

the curt brown chronicles



Tie Points

In many municipalities “tie point” sheets are an invaluable source of information for historic survey information; in some places they are essential. The term generally refers to tie outs, once a common practice before the advent of electronic measurement. Unfortunately, in the age of electronic maps and coordinate based land surveying, their value has been improperly diminished as many surveyors place GPS derived positions over legal boundary monuments. After all, the value must be correct as it is displayed to the nearest thousandth.

GIS analysts refer to a Tie Point as: “A point in a digital image or aerial photograph that represents the same location in an

components for establishing boundary lines. For further information about the use of tie points, visit: www.tiepoints.com/index_files/Page7927.htm

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From a local surveyor I received a question concerning the status of tie points and what special value they have as evidence. My answer is:

Public records are admissible in evidence; there is no trouble introducing evidence of tie point positions. Private records, on the other hand, cannot be introduced as

Monuments and tie points set by city officials, especially if in connection with their official duties, are often accepted in court as being correct unless proven incorrect. This has advantages and much merit in some instances.

After all of the original monuments of an addition to a city have disappeared and uncertainty exists as to street and property locations, tie points by the city engineer are a welcome sight. And after these have been used a number of years, they become accepted as true. This is one of the methods of establishing boundaries and eventually this gives certainty to locations. Without tie points having prima facie status as evidence, many property lines could not be established without court action.

But tie pointing by the city engineer, improperly done, can cause great harm. In one city in the Imperial Valley the city engineer tie pointed all of the blocks by giving them exactly record measurements, and then placed all of the surplus and deficiency in the streets. Many instances of improper tie pointing are found in the court's records, as at Santa Barbara, Sacramento and Racine (Wis.). The usual objections to improperly set tie points come from surveyors with private records; they know when something is wrong. Prima facie status of evidence (tie points) does not always prevent troubles; but it does, at times, give definiteness to otherwise degenerated situations. Tie points, properly set, represent one of the best methods of giving stability to property location. ■

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adjacent image or aerial photograph. Usually expressed as a pair, tie points can be used to link images and create mosaics.”

Unfortunately, far too many public agencies, staffed by clerical people unfamiliar with land surveying, do not recognize the value of these important maps. In San Diego where Curt Brown practiced and developed his many concepts, considerable sections of the city were laid out and controlled by tie point sheets prepared by survey crews in the 1930's as a WPA project. They are essential

evidence without the author being present (there are some exceptions).

Usually, but not always, the monuments and tie points set by the city engineer or the public surveyor, when performing official duties, is prima facie evidence. At law, prima facie evidence is taken as true until such time as it is proven false. Recorded deeds are prima facie evidence of the contents of writings. The original deed may be produced to refute the contents of the recorded document, but, until it is, the recorded deed is accepted.

Author **Michael Pallamary** has compiled the writings and lectures of the late Curt M. Brown. These works are published in *The Curt Brown Chronicles*.