

William G. Skelly
1878 -1957
Inducted 1979

The son of an oil teamster, Bill Skelly was born near Erie, Pennsylvania and grew up helping his father haul oil well supplies to Oil City. In 1894, he went to work as a tool dresser and served in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. Skelly was briefly the manager of the Citizen's Gas Co. in Gas City, Indiana, before joining Westinghouse Meter Co. as a road salesman. That gave him his opportunity to become an independent oil producer. He looked for promising leases in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and, in 1904, found oil on his first try. He moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1919 and founded Skelly Oil Company, one of the strongest independent producers of oil and gas at the time. Bill also secured leases in the Texas boom areas of Electra, Desdemona, Burkburnett, and Ranger. Skelly Oil Company helped create the great fields of Winkler County and was a significant influence in oil development throughout the Permian Basin.

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