

Paul O. Sill
1883-1977
Inducted 1995

Born in Michigan in 1883, Paul Sill headed for Texas in 1902 to work on the Galveston sea wall. Talk of oil and money then lured him to Humble, Texas, where he began his lifelong career building drilling rigs. Paul worked during Spindletop's second boom, then followed that boom to Sour Lake, Batson, and the Oklahoma oil fields of Drumright, Cushing, and Pawhuska. There, he served as city manager and was elected mayor. Paul joined the Marland Oil Company in 1925 and moved to McCamey, Texas, to build rigs. That was the era of wooden derricks, when mule teamsters hauled the timber out to the site, where the rig builders would measure and cut. The next year, Mid-Kansas Oil and Gas Company—now Marathon Oil Company—hired Paul to build the rig for what became the famous Yates oil field discovery well. His expertise was instrumental in most of the discovery wells throughout the Permian Basin, where he continued building rigs long after steel had replaced wood as the material of choice.

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