Prof. William Bleeker Potter (1845-1914) graduated from Columbia School of Mines in 1869 and became the first Chair of Mining and Metallurgy at Washington University St Louis in 1871. He remained there for 22 years, while he also worked from 1872 to 1874 as an assistant in the Missouri Geologic Survey; 1874-1878 as Engineer of Pilot Knob Iron Co.; 1876-1878 as consultant for the Vulcan Iron & Steel Works; and in 1882-1893 as Chief Engineer of the Iron Mountain Mining Co.
While working at Iron Mountain Mining Co., he was credited with “saving” Elephant Rocks State Park.

While with WUSL, he was also actively involved in a sampling and testing business doing chemical investigations. In 1886 he organized and built the St. Louis Sampling & Testing Works. In 1893 he resigned his Professorship to run it full-time. Potter and the Testing Works were leaders in getting the city’s water cleaned up before the 1904 World’s Fair.

Potter also was a noted archeologist, as his father had been.