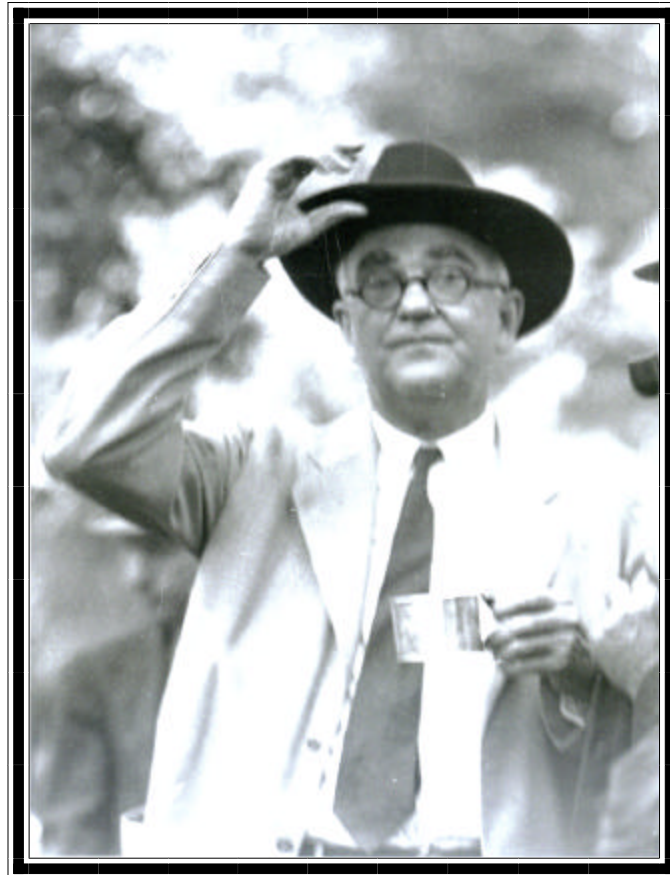


HAIL TO “THE CHIEF”

A Special Tribute to

Dr. Henry Andrew Buehler



by Lois Ann Marler

“That which one does for himself dies with him. That which one does for others lives on and is his monument.”

Those words, spoken in 1944 by Missouri Governor Forrest Donnell at the funeral of Henry Buehler, still ring true today.

Henry Andrew Buehler. . .The Chief. . .Ajax. . .he was known by many names, yet his contributions to this community cannot be encapsulated in a single title. He was a beloved character, a man who inspired all the lives he touched. Upon his death, his adoring public decorated him more profoundly than any other man or woman in Rolla’s history.

In the case of Buehler, the man whose name adorns two buildings and a memorial park in Rolla, we have only to take a step forward to witness the incredible advances he brought to our city. As a community we must not fail to pay homage to this great man.

However, Buehler’s influence was felt far beyond Rolla. “The Chief,” as he was affectionately called, put Rolla on the map economically and wove us into the fabric of the nation. His direct influence in the development of mining in Missouri, the development of highway systems, the placement of Ft. Leonard Wood, and permanent employment for the area established Rolla and south central Missouri as a vital part of the nation.

Buehler was a visionary; his foresight and courage built the civil infrastructure we take for granted today. Without his leadership, Rolla might have been another poor, struggling village left to stagnate in untapped potential. Buehler’s leadership caused him to be revered as “a mighty oak in life’s forest.”

Though never elected to public office, Buehler did the job of a politician, only better. His legacy lives on in those who appreciate equity, honesty and selfless service to the public.

Some have assumed our little park on the west edge of Rolla bears the name of some obscure man from the dusty past; in fact, it is the namesake of someone who was unrivaled both in his professional status of science and in his service to mankind.

Henry Andrew Buehler was born to Andrew and Catherine Buehler in Monroe, Wisconsin on May 27, 1876. Two other children were born in the Buehler family, son Fritz W. Buehler and daughter Elizabeth Buehler.

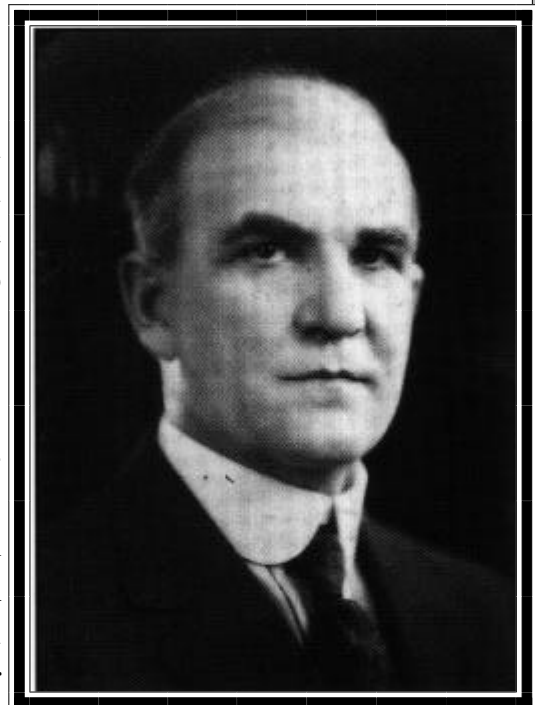
Buehler attended the University of Wisconsin and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering in 1901. He moved to Rolla shortly after earning his degree upon the request of W. R. Buckley. Buckley, who was serving as state geologist of Wisconsin, accepted the position of state geologist for Missouri in 1901 and asked Buehler to come to Missouri with him to serve as assistant state geologist.

Buehler served in the capacity of assistant state geologist until 1907, when he left his state position for one in the private sector. Why he left his state position for one with the Federal Lead Company in Flat River, Missouri, remains a mystery. The following year, the position of state geologist was vacated due to Buckley's resignation.

Buehler was chosen to fill the position, but not without a fight. Another former state geologist, Charles Keyes, also desired the position. Keyes was noted for his unscrupulous politics. Letters of support poured in for Buehler, though some voiced concern over Buehler's lack of a degree in geology.

His current employer, Federal Lead Company, wrote to appointing officer Governor Folk, "Mr. Buehler has decided that he prefers scientific and public work to that of the purely practical and commercial life in which he is now engaged. We think that this is a mistake and that he is too valuable a man for business purposes to spend his time in public work."

Despite the Federal Lead Company's discouragement, Buehler faithfully served in the office of state geologist 36 years, longer than any other Missouri state geologist. He was appointed to the position by 10 consecutive governors: five democrats and five republicans. At Buehler's funeral, Governor 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."



This picture of H. A. Buehler is from the *Missouri Resources* Trading Card series. Buehler is featured in the 2000 series, which is available from the DGLS office, 111 Fairground Road, Rolla, Missouri.

Author H. Dwight Weaver, author and part-time DNR Division of Geology and Land Survey (DGLS) employee, recently wrote an article on “The Chief.” Weaver captures the essence of the man Buehler:

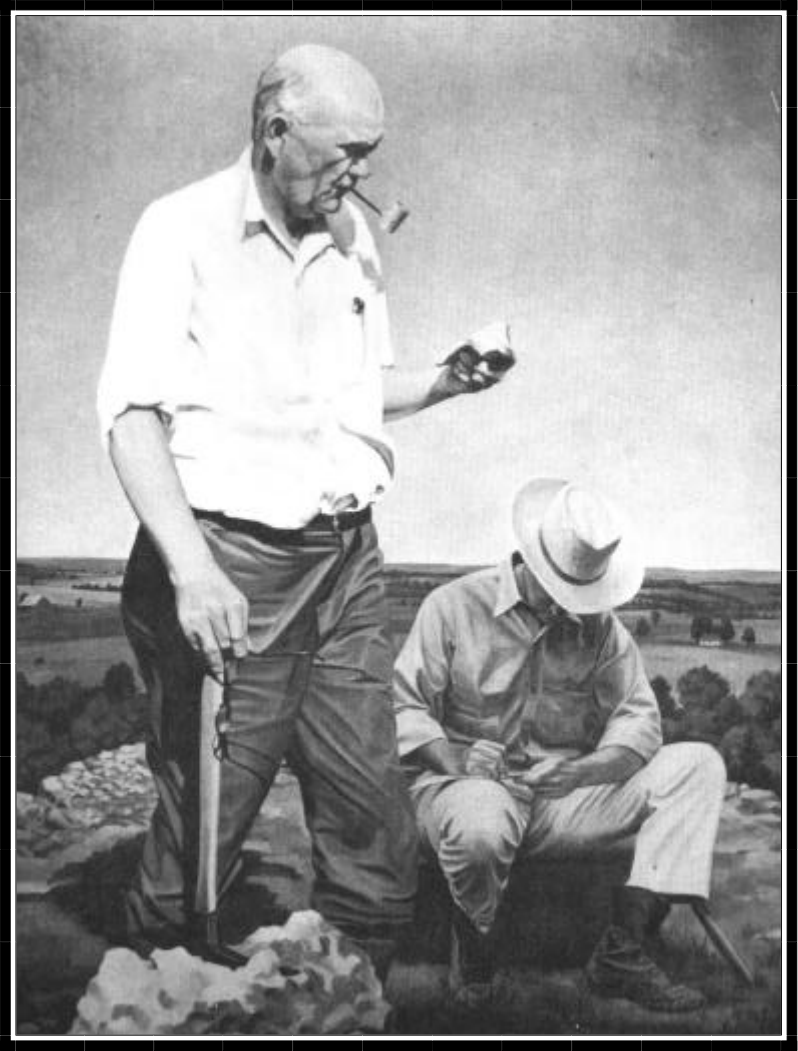
“As Edward L. Clark, who succeeded Buehler, said: ‘Few people knew his [Buehler’s] politics — no one cared. He was accepted as being above party lines.’

“Buehler also possessed a great deal of personal charisma. ‘He was a big man and he wore a ten gallon hat like a cowboy,’ said a 1944 article on Buehler. Remarkably, this man is still so highly regarded that to this day one of his hats and his geology pick are preserved at the DGLS offices in Rolla.

“‘Physically and mentally he is a giant among men’ wrote an admirer in 1942. ‘His eyes are piercing brown under a forest of unbrushed eyebrows, and there is a general air of ruggedness about him which makes him distinctive — a mighty oak in life’s forest.’

“Buehler was well over six feet tall and so broad-shouldered he looked like a professional basketball and football player combined. In almost every crowd, he towered above his colleagues. The Chief’s voice was so well-rounded and powerful, it was said that he probably could have become a great singer if he had trained for it.

“The Chief had a remarkable ability for making friends, a skill that sprang from the strong inner liking and respect for people. ‘He was always interested in people and not only willing to give information, but constantly seeking it,’ said a contemporary.”¹



Painting of “The Chief” by Jack Koenig, famous Rolla artist. This impressive rendering of The Chief, commissioned by Mrs. V. H. McNutt, is displayed at DNR’s Division of Geology and Land Survey (DGLS) office, 111 Fairgrounds Road, Rolla. Buehler worked tirelessly throughout his career. During the Depression era, he reached into his own pockets more than once for the sake of the individual and community.

When Buehler came to Rolla in 1901, the Missouri Geological Survey (known by many titles through the years) had gone through very tough times. The civil war, economic hardships, limited technology, politics and poor leadership had left it in shambles.

The Rolla location of the State Geological Survey began in a building that is now the Chancellor's Residence. In 1904, it was moved to the Rolla Building on the MSM (UMR) campus and continued there until 1946 when it was moved to the first "Buehler Building" in Rolla, the old USO at the corner of 9th and Rolla Streets. Its current location, the only one that wasn't a hand-me-down, is near Buehler Park at 111 Fairgrounds Road, and is now a division of the Department of Natural Resources.

MSM also benefited by Buehler's presence on campus. Garrett Muilenburg, Missouri assistant state geologist from 1952-1957, wrote of Buehler in a 1944 edition of *The Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*, "Not the least of his outside activity was his interest in civic affairs and the welfare of the community and even more outstanding, his interest in the young men with whom he came in contact on the campus of the School of Mines."

One of those young beneficiaries is now 88 years old and living in Joplin, Missouri. Dan Stewart, whose schooling was financed by Buehler, remembers well his 10-year association with The Chief. "It was an honor to work for him," Stewart recalled. Stewart was also one of the pallbearers chosen to serve at Buehler's funeral.

In 1925, the Missouri School of Mines awarded Buehler the degree of Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, in appreciation of his professional work, his loyal support and his untiring efforts in behalf of the school. It was an honor that Buehler deeply appreciated.



The Rolla Building on the MSM (UMR) campus. This was the location of the Missouri Geological Survey through Buehler's entire tenure as State Geologist.

“His personal life was work.”

Dan Kennedy, Buehler contemporary

The lines between professional and personal work blurred for Buehler. He never married; rather, he devoted his life to the service of his fellow man, the field of geology, and the state of Missouri. His work, especially the magnetic and gravimetric surveys of Missouri, coupled with his length of time as state geologist in Missouri, earned him the distinction of “Dean of American State Geologists.”

Buehler’s combined knowledge and intuition of Missouri’s wealth of mineral resources made him a walking Geiger counter. This gift of Buehler’s turned the 15-million dollar mineral industry in the state of Missouri into a 75-million dollar industry by 1944.

Except for two short periods of time during his 36-year career as state geologist, Buehler was on the job continually. He was required to take a leave of absence during World War I to serve on the War Minerals Board in Washington, D.C., and again during the Depression when he served as engineer for the Missouri Relief and Reconstruction Commission.



This picture of Buehler’s staff was taken in 1938. The official title for the office was the “Department of Business Administration’s Division of Geological Survey and Water Resources.” Rolla resident Mary McCracken, pictured third from the right, passed away in 2000. Those in this picture are, from the left: The Chief, H. A. Buehler, state geologist; H.S. McQueen, asst. state geologist; Jean McCaw, secretary; John Grohskopf, geologist; unidentified; Norman Hinchey, geologist; Mary Hundhausen (McCracken), geologist; Clyde O. Reinoehl, geologist; and unidentified.

While Buehler tapped Missouri's hidden wealth of lead, iron ore, oil, clay products, coal, limestone, zinc, barite, cobalt, nickel, copper, and more—he devoted much of his time and resources in Rolla as an activist and founder of notable organizations. Few records remain from turn-of-the-century civic organizations, so it is unclear what affiliations Buehler had. In 1920, however, he attended the organizational meeting of the Rolla Chamber of Commerce.

“Buehler was the Chamber.”

Dan Stewart, Buehler contemporary

Buehler was named to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and headed the membership committee of this newly formed organization of commerce-minded fellows. With the exception of the years he was president (1922, 1926, 1927, 1933), he maintained a position on the board of directors and held committee headships. The June 15, 1920 minutes 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).

In 1922, Buehler was elected president of the Chamber. Under his leadership, membership rates were immediately cut in half, among other changes in the by-laws and cost-cutting measures.

One year earlier in 1921, Buehler was appointed as ex-officio member of the first Missouri Highway Commission. The full impact of his appointment to the Commission, which lasted until the day of his death on March 14, 1944, is yet to be uncovered. It is believed, however, that much of the state highway system that we enjoy today is a direct result of the influence of Henry Buehler. It is said that Highway 63 was paved so Buehler could get to Jefferson City easier, and was often referred to as “Chief Buehler’s Highway.” Highways 72 and “The Mother Road,” Route 66, also go to his credit.

As the roads developed, Buehler wrote promotional “tourist” articles and encouraged fellow Chamber members to do the same. His position as state geologist necessitated extensive travel, and Buehler knew the best spots in the state. Buehler was promoting tourism with Rolla as the starting point. He didn’t coin the phrase but, nevertheless, was promoting Rolla as “The Middle of Everywhere.”

The Chamber purchased the Rolla Fair Grounds (later renamed “Buehler Park”) during Buehler’s third term as president in 1927. The \$6,000 price tag was primarily satisfied from the sale of their “tourist campground” on the north end of Rolla.

Their minutes reflect their intent for use of the land: “...the proper thing that the Fair Grounds be purchased by the Chamber of Commerce to be for civic purposes... .”

The mortgage was nearly paid in full when the Chamber decided to mortgage it again. In 1931, the City of Rolla struggled as all America struggled through the Depression. A new road from Rolla to Salem was desperately needed to replace the only one linking the two towns at the time: Salem Avenue. However, funds were tight; and easements had to be purchased prior to the highway development. The Chamber signed a right-of-way agreement with the City of Rolla and Missouri Highway Commission as a guarantee that the easements would be purchased, and thus mortgaged the Fair Grounds for \$4000 to buy easements within the City of Rolla for Highway 72 development.

A 1931 newspaper article details the plan and issues a plea for help in repayment of the loan, “...believing and knowing that the citizenship of Rolla when called upon will be glad to contribute their share toward paying off this loan. Any man who fails to contribute towards paying off this indebtedness will be making the rest of us carry his load. If all will give, the load will be light.” The authorship of that press release is unknown, but knowing Buehler’s sentiments toward the Fair Grounds property, one can speculate that he had a hand in it.

The debt was eventually paid off in 1943, with the City and Chamber paying an equal share over the years. Since that time, the Fair Grounds has been called “Buehler Park.” In a Buehler obituary, it is stated: “In evidence of high appreciation of his fine services, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen changed the name of the Fair Grounds Park to Buehler Park in his honor,” even though it would be another 15 years before the city received the deed to the park. It is believed that The Chief led the effort in this infrastructure improvement that became known as “one of the major activities of the Chamber.”

While serving as state engineer for the Missouri Relief and Reconstruction Commission during the Depression, Buehler dug in his heels for the community. “‘Immediate action and enthusiasm are demanded now instead of inertia and postponement,’ declared Dr. H. A. Buehler in a passionate appeal for unanimous support of the public works program for Rolla and Phelps County,” began the 1933 column in the Rolla Herald. By now, the Depression was going into its fifth year. “No one man or group of men can carry this whole burden, but an unemployed people of our community must be given a chance to help themselves during this winter.” Buehler headed a local committee that submitted a list of projects for approval by the State of Missouri.

One week later on November 30, 1933, the Rolla Herald announced that Phelps County was to receive \$24,000 as a part of U. S. President Roosevelt's "New Deal." The City of Rolla received \$10,315, and an additional \$70,000 was earmarked for the new Central Ward School Building.

Buehler, however, through his remarkable influence, was granted \$85,000 to hire more engineers for topographic and geological work throughout the state. "I am now ready," said Dr. Buehler, "to put to work every trained engineer who wants to work and possibly some who are not technically trained."

"He was quite a guy."

Daniel Kennedy,
Buehler contemporary

On December 7, 1933, the Rolla Herald reported that Dr. H. A. Buehler, as President of the Rolla Chamber of Commerce, had shown property to the Johnson, Stephens and Shinkle Shoe Company of St. Louis, who did locate in Rolla and provided jobs to many desperate Rolla citizens. Buehler was an economic development maverick. His expertise and love for the common man were received in Rolla as a light from heaven.

In the mid '30s, Buehler devoted even more toward his beloved field of geology. He was a founding member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. In 1935 he was installed as president of the prestigious American Institution of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers (AIMME) 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. Gary Muilenburg wrote, "His [Buehler's] service as president was outstandingly characterized by his efforts to build up the membership from the younger men in the profession. His slogan was, 'The leaders of the future are the youngsters of today.'"

There is no end to the list of Buehler's affiliations. He 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, Geologic 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 W.P.A. project.

There no doubt Buehler never vacationed as we define the term.

In 1939, Buehler's reputation had grown, and appreciation for him was uncontained. The town owed a lot to the man, servant, and philanthropist Buehler. On Wednesday, July 19, 1939, the Chamber of Commerce gave a testimonial dinner in honor of The Chief. At the time, Buehler had just been re-appointed to the position of State Geologist for his 9th consecutive term, beginning his thirty-first year as such. Joining the Chamber in honoring Buehler were the Rotarians (of which Buehler was a charter member) and the Rolla Lions Club.

The event was more than a celebration over Buehler's reappointment as State Geologist; it was an "expression from the people of Rolla, as a whole, of their appreciation of his interest in, love for, and his wonderful service for Rolla and for this section," the Rolla Herald reported. "His work has reached into every field of endeavor for the advancement and progress of Rolla." State Senator E. W. Allison was toastmaster for the dinner. "Speaker after speaker testified to his [Buehler's] worth and unselfish devotion to Rolla."²

The Chief gave a short speech, praising his staff, and commenting on his years in Rolla as "most happy years." He was then presented a parchment scroll and a silver-plated miner's pick. Inscribed were the words: "To Doctor Henry Andrew Buehler - In Appreciation Of Thirty Years Of Service To Rolla."

This silver miner's pick had disappeared for decades but was recently discovered in an antique mall! How it landed there is a mystery. A Taos, Missouri man and his daughter saw the pick and noticed the inscription. They graciously donated the pick to the Division of Geology and Land Survey, 111 Fairgrounds in Rolla, where it will be on display at the Ed Clark Museum of Geology.

The following year, Buehler was voted a life member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce. Minutes from that meeting reflect their intent in the motion: "Dr. Henry Andrew Buehler be made an Honorary Member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Rolla, Missouri, for the duration of his life. And that such action be taken because of his invaluable services past and present for Rolla and the Chamber of Commerce."

In addition to Buehler's service and influence with geology and infrastructure, he has been credited with the placement of Ft. Leonard Wood. However, it is a little-known fact that Ft. Leonard Wood was on its way to the state of Iowa. Buehler intervened and testified as an expert witness to the poor water supply in Iowa and swayed the federal government's decision to place Ft. Leonard Wood there. Instead, it came

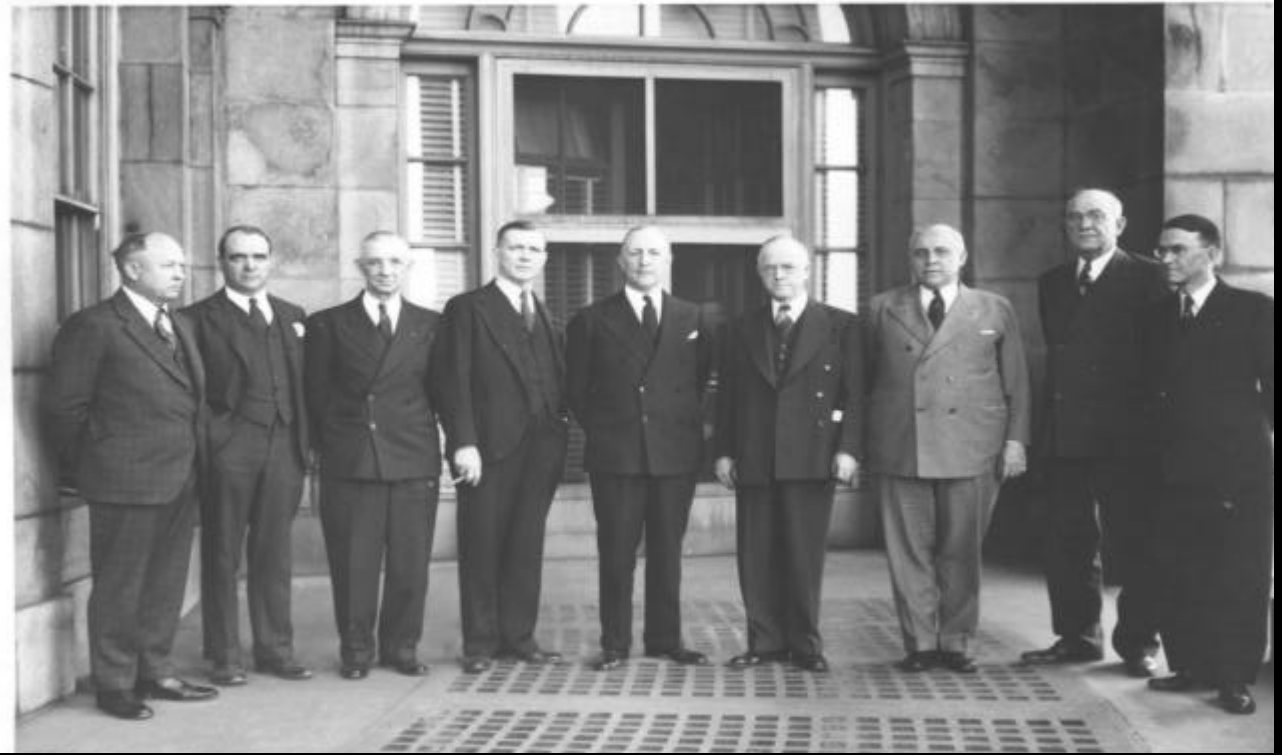
to already-owned federal property in Pulaski County. Governor Donnell, in his eulogy address, mentioned Buehler's contribution in the Ft. Wood decision: "Dr. Buehler rendered aid, and very substantial aid, in locating Fort Leonard Wood."

It's hard to imagine what Rolla, Missouri, would be had Buehler never graced its rolling hills: the many permanent jobs he brought here, the factories, the highways, the unparalleled leadership that motivated a community and a state. Truly tribute is due to this most beloved character from our history. Buehler gave us more than infrastructure: He gave us a heritage. In essence, we are the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren that The Chief never had.

Two years after his death, the Missouri Geological Survey moved off the MSM campus and into the USO building on the corner of 9th and Rolla Streets, and the facility was appropriately named the "Buehler Building." On Friday, September 27, 1946, Governor Phil Donnelly presented the dedication. Also in attendance were Howard Young, president of the American Zinc, Lead and Smelting Company and president of the American Mining Congress; George Smith, president of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, and Morris Leighton, Illinois State Geologist.

Governor Donnelly 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. Our present state geologist, Dr. Edward L. Clark, has said of him: 'The wisdom of his counsel, the devotion to his profession, and the soundness of his philosophy of life were inspirational. He was a great teacher and minister although he refused to admit it. Buehler was richly endowed with qualities that endeared him to all who knew him. His colorful and strong personality, straight thinking, utter frankness, genial friendliness, rough humor, code of ethics, originality, initiativeness, and untiring devotion to assigned duties made him a man whose character, honesty, and integrity were ever beyond reproach. His work is over, but his presence will continue to be felt.'" ³

On October 1963, the second Buehler Building in Rolla was dedicated. Unlike the three previous locations of the Missouri Geological Survey, this was a brand new building specifically designed to meet the needs of the division. This current location, at 111 Fairgrounds Road, was dedicated by Governor John. M. Dalton, who said of



Buehler's influence was widespread. In 1939 he served on Missouri's Committee of the World's Fair Commission. It is believed that, while serving on this committee in New York City, he purchased the black fedora now in the DGLS possession, along with the original hat box. Buehler is pictured second from the right. Missouri's Governor L.C. Stark is pictured in the center.

the survey, "It has been invaluable in locating and developing our mineral deposits, in revealing new uses for materials thought to be of no value, in providing data on water resources that have enabled Missouri to acquire installations of great economic benefit, and even in promoting tourism through its useful development of data on springs, caves, and other geologic features."⁴

At the dedication, Jack Koenig's 1962 painting of Dr. Buehler, for whom the building was named, was unveiled. The Rolla Daily News wrote, "It is most fitting that the building is on land abutting Buehler Park, a city park named in honor of this benefactor of the City of Rolla, of the students of the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy, and of Phelps County. Dr. Buehler's prominence extended far beyond the confines of the state, and associates across the country knew him as 'Chief.'"⁵

The Buehler building was constructed near the north line of a four-acre plot purchased from the Rolla Chamber of Commerce in 1961.

The park that Buehler loved still bears his name; its history is an interesting one.

In 1870, the first Phelps County Fair Board purchased the 35-acre tract, which included modern-day Buehler Park, for \$5000, a hefty price in those days. Within a few short years, the board foreclosed on the Fair Grounds and it was sold to an insurance company for \$1000.



This photo of the Rolla Fair Grounds is from a turn-of-the-century postcard, a few years before the Chamber purchased it.

The Fair Grounds property, which stretches from Buehler Park north to the U. S. Forest Service office, was owned by the railroad when the Rolla Chamber of Commerce purchased it in 1927 for \$6,000. That land was dear to Buehler's heart. He spoke of developing the park with a pagoda or shelter house and a lookout tower to view the awesome westward expanse.

The Gardeners of the Ozark Hills, a regional horticulture club, met on March 21, 1944, one week after the death of Buehler. A newspaper article from that meeting reported the following:

*“May we pause to pay tribute to Dr. Buehler, our friend, who passed away last Tuesday, March 14, 1944, at Jefferson City. Our project, as you know, was named in Dr. Buehler’s honor and was bought a few years ago by the Chamber of Commerce. When Highway 72 was proposed, it was decided to mortgage this plot to help build part of the road. Dr. Buehler took a great interest in this strip of land and saw to it that the income from it was used only for public services. The mortgage was later lifted and it was named, The Buehler Park—I trust that we may continue to develop it as a fitting and beautiful memorial to his memory.”*⁶

Fair Grounds Park was Buehler's baby. He had Chamber money earmarked for city water line construction in the park and encouraged payments toward the mortgage. In 1929, the Chamber voted to permit the Rolla Baseball Club to use Fair Grounds Park, free of charge, for their September tournament, carnival and reunion.



Buehler's memorial park, appropriately along historic Route 66, is one of the busiest parks in town.

In the '30s, the Chamber halted their practice of leasing the park, fearing that it was becoming too commercially used. In 1938, the Chamber designated their first public-use deed of the park and gave 10 acres to the U. S. Government for its Central Repair Shop. Then in 1943, the same year the mortgage on the Hwy. 72 easements was lifted, Chamber records indicate "the matter of giving the Lutheran Church permission to use **Buehler Park** for a church picnic on May 9 was taken up and approved." This is the first mention of "Buehler" Park as such in their records.

In 1944, Buehler Park was used to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Rolla community. The mayor, W. D. Jones, issued a proclamation, declaring the week of August 21 to 28, 1944, "Rolla Centennial Week." The article continues, "For it was sometime during the year 1844 that John Webber arrived at a knoll a few rods east of Buehler Park, stopped his ox-team and wagon, surveyed the beautiful countryside around him — and decided to homestead!"⁷

"I've been all over the country and outside the country. The smaller the city the more important those little parks are."

Daniel Kennedy,
Buehler contemporary

The park was maintained by the City of Rolla, but continued in the custody of the Chamber of Commerce until 1958. At that time, the Chamber deeded 3.2 acres of the original 35 to the City of Rolla, specifying its terms of use. The Warranty Deed to Buehler Park is found on the following page. The essence of this very special covenant is found near the center of the document in bold italics.

It is believed that the Chamber wanted to protect Buehler Park from its own future members who might not care to remember the great namesake benefactor. Their decision to deed the property to the city was to preserve it in perpetuity. Unfortunately, a few short decades later, the Chamber became a catalyst in the crusade to sell their charter member's memorial park.

Times change, attitudes change, and people forget. The first public documentation surrounding changes for Buehler Park were reported in 1992. The Rolla Area Chamber of Commerce approached the city and wanted the park back. Plans for a visitors' center and motel tax had spawned the interest in reclaiming the park. The City, however, balked at the idea of simply handing over property in their possession to a private group. The Chamber, unwilling to accept the City's compromise of *using* Buehler Park for a visitors' center, went away disappointed and disillusioned. Early in 1993, the Chamber announced plans to house their offices and a visitors' center across the street from the park on the 10-acre U. S. Forest Service property.

On March 9, 1994, the City, Chamber and Forest Service signed a "Memorandum of Understanding," which stated that the City would buy the Forest Service property and the Chamber would construct a new facility to be used as a visitors' center. Missouri Senators Ashcroft and Bond helped to pass a Congressional bill, allowing the City to purchase the property at fair market value. That bill passed through both houses of Congress on July 24, 1996. Interestingly, though, earth was turned for the new visitors' center facility in August 1995, eleven months prior to the passage of the bill.

In October 1996, only two months after the passage of the bill, Buehler Park was on the auction block. Originally, Jack Dietzmann, a local developer, proposed trading Buehler Park for the Blue's Lake property on Martin Springs Drive. This City didn't want the trade: They wanted the cash. Speculation has arisen, justifiably so, about the motive to sell Buehler Park. By all appearances, it was a bailout for the Chamber of Commerce. They built a building on land owned by the federal government that they are precluded from buying. The question of ownership of the Rolla Visitors Center is another quirk in this predicament: If public funds are used to finance payments on the Visitors Center (through the 3% motel tax), it begs the question: Does the City of Rolla technically own the building?

Another motive for selling the park for the sake of the Chamber had arisen as well, that being the competition presented by Buehler Park, which is highly visible due to location. Out-of-towners are naturally drawn to a welcoming park; the Visitors Center is not nearly as obvious to see, and thus harder to find.

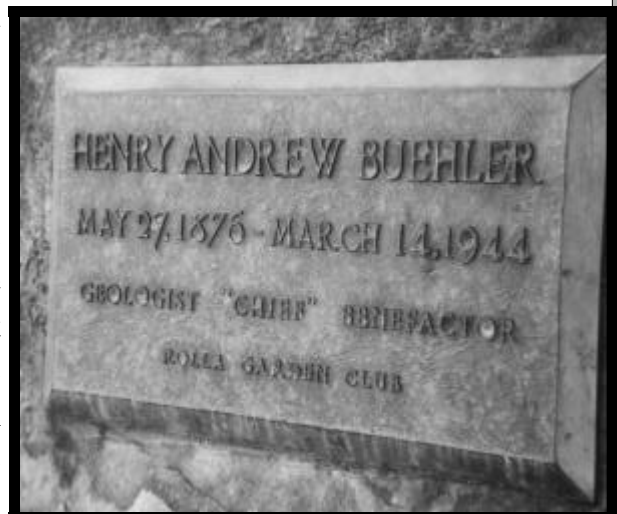
When Dietzmann’s offer for a trade was refused, closed session minutes from the City reveal that the City had been dealing privately with Cracker Barrel Restaurant. Mayor Elwyn Wax allegedly had a passion for bringing this national restaurant chain to Rolla. Like many political decisions, this fix would satisfy the needs of a few with the public left unserved.

Due to public outcry when this hit the newspaper, Cracker Barrel, unwilling at the time to contribute to ill-will in the community, reneged on the deal. However, in the spring of 1997, they returned, resolute to bring their famous biscuits and gravy to the residents of Rolla. Public outcry this time, however, cut even deeper. A class-action lawsuit was filed against the City that essentially tied up any sale of the park for over a year.

The action of the courts was one of ambiguity, ruling that the petitioners had “no standing.” However, the courts would later rule that no damages had been inflicted on the City. The courts ordered the City of Rolla to return 100% of the hefty \$40,000 injunction bond imposed on the citizen petitioners.

Even before the ruling on the bond money was issued, newly elected Rolla Mayor Joe Morgan was anxious to finish the job started by Mayor Wax. Morgan’s plan was more conspicuous than Wax’s ploy. He made no mystery of how the money would be spent: It was to buy the Forest Service property. Morgan directed the City’s engineering department to quickly draft a “new park” design for the Visitors Center property—not exactly the picturesque location of Buehler Park. Morgan’s park plans placed our new city park in a gully. The plans were an embarrassing flop, but that didn’t stop Morgan from trying again. And again. At the time of this writing, Morgan is on his third attempt at selling Buehler Park.

The state of Buehler’s beloved park has suffered neglect in recent years. Even now, the only drinking “fountain” is a standing pipe held together with duct tape. Play equipment has been removed and not replaced and the restrooms are antiquated. This park, though the one used most by out-of-towners, is on the bottom of the city’s priority list for upgrades. The five trash cans in Buehler Park testify to its use; yet, it remains a political hostage.



This bronze placard, on the commemorative sandstone boulder in Buehler Park, was placed by the Rolla Garden Club.

Though the City of Rolla has shown little interest in Buehler's legacy, others have continued to honor this man's commitments, integrity and public service. In July 2000, Governor Mel Carnahan signed a proclamation in honor of Buehler's contributions to the State of Missouri (see following page).

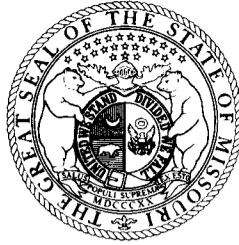
The Governor's proclamation was issued when Missouri hosted the 92nd Annual Meeting of the Association of American State Geologists (AASG) in St. Louis, June 18-24, 2000. The AASG is an organization composed of some of the nation's most competent scientists in the field of geology. Their goal is to ensure that state objectives are met by federal science-based policies. They also strive to increase and improve communication between state surveys. Forty-four states were represented at the Missouri conference. Buehler was a founding member of AASG.

Jim Williams, recently retired Missouri State Geologist, said, "It was the first time Missouri has hosted the AASG in more than a quarter of a century. It gave us an opportunity to showcase Missouri's uncommon geologic features, highlight our wealth of natural resources, and demonstrate how the work of Missouri geologists is helping protect the state's natural resources and environment."

Rolla's Wally Dressel, a retired geologist, portrayed The Chief for the convention and gave folks an idea of what it would have been like working for him. Dressel donned Buehler's original black fedora and miner's pick and entertained the group of American geologists with a glimpse of the past. "It was lots of fun," Dressel recalled. Retired State Geologist Williams said Dressel did a great job in portraying Buehler.

Dressel, who retired from the U. S. Bureau of Mines in Rolla, recounted his days with The Chief. "I became a geologist because of Buehler." Dressel came to Rolla to become an electrical engineer, but after listening to Buehler lecture on geology, he changed his mind. Dressel confirms other reports of The Chief's charisma for the field of geology and his inspirational effect on the students of MSM.

Buehler demonstrated his "PA System" to Dressel and fellow students attending summer classes in Norwood Hall. Buehler's office was on the first floor of the nearby Rolla Building. When he wanted to get the attention of J. G. Grohskoph, his subsurface geologist (who, appropriately, had an office in the basement—see his picture on page 6), he would stamp his foot on the floor and bellow, "GROHSKOPH, GET UP HERE." Grohskoph, who was in the basement, would diligently climb the stairs to answer The Chief's summons. Buehler, according to Dressel, was a humble, yet gruff, individual—which probably contributed to his nickname, "The Chief."



**Office of the Governor
State of Missouri
Proclamation**

WHEREAS, "Chief" Henry A. Buehler was appointed State Geologist and Director of the Missouri Geological Survey in 1908 and served until his death in 1944, being appointed and reappointed by 11 governors during his term of office; and

WHEREAS, "Chief" Buehler aided in the establishment of the Association of American State Geologists and served as President of that association; and

WHEREAS, "Chief" Buehler was instrumental in the development of safe and adequate groundwater supplies and directed the first state plan to create municipal water supplies in drought-plagued areas; and

WHEREAS, "Chief" Buehler introduced the importance of geological knowledge into the Missouri Highway Department during his 23 years as an ex officio member of the Missouri Highway Commission; and

WHEREAS, "Chief" Buehler used his persuasive efforts in the U. S. Congress and his knowledge of geology and water resources to bring Fort Leonard Wood to our state; and

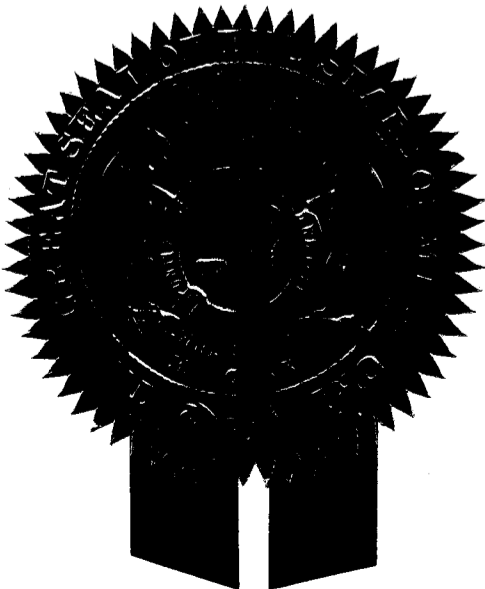
WHEREAS, "Chief" Buehler laid the foundation for the public service orientation of the Missouri Geological Survey, now the Division of Geology and Land Survey:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MEL CARNAHAN, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI, do hereby proclaim June 18 - 24, 2000, to be

"CHIEF" HENRY A. BUEHLER WEEK

in Missouri in honor of the 96th Annual Meeting of the American Association of State Geologists hosted by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Division of Geology and Land Survey in St. Louis, Missouri.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Missouri, in the City of Jefferson, this 11th day of May, 2000.



Governor

Attest:

Secretary of State

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. Rolla Mayor W. D. Jones issued the following proclamation:

WHEREAS death has claimed Dr. Henry Andrew Buehler, one of Rolla's leading and most beloved citizens, a man who has rendered great service to our city, our state and the nation; and

WHEREAS the most that those who appreciated his contribution to the development of so much of Missouri's finest resources; his love of Missouri's superb scenery, his devotion to his fellow men, and to Rolla, his home city for more than forty years, is to pay their sincere respect. Be it therefore Resolved:

That all business be suspended in the City of Rolla from 2 to 4 P. M. on Thursday, March 16, 1944, during the funeral hour.

In addition to the eulogy by Governor Forrest Donnell, former college classmate R. C. Allen also eulogized Buehler, recalling another nickname, "Ajax," taken from Greek mythology—the strong man who fought with other heroes in the battle of Troy. Allen commented, "To me in those years and to his friends of college days and high school days, his name was Ajax, and during all these thirty-five years or more in which he and I have been in steady correspondence, he has invariably signed his letter to me 'Ajax,' which leads me to think how discerning our young people, the associates of high school days, were in recognizing the greatness in the boy that he then was."

He added, "What he leaves to us is something more than originates in learning and in wisdom and in endeavor and those things which we think of generally as accomplishments—something more than that.... To me he is not The Chief, he is not Dr. Buehler or the eminent scientist, great geologist, a member of learned societies. He was to me as he was to you folks here in Rolla, a friend."

Buehler's death was followed by numerous tributes from the State of Missouri and professional organizations. The 1943-1944 Constitutional Convention of Missouri honored Buehler through Resolution No. 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."

Buehler's funeral was held in Parker Hall on the MSM (UMR) 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 worth the hunt, adorned with a lichen-covered pink granite boulder. Buehler was buried with full masonic honors.



Buehler's "baby elephant"—a boulder from the Elephant Rock State Park area near Graniteville, Missouri.



Close-up of inscription of pink granite grave boulder. Original drill holes are seen in corners, evidence of the bronze placard that once graced the monument. Witnesses say the bronze placard was stolen, though the date it was stolen is unknown. Someday it might resurface, as did Buehler's 1939 honorary silver miner's pick.

His rugged, earthy nature led him to request nature's simplicity for his grave marker. "The Chief's wishes were for a 'simple granite rock, unpolished, from one of these Missouri hills.'"

Senate Resolution No. 6 stated: "Dr. Buehler was in the true sense of the term an institution in Missouri and was a national figure recognized throughout the nation for his efficiency in geological work. The imprint of his outstanding attainments is left indelibly impressed upon the State of Missouri for all time to come."

House Bill No. 12 called Buehler, "Rolla's most prominent citizen." On March 31, 1944, Victor Rakowsky, Buehler associate wrote, "It doesn't seem possible that he would ever be leaving us."

It doesn't seem possible that anyone would ever destroy his memorial.

Genuine qualities of a true leader linger for generations. Buehler's contributions have been with us for a century and will undoubtedly continue throughout the next.

Are we teaching our children about this rich heritage brought to us through Henry Buehler? Local school children hear about Edmund Bishop as the "founder" of Rolla and John Webber, who was the first settler in what was later named "Rolla." But it was indisputably Henry Buehler that gave us a future: deep roots that would get us through two world wars and the Depression.

Our responsibility as citizens, now more than ever, is to preserve and protect our heritage for posterity's sake. O, for another Henry Andrew Buehler to show us selfless insight and leadership in this quest.

Buehler's attributes went beyond that of philanthropist, economic developer, friend, servant; he was truly a godsend, a man for the time for time immemorial.

Buehler was beloved by all those he touched. Even today, those who knew this great benefactor are stirred with emotion as they recall their days with The Chief.

The year 2001 marks the Centennial Anniversary of the arrival of Henry Andrew Buehler to Rolla, Missouri. We stand at a crossroad: Will we choose to celebrate the man who gave entirely of himself, or will we decide that "progress" has its price, even when that price is a hero's memorial? Time will tell and historians will be anxious to recount what Buehler's adopted children did to remember him.



Henry Andrew Buehler, son of a Wisconsin blacksmith, went on to become one of the greatest scientists the world has ever known. The date on this photo is unknown but was obviously taken later in his life and is characteristically "The Chief" with the round spectacles.

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UMR Archives
Pictures courtesy of UMR Western Historical Manuscripts
Kevin, Rachel and Timothy Marler
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FOOTNOTES

- 1 H. Dwight Weaver, 2001, *The Chief: Big Man; Bigger Mission*, Missouri Resources, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Land Survey
- 2 *C of C Honors "Chief" Buehler On 31st Year as State Geologist*, The Rolla Herald, July 20, 1939
- 3 Edward Clark, State Geologist, *Dedication of Buehler Building*, 1946
- 4 *Mo. Geological Survey Building Dedicated*, Rolla Daily News, October 1, 1963
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- 6 *Gardeners of Ozark Hills Pay Tribute to Dr. Buehler*, The Rolla Herald, March 21, 1944
- 7 *Big Picnic To Mark Century Since First White Settler Arrived*, Rolla Daily New Era, August 21, 1944



“THE CHIEF”

H. P. Buckler