## Title News

the official publication of the American Land Title Association



Perspective: Title Company Equipment



March, 1971





## A Message from the Chairman, Title Insurance and Underwriters Section

#### MARCH, 1971

Our Mid-Winter Conference is now history. This meeting has always seemed to me as the launching of our programs for the ensuing year. All of our committees have been formed, and the Conference provides an appropriate sounding board for the course of action your association should follow. The Conference speakers and panelists have focused on what we can look forward to during the balance of 1971. Certainly our society is facing rapidly changing times. For those of you who have not read, "Future Shock," I would recommend that you do so, in order to become more aware of the rapidity of change.

The land title industry is no exception. For those of us who have been engaged in the profession a few years, we can see many changes. The Mid-Winter Conference and state meetings give us some insight as to how to face the future changes.

Speaking of state meetings, many are scheduled during the spring months. Your ALTA officers look forward with anticipation to meeting you, bringing you up to date as to the national industry, and getting the benefit of your thinking as to our course of action.

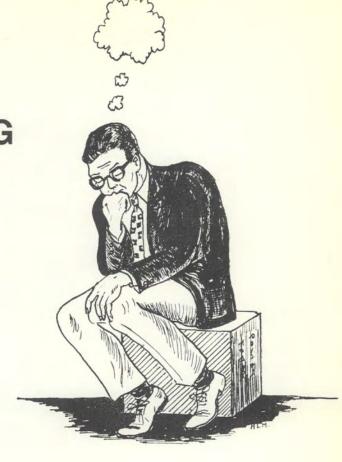
Sincerely,

JAMES O. HICKMAN

James O Bukman

# HAVE YOU BEEN THINKING ABOUT MODERNIZING YOUR TITLE PLANT?

...BUT ARE UNCERTAIN OF YOUR FIRST STEP?



HW SYSTEMS, INC., specializing in systems for the title industry, offers expert management consulting and thorough evaluation and solution of title plant automation problems.

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#### HW SYSTEMS, Inc.

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H W Systems, Inc. is an independent computer system development company which specializes in providing management consulting and cost effective computer services to the land title industry.

## Mid-South Awards Law Scholarship

James Marshall Doyle, Jr., a Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam, is the recipient of Mid-South Title Company's tenth annual \$2,000 scholarship to Vanderbilt University School of Law.

His selection was announced jointly by George N. Houston, president, Mid-South; Dr. John S. Beasley, II, associate dean and director of admissions, Vanderbilt; and Henry M. Beaty, Jr., chairman of the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Association selection committee.

A native of Memphis, Doyle was graduated from The University of the South at Sewanee in 1966, and attended Southern Methodist University Graduate School. In 1967, he volunteered for the Marines and entered officers candidate school at Quantico, Va. He served in Vietnam as platoon

leader and was wounded in the fighting at Khe Sanh. Before being discharged in 1970, Doyle applied for admission to and was accepted by the Vanderbilt School of Law.

Inaugurated 10 years ago, the Mid-South scholarship, is to provide full first-year tuition.

## Commonwealth Aids Historical Work

A forgotten national historical landmark, the house in which Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, is going to be recreated in Philadelphia.

The site at the Southwest Corner of Seventh and Market Streets is marked only by a plaque. In recent years, it has been used as a parking lot and lunch stand. It was sold recently as part of a 23,000 square foot tract to Fidelity Bank, executor of the

estate of Emily S. Balch and trustee for the Balch Institute.

The Balch estate will eventually sell a portion of the site to the Independence National Historic Park, which will recreate the house using funds raised by the Independence Hall Association, with matching funds from the Department of the Interior. A library also will be built on the site.

According to Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company, which conducted the title search and insured the title to the property, the property has a history dating back to November 3, 1735, when William Branson acquired title to the property from John Penn, Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, Esquires, "true and absolute Proprietaries and Governors in Chief of the Province of Pennsylvania."

Title subsequently was acquired by Jacob Graff, a bricklayer, by a deed dated October 27, 1775, from Edmund Physick and his wife, Abigail. Graff constructed the original threestory house at the corner.

The following spring when the Continental Congress met in the State House (Independence Hall) two blocks away, young Thomas Jefferson was a roomer on the second floor of the Graff House. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, introduced a resolution to the Continental Congress "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States."

On June 10, 1776, a committee composed of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, Roger Sherman, and Thomas Jefferson, was selected to prepare a Declaration of Independence. Jefferson, who at 33 was the youngest member of the committee, was selected to write it. And so, in his second floor sitting room in the Graff House at Seventh and Market Streets, Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, with some changes by John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. On June 28 it was presented to Congess, where debate on the Richard Henry Lee resolution was resumed. The resolution was finally passed on July 2 and two days later, on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted.



Mr. and Mrs. James M. Doyle, Jr., look over a letter informing him of his selection as recipient of the tenth annual Mid-South Title Company scholarship to Vanderbilt University School of Law.

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the official publication of the American Land Title Association

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ON THE COVER: Title company equipment is the subject for two articles in this issue. Beginning on page 4, Russell Lowry, Jr., discusses equipment selection from his viewpoint as an experienced systems officer for Chicago Title and Trust Company. And, on page 7, Walter A. Bowers of The Street Abstract Company, Inc., Yates Center, Kans., presents his thoughts on modernizing a smaller title plant.

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GARY L. GARRITY, Editor, CAROLYN E. CAPPS, Assistant Editor

#### Russell Lowry, Jr., Systems Officer Chicago Title and Trust Company

## **Selecting Effective Equipment**

Editor's note: Russell Lowry, Jr., systems officer at Chicago Title and Trust Company, has appeared at a number of state land title association meetings to make presentations on modern equipment utilization in the title and abstract business. His somewhat humorous and occasionally caustic handling of the subject over the past several years has generated a fairly high level of interest. It was suggested that his knowledge and insight could be shared with the entire land title industry through an article in Title News; this article is an outgrowth of that suggestion. In addition, it was decided that it might not be appropriate in such an article to level criticism of specific devices as to manufacturer name.

It was with a great deal of difficulty that this article was written. Although I have given numerous presentations on the subject, I found this writing not so simple because there appeared to be something lacking. The subject of selecting equipment for our business-treated by itselfseemed somehow out of context. After a great deal of thought, I came to the startling conclusion that the only reason a title or abstract company acquires equipment is because it maintains a plant of records. What was needed, I concluded, was some preliminary treatment of the concept of keeping a plant.

However, the word, "plant", and the idea of maintaining a plant have become questionable to many current day operators. This should not be. A plant should be efficient and carry its own weight. It must be recognized as the prime competitive advantage that a title or abstract company has in its community. While a plant does not bring in the title business, it does establish and fortify the service reputation of a company.

Before I proceed, therefore, into discussing equipment and equipment concepts, it might be well to establish



Author Lowry

the value of maintaining a plant. If I cannot do this in the reader's mind, if the reader does not feel that the plant is really a worthwhile expense of the operation, then any equipment consideration, or anything that I might suggest tends to be a futile exercise.

#### What's Happened To The Idea Of Maintaining A Title Record Plant

The possessor of the large comprehensive title plant today is generally apprehensive. His company may be the biggest fish in the pond in the community, but he sees himself as the company with the biggest overhead or expense—an expense that his competitor generally does not have. These feelings are usually aggravated in periods of declining revenue. The competitor with no plant or slight plant feels relatively little pinch; the words that best describe the expenses of a big plant are "relentless" and "rising".

What must come about is for the owner of the large plant to ask himself some hard questions and give some honest answers. Is the plant—as originally planned—properly conceived for the long haul? Is it a genuine production device or really only a clever paper arrangement? Is the plant the brain child of one or two people who gave it all its initial impetus and have now passed on and left it to others who are not so enamored? Was it ever actually financially justi-

fied (its costs related to prices charged for services)? Are costs actually documented or kept track of? Was the plant launched in a high-revenue period and its true cost never really matched to revenue?

The plant, of course, must be well justified and the only way justification can be determined is to know what the costs are. The plant manager must recognize the plant cost as a true cost of doing business. Knowing such costs in detail puts him into the best position to know what kind of equipment is most needed in his plant. Far too often abortive decisions are made without knowing the true facts of the operation.

Perhaps I am old-fashioned, but I still believe that the title or abstract company that has the plant has the best chance of winning the ball game. Preferably that plant should be exclusive to the company. How else can it be justified as a competitive advantage?

What appear to be on the increase are shared plant situations, which I admit are somewhat of a paradox. I can understand the need in many situations to share expenses but I do not understand why a company will drop itself into a shared market as a result. It also seems likely that all research, development and improvement will be arrested in shared plant arrangements and, in fact, most likely the very plants that cry out for improvement and are unduly expensive are the very ones that become shared.

Another latter day phenomenon is the setting up of shared arrangements in order to be able to afford a computer plant being constructed. Here most likely a very efficient plant will evolve—with its value diluted by multiple ownership.

#### What is the Solution?

If you are the owner of a plant exclusively—you are in a unique service position. What must be done is to build the best mouse trap. It behooves the company to develop its unique service position and become evermore competitive. A good part of this may well be a thorough revamping of its title plant.

The plant concept should be re-examined and its proper justification established. There should be no excuse for not exercising complete control over its costs and to make that control continuing. Whatever re-design the plant takes should recognize the developing technologies. In practical terms, the plant should be predicated on a system that spends the least amount to put away data, recognizes the transitory nature of the data it files, and therefore plans for its purge. What must be avoided is becoming "record bound".

Consideration should be given to doing away with paper, filing less things away, checking on what is being filed and its true justification. Spend less on transcription and arrangement as intermediate production steps. Start to build the final product, in effect, the day the application is received. Eliminate the superfluous niceties—decide what is truely essential in plant work to best sell the services. After all this, then begin to consider what is needed as effective equipment to meet these objectives.

For the balance of this article, I'm going to review some of the concepts and devices which I feel pass the "effective equipment" test. Some of these are probably already familiar, but I would challenge the reader to consider or reconsider the concepts offered as to all of the possibilities that the particular system offers. There is a need to take the radical and systematic approach.

#### Let's Take A New Look At Photography—It's Electrified Now

Are there still those who reject photography as the greatest transcription tool available to our industry? Are the reasons something like: "it picks up too much—an abstract is better", or "I can abstract a document faster and more accurately and more cheaply than I can by taking a picture of it"?

The industry has come a long way since the day of the wet chemical produced photostat. The medium has changed from an expensive emulsion coated paper that drys, becomes stiff and cracks. Now, more than several dozen manufacturers offer machinery that requires no chemicals—turns out copies of almost anything in seconds and it costs only pennies per copy. At least three manufacturers place copies on plain paper of your choice. In fact, the technology now has reached the stage of true transcription—the ability to "lift writing or printing" from almost anywhere and put it down wherever and on whatever the user decides.

Since it has become electrified, the ability to change copy from black on white to white on black or vice versa has become a matter of electrical polarity and this is often easily adjusted with a toggle switch.

But electrostatic photography in its developing competence can pose a threat. The ever speedier machine appears to encourage copy making which can return us to the paper jungle. The good, easy-to-use copier that makes copies on plain paper must be used with discretion—and primarily as a transcription device. If the primary purpose of a copying device is to produce a paper file—then its advantage will become a growing disadvantage. If it is files that must be built, consider the next section.

#### Microfilm-Make it Useful

If microfilm as a tool of our industry has reached any degree of acceptance it is probably in the document library application. This appears to be the most universally accepted form of such record in both large and small companies alike. For the die-hards who still reject the concept, I'd like to point out that the camera can be acquired for around \$1,000 and the reader for less than \$300 and the user will be able to store archival records of documents for less than a cent a page. This includes the write off of the cost of the equipment.

This produces rolls of microfilm that are inviolable as to record integrity. It almost seems ridiculous to argue the virtues of a paper file (which is "violable") when it can be shown that where paper stores at the rate of 4,000 to 7,000 sheets per

square foot of accessible floor space of the title office, the microfilm file equivalent contains a quarter of million records in the same square foot. But microfilm needs greater acceptance. It must be substituted for more existing paper records—even records that are in constant use.

It is my feeling that this will come to pass when the title office equips itself with proper reading or viewing stations and equipment. In fact, the day is not far off where the microfilm reader should be integrated with the office desk—the viewing screen in a horizontal mode much like an open book or sheet of paper lying on the desk.

Microfilm has a lot going for it. It always provides security in that it can be readily and cheaply duplicated and the duplicate stored remote. The ability to cheaply duplicate offers mobility of record if that is an appropriate term. What I mean is the ability to place complete duplicates in several locations. Think of the branch office that has its own complete record system. Inviolability or the preservation of a sequence of records and elimination of the problem of the missing paper or the misfiled paper cannot be denied.

I am not necessarily recommending microfilm files "with reader printer machines attached", but only as a last resort. Again the advantage begins to dilute if the system relies on exploding every reference sought to a piece of paper. Microfilm as a primary reference record in many different forms offers the title company a decided advantage in storage capacity and record integrity. Output should also be considered. Before you mail that piece of paper, be it an abstract, policy or even a bill, run it through the microfilm camera. Genuine savings will be effected in paper, carbon and storage costs.

#### Record Accessibility

Our generation will probably go down in history as the impatient generation. Consider the number of make-ready tasks that have been automated:

—threading a box Brownie with film

- —threading a movie projector or movie camera
- -threading a tape recorder
- —threading a new ribbon in the typewriter and a number of others.

Perhaps it might be called the cassette or cartridge revolution. The microfilm industry has not been left out. At least half a dozen manufacturers offer cartridge or cassette loaded readers. There is now even a microfilm camera that is cartridge loaded. This feature has made microfilm in roll form highly accessible.

I have always liked the story of the title company which sought to secure its paper document files with a back up series of microfilm rolls. This was done with great care and the resultant film was neatly cartoned in indexed cardboard cartons, arrayed in drawers near the paper file. This file required no maintenance except to occasionally dust off the cabinets and perhaps add water to humidified lower drawers. Nobody bothered it much. This film was intended as a back up, in case the paper file failed but it only seemed to cause the clerks to look harder for a missing paper rather than get any use. Presumably the help didn't want to fuss around with rolls of film, threading and etc.

But then one day a new reader was acquired—a reader that required cartridged film rolls exclusively and in order to suit its use, the entire file of film rolls was duly installed in those neat "plastic ham sandwiches"—or so they resembled.

Now a strange thing happenedperhaps slowly at first, but steadily increasing. Nobody goes near the paper file anymore-why should they-what with the missing members-this is never true in the "new" file. One just plugs in that ham sandwich-presses the lever and zips to an image. Since the file occupies only about 1/20th of the space of the paper file-not much walking and seeking is involved. Can you guess what great plans are being made to get rid of an entire file of, because everybody's tired of dusting all those paper cabinets and the whole thing is a fire hazard anyway.

The typical film cartridge contains 100 feet of microfilm. At ordinary re-

ductions, that amount of film should contain about 2,000 to 3,000 legal documents. Just think of 2,000 to 3,000 documents inviolably contained and readily accessible in each of such size plastic boxes, and when you've got that picture in your mind—call your paper salvage dealer.

#### Microfilm Ledgers

In early attempts to otherwise utilize microfilm on a unitized basis in our industry, the aperture card concept was developed. This has its merits in some applications wherein the individual picture was a high rate of inquiry. One example of this is the subdivision plat that has been microfilmed on 35mm or even larger width film. But the application to a single document is somewhat questionable because of the highly transitory need for the average document mentioning a single parcel of property.

With the development of good engineered film installers (or stuffers as they are occasionally called) the idea of distributing a strip of film of random recording to precisely labeled microfilm jackets has gained increased acceptance. The microfilm jacket that is manufactured in an assortment of sizes can contain up to 50 or more individual frames of microfilm. The application I like the best is the designation of a jacket as to a particular parcel of property. This is accomplished either by coded number or literal description in an adhesive label. Some jackets are so manufactured so that their top edge has been treated to accept typewriting directly on to the opaque plastic surface.

The jackets are filed in property order much like ordinary 4x6 or 5x8 card files. The daily recording contained on a strip of film is "posted" to the individual jacket by the film stuffers which feature roll film conveyance, a reader screen to view the film before it is cut, and an electrically actuated cutting blade that separates the frame from the roll as it is being fed into the jacket chamber.

This provides a pure plastic tract book system if you will—no paper or writing is involved and each jacket Continued on page 12

## Thoughts on Modernizing A Smaller Title Plant

More than half the counties in the nation probably have two things in common with Woodson County, Kansas: they are essentially rural in makeup and they are sparsely populated.

That's the thought of Walter A. Bowers, president of The Street Abstract Company, Inc., Yates Center, Kansas, as he contemplates title plant equipment and modernization. Using his own plant in Woodson County as a reference point, Bowers notes that "there must be a 'break even' size plant and there must be a size too small to think about the investment required and annual operating costs" in connection with adding equipment for microfilming and automation.

Accordingly, Bowers sets forth the following thoughts on estimated costs for microfilm and punch cards for a small plant—in the hope they will stimulate comment from others and thus prove increasingly useful to titlemen associated with smaller abstracting operations. ALTA members wishing to contribute their views are invited to write *Title News*.

In establishing related cost estimates for his plant, Bowers notes that Woodson County—with Yates Center as county seat—is 21 miles north and south and 24 miles east and west and contains 504 square miles. Multiplying 504 sections by 4 quarter sections makes 2,016 quarter sections. This

computes that the county has 8,064 10-acre tracts.

A random sampling of copies of abstracts made by Street Abstract over the past 50 years shows an average of 50 entries per tract in a chain of title since organization of the county, and an average of two court cases and two miscellaneous documents in the 115 years the county has existed.

Multiplying 8,064 tracts by 50 entries makes 403,200 abstract entries. Doubling this for court case docu-



Walter A. Bowers

ments and miscellaneous documents makes 806,400 abstract entries and items for the key punch operator to punch holes from in a standard 105 column tabulating card.

To punch holes in 806,400 tabulating cards, the keypunch operator must scan 806,400 microfilm enlargements as they flash one by one on the viewer or reader that sits by her side.

The 806,400 microfilm pictures of 35 mm size would require—at 60 pictures per foot—around 15,000 feet of microfilm. This would be 150 of the 100-foot rolls of 35 mm film. Allowing \$8.00 per roll for film and processing, \$8.00 per roll for plastic reader sleeves, and \$4.00 per roll for microfilm camera rental makes a total of \$20.00 per roll for setting up a plant of 806,400 microfilm pictures. Multiply \$20.00 per roll times 150 rolls, making a cost of \$3,000.00 for setting up the Street Abstract office on microfilm.

The key punch operator may be able to punch two tabulating cards full of holes per minute. If so, punching holes in 806,400 cards would take 6,720 hours. If the operator earns \$3.00 per hour, this would cost \$20,160.00. Add to this an estimated \$4,840.00 for rental of key punch, verifier, sorter, and tabulator printer and lister for printing chains of title for 8,064 tracts and an additional investment of \$25,000.00 is required.

In total, then, it appears that an initial investment of \$30,000.00 would be needed to set up a microfilm and punch card plant for 504-square-mile Woodson County.

Bowers—who states, "Most all I know about microfilm and punch card systems is what I learn from salesmen"—also is giving thought to the design of tabulating cards. He cites information from a manufacturer that a standard tabulating card contains 80 columns.

"By the time all the coding data is punched to identify the ½½ sections of land plus coding for types of instruments, there will not be many columns left for identifying parties and special reservations and limitations pertinent to a particular transaction," he adds.

Any comments?

### **Land Title Services and Home Builders**

(Editor's note: These remarks-presented January 17 at the National Association of Home Builders Convention in Houston-were aimed at an audience of single family builders, most of whom build between 10 and 25 houses per year in towns of 50,000 to 100,000 in population and in the suburban and ex-urban areas of larger cities. Many of these builders have continued to use only conventional loan sources and have avoided the "red tape" of federally insured mortgages for themselves and their purchasers. One of the author's larger problems was to meaningfully relate to these builders coming from a variety of backgrounds of widely differing local land title practices. The author was one of four speakers grouped on a panel under the general topic of, "Single Family Financing". Other speakers were Max Karl, president, Mortgage Guaranty Insurance Corporation; Roger Hawkins, director, Mortgage Financing Department, Mortgage Bankers Association of America; and Norman J. Farquhar, director, Mortgage Finance Department, National Association of Home Builders.)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is, I believe, a small historic occasion—the first time a titleman has addressed one of these conventions on the subject of our industry. There is growing recognition among builders that a titleman is not just another supplier, but can be a real partner in getting your job done well and profitably. So, I am pleased to speak for the land title insurance industry this morning on the subject of how to get the most from your title company and your title dollar.

For those of you who previously have been building in areas where title insurance is not often used, the new Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac programs for conventional mortgage loans probably will be exposing you to title insurance soon.

My job today is to give you some insight into what title companies do and to describe some services we are giving builders in different parts of the country. Incidentally, you've seen one of these additional services in the lobby—the information computer service of Stewart Title. At least some of these ideas should be new to you and can be used or adapted for use in your marketplace. We'll be covering four points:

- 1) What title companies do
- Additional services we can supply you as a builder
  - 3) Ways you can save money
  - 4) Ways you can make money

#### I. What title companies do-

The pattern of title company services is set by local custom and usage, by state laws, and by regulation of state insurance commissioners. Here in Texas, for example, title companies have the most detailed regulation of their product and services of any

state in the country. In most large metropolitan areas across the country, title companies provide a full range of title services. These are:

1. The Title Insurance Binder and Title Insurance Policy: There are two basic kinds of title insurance: Owners policies and Mortgage policies. The owner's policy protects a buyer, and its coverage continues after an individual buyer's death and after a corporate buyer's merger or acquisition. The mortgage policy protects a lender and subsequent assignees of the mortgage debt, and its coverage ends when the mortgage is paid off. Both kinds of policies have a one-time premium. In most states, there is a price break if both are issued simultaneously, and generally the price rate goes down as the size of the policy goes up, i.e., on large-sized transactions.

The policies are generally written after the transaction is closed. Before closing the sale, in most parts of the country, a title insurance binder is issued. This is a commitment to insure and to issue the policy, once the binder requirements have been met and the premium paid. The binder also operates for you as a preliminary report of title and shows the exact record owners, outstanding mortgages, any judgments or tax liens. The binder also sets out any recorded building or use restrictions, recorded easements across the

property, and recorded set-back lines, whether shown on earlier recorded deeds or on recorded plats, plans, or surveys.

This issuing of title insurance binders and policies is at the core of our industry.

- 2. The Title Search—a review of the local public land records or the company's title plant records (an accumulation of land records organized for convenience in its own offices). This search typically goes back 40 years or more to determine who holds each of the legal interests that make up the total ownership of a piece of land.
- The Title Report—a written summary of results of the title search.
- 4. Conducting the Closing, the Escrow, or the Settlement—the transaction where money and deed change hands.

In some parts of the country, one or more of these functions are performed by attorneys or abstracters or others. In Washington's Maryland and Northern Virginia suburbs, for example, attorneys do title searches, title reports, closings, and sometimes they also issue the binders and policies as agents of the title companies. Yet right next door in Washington, D.C., itself, title companies have been doing all these things with staff personnel for 80 years. Similarly, in Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, or Miami, title companies perform all these functions.

Whether you deal with title insurance companies directly or through attorneys or abstracter agents, the important thing for you to do is to get a skilled specialist who knows real estate law and real estate titles and shows you a desire to help you.

- II. Additional services title companies can supply to you as a builder, sometimes at nominal cost, sometimes for free—
  - In many areas, title companies provide copies of legal descriptions, recorded plats, restrictions, easements, and building set-back lines.
  - 2. We also can provide these to



Author Smith

your surveyor, making his work faster and more complete. Sometimes this saves a builder money. It always saves you time.

- Closing cost estimate sheets, for use by your salesman in helping your buyer figure how much he needs to bring to the closing.
- 4. Advice, coordination, and problem-solving. Here the range of services is practically unlimited. If you plan to build in a new area, we can suggest lenders, zoning attorneys, or appraisers. We can help you identify lenders who are innovative and those who, in tight-money times, have dollars to lend. If a title or closing problem pops up, it frequently can be handled by our taking an affidavit or an indemnity or holding some funds in a special escrow until the problem is worked out, instead of your having to wait for a court decree.
- On large projects, the escrow closer can close at the project at a model home or some location other than the title company offices. If you wish, he can hold multiple closings simultaneously.
- If you are acquiring ground, the title company can do some quick informal searches of several locations to give you the

names of owners and a clue as to land values from federal or state revenue stamps or tax valuations. It can generally act as your nominee to take title if you want to preserve anonymity in assembling ground from several owners in order to keep prices from sky-rocketing.

#### III. Ways we can save you money; getting the most from your title dollars—

- Obviously, the services I have just outlined are going to save you money.
- 2. The way in which you use the owner's title binder can also save you money. First, order the title as early as possible, so you can work out any possible title problems and avoid delays. Delays cost money. Get full information on building and use restrictions, building set-back lines, and easements-things that will determine whether you can build on the ground, what you can build, and how you locate your foundations. Get a copy of this information to your surveyor fast or have the title company do it. Don't gamble that everything will work out O.K. Make sure that it does.
- 3. Stretch the length of your owner's title binder to get the most financial benefit from it on your mortgage financing. If your lender requires a mortgage policy on construction financing, the policy will cost you less in many states if you have it issued simultaneously with the owner's policy.
- Check to see if your lender and your local title companies will accept the use of a construction loan binder. In a number of states this costs less.
- 5. In some states your seller of lots will pay for owner's title insurance; in others, you have to pay. When that's the case, some builders are tempted to skip it. In Akron, I had a

Continued on page 14

#### association corner



#### Florida Association Elects Brooker

Marvin A. Brooker, Jr., vice president, Alachua County Abstract Company, Gainesville, was elected 1970-71 president of Florida Land Title Association at its annual convention in Orlando.

Also elected were Drake Circle, president, West Coast Title Company, St. Petersburg, first vice president; Waldo W. Wallace, Jr., president, Panama Title Corporation, Panama City, chairman, past presidents council; Donald R. Crisp, president, Bay County Land and Abstract Co., Inc., Panama City, Zone I vice president; Douglas S. Harden, executive president, Title Insurance Company of the South, Jacksonville, Zone II vice president; James M. Milligan, Jr., vice president, Seminole Orange Title

Company, Winter Park, Zone III vice president; C. J. Bryan, executive vice president, Guaranty Title Company, Tampa, Zone IV vice president; C. E. Banta, assistant vice president and manager, County Title and Abstract Company, Boca Raton, Zone V vice president; George Adams, vice president and manager, Hollywood Title & Abstract Division of Peninsular Abstract Company, Hollywood, Zone VI vice president.

Guest speakers for the convention included the Honorable Kenneth H. MacKay, Jr., Florida state representative; ALTA President Alvin W. Long, Chicago Title and Trust Company; and William J. McAuliffe, Jr., ALTA executive vice president.



Newly-elected officers of Florida Land Title Association are sworn in by ALTA President Alvin W. Long (right) during the 1970 FLTA Annual Convention in Orlando. From left are: George E. Adams, Zone VI vice president; Drake Circle, first vice president; James M. Milligan, Jr., Zone III vice president; C. J. Bryan, Zone IV vice president; Douglas S. Harden, Zone II vice president; and Marvin A. Brooker, Jr., president.

## Glenn Morris Heads Louisiana Group

Glenn B. Morris, president, Stewart Title of Louisiana, Inc., New Orleans, was elected president of Louisiana Land Title Association at its 1970 annual meeting in New Orleans.

Also elected to office in the Association were Leo L. Brasset, vice president, Louisiana Insurance Agency, Inc., Baton Rouge, first vice president; Guyton H. Watkins, second vice president; Claudius A. Mayo, president, Mayo Land Title Company, Inc., Lake Charles, secretary-treasurer. Elected directors were Joe Balogna, Lloyd Adams, and Louis B. Graham.

William J. McAuliffe, Jr., ALTA executive vice president, discussed ALTA activities in a meeting address. A question and answer period followed.

Other subjects discussed at the meeting included forms for use by Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation and Federal National Mortgage Association in a secondary market for conventional mortgages; state legislation; and coordination of activity within the state concerning television and radio spots developed through the ALTA Public Relations Program.

## Stewart Announces Holding Company

Stewart Information Services Corporation has become the holding company for Stewart Title Guaranty Company and its several subsidiaries.

Stockholders of Stewart Title accepted an exchange offer tendered by Stewart Information Services in late December. Principal officers of SISC include Carloss Morris, senior chairman of the board; Stewart Morris, chairman of the board; and Maco Stewart, president and chief executive officer.

Operations of Stewart Title offices and issuing offices will continue as in the past.

## names in the news



ROLLER

Stanton S. Roller has been elected executive vice president and chief executive officer of Inter-County Title Guaranty and Mortgage Company.

The election of Roller follows an announcement that Thomas H. Quinn will retire as president and chief executive officer of Inter-County Title. Quinn will serve as a consultant in the nationwide title insurance operations of USLIFE Corporation, parent company of Inter-County Title.

Roller has spent more than 12 years in the land title insurance field and formerly was a vice president for another title underwriter.



WOLF

William B. Wolf, Sr., senior partner in the law firm of Wolf & Wolf, Washington, D.C., has been elected a director of District-Realty Title Insurance Corporation.

District-Realty also has announced the following promotions: Michael J.

Patchan, comptroller and treasurer; Velma R. Williams, assistant vice president; Leonard A. Hurley and John B. McClung, assistant secretaries; and Alan H. Rosenthal, assistant title officer.

Graham E. Heniken has joined Chicago Title and Trust Company as vice president—trust division, and is responsible for administration of the probate department and common trust funds.



WILLIAMS



GORE



KELLERMAN



SCHULTZ



NOLEN



HOPP



WALKER



GEBHARDT



McKILLOP



DOWD



COLWELL

Lawyers Title Insurance Corporation has announced the following elections: Kenneth F. Williams, Winter Haven, Florida state counsel; William J. Schultz, Detroit National Division manager; Paul R. Gore, San Francisco National Division manager; John W. Nolen, Jr., Newark branch manager; Henry R. Kellerman, Stamford (Conn.) branch manager; Edgar C. Hopp, Chicago, Milton W. Thorpe, Norfolk, and H. E. Walker, Jr., Dallas, title officers; William V. Dillard, Birmingham, Lee B. Freedman, New York, and John R. Knapp and Lacey Owens, Jr., Cleveland, assistant title officers.

Lawyers Title also has announced the following retirements: Charles A. Gebhardt, senior vice president, Newark, N.J.; Hart McKillop, senior vice president, Winter Haven, Fla.; Thomas P. Dowd, vice president, Detroit; and Wallace A. Colwell, manager, Detroit National Division.

Stewart Title Guaranty Company has announced the appointment of **Will Woesner**, founder and owner of

\* \* \*





WOESNER

WRIGHT

Woesner Abstract & Title Company, Waukesha, as its Wisconsin state agent.

Stewart Title also has announced the appointment of James Garst, Houston, as legal counsel, and Madison Wright, Lake Jackson, Tex., as legal counsel—claims.

EFFECTIVE EQUIPMENT—Continued from page 6

represents a complete continuing dossier of a parcel of property.

Jackets made to contain single frames of larger film also serve as excellent substitutes for the cumbersome plat books. With such a file and a reader printer—the facility to produce spot parcel graphic enlargements is added.

Since the jacket itself finally resembles a file card, it can be used and stored with the many varieties of motorized filing equipment that have been developed for card files. Most of these, of course, accent accessibility.

#### A Caution—Think Twice About the Sophisticated Retrieval Device

I must lapse slightly negative just for a moment.

In the past several years we have seen the development of many sophisticated microfilm retrieval devices. Most of these are beautiful combinations of mechanics, optics, hydraulics and electronics and usually are accordingly priced. I have yet to see a really successful application to our type of record.

First of all, these machines suffer from the basic problem inherent to all information retrieval. I think of it as the gap between the infiler and the outfiler and the language they respectively speak. The man that puts a piece of data away must first determine or at least anticipate all possible inquiries that can occur which the data at hand could answer. He must then appropriately infile or code such data so that it will be so retrieved. Whenever he fails or whenever the inquiry varies in language or term that he did not anticipate-the system fails. Now many feel (particularly the I.R. machine salesmen) that this can be easily resolved by discreet wording and coding that can be standardized. But the end result is undue emphasis on the skill of the infiler and this violates one of the original parameters. The infiling should be simply and cheaply accomplished.

Another disadvantage to this type of equipment is its usual inability to purge. I still think of our average infiled document as a highly transitory bit of data. I don't care to spend a lot of money on infile and I don't expect to seek it much more than one time. After that it becomes growing clutter in my file and becomes something that I must always paw through to get to another document.

#### Now—About that Computer

Now don't run off on me with some old cliché like-Oh we're too small-our volume can't justify anything like that-or, we're thinking about investing in our first electric typewriter-so let us crawl a little bit before we walk or run. Well that's just about what you may be doing when the new outfit moves in down the street with a staff of one or two people. Maybe you'll notice that one of the staff is sitting over at the courthouse with a special typewriter copying out of the public recordsjust crawl on brother and get ready for a shock.

Let's pose a question. Supposing a big ungainly individual showed up at your shop tomorrow and asked for a job. When you got around to it and asked him what kind of a salary he expected, he said something like,—"Well, when I work, I get 50 to 100 bucks an hour." If you survive this shock and inquire as to what he can do for that kind of money, he says,

"In one hour, I can read 5,000 lines of type and remember every word and figure I read with unfailing accuracy. Or, in one hour, I can compare endless pairs of things and tell you when they are or are not equal, and still remember everything I saw. Or, in one hour, I can write down everything I remember in whatever order you like right on to microfilm; you see, I remember very well, I write . very small and I am lightning fast".

Now let me ask you the \$64 question: Just how much are such skills . worth to you or, putting it another way, how much are you paying for such skills today? Can the people that operate your plant read, sort, organize and write out the results at any such rate? Or, just looking at the amount of work accomplished and what it costs, could your staff do that much in whatever time it takes them for that amount of money? That's the shock of this technology. It's not blue sky-it's available, probably right in your town or a town not too far away-and on an hourly basis for however much you have.

The critical bridges to and from the computer are the input and output systems. For many years the only acceptable input mode was the punch card. Today there are many reliable optical reading machines around—available for lease—that read standard typewriter fonts. Some special form design must be employed to carry the typing but this too is modest and easily accomplished.

As for output, where once computers poured their knowledge onto paper, they have now learned to write directly to microfilm at a higher rate of speed and, therefore, at far less cost. And, what's best of all, the results occupy about ½5th the space that the former paper output occupied.

Oh yes, people are still necessary, but all the tedious chores can be relegated to the monster and, if you're really cagey, you can instruct the big fellow in a precise format to watch for and to blow his whistle when he doesn't find it. Like, every deed has a grantor and grantee. He's good at that and he never forgets. You'll be surprised how careless people become but the whistle just blows the more.

The special skill or special record that sets our plant apart is its indexes. These indexes organize the raw data that flows through the public offices into meaningful combinations that lend themselves to our examination. These indexes are the results of a lot of reading, organizing, sorting, writing and arraying. Let's think about letting the big fellow do it. He reads fast—is inflexible as to his requirements for accuracy—thinks fast and writes fast, now to a very compact record.

Up to this point, I hope I have established my thesis-that the way back to the good times is for the title or abstract company to re-assert or, if necessary, re-establish its competitive position. A good path (and I do not mean to imply it's the only path) to the objective is through its plant and the consequent better services that should be provided. My equipment suggestions are of necessity general in nature, since plant techniques over the land are varied. But I believe the applications are sound and proven and commend them to your consideration.

I do not advocate in any way letting up on your sales effort, and I might be remiss if I did not say something in respect to production of the output.

Surprisingly enough, the number one production device in our industry hasn't changed too much over the years. But there are some developments which bear mention and with which I propose to close this article. I speak of the typewriter.

We have seen a number of attempts to embellish this device, to give it electric power first, and more recently to equip it with a memory in various forms.

The automatic typewriters, the piano player roll type, the paper tape machines and latest magnetic tape and card machines are a subject of much discussion in the industry. The most frequent inquiry is when such machines can be justified as a worth-while addition to the office equipment. This is somewhat puzzling and it comes about because of the cost of the machines and how they are generally acquired.

It seems the day is passing when we decided to buy a typewriter and then proceeded to disburse a reasonable sum of money to accomplish the acquisition. Now, particularly in the magnetic varieties-and these do seem to attract the most interest-we into leasing arrangements. Where we once hired a girl and paid her a monthly salary to operate a typewriter, the costs of the operation were largely governed by her salary. It almost appears that the automatic typewriters have joined the payroll since they must also be "paid" monthly and their "salary" can sometimes be more than half of what the girl makes. Perhaps therein lies the formula for determining justification. If I paid a girl \$400 per month to produce a given amount of work at typewriter and I suddenly equipped her with an automatic typewriter that leased for \$200 a month, it would seem that I ought to get 50 per cent more output from the two. Very frequently this does not occur. If cost justification is the only criterion, consider the following.

First of all, the automatic typewriter is a systems device and, before applying it, a good systems analysis of the operation should be undertaken. What type of material is being typed must be analyzed for content.

Supposing I had a girl who operated a standard typewriter and I discovered that she was able to accomplish 50 units of output per day. The units might be policies, abstracts, whatever you care to use. If her output was analyzed as to content and the time she sat at her machine was estimated, we might discover that we could project her actual typing speed. Let's put an arbitrary figure on this: we will use 30 words per minute as her average typing speed.

Now we are getting somewhere, because we know the automatic type-writers work at speeds of 150 words per minute and up. But we can't just fire Suzy and install an automatic typewriter in her place. The thing is fast—it has a good memory—but it can't think. It has to be told what to type and Suzy can only tell it at the rate of 30 words per minute. Its when she asks it to repeat it goes at 150+ words per minute. Therein lies the answer.

Suzy's typing must be analyzed for



George Parker (right), chairman of the board, First American Title Insurance Company, presents James E. Liebig, member, First American board of directors, with a tribute signed by company executives and long-time employees that honors Liebig's one hundredth birthday. Among Liebig's many congratulatory messages was a telegram from President Nixon.

what we shall call repetitive text—words, phrases and entire paragraphs that she is likely to use on repeated occasions in her daily work. These texts must be predetermined and committed to the typewriter's memory. Finally, and this is important, the proportion of her total work that this repetitive typing represents makes or breaks justification.

To put it simply—if I pay Suzy \$400 per month, and I pay the type-writer \$200 per month, at least 50 per cent of her work better be repetitive text (the ratio of the two amounts) or the machine rental cannot be justified if cost is the only consideration. This also assumes that Suzy will be sitting idle when the machine is typing.

This is a relatively narrow approach to the problem because there are other justifications for automatic typewriting. The quality and accuracy of the typing is bound to increase. There are also other considerations.

A great deal of the success of an automatic typewriter station depends very heavily on the girl assigned. I have seen very successful operations and others that were miserable failures involving the automatic machines. I do not have sufficient data to qualify more than theory as to the success or failure. Permit me to theorize.

On the average, I do not believe a cracker-jack typist will be a good automatic typewriter operator (theory). I suspect a girl who is a fair typist, who is inclined to be somewhat lazy but also somewhat innovative will probably become an excellent automatic typewriter operator (theory). To rationalize, I think the girl who is a good typist-a girl who is proud of her output-will be reluctant to allow the machine to outdo her as indeed it can if she will allow it. There is probably also some resentment developed towards the machine-a machine which she knows can make an inferior typist as good as she is. Now this is pretty far out and I must remind you that there are exceptions to all rules but I have observed too many phenomenal situations regarding automatic machines to be without an answer.

Finally, I must admit that auto-

matic typewriters must be classed as effective equipment for any title operation but the prospective purchaser should be advised that a good thorough preliminary analysis of the work should be undertaken before the machine is actually acquired, not only as to what will be typed but who is going to use it.

Where have I left you? I hope with a more modern and exclusive plant. A plant that occupies a minimum of space, but provides faster access to a greater amount of data. This should be accomplished with a take-off that lends itself to simpler dissimilation to index. Consideration should also be given to buying a few hours periodically on some sophisticated equipment to police, refine and condense your indexes. With all of this, and type-writers that can break into 150 word



A consortium of title insurance companies, headed by Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company as principal insurer, has written what reportedly is the largest title insurance policy in Philadelphia history on a new mid-city office complex shown in this rendering. The amount of title insurance coverage for the \$82 million complex, known as Centre Square, is listed as \$76 million at this time-with more to come. Initially, \$16 million covered the property owner and \$60 million was to cover the construction mortgage. In the future, a \$66 million permanent policy will be issued on the completed project. The site was acquired from the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority for \$16 million.

per minute speeds, the word that will best describe your plant is "effective".

HOME BUILDERS-Continued from page 9

builder customer who paid for a construction mortgage policy but refused to buy an owner's policy. His dozer operator un-. covered and broke a private sewer line on the second day of work, before any money had . been advanced on the construction loan. He was tied up for three weeks finding out where it came from and arranging for temporary and permanent sewer service for the holder of the unrecorded sewer easement. We didn't owe him a nickel, but we would have if he'd taken out the owner's policy and had gotten its protection against unrecorded easements.

#### IV. Ways to make money with title insurance—

Here I'm talking about a marketing tool that you can use to sell your houses faster. Give your buyer an insured title to his house.

In Columbus, Ohio, a few years ago, most builders gave an abstract to their buyers-a thick bundle of papers containing the history of their property. One of the title companies in Columbus came up with a better idea-their insured home program. In this city, the lenders required mortgage policies, paid for by the buyers. For a few additional dollars, the builders furnished owners policies to the buyers. Then title companies assisted in radio and newspaper advertising, literature at the model homes, and key chains attached to the new house key and given away at settlement. Participating builders found their sales increasing pleasantly.

Other builders have found that it paid them to include the buyer's cost of title insurance and closing costs in their sales price and to advertise that they pay all closing costs. Here, again, you market the additional protection afforded the buyer.

In summary, I hope that at least

some of my ideas on additional title company services, and ways to save money and ways to make money, can be put to work for you. Ask us to help you.

#### **James Buck Dies**



BUCK

Word has been received of the death on January 24 of James M. Buck, vice president, Title Insurance Company, Portland, Ore.

He was engaged in the land title business in Portland for 25 years. In addition he was a past president of the Oregon Land Title Association.

#### **Rickert Succumbs**

Word has been received of the death on January 10 of Paul M. Rickert, who was president of Roberts County Abstract Company, Sisseton, S.D., from 1925 until his retirement in 1967.

He was a member of the South Dakota Abstracters Board of Examiners for 32 years, and was instrumental in enactment of that state's title plant law. In 1927, he served as president of the South Dakota Title Association, and he was well acquainted with many title men and women in his home state and others.



## First American 'Thinks Feathers', Earns Promotional Dividends, Realtor Praise

How can a title company better stimulate public interest in its product? First American Title Insurance Company recently found that one excellent way is to "think feathers".

Renting homing pigeons from a Santa Ana (Calif.) trainer, First American initiated a "junior eagle relay" from escrow offices to a Del Amo Financial Center base in Torrance, Calif. The "junior eagles" were delivered to various escrow officers—complete with instructions for placing miniature title insurance order forms in pigeon-size leg capsules and releasing the birds for flight. As orders were received at the Del Amo office, a title officer telephoned customers to complete the information.

First American customers responded with enthusiasm. The "junior eagles" generally kept to their scheduled timetables, although one made a leisurely 6-hour flight from Pomona.

After noting the enthusiasm and interest generated by the relay, First American executives later inaugurated a 43-mile Thanksgiving Turkey Trot.

This time human racers, representing 43 real estate offices in Los Angeles County, teamed on one-mile relay legs from Covina to Torrance offices—passing along a packet of title orders and generating public interest in purchasing real estate now. They were accompanied by a pace car carrying race judges and a rooster said to be glad he isn't a turkey. Each runner received a turkey and the racer with the fastest time also won a \$100 Thanksgiving feast.

Donald G. Taylor, First American vice president and manager of the Torrance branch, reported that escrow customers were enthusiastic about the promotional activity, and Realtors complimented First American for using imagination to enliven the real estate market.



In preparation for the first "junior eagle relay", Jesse Nelson, business development director for First American Title Company Del Amo office, right, learns the technique of placing a miniature title order form in the leg capsule of a participant. Barney Brock, Santa Ana racing pigeon trainer, provides bird and instruction.

1971

April 28, 1971

New England Land Title Association

Marriott Motor Hotel

Newton, Massachusetts

April 29-May 1, 1971 Oklahoma Land Title Association Camelot Inn Tulsa, Oklahoma

April 29-May 1, 1971 Texas Land Title Association Holiday Inn El Paso, Texas

May 2-4, 1971 Iowa Land Title Association Hyatt House Des Moines, Iowa

May 6-8, 1971 Arkansas Land Title Association Sheraton-Little Rock Motor Hotel Little Rock, Arkansas

May 13-16, 1971 Washington Land Title Association Salishan Lodge Gleneden, Oregon

May 20-22, 1971

New Mexico Land Title Association
Palms Motor Hotel
Las Cruces, New Mexico

May 20-21, 1971 Utah Land Title Association Tri-Arc Travelodge Salt Lake City, Utah

May 21-22, 1971 California Land Title Association San Jose Hyatt House San Jose, California

June 4-5, 1971 South Dakota Title Association Sioux Falls, South Dakota June 5-8, 1971 Pennsylvania Land Title Association Pocono Manor Inn Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania

June 10-12, 1971 Land Title Association of Colorado Ramada Inn Pueblo, Colorado

June 23-25, 1971 Illinois Land Title Association Drake Hotel Chicago, Illinois

**June 23-26, 1971** Michigan Land Title Association Boyne Highlands Harbor Springs, Michigan

June 24-26, 1971 Oregon Land Title Association Bowman's Golf & Country Club Wemme, Oregon

June 24-27, 1971 Wyoming Land Title Association Idaho Land Title Association Ponderosa Inn Burley, Idaho

June 30-July 3, 1971 New York State Land Title Association The Otesaga Cooperstown, New York

July 8-10, 1971 New Jersey Land Title Association Seaview Country Club Absecon, New Jersey

August 12-14, 1971 Montana Land Title Association Florence Hotel Missoula, Montana

August 26-28, 1971 Minnesota Land Title Association St. Paul Hilton St. Paul, Minnesota September 15-17, 1971 Nebraska Title Association Villager Motel Lincoln, Nebraska

September 17-19, 1971 Missouri Land Title Association Downtown Holiday Inn Kansas City, Missouri

September 17-18, 1971 North Dakota Land Title Association Tumbleweed Motel Jamestown, North Dakota

> September 17-18, 1971 Wisconsin Title Association Racine Motor Inn Racine, Wisconsin

September 23-25, 1971 Ohio Land Title Association Sheraton-Columbus Motor Hotel Columbus, Ohio

September 24-25, 1971 Kansas Land Title Association Holiday Inn Towers Kansas City, Kansas

October 3-6, 1971 ALTA Annual Convention Statler Hilton Hotel Detroit, Michigan

October 24-26, 1971 Indiana Land Title Association Indianapolis Hilton Indianapolis, Indiana

December 1, 1971 Louisiana Title Association Royal Orleans Hotel New Orleans, Louisiana

1972

March 1-2-3, 1972 ALTA Mid-Winter Conference Regency Hyatt House Atlanta, Georgia

October 1-2-3-4, 1972 ALTA Annual Convention Astroworld Complex Houston, Texas

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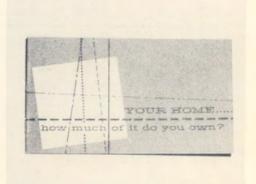
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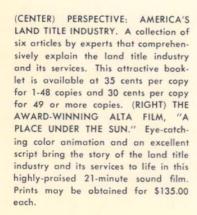
HOW FHA HELPS THE HOME BUYER. This public education folder was developed in cooperation with FHA and basically explains FHA-insured mortgages and land title services. \$5.50 per 100 copies.



LINCOLN LOST HIS HOME . . . BECAUSE OF DEFECTIVE LAND TITLES . . . A memorable example of the need for land title protection is described in this folder. \$5.00 per 100 copies is the cost for this publication.



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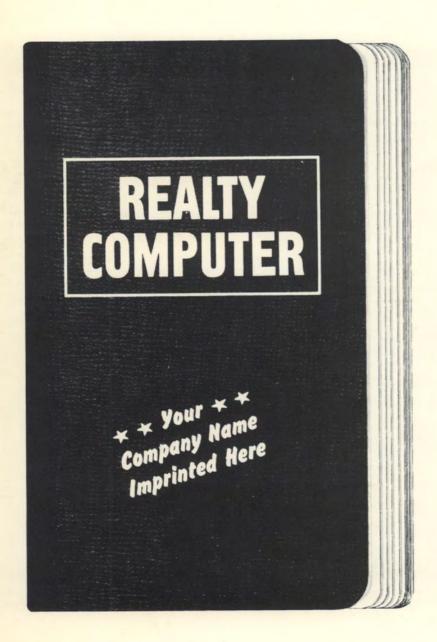






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