wilson, secretary; Lubricating Oil Company of New Orleans, John C. Fibinger, Jr., president; Pennsylvania Oil and Mineral Development Company, H. J. Lutchter, president, and J. A. Bentley, secretary; and Southwestern Petroleum and Mineral Developing Company, Ben S. Wettermark, president. In addition to these companies, many individuals, chiefly from Pennsylvania, also acquired leases in the new area.