

WORLD-WIDE CONSULTANT

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After a 31 year career in the design, production and marketing of steel castings, Herb entered a second phase - that of Foundry Consultant, Foreign. We persuaded him to share his life story with us, which, with the help of his wife Cynthia, he has done in the following article.

No matter how carefully one may prepare for and plan a career, unexpected events can take charge. This has certainly been the case in my life. Assignments in a host of countries around the globe, adapting to new work habits, cultures, living conditions, and enjoying countless opportunities for sightseeing and recreation along the way, was certainly **not** the result of any career plan.

My first step toward becoming a civil engineer was sitting in my Uncle Pat's lap watching him draw sketches of bridges. I was supposed to take after Pat, so I, too, was to be a civil engineer. My family lived in Plainfield, New Jersey, close to Princeton, and many of my friends were planning to go to Princeton. One of my family's friends, who headed a large civil engineering firm, told us that they hired draftsmen from Stevens Tech, engineers from M. I. T., and managers from Princeton!

So, after four undergraduate years in the Princeton Engineering School and a year at the graduate college, I went forth with a C.E. degree seeking a job in an uncertain world. Fortunately, a tip from Princeton's Engineering Dean Green (Art Moody's uncle), took me to the Taylor Wharton Iron and Steel Co., in High Bridge, N. J., where I began in a management training program. This firm, founded in 1742, was of historic significance, being America's oldest, continuously operated company. It produced cannon balls in the Revolutionary War, and, in 1940, produced castings for the U. S. Army and Navy. We cast thousands of tank shoes for the British Valentine tank, so essential in the African desert campaign.

Taylor Wharton was a great experience for the next 31 years. I worked in

engineering, manufacturing and, lastly, in sales. I acquired a complete education in the production of both carbon steel and alloy steel castings. This experience would be the foundation for the consulting which I did later.

In 1943, with a commission in the Navy, I was ordered to the Welding, Casting and Forging Section of the Bureau of Ships in Washington, expediting and troubleshooting for all Naval procurement in that field. In



With friends at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

June 1945, I was headed for a new ship repair base being established in Okinawa. After two typhoons destroyed most of the buildings there, the Navy abandoned the base, and I eventually joined a group under Captain H. G. Rickover inspecting the postwar ship deactivation program on the West Coast.

In June 1946, I returned to Taylor Wharton, became successively plant manager, research director, plant manager again, and finally vice-president and general manager. Then, abruptly in 1965, for reasons which were never made clear to me, I was asked to resign, and a few years later the company went out of business. Though not recognizable at the time, this proved to be an extremely fortuitous event, launching me, as it did, on an exciting new career.

My first consulting job, after four months of job seeking, was a one-month audit of a specialty steel foundry in Sheffield, England. (Cynth had her bags packed even before I accepted the post). This led to a four months project at the Royal Demka Steel Works in Utrecht, Holland, with a week's skiing in Geilo, Norway in between. We covered most of Holland in our little Fiat, even braving the German autobahns on trips to Zurich (slow lane for 60 mph; conservative lane for 80 mph; and left lane for the hot-rodders at over 100 mph).

Upon our return from Europe in 1966 I accepted a position as foundry consultant with American Hoist and Derrick in St. Paul, Minnesota, where we bought a home. After nearly five years the project was terminated and I heard about and applied for a post as Foundry Expert in Taiwan under the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Our excitement was intense when an acceptance came through, and thus began a fascinating adventure for us on the other side of the world. The Taiwan Machinery and Manufacturing Co. was located in Kaoshiung, the most southern port in Taiwan, and we settled into a rented suburban house in a mixed community of Chinese and Westerners. Cyn became active in the Kaoshiung Women's Club, taught English to students and studied the Chinese language. We played golf at the Chinese Navy Golf Club. Through my job at the plant and these other activities, including the caddies at the golf club, we formed rewarding and long-term friendships.

Our Taiwanese stay was interrupted by the UN's recognition of the government of mainland China, terminating my program. I fulfilled my UN contract in Vienna, rewriting a paper entitled "Guidelines for the Development of a Demonstration Foundry in a

Developing Country." Cyn eventually joined me, leaving our Chinese cat in the care of an amah, and in our spare time we "did" everything in Vienna, took some memorable drives into Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and had some time in Greece.

The Hungary trip was both fascinating and hairy. First, our hotel reservations had been made for a different day; then we had to get the battery in the Avis car recharged; it went dead again in the middle of nowhere. I left Cyn with the car and hitched a ride with some students to the next town leaving my passport behind. Unable to reach Avis by phone, I was directed to AGIT, the state service station; the wrecker they sent brought in Cyn and our car and they "fixed" it while we had lunch. Then, after dark on a two lane road, the battery quit again; we managed to stop a good Samaritan who spoke no English but who took us to the sheriff in the next town who was watching TV in his bathrobe. While he shifted into his uniform his wife gave us juice and cakes; we went with a service truck to retrieve the car, but on our return to town at midnight found there was no room at the inn, so the truck driver, Imre Pechi, took us to his apartment, gave us drinks and scrambled eggs and their bedroom to sleep in and breakfast the next morning. Since our visas had now expired we went back to AGIT, got an extension and a new battery, and except for a one and a half hour delay at the frontier, made it back to Vienna in one piece. Though maybe not the preferred way, the experience gave us a wonderful exposure to some very friendly Hungarians.

When we returned to Taiwan my contract was with the Chinese government there, involving modernization planning for several foundries for the next year and a half. March 1974 found us in Singapore where a local firm was interested in developing a steel foundry for the production of anchors and other steel castings for the shipping industry. My feasibility study showed that profits would be a long way down the road, so this one did not get built.

Before leaving Singapore, however, Cyn and I toured Maylasia - Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Cameron Highlands, Fraser's Hill and Penang, trying the local golf courses on the way. This great sport has been a helpful diversion in many countries where we were working. We have managed to play 38 different courses in 19 foreign countries. We even sampled the courses at Guam on our way home from Singapore. Complicating our travels, however, was our precious Chinese cat, which Cyn had succeeded in smuggling

into Singapore from Taiwan. Getting her, the cat that is, into the U. S. took some doing.

We had sold the house in St. Paul, and a hiatus in my consulting work made it possible to give serious attention to finding a place to live. We took our time, driving south from New Jersey with the North Carolina mountains in mind. But it was in Greeneville, Tennessee where our search ended with a 100 year old house that had WORK written all over it. But it was close to the Link Hills Country Club, so we signed the contract, joined the club and began the extensive alterations involved, living in a mobile home in the meantime.

No sooner had this move occurred when I was off to Korea on another job. The year 1975 was busy - while remodeling the farmhouse, digging and planting gardens, I spent 129 days away, mostly in Korea, covered 75,000 miles by air, rewrote the pamphlet on the Demonstration Foundry for UNIDO, and managed to play 40 rounds of golf.

From then on, it has been more and more of the same, each assignment bringing new parts of the world, new and challenging jobs and hosts of new friends.

- A five year program in Mexico, involving 71 trips, with and without cat.
- Consulting trips for Esco Corp. to Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Spain and the Philippines.
- A new steel foundry in Honduras, my latest assignment about three years ago.

In 1979 began an association with the International Executive Service Corps (IESC), through Stan Wilson, a resident of Princeton and a good friend of Elly Godfrey. This organization, largely inspired by and originally headed by Frank Pace '33, sends retired

businessmen to assist developing countries. Through IESC I have worked on projects in Peru; Alexandria, Egypt; Manila, Philippines and Calcutta, India. Calcutta must be seen to be believed - piles of garbage everywhere, streets jammed with cows, goats, dogs, rickshaws, bicycles, motorcycles, in addition to the cars and street cars; countless people living in makeshift houses, noise unbearable. While in India we did get to see the Taj Mahal and to visit Nepal.

While consulting inquiries still come in, I am not sure I would accept another IESC assignment, although Cyn and I would like to go to Poland or Hungary, or possibly Russia. I firmly believe that the U. S. can and should assist these countries in improving their operations, however, in my opinion, teams of consultants rather than individual experts in the several fields would be more effective.

Although 60 years in the foundry business may seem like a "one track" career, mine have been filled with excitement, a host of friends in far flung places, an exposure to life all over our planet and many rewarding accomplishments. Special memories include Macchu Pichu in Peru, the pyramids in both Mexico and Egypt, the Himalayas from Nepal, Taroko Gorge, The Grand Hotel in Taipei, the beaches at Oulanpi, Taiwan, the castles in Austria, Prague, Budapest and Holland. I could go on and on.

I believe our stay in Taiwan for two and a half years was by far the most satisfying, not only in tasks accomplished but in the business and social contacts made there. Certainly the broad education received in Princeton contributed a lot to an ability to adapt to and cope with the diverse cultures in the forty different countries where we have lived, worked and played.



Two smiling former Class Presidents with photographer Marsh in background, at our 59th.