



Frank T. Pickrell
1890 - 1975
Inducted 1968

Frank Pickrell was born in Ennis, Texas. After serving in World War I, he established himself as a businessman and banker in El Paso. By chance, Pickrell ran into his former company commander Rupert Ricker, who had title to 431,360 acres of oil leases on University of Texas property. Ricker was unable to afford the rental payments on these leases and sold them to Pickrell and his partner, Haymon Krupp. Pickrell worked hard to raise the capital to fund a test well on the property; by law he had to drill within 18 months of the lease issuance. Two days before the expiration date, Pickrell secured a rig and had it hauled to location by train. Just before the midnight deadline, the Santa Rita No. 1 was spudded fourteen miles from Big Lake. The venture was more than a wildcat; it was a shot in the dark. But the impossible occurred, and in May of 1923 the Santa Rita No. 1 struck major oil. The strike triggered development of the Permian Basin oil empire of West Texas and southeast New Mexico. Frank Pickrell was the first member of the Petroleum Museum's Hall of Fame.