
Henry A. (Chief) Buehler *(Missouri)***Bill Duley** *(Missouri Division of Geology and Land Survey)*

Henry Andrew Buehler was born to Andrew and Catherine Buehler in Monroe, Wis., on May 27, 1876. His father was a blacksmith. Henry attended the University of Wisconsin and earned a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering in 1901. He moved to Rolla shortly after, upon the request of W.R. Buckley. Buckley, who had served as state geologist of Wisconsin, accepted the position of state geologist for Missouri in 1901 and asked Buehler to come to Missouri to serve as assistant state geologist. Buehler



served in that capacity until 1907, when he left his state position for a brief stint in the private sector. The following year, the position of state geologist was vacated because of Buckley's resignation, and Buehler was chosen to fill the position. Buehler served in the office of Missouri state geologist for 36 years, longer than any other. He was appointed to the position by 10 consecutive governors: five Democrats and five Republicans. At Buehler's funeral, Gov. Forrest Donnell commented, "to have been selected by ten consecutive governors without regard to politics is a striking testimony to the quality of work and the character of the man."

Buehler's support of Missouri's mineral resource development helped turn a \$15 million industry into one that produced \$75 million annually in 1944. During Buehler's tenure, the Survey produced publications on coal, oil, gas, water resources, fireclay, and pyrite. The state geologic map was revised. Staff did extensive research on insoluble residues, principally as a means for zoning Cambrian-Ordovician dolomites.

He served as president of the Rolla Chamber of Commerce in 1922, 1926, 1927, and 1933. The June 15, 1920, minutes of this organization reflect receiving "two telegrams from Mr. Buehler, who is in Washington [D.C.] looking after the interests of Rolla, in the securing of the zinc and lead experiment station" (that later materialized as the U.S. Bureau of Mines office in Rolla).

In 1921, Buehler was appointed as ex officio member of the first Missouri Highway Commission. It is said that U.S. 63 was paved so Buehler could get to Jefferson City easier, and was often called "Chief Buehler's Highway."

The Missouri School of Mines awarded Buehler the degree of doctor of science, honoris causa, in 1925 in appreciation of his professional work, his loyal support, and his untiring efforts on behalf of the school.

The chief was a founding member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. In 1935, he was installed as president of the prestigious American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers in New York City. Buehler was preceded in service as president of AIMME by U.S. President Herbert Hoover, who was elected as the organization's president in 1920.

Buehler belonged to the Missouri Planning Commission, Missouri Resources Museum Commission, Conservation Committee of the Missouri Academy of Science, Natural Resources Committee of the State Defense Council, Geological Society of America, St. Louis Science Academy, Tau Beta Pi, and numerous other organizations. He also served as state engineer on the Civil Works Administration, director of the State Rehabilitation Corporation, and director of a WPA project. In 1940, Buehler was voted a life member of the Board of Directors of the Rolla Chamber of Commerce. In 1939, he served on Missouri's Committee of the World's Fair Commission.

On March 14, 1944, Rolla, along with the state and nation, were shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Henry Andrew Buehler. Buehler died of heart disease while in Jefferson City, preparing to attend a State Highway Commission meeting. He was 67. Buehler's funeral was held in Parker Hall on the Missouri School of Mines campus. So many attended that 3,000 had to stand outside the auditorium and listen to the ceremony via speakers. Buehler was laid to rest in the Rolla Cemetery. His grave is adorned with a lichen-covered pink granite boulder. The chief's wishes were for a "simple granite rock, unpolished, from one of these Missouri hills." Buehler was buried with full Masonic honors.

Buehler's death was followed by numerous tributes from the state of Missouri and professional organizations. The 1943–44 Constitutional Convention of Missouri honored Buehler through resolution 39, offered by Mr. Allen McReynolds. After highlighting his service as state geologist and its many facets, McReynolds wrote,

Few people have known his politics—no one cared. The important thing was that here was a great disinterested public servant who devoted his life to the development of the natural resources of the State in order that mankind might be benefited. It is said that no man is indispensable. This may be true, but it will require many days to find a man of the stature and capacity and unselfish devotion to succeed to the work of H.A. Buehler, as State Geologist of Missouri.

The state geological survey has been housed in a number of locations, but in 1946 it was moved to the first Buehler Building in Rolla, the old USO building at the corner of 9th and Rolla Streets. At the dedication ceremonies, Gov. Donnell said of Buehler,

The building which we proudly dedicate today has been named the Buehler Building. It is so named in memory of one of our greatest geologists, Dr. Henry

Andrew Buehler, whose life and career were so intimately associated with the advancement of his beloved state as he labored in the great field of geological research, planning, and investigation. It has been said of him that every mineral industry in the State of Missouri felt the wisdom and influence of Buehler. His advice and counsel were in constant demand.

The current home of the Division of Geology at 111 Fairgrounds was also named in honor of Buehler upon its completion in 1963. In July 2000, Gov. Mel Carnahan signed a proclamation in honor of Buehler's contributions to the state of Missouri on the occasion of Missouri's hosting of the 92nd annual meeting of the Association of American State Geologists in St. Louis.

Biography adapted from Marler (2001) and Weaver (2001).