



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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Changes experienced in his 50+ years of appraising

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Bruce Taylor, MAI, SRA, of Fairlee, Vermont, wrote this article about the changes he has experienced in his 50+ years of appraising. Bruce is the former president of the New Hampshire Chapter of the Appraisal Institute, charter president of the Vermont Chapter, and also served 15 years on National Committees for AI.

Measuring and Maps

I started with the original Cole-Layer-Trumble Company (CLT) in the early 1960s working in Barre, Vermont. I was handed a strange looking pipe that broke into two pieces with a dowel in the middle so that you have four feet on each end of it. It was marked with red and black tape every six inches. This, I was told, was a measuring device that I was to measure buildings with. For the next three years while I remained with CLT, that was my main source of measurement. Occasionally, I was lent a tape to use but for the most part, it was this 8-foot pole. It was a very speedy process. We measured by slapping it on the side of the building, remembering where the end of the measuring device was as you went and kept flip-flopping down the side until you have 24 ½ feet or 32 feet or 100 feet, keeping in mind how many times you had struck the building.

In those days, after you measured, you leaned up against the building with your clipboard, sketched it right on site and figured the square feet by a multiplication table glued to the back of the clipboard or by slide. Then the card went into the local office or perhaps to Portland, Maine where the regional office was, and women did the dollar calculations on all of the cards.

That metal pole was an excellent tool for measuring bays. You could flip it in and get the depth and then flip it out and get the length. It was also a good weapon against dogs. Once you doubled it up, it made a formidable weapon.

We went from the pole to the 50 or 100 foot measuring tapes with metal strands woven in the tape, which could be attention getting if they dropped on an electric fence. The fiberglass tapes would break in the wintertime. Then I had an early measuring device that was activated by sound waves but the batteries would go flat in the wintertime if you left it in your car. Now I have a Disto laser measuring device, which is far easier to operate, and very precise.

Perils of Appraising

One of the most unusual events happened to a friend of mine. He was measuring a large farm property that was quite a building complex. He went to the back of the barn to measure it and noticed a flat area that was snow and ice covered. It looked like he could walk across it and measure the end of the barn, but it turned out to be a slurry pit and he fell in up to his waist. It took him six months to get the smell out of his car.

I was doing an appraisal that was headed to court and one of the questions raised was whether the dwelling was insulated. I visited the homeowner to see if he could support his claim that the building was insulated. We removed the light fixture and sure enough, the ceiling/roof were insulated. It was

not as easy to remove the wall outlet. His wife was sitting at the kitchen table against a wall. He left the room briefly and came back with a huge hammer, pushed her out of the way and proceeded to smash a hole in the wall under the table and triumphantly stated, "See, I told you it was insulated."

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