

Test Your Knowledge of Engineering History

The column of geotechnical and civil engineering achievements, and the heroes behind the triumphs, successes, and sometimes failures.

I have received some reader feedback suggesting that I make the questions easier, so I have tried to do so! Please keep the comments coming, as I am working to make the column interesting and informative to the geotechnical community. Also, reading your e-mail breaks up my day.

1. In 1911, Swedish agricultural scientist Arthur Atterberg developed a series of tests that evaluate a soil's consistency as a function of moisture content. By the 1930s Arthur Casagrande had adapted three of those tests to geotechnical

engineering: the shrinkage limit, the plastic limit, and the liquid limit tests, all together known as the Atterberg limits.

However, it is not widely known that Atterberg also developed two other soil moisture limits. One of these limits is still occasionally used in large excavation projects, while not much is known about the other.

What are the names of these two other limits and what do they test?

2. This award-winning, best-selling author has written books about life in the Swiss Army, the northwestern New Jersey farm country, and the odd people and personalities of Alaska. In one of his most famous books, about nuclear scientist Theodore B. Taylor, he writes of this fellow who failed his doctoral qualifiers, worked for a few years, and then came back to earn a doctorate and become one of the "most inventive nuclear scientists of our time."

Of great interest to the geotechnical and geological community is his series of books on geology, most of which have been lauded by the American Geological Institute. But perhaps his most exciting book, a book of gripping drama and edge-of-seat excitement (*I am not exaggerating, by the way!* —

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