



H. Foster Bain (*Illinois*)

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H. Foster Bain was the first secretary of AASG, serving 2 years in that position, 1908 and 1909. The tremendous role he played in the creation of AASG is well documented in preceding chapters. He became the first director of the Illinois State Geological Survey in November 1905. His 1931 account of the people and conditions under which the Illinois State Geological Survey was founded pays tribute to the vision, courage, and ability of the

founders and political leaders of the time, but Bain himself was also a person of remarkable vision who was chosen to give the Survey its start because of his unique set of qualifications and his capacity for hard work. He set the Survey on the road toward fulfilling its mission of research and service.

Harry Foster Bain was born in Seymour, Ind., on November 2, 1871, and was known as Hal. He attended Moores Hill College (Indiana), Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Chicago, where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1897. He began his professional career at the Iowa Geological Survey, during which time he authored a number of county reports and eight papers on glacial and physiographic geology. He also published reports on coals of Arkansas and on the Western Interior Coal Field. In 1901–02, he worked at mining in Colorado before joining the U.S. Geological Survey in 1903 and publishing a series of reports on the fluorspar deposits of Kentucky and Illinois and the lead-zinc deposits of the Upper Mississippi Valley.

Upon joining the newly established Illinois State Geological Survey in November 1905, Bain built an organization designed to investigate all phases of geology and the important mineral resources of the state. He recruited a small permanent staff but utilized specialists and graduate students from several universities of the state, an arrangement that continues in one form or another to this day.

Bain thought that the Survey should serve both educational and economic needs and that the latter should be interpreted broadly. This resulted in a special series of educational bulletins and local material for use in Illinois classrooms. Topographic mapping was recognized as a basic necessity, and a priority, and the cooperative agreement made with the U.S. Geological Survey has been maintained to the present day. Bain also called a meeting in 1906 in Chicago to organize the Association of State Geologists of the Mississippi Valley, which led to the formation 2 years later of the Association of American State Geologists. This association's mission was to promote the development of expertise and cooperation among state surveys and the independent thinking needed for scientific endeavors in the states' best interests, separate from those of the U.S. Geological Survey's interests, which were focused on federal priorities.

Bain arranged cooperative programs with federal and state agencies concerned with geology, mining, topographic mapping, reclamation of land subject to overflow, highway building, and water supplies. He also enlisted the goodwill of coal operators and miners, clay operators, railroad officials, engineering societies, the technical press, and high school teachers. The Survey quickly became known as an important agency for scientific research and distribution of information for the development of the state. There are many other examples of Bain's vision and intense hard work toward the establishment and fulfillment of the Survey's goals for the future.

Bain stepped down as ISGS director in 1909 to become editor of the Mining and Scientific Press, then went to London to become editor of *Mining Magazine* in 1915. While in England, Bain became a member of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, service for which he received the Medal of King Albert. He spent most of 1916–20 in minerals exploration of Africa and the Far East, but returned to the United States for a brief period to serve as assistant director of the U.S. Bureau of Mines, working on several subjects related to the war. He served as director of the Bureau of Mines from 1921 to 1924 and as secretary of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers from 1925 to 1931. Bain entered private industry in 1931 and continued to conduct much of his work overseas. In 1937, he moved to Manila to plan the Philippines Bureau of Mines, which included a geological survey. He stayed on to head the new organization and was trapped there when World War II came. In 1942, at the age of 71, he was interned by the Japanese in the Santo Tomas University prison camp. Upon his release 2 years later, he returned to the United States and his private consulting work. This work took him back to Manila, where he passed away from a sudden illness on March 9, 1948.