

1907—The Only State Geological Survey in a State Constitution

The Oklahoma Geological Survey has the distinction of being the only geological survey written into a state constitution. When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, it immediately became the leader among states in oil production. From the beginning, Oklahoma's natural resources were important to the economy. Legislation mandated that the Survey:

Investigate the state's land, water, mineral, and energy resources and disseminate the results of those investigations to promote the wise use consistent with sound environmental practices.

The Survey began work in 1908 after an enabling act was signed by Governor Charles N. Haskell on May 29, 1908.

The basic mission then, as now, is research, field work and mapping to add to the body of knowledge about Oklahoma geology and natural resources. The Survey publishes its findings and makes the information available through books, maps, workshops and seminars, lectures, the Internet, and many other means of communication to the public.

Among the benefits derived from OGS activities are location and assessment of road and building materials, examination of such natural hazards as earthquakes and ground collapse, water quality and availability studies, information for siting of roads and dams, and studies that aid in exploration for and production of oil and gas.

Along with research and mapping, the Survey makes geologists available to answer questions from the public, speak to schools and scout groups, produce educational materials, and talk to civic groups. The OGS also distributes needed maps and materials from other agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey.

Charles Newton Gould The Father of Oklahoma Geology Director, 1908–1911, 1924–1931

When Charles Newton Gould came to OU in 1900, his drive, determination and relentless energy made him the perfect person to found OU's geology department and, in 1907, to foster in the Constitution what would become the Oklahoma Geological Survey.



Gould

Gould saw the need to blend academics, industry concerns and public needs in a single research and public service agency that would bring these areas together to better serve Oklahoma. And that he did, setting the tone for the OGS for at least the next 100 years.

In 1911, Gould resigned to try his hand in the oil business and was a pioneer in the application of geology to exploration. Although he was very successful, he returned to become director of the OGS again when needed in 1924 and stayed until 1931.

Gould is known as the "Father of Oklahoma Geology."

Continuing Study of the New State Daniel W. Ohern, Director 1911–1914 Charles W. Shannon, Director 1914–1923

The basic reconnaissance work continued under the next two directors during the early years of the Survey. Investigations of oil and gas, coal, glass sand, building stone, gypsum, lead and zinc, water resources, and building materials continued, while new publications and maps were printed. The first full-color geologic map of



Shannon

Oklahoma was issued in 1926.

It was Charles Shannon who noted that the "need of conservation is apparent to members of the Survey," and pointed to wastes of coal, oil, natural gas, soils, forests



Ohern

and animal life, especially birds. The Survey's directors have been mindful of the mandate to conserve resources and use them wisely.

For Daniel Ohern and Shannon, the task was to continue basic studies and expand publication and mapping programs. In 1924, Gould returned.

From the Depression to the Jet Age Robert H. Dott, Director, 1935–1952

Dott saw the Survey through the Great Depression, through World War II, and into the beginnings of the space and technology age.

One of his early OGS projects, however, involved people hired through government relief programs in the 1930s to study the culture, building materials and mineral deposits of the state. While the information proved valuable and was put to good use, most importantly a water study of some 100,000 Oklahoma wells, the much-needed jobs helped individuals and the economy.

Dott's Survey focused on natural resources suitable for manufacturing and even opened a research lab to develop new uses for some of the most mundane materials, which he called the "humble materials." He hoped Oklahoma businesses would use manufacturing to add value by making pottery, tile, stoneware, brick, drilling mud, glass, rock wool and other products that would result in more money and jobs than simply producing the raw material.

Into the Space Age and Beyond William E. Ham, Interim Director 1952–1954 Carl Colton Branson, Director 1954–1967

Bill Ham is the only native Oklahoman yet to be director of the Survey. He was an economic geologist and an authority on carbonate rocks.

Carl Branson's greatest accomplishment as OGS director may have been building up the University of Oklahoma Geology Library.



Dott



Ham

—continued on back



G. Randy Keller

The Oklahoma Geological Survey celebrates its 100th year of service to the state of Oklahoma in 2008. It is the only geological survey to be written into a state constitution, an act that highlights the importance of natural resources in this state.

We hope that this very brief overview of the Geological Survey, its history and its directors will help you better understand our mission and our accomplishments.

Please join us in celebrating our Centennial.

G. Randy Keller
Interim Director



OKLAHOMA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

100 E. BOYD, R.M. N-131
NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73019-0628
(405) 325-3031; ogs@ou.edu; www.ogs.ou.edu

MEWBOURNE COLLEGE
OF EARTH AND ENERGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Today, the Survey continues to add library materials through an exchange program with other agencies in the U.S. and abroad. This effort provides publications that are donated by the Survey to the collection of the Youngblood Geology Library.



Branson

During his tenure, Branson added a full-time petroleum geologist to the staff and efforts were made to publish more material for oil, gas and coal studies. Uranium also was an item of much interest nationally, and the Survey devoted time to the study of this topic.

Charles J. Mankin, Director 1967-2007

During Charles Mankin's years, the OGS became more involved in cooperative studies with state and federal agencies and concentrated on oil and gas activities that would help the small producers in Oklahoma.



Mankin

In 1978, a geophysical observatory at Leonard, southeast of Tulsa, was added to monitor earthquakes worldwide. The Oklahoma Petroleum Information Center in Norman opened in 2002, and in 2006 the OGS officially became affiliated with OU's Mewbourne College of Earth and Energy.

G. Randy Keller, Interim Director 2007-Present

G. Randy Keller, a geophysics professor at OU, came to the Survey to assist in operations after Mankin's retirement. Keller will oversee OGS administrative duties and help the Survey move forward with projects and programs at this time.

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Oklahoma Geological Survey

A brief history

*100 years of service
to Oklahoma*



1908-2008