

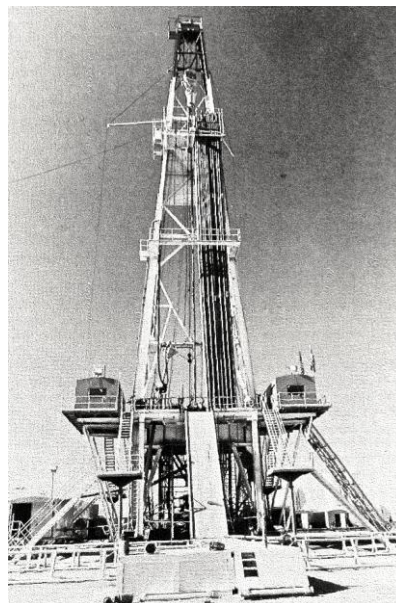


Arizona Rocks 66

Text and photos by Ray Grant

Why spend millions of dollars to drill a well over three miles deep looking for oil, when you are drilling in granite the whole way? That is what happened south of Florence in 1981 with the deepest well in Arizona at 18,013 feet. There were six additional major wells drilled in southeast Arizona at that time looking for oil. They drilled from 7,000 to over 10,000 feet and were all dry holes. See map for the location of these wells. The explanation for this activity is also shown on the map with the area marked "Overthrust Trend". In Utah and Wyoming several large oil and gas fields were found beneath thrust sheets where older rocks are pushed up and over younger rocks. It was thought that this overthrust belt extended across Arizona as shown on the map. So that the oil and gas containing sedimentary rocks were under the older granite and drilling through the granite they would possibly find oil bearing sediments below. The oil companies did seismic surveys around the state and there was an anomaly where they drilled the deep well. It is not certain what caused the seismic anomaly where they drilled.

We don't hear much about it, but oil and gas has been found and recovered in Arizona, but only in the northeast corner of Apache County. There is an Arizona Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and you can go to their website to see production figures for oil in Arizona. From 1954 to 2014 Over 21 million barrels of oil were produced in Arizona.



Drill rig near Florence, AZ 1981

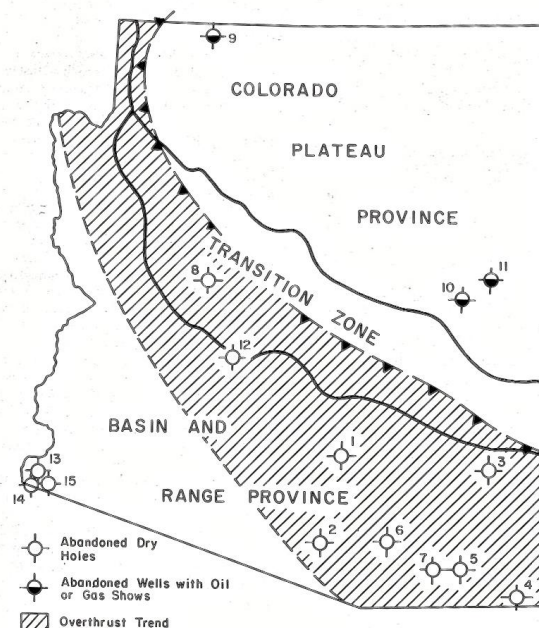
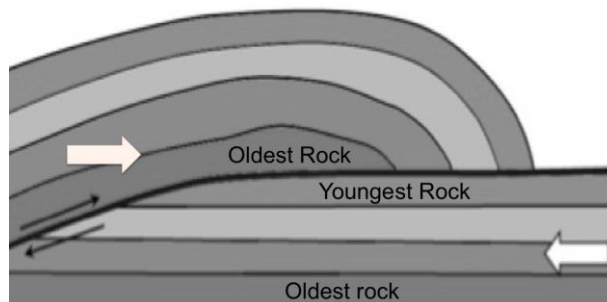


Figure 17. Location of significant exploration wells drilled since 1980.



Overthrust diagram