

BIRTHPLACE OF THE OIL INDUSTRY, 1859



Tarbell House

DW1607

Titusville

HISTORIC

WALKING TOUR

Welcome to historic Titusville! Here you will discover some of our treasures from the days of the early oil industry. Titusville's ties to oil are still evident in the rich architectural diversity and in the stories of some of its earlier citizens.

Developed by:

Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism

Benson Memorial Library

Drake Well Museum & Park

City of Titusville

Titusville Chamber of Commerce



Franklin Street, looking north from Spring Street - 1870

The Titusville Historical District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 by the U. S. Department of the Interior. The District is a compact representation of Titusville's built environment as it developed from the beginning of the oil industry in 1859 through the turn of the century.

The District includes more than 450 homes, churches, and commercial buildings, several of which are described in this walking tour brochure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Drake Well Museum and Park

202 Museum Lane, Titusville, PA 16354

814.827.2797, drakewell.org

Benson Memorial Library

213N Franklin Street, Titusville, PA 16354

814.827.2913, bensonlibrary.org

City of Titusville

107 N. Franklin Street, Titusville, PA 16354

814.827.5300, cityoftitusvillepa.gov

Sources:

Titusville of Yesterday, published by Titusville Historical Society, 1984

Titusville: an Illustrated History, by Mable Clark; 1976, rev. 1993

The Titusville Herald, various



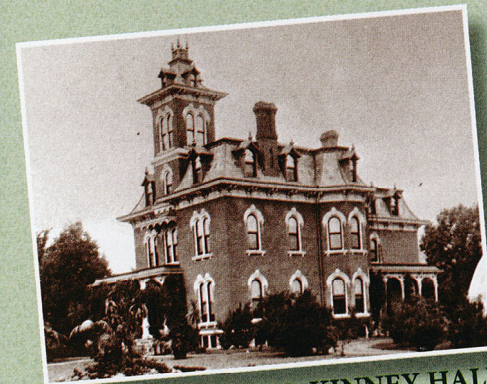
DW 2448

JOSEPH SEEP HOME



DW 2141

JOHN MATHER HOUSE



DW 3309

MCKINNEY HALL

Please respect the privacy of the owners of these properties. The residences featured in this tour are not open to the public.

For more information on these buildings see inside.

- 1 WESTERN NY & PA RAILWAY STATION 1860
Since the freight station was renovated in 1988, more than a million tons of freight have traveled over the Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad, serving industry today as it did at the turn of the century.
- 2 TITUSVILLE IRON WORKS COMPANY 1860
Once used to manufacture oil industry engines and boilers, this facility was the major supplier of big artillery guns and shells to the Navy during WWII. Today, buildings on both sides of the street house Charter Plastics Company. Plastic is a byproduct of oil.
- 3 SECOND NATIONAL BANK 1865
This eclectic brick and sandstone building with Gothic style overtones was originally four stories high with a mansard roof. The roof was removed in 1918 and replaced with its present remodeled parapet. The structure today is known as the Park Building. Its former name remains elegantly carved across the façade.
- 4 ALGRUNIX BUILDING 1894
The two story Victorian Gothic style building with ornate brickwork, oriels, various corbel tables, niches, and arches is unique for its distinctive corner turret with wooden shingles. The building has housed stores, a restaurant, offices, and rental rooms.
- 5 TITUSVILLE TRUST COMPANY 1919
The Beaux Arts style adaptation is characterized by massive stone construction, a parapet with central statuary, and segmented moldings around the windows. The ceiling mural commemorates Edwin Drake, the early history of the oil industry, and the uses of oil. Farmer's National Bank now owns the building.
- 6 TITUSVILLE OIL EXCHANGE 1881
The Oil Exchange was established in 1871, but this impressive building was not completed until 1881. *The Titusville Herald* devoted several lengthy columns describing it, stating in part that, "It is by far the most attractive structure in the city, and in the point of elegance, artistic finish and taste is superior to any building in the oil regions." The style was classic Florentine, adapted to modern taste, featuring pressed brick, laid with black mortar joints, and

enhanced with Ohio sandstone. A tower marked the main entrance. Quincy granite columns supported the stone arch, above which was a stone balustrade protecting a recessed second story balcony spanned by a stone lintel cornice. *The Herald* goes on at length to describe the grand interior. Sadly, the building was razed in 1956.

- 7 CORINTHIAN HALL 1865
The Corinthian was for several years the most important public hall in Titusville for theatrical plays, political meetings, concerts, and gatherings at which community leaders assembled. Public events took place on the second floor while the lower floors accommodated stores and a billiard parlor.
- 8 CHASE & STEWART BLOCK C. 1870
Built as three separate structures with Italianate style feature, the southernmost section became a clothing store and haberdashery. The middle section, completed last, had a unique slate mansard roof covering a spacious fourth floor. The ground floor became a pharmacy. One of famed oil photographer John Mather's studios was located upstairs. The fourth floor was occupied by the Titusville Redevelopment Authority when on March 19, 2015 fire destroyed it and caused heavy damage to the rest of the building. The Redevelopment Authority restored the majority of the building, but due to the extent of the damage the fourth floor was unable to be restored.
- 9 ST. TITUS CHURCH 1864
The original church building still exists. It was preserved by partially remodeling the exterior and encasing the entire structure in native stone. A gallery was added to the interior to contain the organ and choir. Chapels were built in the east and west transepts, while the beautiful windows were created in a New York City studio. In 1935, the plastering was renewed and columns were added to produce Romanesque style architecture. The present interior was reconfigured in 2000.
- 10 SISTERS OF MERCY C. 1870
The Second Empire style St. Joseph Convent was erected in the 1870s for the Sisters of Mercy. The building served as a home for the Sisters and for St. Joseph Academy. The effectiveness of the Sister's work was reflected in the need for additions over the years

– a west wing in 1889 and an east wing in 1894. The school remained in operation until 1969. Sadly, the building was razed in 1974.

- 11 JOSEPH SEEP HOME 1892
In scale, proportion, and use of the finest quality materials, the structure was characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style. It was built primarily of pressed red brick. The upper stories were dressed with red sandstone sills and lintels, and intricately sculpted stone details. The most noticeable Romanesque style features were the wide Syrian arches at the front and side entrances. The Seep home was Titusville's only residence featuring this style of architecture.
- 12 WILLIAM ABBOTT HOME C. 1870
The Colonial Revival style house with Neoclassical elements features a front pediment and lunette window. The large front porch with fluted Doric columns and projecting semicircular pavilion is notable. The symmetrical front façade is flanked by two-story Ionic pilasters with bowed bays on either side.
- 13 WILLIAM H. SCHEIDE HOUSE 1866
This home was built by Charles L. Maltby, an area oil dealer. Following several owners, Josiah G. Benton bought the property and refurbished it to a more elaborately detailed Italianate style than the original. The last private owner, John H. Scheide, added the Tudor style wing of brick and stone to house his library. Its stained glass windows depicted the history of printing. The windows, along with the contents of the library, were sent to Princeton University following the death of Mr. Scheide.
- 14 THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1888
"The earliest religious association in the Titus settlement was begun by the Presbyterians... Upon tradition alone is the first information respecting the first religious work in the settlement founded." (*Our County and its People*, 1899). The congregation increased over the years, outgrowing four buildings before the current one was built of Medina red sandstone in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Rather than the conventional spire, the design called for a main tower topped by a belfry and dome. The interior wood is oak, and the pews are in a semicircular arrangement. A memorial chapel was added in 1906. The church contains a pipe organ and stained glass windows.

15 BENSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY 1904

This two-story red brick Colonial Revival style building is reminiscent of the carriage-style library. It has a hipped roof, sandstone entablature, paired Ionic columns supporting the pediment, and a Palladian entrance. The vestibule is made of Knox and Italian marble. The original oak, bronze, and copper doors are mounted on the walls of the vestibule.

16 CHARLES HYDE HOME C. 1865

The two-story Italianate style brick house has wide eaves lined with paired brackets, a cupola with eyebrow cornices and window heads, flat-roofed open porches, and carved panels over the doors. The residence is one of the oldest brick homes in Titusville. The Hyde Home is now the YWCA.

17 ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH 1863

St. James is the oldest standing place of worship in the city. The Gothic Revival style building of cut sandstone may also be the first permanent building of any kind in Titusville. The slate roof was added soon after the ordinal construction, and the porch and campanile in 1893. The church has maintained much of its interior detail work, including the Tiffany window in the bapistry.

18 KINGSLAND HOUSE C. 1862

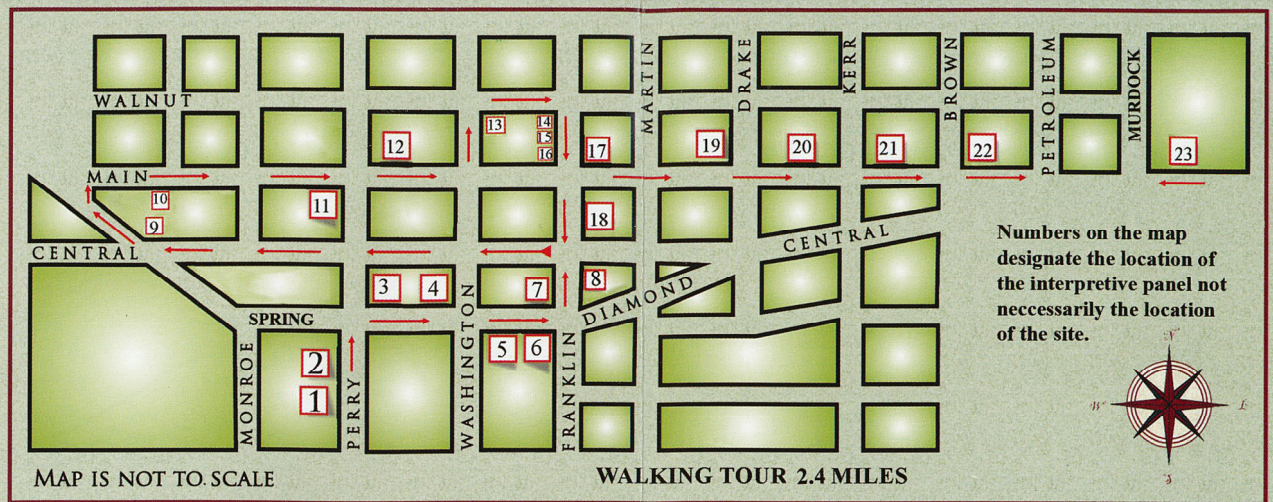
Hotels in the oil region were most frequently called "houses." Nelson Kingsland built this example of Greek Revival style architecture with the front façade featuring a projecting pediment supported by four monumental Ionic columns. From 1865, the building became known as the Bush House until purchased in 1872 by the City. Today, it serves as City Hall.

PENDELTON HOUSE 1864

One of nine hotels at the time of its construction, the Pendelton began as a three-story frame building that underwent a series of renovations over its 134 years of operation. It became the Mansion House in 1891, extensive alterations being completed in 1897. In 1946, it became the Colonel Drake Hotel. A three story addition provided 20 new rooms. In 1998, it was sold, then demolished.

19 GEORGE CUSTER HOME 1869

Italianate style brick homes were influenced by both the Italian Renaissance and Italian Country Villa styles.



They mainly consisted of two to three stories with low-pitched roofs and wide overhanging eaves. Tall, narrow, arched; and embellished windows and entry porches supported by square columns were typical. The style was widely popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing's pattern books during the mid-1800s. This home features full height windows that lead out to a large front veranda.

20 TARBELL HOUSE 1870

The demise of the oil town "Pithole," offered Franklin S. Tarbell the opportunity to purchase and use the quality building materials from the Bonta House to construct this home. Originally, it was typical of the Italian Villa style but it has been altered considerably. The west wing and the observatory have been removed. Tarbell and his family resided in the home for many years. The exterior has been restored back to the original time-period except the former east wing that was destroyed by fire.

21 JOHN MATHER HOME C. 1859

Mather bought this home in 1885. The well-constructed residence, like many others, has been remodeled throughout the years. The wide porch has been changed, but a photograph survives showing Mather seated there. He continued to live at this address until his death in 1915. Mather's historic contribution as the photographer of the developing oil industry is of great importance.

22 MCKINNEY HALL 1871

John C. Bryan built this Second Empire style mansion. It had several similarities to the Italian Villa style including a tower, wide-bracketed eaves and tall hooded windows. One difference was the mansard roof, rather than the usual low-pitched, hipped roof. The home had several owners until Col. Carter purchased it in 1884, and completed its first remodeling. Louis McKinney bought the property in 1926 and thoroughly renovated it into the present structure.

23 CYTEMP SPECIALTY STEEL COMPANY

Though it closed its doors for good in the 1990s, Cytemp Steel's legacy lives on throughout the Oil Region and beyond. It was established in 1884 as "Cyclops Steel Works" by English immigrant Charles Burgess. In the early days, the plant produced steel for use in the oil fields. Over the years it produced steel for both World War I and II, super alloy for the aircraft industry in the 1930s, and in the 1960s, a knife capable of shearing hot metals. By the late 1970s, the plant covered more than 265 acres and employed around 1200 people. At one point, it had the largest vacuum-induction melting furnace in the world. After numerous changes in ownership, Cyclops became Cytemp Specialty Steel Company in 1984. It closed the following decade.

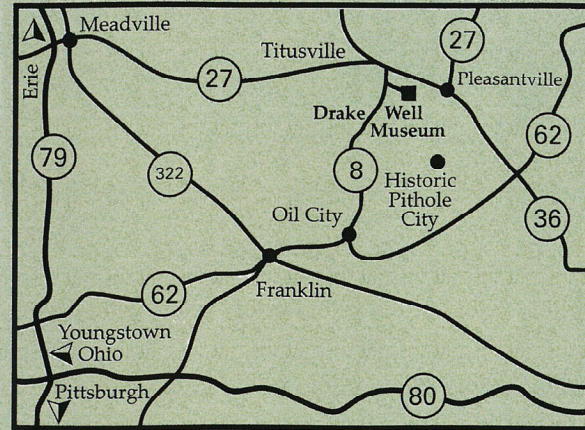
In 1796, Holland Land Company surveyors, Jonathan Titus and Samuel Kerr, claimed the land that would become Titusville. They provided lodging for Native Americans, fur traders, and lumbermen.

Sea Captain William Sheffield opened the first store and lumber mill in 1816 and lumber soon became the primary industry of the region. Titusville was incorporated as a borough in 1847, and by 1859, 300 people had settled in town.

Edwin Drake came to Titusville in 1857 as an agent for the Seneca Oil Company. Oil was available in natural seeps along Oil Creek, but larger quantities and more efficient production methods were needed. Drake and his driller, Uncle Billy Smith, adapted existing salt well technology and their well struck oil on August 27, 1859, thus launching the modern oil industry in the Oil Creek Valley near Titusville.

The impact was immediate. People poured into Titusville and the surrounding area to buy oil leases and to work in business that grew up around the new industry. Churches, schools, and mansions were built and banks were chartered. Refineries sprang up throughout the region and oil related machinery was designed and produced here. Titusville's growth led to incorporation as a city in 1866. In 1881, the world's first oil exchange was established here.

Known as the "Queen City" for its rich cultural amenities, Titusville was home to the region's first opera house. Its architecturally significant churches, homes, and commercial buildings are described here for your enjoyment on this walking tour.



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