

# the curt brown chronicles



## The Challenging Future for the Land Surveyor

**C**urt Brown spent a considerable amount of time and energy in advancing the interests of the profession and, as he astutely noted, notwithstanding the evolution of measuring equipment, the fundamentals components of the profession merit consideration and attention. Then, as now, the future of the profession lies with its members and state boards.

—Mike Pallamary

### 1964

Within the last generation we have witnessed the most rapid advancement in the science of land measurements that has ever occurred in any like period in the history of the world. The more important areas of progress have been in electronic distance measurements, in photogrammetry, in electronic computing, and in the knowledge of the size and shape of the earth, that is, geodesy.

Photogrammetry has supplanted many of the old transit and tape methods. For any large area, distances between control positions are determined electronically; contours are platted from photographs; directions are measured with improved types of theodolites; and trilateration may someday eliminate part of this step. With the invention of laser beams, it will only be a matter of time until the beams will be adapted to distance measurements. We will probably live to see the day when short distances will be measured accurately and economically with light beams.

In several States, photogrammetry has been used to resurvey land boundaries.

Though the cost is as yet excessive for desirable accuracies, this will probably be overcome in the foreseeable future. In a few instances, original property surveys have been made using photogrammetry. The usefulness of the old work horse, the transit and tape, is gradually being reduced in scope. While these instruments probably will never be completely supplanted, their importance will continue to diminish with time.

Many land surveyors have found that they have had to adopt photogrammetry, electronic calculation methods, and electronic measurements in order to survive. Those who fail to use these new tools are apt to find themselves priced out of competitive range.

The future of any profession is wholly dependent upon the quality of the new men admitted to practice. Are we seeking new, professional surveyors on the basis of what grandpa had to know, or are we seeking them on the basis of what they will have to know to survive in coming years? Are we sticking our heads in the sand and assuming that the profession of land surveying can forever confine itself to horse-and-buggy methods, or are we going to expand the scope of examinations to include new methods?

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Professional standing must be earned; it cannot be attained by self-proclamation. The standing of land surveyors in this country must rise or fall with the quality of its members. If the public thinks that

land surveyors as a group have superior knowledge, have professional behavior, and deserve to be considered professional people, only then will they be such.

Of all things that will shape the future standing of land surveyors, the quality of new members being admitted to practice is of paramount importance. This can be regulated by critical discrimination in the process of screening candidates and by improving the quality of examinations so that those unqualified will not be permitted to practice.

Those preparing examinations can benefit their profession by composing questions that go beyond the horizon of mere factual knowledge and test candidates ability to think, to use logic and reason, to come to correct conclusions, to demonstrate good judgment, and to effectively communicate all of these to the grader... Most boards of registration already have the power to determine what the scope of examinations should be. By a mere declaration of policy, better examinations can be given; and, where this is possible, it is hoped the boards will do so.

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