

RE 310 – Principles of Real Estate Legal Property Descriptions

1) Describing Land

- a) A proper description of real estate is essential for legal documents relating to real estate.
- A *legally sufficient* description is one that would:

- Property address is generally _____.

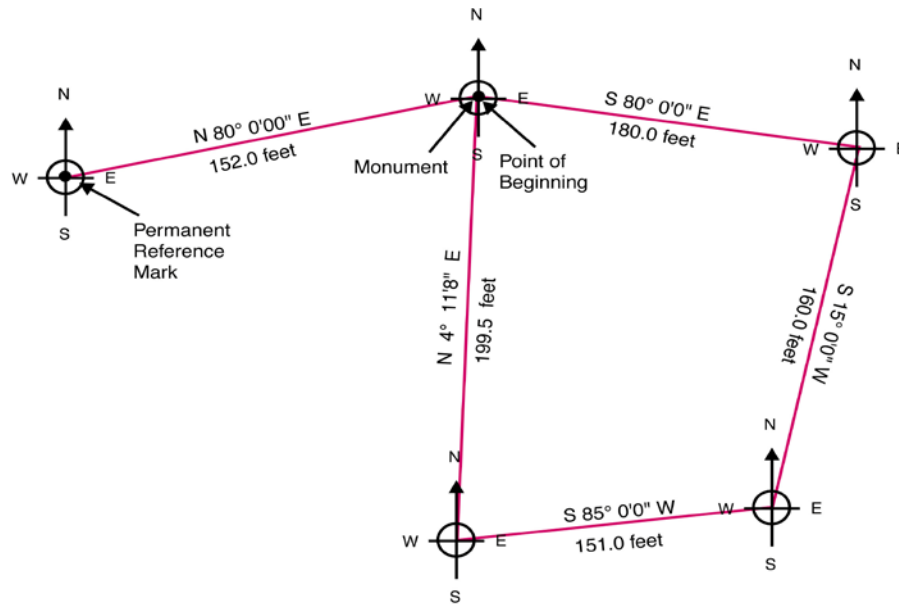
b) Three methods are typically used to legally describe real estate

- Metes and bounds descriptions
- Rectangular survey system
- Recorded plat system

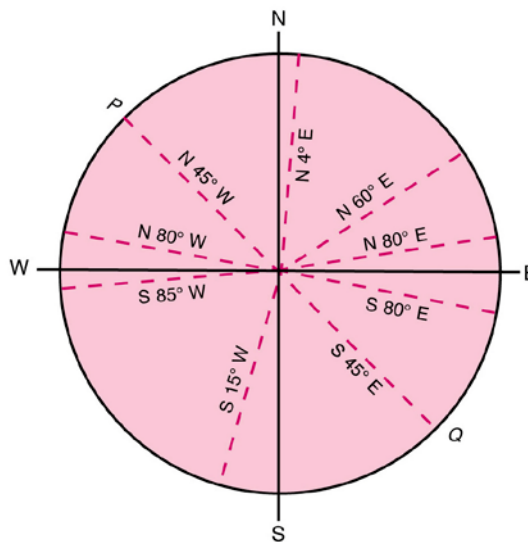
2) Metes and Bounds Property Descriptions

- b) Property is described by starting at a designated place on the parcel – the *point of the beginning (POB)*. It then proceeds around the property's boundaries following the description given.

- The description must always end at the POB.



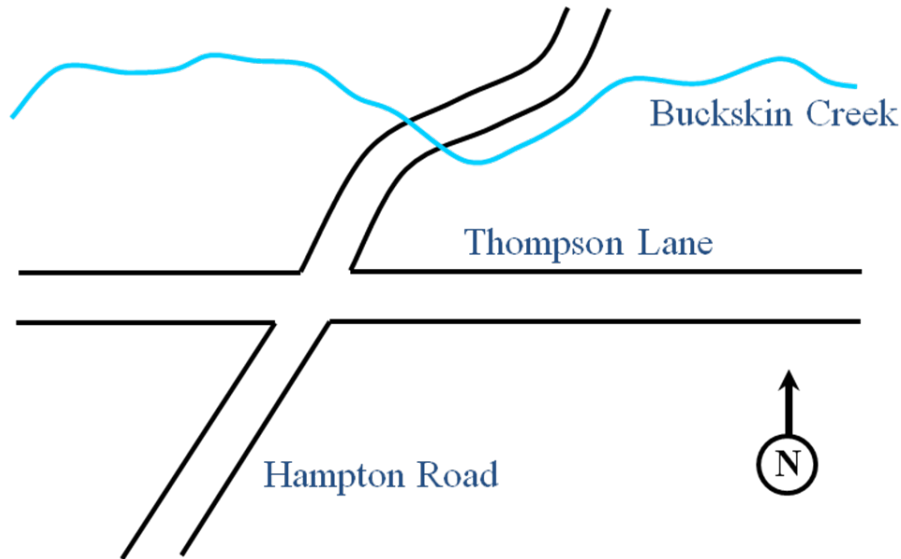
- Metes are the distances used in the description
- Bounds are the directions of the boundaries that enclose the land



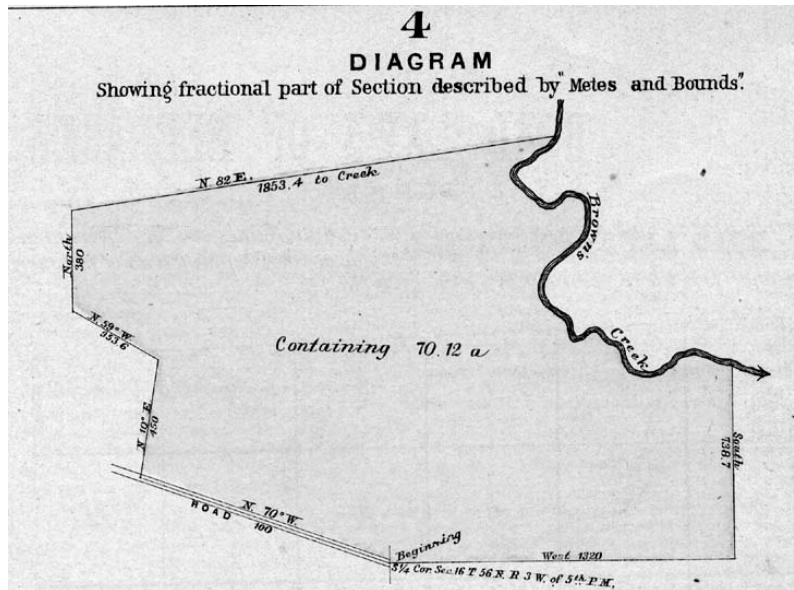
- Monuments are identifying landmarks

c) Metes and bounds example

- A tract of land located in Wichita, Sedgwick County Kansas, described as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the west line of Hampton Road and the north line of Thompson Lane; thence west 200 feet along the north line of Thompson Lane; thence north 15° east to the center thread of Buckskin Creek, being 175 feet more or less; thence easterly along the center line of said creek to its intersection with the west line of Hampton Road, being 220 feet more or less; thence southerly along the west line of Hampton Road to the point of beginning, being 160 feet more or less.



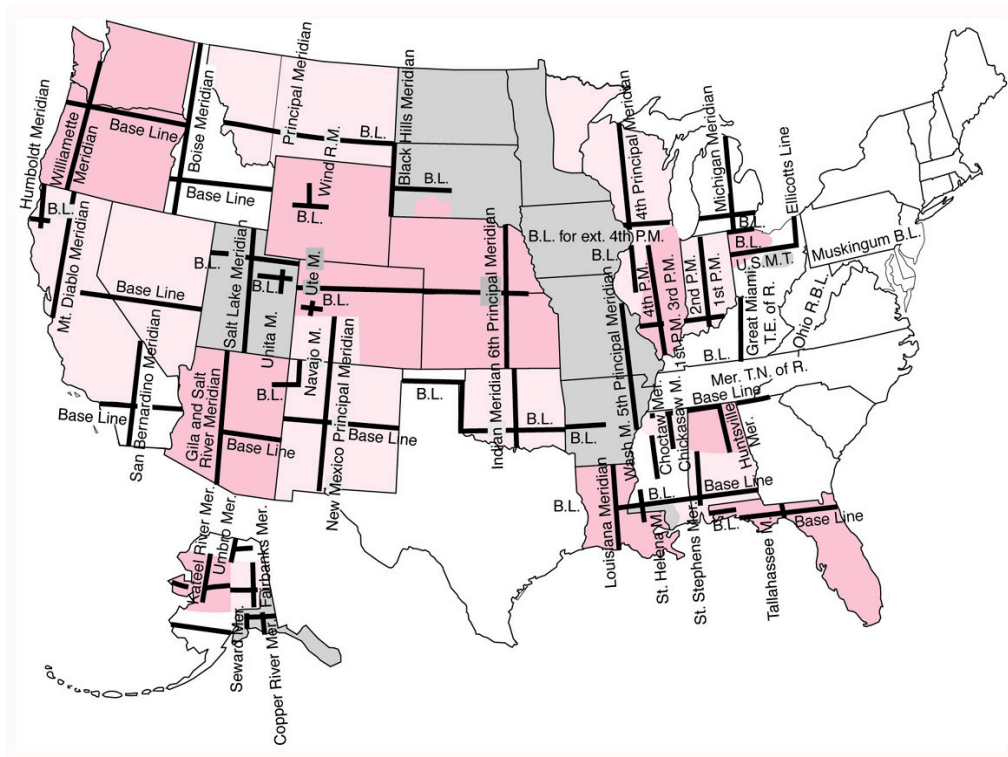
d) Metes and bounds example



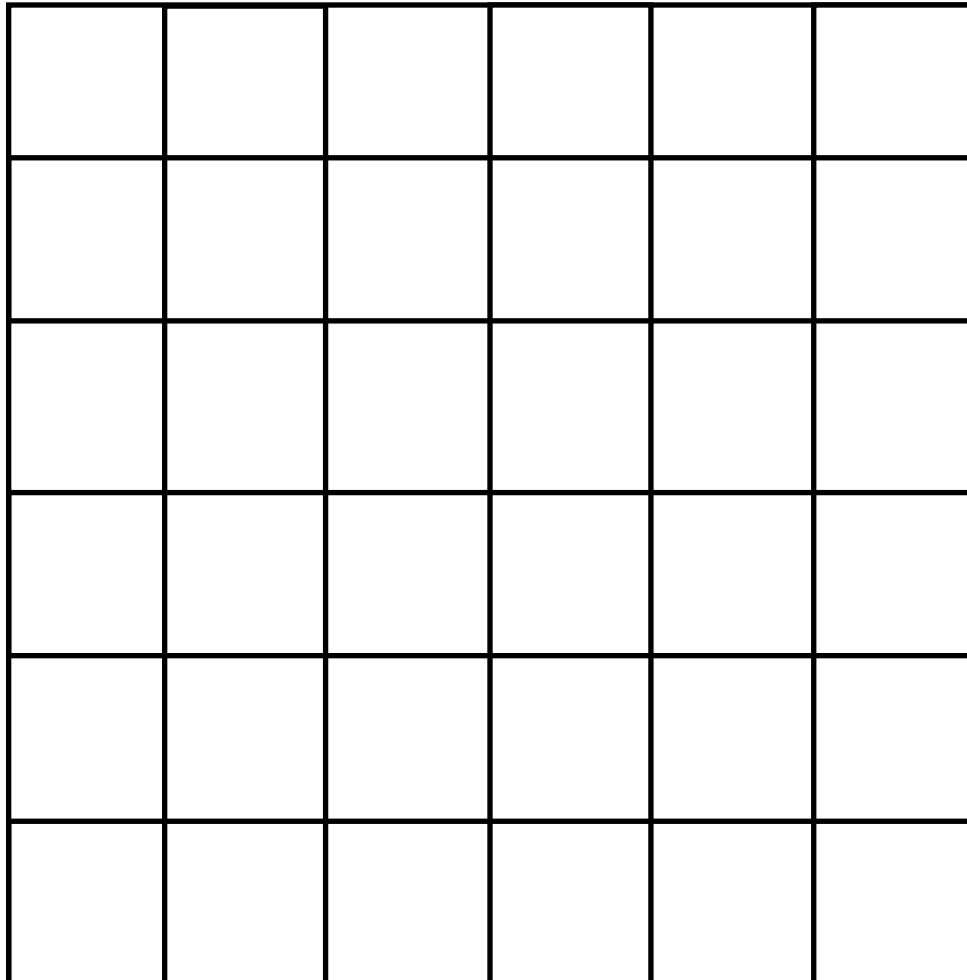
3) Rectangular Survey System

a) Created after the revolutionary war, this system is based on two sets of intersecting lines:

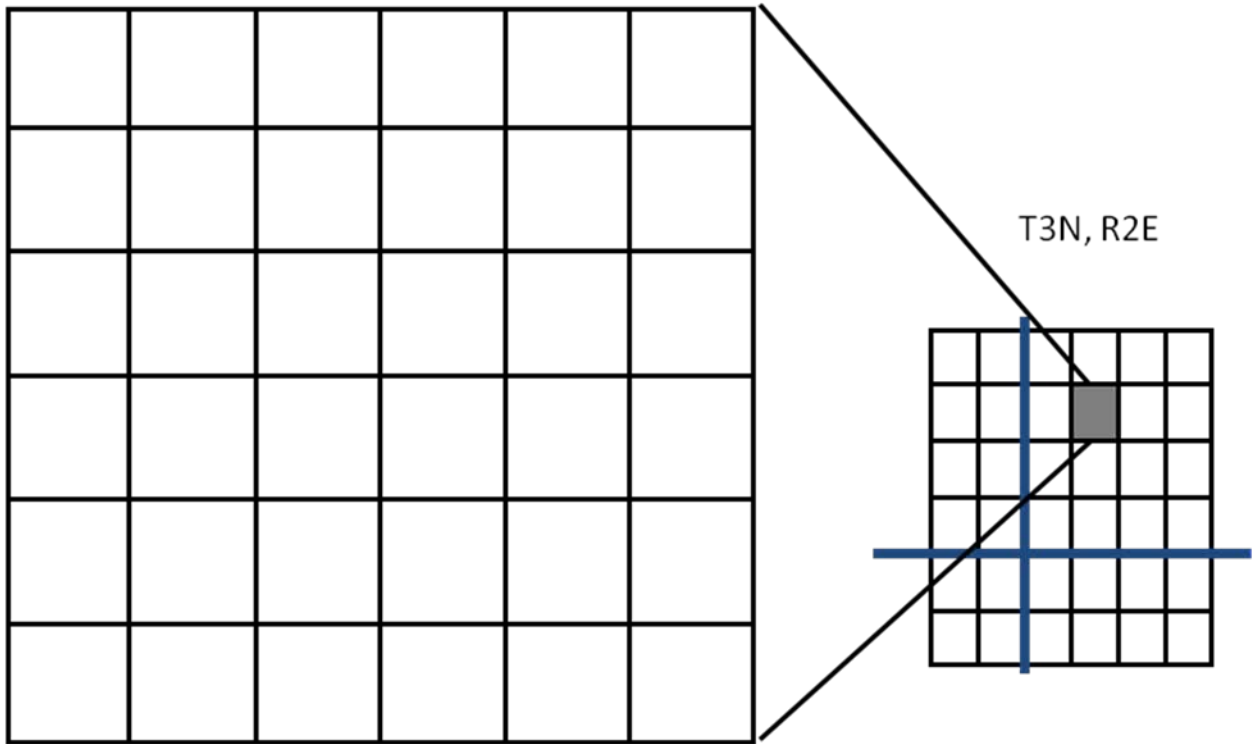
- *Principal meridians* run north and south.
- *Base lines* run east and west. Each principal meridian has its own base line.
 - Both principal meridians and base lines are located by reference to degrees of longitude and latitude.
 - Each area is assigned to a particular meridian and base line. Ours is used to reference information in all of Kansas and Nebraska, most of Oklahoma, and parts of Colorado.



- *Township lines* are 6 miles apart, running east and west.
 - They define strips of land called *township tiers*.
 - The township tiers are designated by consecutive numbers north or south of the base line.
- *Range Lines* are 6 miles apart running north and south.
 - They define strips of land called *ranges*, which are designated by consecutive numbers east and west of the principal meridian.
- *Township squares* are the 36 square miles squares formed by the intersections of the township and range lines.

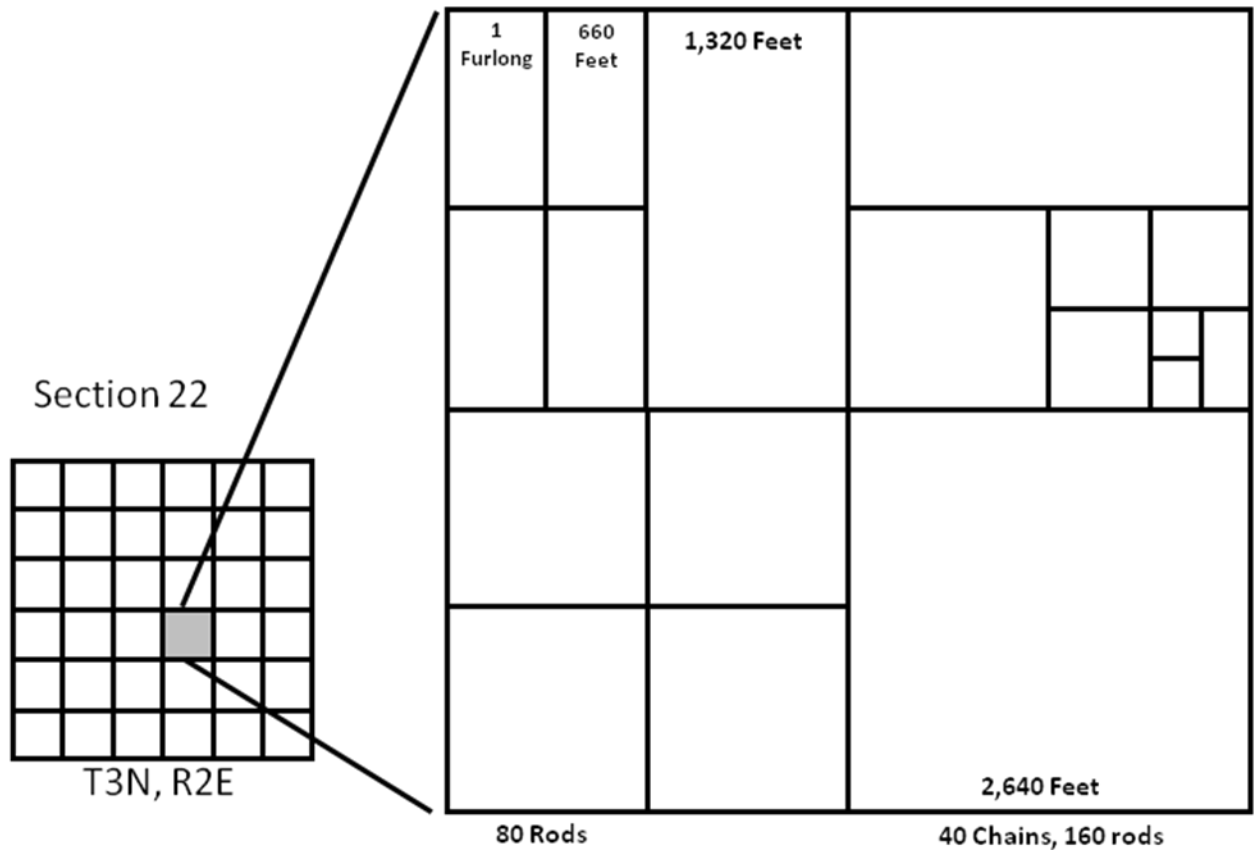


b) *Sections* – Each township square is divided up into 36 square mile sections



c) Subdivisions of a Section

- Each section is divided into halves (320 acres) and *quarters* (160 acres).
 - In turn, each of these parts is further divided into halves and quarters. Each is defined in relation to its position in the section.



- Note that it is possible to combine portions of a section.
 - For example, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ and N $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$.
 - Sometimes a semicolon is used to denote “and”: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$; N $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$

d) Other measurements that matter:

- One chain = 66 feet
- One rod = 4 chains = 264 feet
- One furlong = 660 feet = 10 chains
- One acre = 1 chain \times 10 chains = 66 feet \times 660 feet = 43,560 square feet

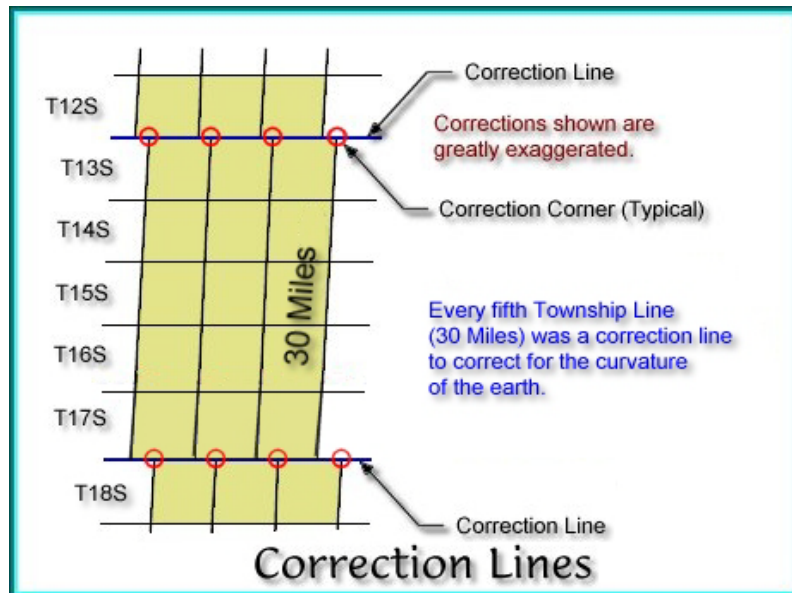
The book has a nice box outlining the history of these measurements (page 36).

4) Correction Lines – The curvature of the earth means that the range lines are not strictly parallel. Thus, few townships are exactly six miles square.

a) To adjust for this, every fifth township line (both north and south of the base line) are termed *correction lines*.

- On each correction line, the range lines are measured to the full distance of six miles apart. Thus, the correction lines are exactly 30 miles apart from each other at each point on the line.

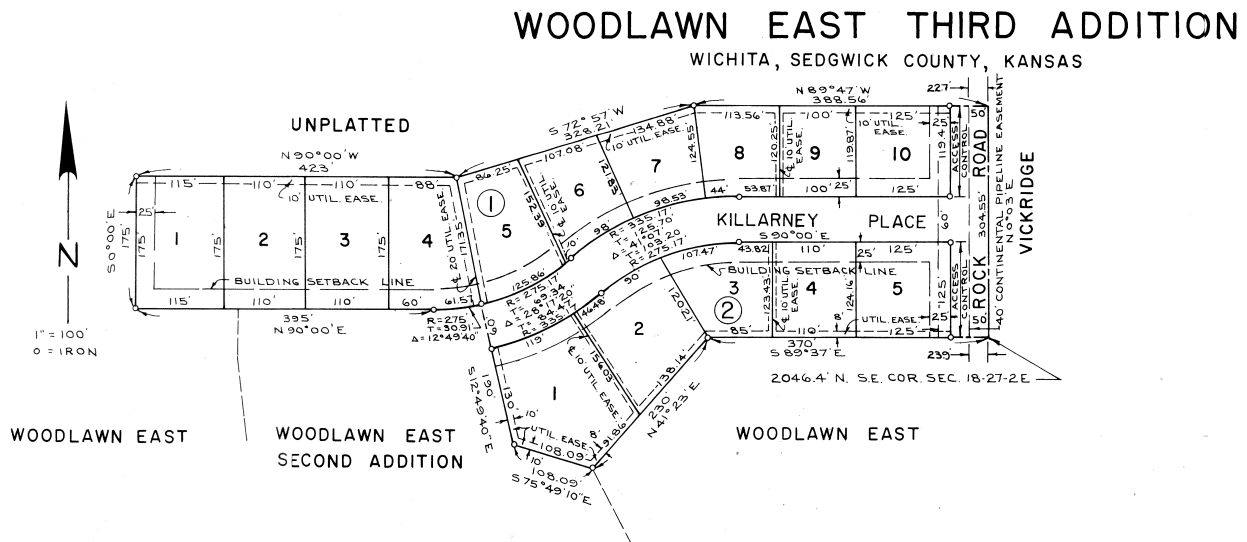
b) In many parts of the country, the correction lines are 24 miles apart.



5) Recorded Plat System

- a) Under this property description system, a subdivision plat is prepared by a licensed surveyor or engineer.
 - The Plat divides the land into numbered or lettered lots and blocks.
 - Other characteristics of the area are outlined in the platting documents as well – e.g., streets, easements, etc.

- Legal descriptions may then refer to the plat records:
 - Lot and block number;
 - Name or number of the subdivision plat; and
 - Name of the county and state.



6) Measuring Elevations

a) Elevations can also be a part of legal property descriptions.

b) A *datum* is a point, line or surface from which elevations are measured or indicated.