



Ray V. Hennen
1875 - 1958
Inducted 1975

Native West Virginian Ray Hennen graduated from West Virginia University in 1901 with a degree in civil engineering, then served in World War I. In 1919, he was appointed chief geologist for Transcontinental Oil Co., overseeing exploration in the Appalachian, Mid-Continent, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Coast regions. In 1923, he supervised a geological survey of a swath of Texas land 20 miles wide and 100 miles long, extending from the towns Emerson, in Terrell County, to Stiles in Reagan County. Based on his findings, Hennen, along with protégé Jack Hagan, recommended to Transcontinental president Mike Benedum that sixteen sections of Reagan County be drilled. This effort would ultimately result in the formation of the Big Lake Oil Company and the development of the Big Lake Field, the first oil and gas producing area on University of Texas lands. Later, based again on Hennen and Hagan's recommendation, Benedum worked out an agreement under which Transcontinental joined with the Mid-Kansas Oil Company for the drilling of the Ira G. Yates No. 1. Completed in 1926, it was the discovery well for the great Yates Field, at that time the most productive shallow-depth oil field in the world.