Born 7 November 1858, near Richmond (Wayne County), Indiana; son of John T. Stubbs, a farmer, and Esther Bailey Stubbs, 12 brothers and sisters, 5 dying in infancy; educated at Hesper, Kansas, University of Kansas (preparatory department); married Stella Hostettler, 21 September 1887, 2 sons and 2 daughters; religious preference Methodist; died 25 March 1929, of heart disease, in Topeka; buried in Lawrence Cemetery.

In 1908 Walter Roscoe Stubbs, leader of the "boss busters," was nominated for governor in the first Republican party primary. He defeated Jeremiah D. Botkin, Democrat, 196,692 votes to 162,385. Third-party candidates George Francis Hibner (Socialist), Alfred L. Hope (Prohibition), and John W. Northrop (Independence League) collected a total of 15,696 votes. In 1910 Stubbs was renominated, but his margin of victory was small—although not as low as Hoch's in his second election. Stubbs defeated George H. Hodges, Democrat, by 162,181 votes to 146,014, while Socialist S. M. Stallard and Prohibition candidate William C. Cady together received 17,759 votes.

Stubbs, more than any other Republican, brought the Kansas Republican party to its progressive stance in the early twentieth century. He pushed for many reforms as governor, including a campaign expense law, commission government for towns and cities,
normal training (teacher preparation) in high schools, and civil-service reform. He sought improvement of state administration, regulation of lobbyists, and strict enforcement of prohibition.

The Stubbs family moved from Indiana to Iowa and then to Hesper (Douglas County), Kansas in 1869. Sometime before 1880 Walter Stubbs entered business as a contractor for building railroad grades. He prospered, expanded his business, and became a bank president and an owner of much land. He was a self-made millionaire, and in keeping with his Quaker rearing, he sought to serve his neighbors through public service. He was elected as a Republican to the state house of representatives in 1902, but he had difficulty with party bosses. Frustrated by demands from party leaders, he organized his own faction—the “boss busters,” who took over the Republican party in 1904. Stubbs served two more terms in the house and was chairman of the Republican central caucus and speaker of
the house. He guided the Kansas primary law through the legislature.

In 1912, his last year as governor, Stubbs defeated Charles Curtis, a Republican conservative, in the party primary race for the United States Senate, only to lose in the general election to Democrat W. H. Thompson. Stubbs sought the Senate seat again in 1918 and a return to the governorship in 1922 and 1924, but he was unsuccessful on all attempts. In later years he managed his cattle ranches in Kansas, Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico. His home was Wind-Hill near the university campus in Lawrence.

REFERENCES: Blythe, 1910; Doyle, 1932; LaForre, 1974; McKee, 1967; Sageser, 1968.