

W.R. GAMBLE ENGINEERING

CONSTRUCTION – ENGINEERING - MANAGEMENT

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WALTER R. GAMBLE, P.E.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY – generally chronologic

Dr. Fred Burgess, Dean of Engineering Emeritus, Oregon State University, fostered Walt's interest in civil engineering and construction at an early age. That was the 7th grade and at the time oil field development in South America had everyone's attention and fueled his interest through high school. Of course by the time he got to Oregon State University the Interstate program held sway and Walt was able to get his first taste of construction as a summer hire with ODOT's Corvallis PM Office. Rear Chain and Tech Assistant gave him all the best assignments, those closest to the real work. The Alsea grade was under construction and the "P" line for the first new work on Highway 20 from Wren west kept Walt busy. Writing slope stakes as the green horn was good experience and humbling.

Another summer assignment that built good technical understanding was with Morse Bros. at the Harrisburg Oregon Prestress plant. Most of the time was spent building prestressed deck slabs for short spans but time was also spent on the "Bulb-Tee" and the then new product, "CorFloor". It was his first exposure to industry working conditions relative to employee relations and work rules. Of course he got plenty of practice casting, curing and breaking test cylinders. He parlayed that into part time work at OSU becoming the student technician at the in-house concrete materials test lab. Those materials testing and quality control skills landed Walt another summer of work with Corvallis Sand and Gravel. Sprinkled with assignments as truck driver, all around mucker at three aggregate plants and several construction sites more experience was cached for his future in the industry.

Upon graduation from OSU in 1969 Walt went to work for Gibbons and Reed Company of Salt Lake City at their NW Division office in Portland. His first project was the Section of I-205 from the Tualatin River to the Willamette. Initially assigned as assistant to the Project Engineer he took over that position shortly thereafter. The challenges of large scale heavy rock excavation, aggregate production, bridge structures of three different designs, large cast-in-place double box culverts, numerous highway appurtenances, guardrail, aluminum bridge rail, sewer, water lines, and subgrade stabilization provided Walt with an marvelous opportunity for learning. Coached and mentored by both his superiors at Gibbons and Reed (Bob Westermann and Bob Pierce) and the engineers at ODOT (R.T. "Bud" Heinz and Arvey Nelson) he thinks he made the most of it.

During eight years at Gibbons and Reed the scope of experience and opportunity was unlimited. With the encouragement of the Port of Portland, Gibbons & Reed, largely under Walt's direction, developed the capacity to produce and install L.C.P.F. The projects at Fulton Terminal 6, Terminal 4 and Portland International Airport stand today as monuments to good engineering, economic use of pavement materials and good contracting. Another project at Gibbons and Reed that tested Walt's managerial skill was the emergency repairs with in the City of Portland's Bull Run Watershed. Sixteen weeks of hard work with multiple agencies, in pristine terrain, limited design development and the heaviest equipment available resulted in a lasting repair and a string of strong relationships with the Forest Service and the City of Portland.

Under Walt's guidance Gibbons and Reed established a successful Municipal Construction Division. Numerous infrastructure improvements were completed at such sites as PCC's Mt. Sylvania Campus, PGE's Beaver Generation Farm, Cowlitz County Waste Water Facility, and City of Tualatin's first new street - Martinazzi Ave. Other interesting assignments included Emergency Railroad Incident services (train wrecks), large scale railroad rock slope scaling and pinning, CPM scheduling (by hand) for a million yard I-80 project, and solving hydrated lime delivery restrictions for the LCPF program.

Walt achieved professional registration as a Civil Engineer in 1976. His move to Columbia West and Materials signaled advancement in rank to the Area Manager for the firm's Portland Office, then operating out of the Rivergate Rock Quarry. Public and private small projects dotted the market area. During one season Walt believes they completed the equivalent of 100 city blocks on multiple contracts with several public agencies. The most significant was the inlay paving for the City's first major transit project the Tri-Met Downtown Mall. Col-West, as a subcontractor to Hensel Phelps, not only redesigned the asphalt mixes used but had to do the delicate - almost surgically clean job of installing it between granite curbs, precast pavers and brick work. The silicon industry moved to Portland and Rivergate Rock was closed by the City to accommodate the Wacker Siltronics plant.

In 1980 W.R. Gamble Engineering was established. Walt's vision was to provide construction-engineering services to the design and contracting industry in the Northwest. Those services are still sought out by a wide array of parties to the design and contracting process. Engineering and management assignments such as value engineering teams, constructability reviews, dramatic site condition failures, pavement materials, schedule development, cost estimating, right of way takings, QA/QC, and project permitting are common. METRO chose Walt to oversee the site development and construction at its Energy Resource Recovery Facility at Oregon City. When that project morphed into the Clackamas Transfer and Hazardous Waste Disposal Center Walt's firm acted as METRO's resident agent. Surety Companies call on Walt for project takeover and completion services. Working with his network of contractors and suppliers timely completion is assured. The US Soil Conservation Service and the Sauvie Island Drainage District engaged W.R. Gamble Engineering to shepherd the completion of designs and construction oversight for the Sturgeon Lake Flushing Canal. Walt coordinated government designs, assembled the contract drawings and authored the contract. He also advertised, received the bids and made award recommendations to the District. Project QA/QC and administrative oversight were included as well.

In the mid 80's, through his relationship with now ex-Gibbons and Reed team members at Riedel International, W.R. Gamble Engineering began providing supplemental estimating and scheduling services to several entities under that firm's umbrella. Most notable was the reconstruction of I-84 to accommodate the MAX line installation. At the time it was the largest single contract award by ODOT. The Riedel personnel that participated in the JV for that work valued Walt's estimating and scheduling contributions. That relationship fostered several transit related assignments. The Sacramento Transit's Lightrail gave Walt more experience planning for downtown utility and track installation. The culmination was the assignment to perform the on-site project management for the 33 blocks of City street reconstruction and paved track installation from Holladay Park to the 11th Street Terminus in downtown Portland (MAX). Walt takes pride in that milestone project. The orchestration of multiple subcontracts, multiple owners, designers, business owners and the public was no easy task. The City - Tri-Met - Bechtel - Contractor team dealt with difficult site conditions, traffic, new techniques and a sensitive political climate to produce what is now a nationwide hallmark.

In partnership with Bob Pyritz a construction company (G&P Co.) was formed to field and operate two paving laydown spreads for ODOT. ODOT's cold-in-place-recycling trains were rehabilitating significant stretches of central and eastern Oregon primary highways. When that program was discontinued in 1987 Gamble Construction was established with one-half the equipment assets of G&P.

Gamble Construction focused on unique projects. Some of the larger ones being the condominium conversion of Mariner's Village at Charbonneau, the re-fitting and industrial development of a new plant for Northwest Rubber Extruders in Beaverton and the permitting and construction of McQuire Point, an 81 floating home development on the Columbia River.

In 1970 the Oregon Columbia Chapter of AGC appointed Walt to its Teamster Union Collective Bargaining team. That began an extended run of activism at AGC. His principal interests now include information systems technology and education. He chaired the National AGC committee for I.T. and remains the chair of the industry advisory board for OSU's CEM program. In 1991 he was rewarded with his election as Chapter President. Often the out spoken "advocate," he holds the respect of his peers through his willingness to get involved. An example of that involvement is the Construction Contractor's Board. Governor Kulongoski appointed Walt to two 4-year terms. Walt took a great idea from another Chapter President. Dale Campbell (P&C), the Bud Monnes Police Activities Center (PAL), and nurtured it to reality.

Gamble Construction Services continues to offer a complement of services in contracting, engineering and management. During the 90's significant business came from construction dispute resolution. Confidentiality limits the specificity but the projects and the disputes ranged from modest General Contractor v. Supplier disagreements to very large Public Owner v. GC. Walt serves effectively on both "sides." The technical aspects of the cases have involved details of the high technology industry as well as the rudimentary contracting topics like scope of work and delayed work. Client relationships are long term. One pavement management assignment is going on its 24th year.

Most recently, Walt shifted focus to early dispute resolution and mediation services. To complement his OJT in facilitation and mediation, added professional training and education is complete. The principle that early and swift action settles disputes is the focus of Walt's resolution model.

On a personal note, Walt and Jackie live in West Linn and have two sons, Stuart and Patrick. Stuart is married, an OSU CEM graduate and City policeman, lives in Stayton and has two children. Patrick is an art director at Arnold Advertising, a professional musician, and lives in Brooklyn. Walt enjoys the outdoors with hunting, fishing, skiing and running taking priority.