

In Memoriam

OLAF PITT JENKINS
1889-1983

Dr. Olaf P. Jenkins, State Geologist and Chief, California Division of Mines and Geology from 1947 to 1958, died Wednesday, October 19, 1983, at the age of 94. Olaf Jenkins was a long-time member of AASG, serving as President in 1957-58. He also hosted the annual meeting held in California in 1949. He remained an Honorary Member following his retirement in 1958, and 20 years later, dedicated his personal memoir "Building a State Geological Survey" to the AASG.

Dr. Jenkins' interest in geology developed at an early age. His father, Oliver P. Jenkins, came to Stanford University in 1891 with David Starr Jordan to head the Physiology Department. In the university environment during his boyhood and youth, Dr. Jenkins was exposed to scientific research, and his interest in science was encouraged by some of the foremost natural scientists of the day.

As a youth, Dr. Jenkins participated in a government fisheries expedition to the High Sierra with a group studying the golden trout. In 1909, Robert Anderson and Robert Park chose him to be an assistant in their mapping of the geology of part of the central Coast Ranges; in 1911, he joined the Stanford University expedition to Brazil. He made geologic maps of Tennessee and Arizona, mapped the great Warrior coal field of Alabama, and taught at the State College of Washington in Pullman for 7 years. From 1923 to 1928, he was in the Dutch East Indies as an economic geologist for Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.

Between his return from the Dutch East Indies in 1928 and the beginning of his work at the Division of Mines in 1929, he obtained his PhD degree at Stanford University.

When Dr. Jenkins became chief geologist of the newly created Geologic Branch of the Division of Mines, it was chiefly a statistical bureau dealing almost exclusively with mining. This, he felt, was inadequate service, and he set about making changes. As his staff was practically non-existent, he invited graduate students in geology to publish their theses with the Division. He invited geologists of all disciplines to contribute to a statewide geologic map, and petroleum geologists and engineers to contribute to a comprehensive volume on the California oil industry.

Response was immediate, generous, and gratifying. Graduate students produced geologic quadrangle maps and other geologic reports; a state geologic map on the scale 1 inch equals 8 miles was compiled from contributed information and published in 1938. During this time, the Division published bulletins 104 and 115 which provided comprehensive bibliographies of California geology. Bulletin 118, Geologic formations and economic development of the oil and gas fields of California, featuring contributions from each oil company in the state, was released in 1943. It became "the bible" in the industry.

When Olaf Jenkins took office, cooperative programs with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) were minimal. Topographic quadrangle maps for much of the state were old, poor, or non-existent. He fought for and obtained a tremendous increase (\$5,000 to \$300,000) per year for the state engineer to use as matching funds for topographic mapping to be done by the Topographic Branch of the USGS, as well as funds for cooperative work between the Division and the Geologic Branch of the USGS.

In 1947 Dr. Jenkins was appointed State Geologist and Chief of the Division of Mines and Geology, headquartered in the Ferry Building in San Francisco. Until his period of service to the state ended in 1958, he practiced his basic philosophy: that it was the particular province of the Division to provide statewide foundation for the more detailed work which could be done by industry and individuals. He placed great emphasis on getting information to the public. To further this effort he created "Mineral Information Services" (renamed *California Geology* in 1971). As his staff grew and field projects multiplied, geologic maps and reports flowed from the Division in an ever-swelling stream. By the time he retired, the Division was recognized as one of the two foremost state geological surveys in the nation.

Dr. Jenkins was an honored member of several professional societies and institutions, among them Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (which

made him the first honorary life member for his contribution to oil geology and the oil industry), the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, the Association of American State Geologists, and the California Academy of Sciences, of which he was a Fellow and one-time recording secretary.

Retirement did not end his long career. Dr. Jenkins engaged in consulting work until the last few years, when age limited his physical activity. Two autobiographies chronicle, with his own brand of humor, his life until retirement: "Early Days—Memoir" and "Building a State Geological Survey, California 1928-1958."

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