

Oil Field Masterpiece



By Craig Prucha

New York Collector's Determination Brings Rare 25 HP 1901 Swan Back to Life

Editor's note: This article is the first of a two-part series chronicling the restoration of a 1901 Swan oil field engine.

In mid-October 1998 I drove from my home in Pavilion, N.Y., to the Coolspring (Pa.) Power Museum to lend a hand on a volunteer work detail at the museum. In the middle of things, I was talking to Paul Harvey, the museum's co-founder, about a Swan engine behind one of the museum's buildings. Paul told me he owned

Above: Craig Prucha and the 25 HP Swan at the Coolspring (Pa.) Power Museum on the day he bought it in 1998.

Right: The Swan's cylinder head cover plate.

the 25 HP Swan, and that he had purchased it about 30 years earlier. I needed a winter project, so I asked him if he would be interested in selling the Swan.

My heart stopped for a few short seconds when, to my surprise, he said "yes."

We walked over and looked at the Swan. Paul knew a little of her history, telling me she had pumped oil for a living in eastern Indiana. She was taken out of service 24 years before Paul purchased her, and at some point she had been in a fire. I could see Paul had a great affection for this engine and that he had a great appreciation for its design and style. With his decision, we made arrangements for me to pick the engine up during the museum's fall swap meet two weeks away.

