

ALVIN DRAKE DEMING

An Ohio civil engineer with previous experience drilling water wells in Kansas, Alvin Deming came to the Oil Region in the early 1860's. Alvin soon had interests in producing oil wells along Oil Creek. The multi-talented Deming opened a photographic shop. Lithographs of Deming images of the early oil industry appeared in publications in America and Europe. His stereograph "Views of the Oil Region" were marketed to the curious public.

Due to industry-wide overcapacity and poor health, in 1876 Deming was compelled to sell his interests in a refinery to Standard Oil.

In 1882 Deming was a principal in the establishment of the Independent Refinery. The firm refined naphtha, a component in manufactured gas, and a high grade of water-white Kerosene marketed under the brand name "OLIENE". As a vertically integrated company with a focused market niche, the Independent Refinery prospered along side Standard Oil.

Involved in many of the initiatives of the independent refining industry, Deming was a nationally recognized advocate for the independents' positions.

Much of the Independent Refinery was destroyed in the great fire and flood of June 1892. Over a hundred people in the Oil Region lost their lives in this extraordinary tragedy. Deming was injured in the massive explosion along Seneca Street in Oil City while on his way to determine the status of his refinery. News of his condition was reported in newspapers throughout the nation. Never fully recovering from the injuries to his lungs, he died the following year at the age of fifty-six.

