



Paul O. Sill 1995

Paul Otis Sill, born in Michigan in 1883, headed for Texas in 1902 to work on the Galveston sea wall.

Talk of oil and money lured him to Humble, Texas in 1904, and at the age of 21 Paul began his lifetime career of rig building, first as a foreman and later as a contractor.

He worked in Spindletop's second boom, followed the boom to Sour Lake and Batson and to the Oklahoma oil fields of Drumright, Cushing, and Pawhuska. He threw his hat into the political ring in Pawhuska serving as its city manager and then as elected mayor.

In 1925 Paul was hired by the Marland Oil Company and asked to move to McCamey, Texas, to build rigs. After settling his family in San Angelo, he worked in the McCamey district and built over 100 rigs. That was the era of wooden derricks, when timber was trucked to the field by mule teamsters for the rig builders to measure and cut. Mid-Kansas Oil and Gas Company (now Marathon Oil Company) hired Paul to build the rig for the Yates' oil field discovery well. His expertise was used for most of the discovery wells throughout the Permian Basin.

Wooden derricks were replaced by steel derricks during the twenties; his talents remained in demand and he continued building rigs throughout the Permian Basin of West Texas and Southeastern New Mexico.

He retired from rig building in 1968 and died in 1977.

His wooden and steel derricks stand as sentinels, casting his shadow over the landscape of this vast petroleum empire. Paul Otis Sill is remembered and honored for his role as a premier rig builder in the southwest and the Permian Basin.