

# Gladewater Oil and Antiques

Gladewater, Texas is known for two kinds of very rare finds- oil and antiques. If you stop by this East Texas town, you'll easily discover the two. The town's first find was discovered in the early 1900s when Gladewater was just a speck on the map, and the folks here were making their living mainly on the harvest of lumber and cotton. However, during the Oil Boom in 1931 this small, quiet town was struck with excitement, and things have never quite been the same. In that year, just outside the town, the ground shook and oil sprang up from the ground, straight over the top of the Daisy Bradford #3 oil rig, and rained black gold down upon the land. Oil began to bring its bounty to the town and led to a population increase during the 1930s from 200 to around 8,000 people.

Progress, much like a rose, brings thorns along with its beauty. After World War II ended and the primary production of oil was no longer for supplying the U.S. oil tankers in the war effort, people's focus was turned inward, and it became apparent that there were some dodgy business practices in the area. Sly operators were drilling slanted wells from property that had no oil under it and stealing from underneath neighbors' property. The Texas Rangers were brought in with Oil Inspectors and together they shut down over 380 wells. Amidst the corruption, many legal oil wells remained in business and continue to drill today. If you're around the area in early May, you can relive the nostalgia of the Oil Boom days at the East Texas Gusher Days Festival.

Over the past couple of decades, Gladewater has debuted another recognized business: antique shops. The bustling Main Street Downtown Antique District has earned the town the state title "Antique Capital of East Texas." Visitors can enjoy browsing through quaint, old shops with the greatest selection of antiques around.

So if you are passing by the town and see what looks like a "thirsty bird," a "nodding donkey," or an iron "grasshopper," you are probably looking at an oil rig, or what people from around here call, "pump jacks." A visit to Gladewater will allow you to revisit the past, and maybe even take something home.

## Source(s):

Gladewater Chamber of Commerce. (2004). Retrieved February 2, 2011 from <http://www.gladewaterchamber.com/index2.html>

Wikipedia. (2011). Gladewater, Texas. Retrieved February 2, 2011 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladewater,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladewater,_Texas)

## Author(s):

Written by Maggie Pottkotter (Intern) and Ben Sigmundik (Undergraduate Student) in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University, as part of a National Park Service Trails and Rails project funded by Amtrak, 2011.