

A Tribute to the *Journal of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers*: 1914 to the Present

The advancement of any profession requires the exchange of practical information in a timely, interesting, concise and knowledgeable manner.

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The value of the *Journal of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers* (BSCE) to civil engineers worldwide is immeasurable. The *Journal*, published continuously since 1914, has been circulated to BSCE members and to more than 40 countries by annual subscription. Thousands of peer-reviewed papers have been published since its origin, providing an insightful look into the achievements of BSCE's members as well as from worldwide contributors. These papers collectively document the advances that have been made in civil engineering practice during this century.

Journal articles involve local, national and international projects, and include discussions on design and construction techniques as well as articles on the use of leading-edge technologies. Among other things, the *Journal* also:

- Hosts discussions on professional practice issues involving education, licensing and ethics;
- Provides compilations of collected soil boring data for the Greater Boston area;
- Documents civil engineering history and heritage through local historians; and,
- Publishes memoirs on prominent BSCE members.

Contributing authors from the past include many noteworthy civil engineers such as John M. Biggs, Thomas R. Camp, Clemens Herschel, Ernest A. Herzog, Karl R. Kennison and Karl Terzaghi.

The content in some *Journal* articles published decades ago is timeless. Articles were originally prepared as presentations to BSCE members. Of these, one noteworthy example is from the October 23, 1957, Student Night pres-

entation that Dr. Karl Terzaghi made to a joint meeting of members from both BSCE and the Massachusetts Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). His presentation was published as the article entitled "Consultants, Clients and Contractors," in the January 1958 issue of the *Journal* (Vol. 45, No. 1). In that article, which is reprinted here in its entirety on pages 46-54, Dr. Terzaghi describes his professional experiences working as a consultant to engineering organizations on large earthwork operations across five continents. Forty years later, this article is a testament of the strength of the civil engineering legacy that was left to us by those who practiced civil engineering many years before. It also remains timely and useful to current civil engineering practice.

An added bonus to Terzaghi's 1958 paper are the follow-up discussion papers written by sixteen prominent engineers. These discussions were also published in the *Journal*. Some examples of the comments Dr. Terzaghi received on his paper are:

Arthur Casagrande (Professor of Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering at Harvard University) wrote that "too many variables [are] involved in the relationships between consultants, clients and contractors to permit hard and fast rules in order to assure that consultants will be used to the best interest of a project."

D.J. Bleifuss (of Bleifuss, Hostetter & Associates, Consulting Engineers, Sacramento, California) wrote: "Our trouble with an engineer's performance is this: if his job is well done, the work goes smoothly, and client and contractor alike are apt to consider that the money spent on engineering has been wasted; if the work does not go smoothly, they are apt to place the blame on incompetent engineering."

Ralph Peck (Professor of Soil Mechanics, University of Illinois) wrote that "no two consultants would have identical views about the relations among consultants, clients and contractors." His discussion continues on, addressing the special opportunities and problems of the professor-consultant.

Frank A. Marston (Partner at Metcalf & Eddy, Engineers) wrote what has been an all too familiar line: "Inexperienced officials are sometimes led to select an engineer for a project because of a proposed low fee, rather than on the basis of qualifications."

And finally, H.J.B. Harding (Consulting Engineer, London) provided a British perspective on the subject. He wrote: "In Great Britain independent consultants are often professors in engineering colleges who undertake consultation and research in order to widen their field and improve the value of their teaching. The relation between client and consultant is set out in a most interesting way. A consultant will find himself a more popular figure when he is called in after trouble has arisen than in the early stages when his warning may be unwelcome in the prevailing atmosphere. . . This led me to say. . . at a meeting of the Institution of Civil Engineers that 'among Civil Engineers wishful thinking amounts to an occupational disease.' "

In July 1958, Dr. Terzaghi published a closing response that recognized the contributions, thoughts, observations and experience records of the discussers. Today, this collection of articles shows proof of how little time has changed the manner in which civil engineers still practice and the challenges that we continue to face.

Many more examples of timeless and historically rich articles can be found in the *Journal*. A few examples include:

- A March 1932 article on "George Washington, Engineer" by Edward Grossman (Vol. 19, No. 3);
- "Notes on the Design of Earth Dams" by Arthur Casagrande in October 1950 (Vol. 37, No. 4); and
- "Hurricane Protection in New England" by John B. McAleer and Peter J.A. Scott in April 1958 (Vol. 45, No. 2).

Also, many distinguished authors can be found in the *Journal* — such as Major General Emerson C. Itschner, former Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army. His paper entitled "Engineering for National Security" was published

in July 1959 (Vol. 46, No. 3) following a presentation to a joint meeting of BSCE and the Boston Post of the Society of Military Engineers.

In 1983, BSCES weighed the future of the *Journal* very deliberately. After much study, BSCES endorsed "a major restructuring of the entire *Journal* effort." Today, the *Journal's* successor, *Civil Engineering Practice: Journal of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section/ASCE*, carries on the tradition of providing a forum of exchange for the furtherance of the civil engineering profession. Since its first issue in 1986, *Civil Engineering Practice* has sought, as stated in its charter, "to capture the spirit and substance of contemporary civil engineering practice through articles that emphasize techniques now being applied successfully in the analysis, justification, design, construction, operation and maintenance of civil engineering works." Special issues of *Civil Engineering Practice* have featured:

- Boston Geology (Spring 1989, Vol. 4, No. 1);
- The Boston Harbor Project (Spring/Summer 1994, Vol. 9, No. 1);
- The Central Artery/Tunnel Project (Spring/Summer 1996, Vol. 11, No. 1); and,
- The Yangtze River Three Gorges Dam Project (Spring/Summer 1997, Vol. 12, No. 1).

A complete series of BSCES's *Journal* is available for on-site use at The Engineering Center library (1 Walnut St., Boston, MA 02108-3616). Several local university libraries (such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and others) also have a series of BSCES's *Journal* in their civil engineering

reference department. Internationally, the Institution of Civil Engineers in London maintains a collection in its library. (Back issues of more recent issues are also available for purchase through The Engineering Center.)

Information on the *Journal* is on the World Wide Web at www.quale.com/cep/cephome.html. A linked index of articles that have appeared in *Civil Engineering Practice* from 1986 to the present is at www.engineers.org/boces. Work is in progress to expand the *Journal* index on BSCES's web site to extend back to 1914. BSCES's *Journal* Editorial Board is working toward a goal of enabling worldwide access to our publication, on-line search capability and electronic reprint and subscription requests.



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