



Carl G. Cromwell
1889 – 1931
Inducted 1970

The son of an oil driller, Carl Cromwell was born just a few miles from the first oil well ever drilled in the United States, in Titusville, Pennsylvania. After some drilling work in California, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, Cromwell was hired by Frank Pickrell to drill Texon Oil and Land Co.'s test well near Big Lake, Texas. They spudded the well the day the leases expired in 1921 and for several months Cromwell worked as driller, tool dresser, derrick man, roustabout and fireman. On May 23, 1923, his hard work paid off when the Santa Rita No. 1 struck big. From there, believing in the reports from Clayton Williams, Texon's chief geologist, that there was more oil to be found in the area, Cromwell proposed drilling at least 6,000 feet into the Big Lake Field. For almost three years he kept drilling through unbelievable hardships never relenting, even when Texon ordered him to halt operations. In December of 1928, Cromwell brought in the University No. 1-B at a depth of 8,525 feet—the deepest well ever drilled at the time.