



THE  
FRESNO & SAN  
FRANCISCO  
BICYCLE  
MAIL ROUTE

PRESENTATION TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON SITE POTENTIAL HISTORIC  
INTEREST

DECEMBER 18, 2023



# INTRODUCTION

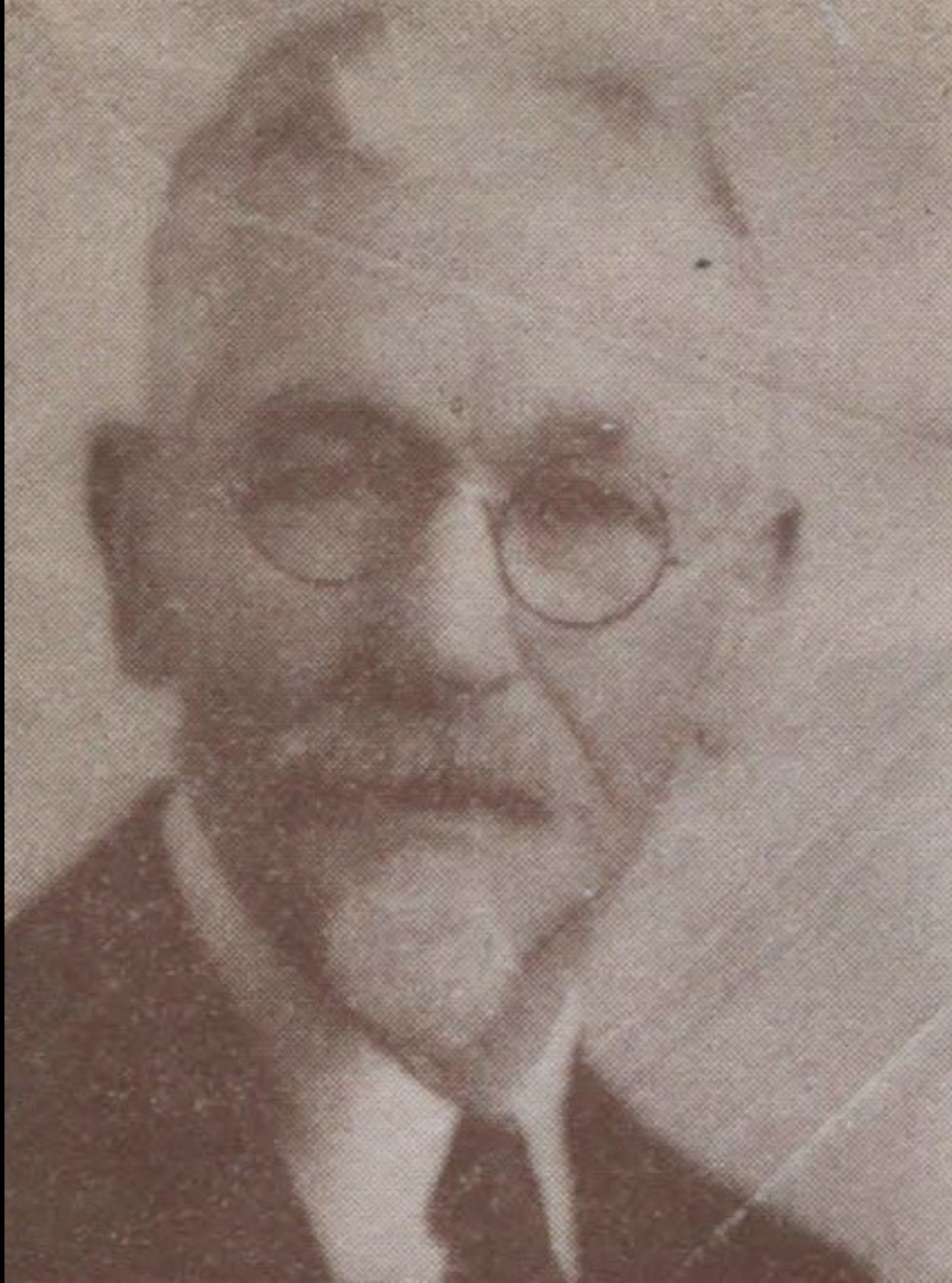


May 10, 1893 - Pullman Railcar Strike Begins. This is due to a reduction in pay for workers and increase in living costs at the Pullman Company town near Chicago.



In the ensuing weeks, the strike would grow culminating on June 26, 1894, in additional rail operations striking in solidarity with the Pullman Strikers bringing most of the US rail traffic to a halt including the Post Office Department as part of a nationwide boycott of Pullman Car usage.

Creator: Workers leave the Pullman Palace Car Works, 1893. This picture appeared in a promotional booklet celebrating the paternalistic labor policies of George Pullman. A year later Pullman's workers were at the center of a national strike of rail workers that failed after federal troops intervened. | Credit: Workers leave the Pullman Palace Car Works, 1893. This picture appeared in a promotional booklet celebrating the paternalistic labor policies of George Pullman. A year later Pullman's workers were at the center of a national strike of rail workers that failed after federal troops intervened. via Picryl.com  
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# ARTHUR C. BANTA

- Owner of Victor Cyclery located at 1730 Tulare St. (today corrected address would be 1830 Tulare St.)
- July 1, 1894 - Banta begins to draw up routes, advertising, and plans to attract usage of the bicycle mail route.
- The primary location for mail collection would be the cyclery office with additional collection in the towns of Selma and Fowler.
- Prices would be 25 cents for a letter compared to the normal 2 cents.

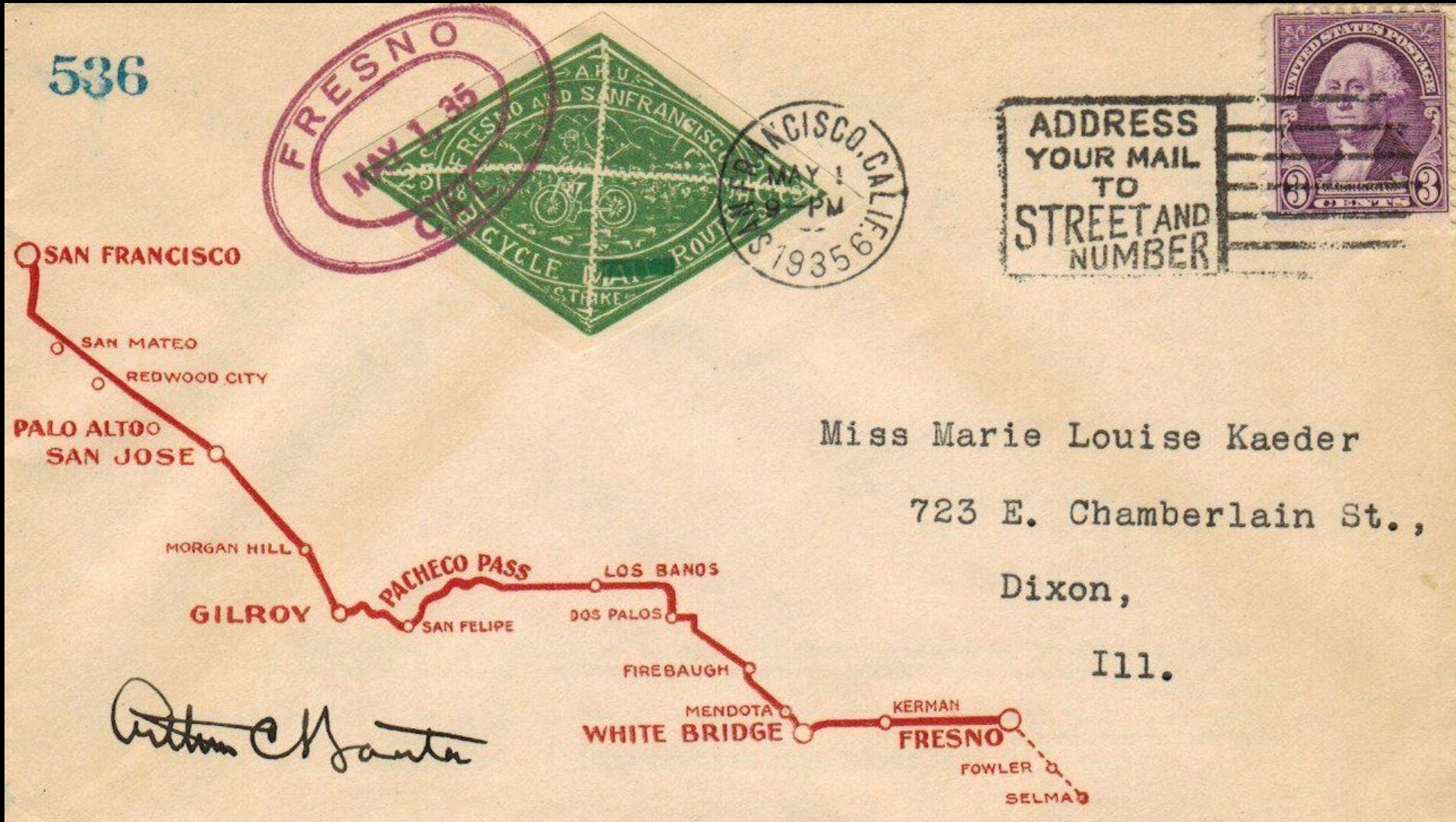
Source: Image: The Mike Farrell Collection. Via Web. Accessed December 8, 2023.

[https://www.pennypost.org/pdf/farrell/BicycleMail\\_FarrellCollection.pdf](https://www.pennypost.org/pdf/farrell/BicycleMail_FarrellCollection.pdf)

Text: Cooper, Lowell B. The Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail of 1894. Published 1982. Leonard H. Hartmann. Philatelic Bibliopole. ISBN 0-917528-05-0.

# THE ROUTE

THE FRESNO & SAN FRANCISCO BICYCLE MAIL ROUTE



Source:  
WorthPoint  
Corporation.  
Accessed  
December 8,  
2023.  
<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/1935-san-francisco-fresno-bicycle-1826451958>

# PURPOSE OF THE ROUTE

Due to the Pullman Strike, Banta established this as a route of maintaining communication between the Central Valley and the rest of the United States.

From San Francisco, Fresno and the Valley could communicate with the eastern US via mail as well as telegraph which remained active during this time.

The first mail delivery left Fresno on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1894, at 4:30am and arrived in San Francisco at 10:30pm covering 210 miles on bicycle in 18 hours.

The fastest ride was noted at taking under 16 hours or traveling an average speed of 13 mph over wagon trails.

The last mail run would take place July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1894, as the Pullman Strike ended.



Source: Bicycle Image: The Online Bicycle Museum. Via Web. Accessed December 11, 2023.

[https://onlinebicyclemuseum.co.uk/1894-humber-pattern-safety-bicycle/?tax=date\\_tax&tid=128](https://onlinebicyclemuseum.co.uk/1894-humber-pattern-safety-bicycle/?tax=date_tax&tid=128)

Stamp Image: The Mike Farrell Collection. Via Web. Accessed December 8, 2023.

[https://www.pennypost.org/pdf/farrell/BicycleMail\\_FarrellCollection.pdf](https://www.pennypost.org/pdf/farrell/BicycleMail_FarrellCollection.pdf)

Hughes Hotel Image: ca. 1890, San Joaquin Valley Library System. Via Web. Accessed December 11, 2023.

<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/kt7f59q4rc/>

Text: Cooper, Lowell B. The Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail of 1894.

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# PURPOSE OF THE ROUTE

The Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail Route was broken into 8 segments to allow for a fresh cyclist in increments

Segment 1: Fresno to 20-mile House (present day 20500 W Whitesbridge Rd.) 21.7 miles

Segment 2: 20-mile House to Firebaugh 21.6 miles

Segment 3: Firebaugh to Los Banos 30.5 miles

Segment 4: Los Banos to foot of mountains 6 miles beyond St. Louis Ranch (present day San Luis Reservoir) 19.5 miles

Segment 5: Foot of mountain over Pacheco Pass to Bell Station 9.5 miles

Segment 6: Bell Station to Madrone (present day Morgan Hill) 32.6 miles

Segment 7: Madrone to Menlo Park 41.5 miles

Segment 8: Menlo Park to San Francisco (Larkin & McAllister Sts.) 32.5 miles



Bicycle Image: The Online Bicycle Museum. Via Web. Accessed December 11, 2023.

<https://onlinebicyclemuseum.co.uk/1893-overman-victor-flyer/>

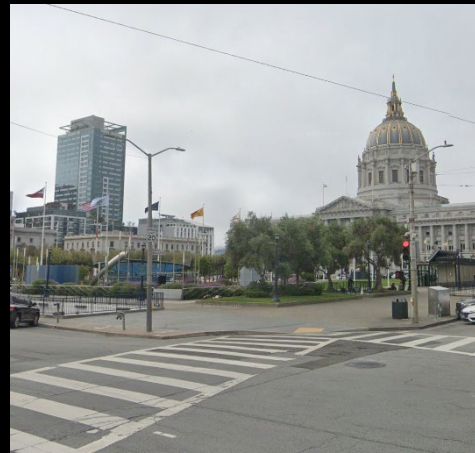
Letter Image: Ebay. Accessed December 11, 2023

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/225107464705>

San Francisco Image: Google Maps, May 2023.

Text: Cooper, Lowell B. The Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail of 1894.

Published 1982. Leonard H. Hartmann. Philatelic Bibliopole. ISBN 0-917528-05-0.



# THE ADDRESS DIFFERENCE

THE FRESNO & SAN FRANCISCO BICYCLE MAIL ROUTE

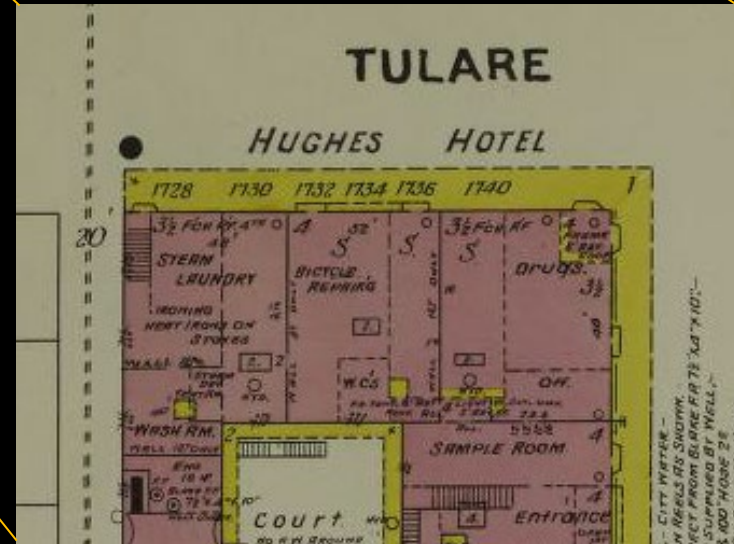
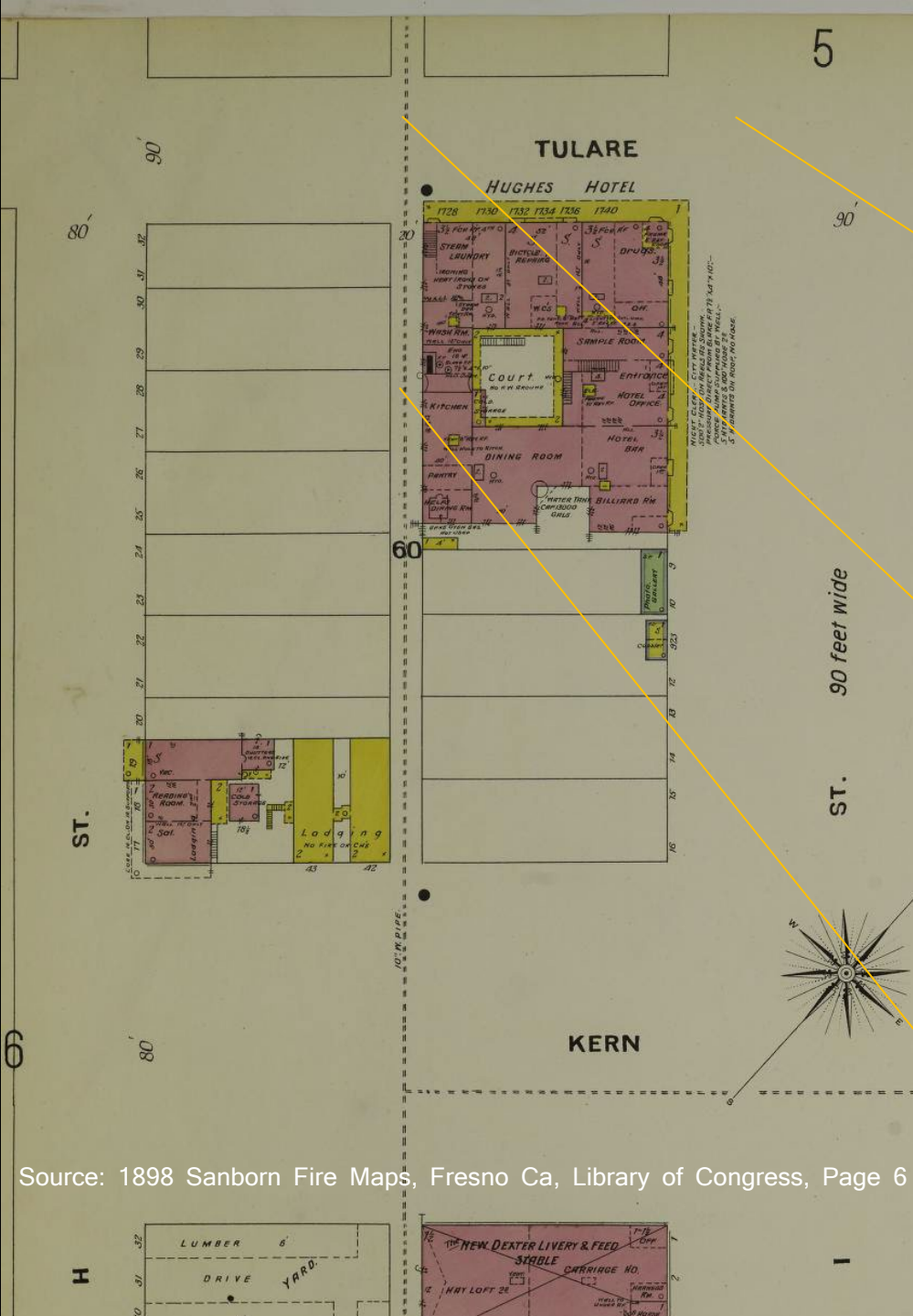
Source: Hughes Hotel  
Image: ca. 1890, San  
Joaquin Valley Library  
System. Via Web. Accessed  
December 11, 2023.  
<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/kt7f59q4rc/>



# 1898 SANBORN

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8



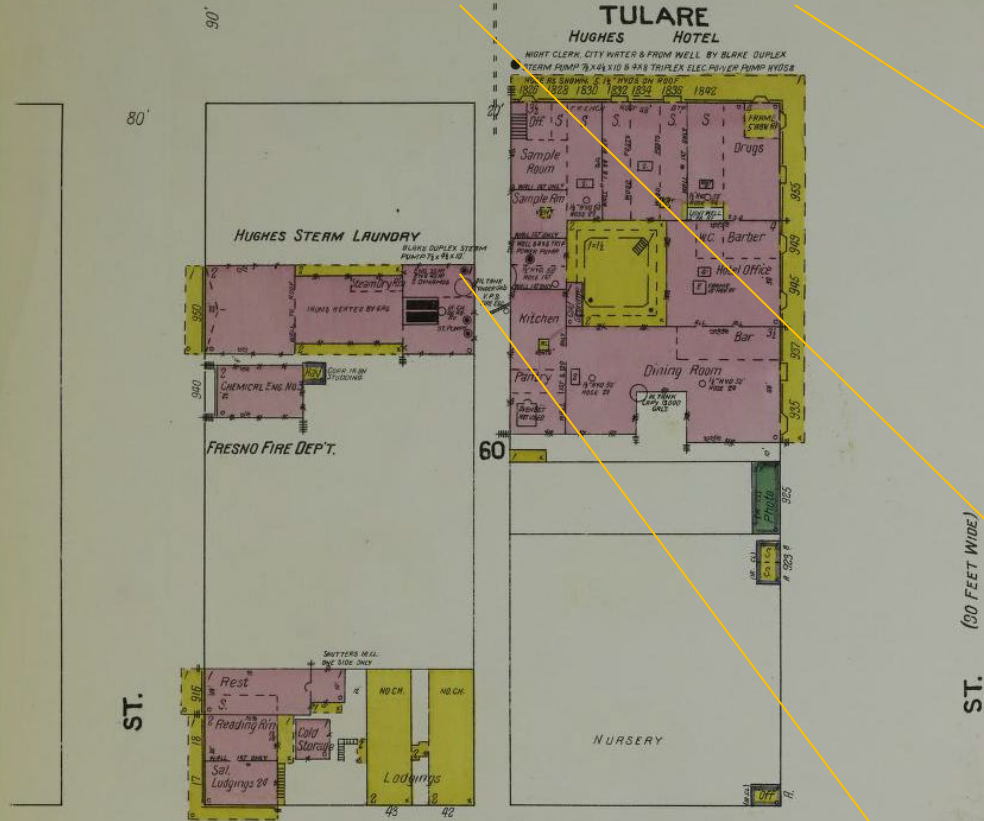
Source: 1898 Sanborn Fire Maps, Fresno Ca, Library of Congress, Page 6



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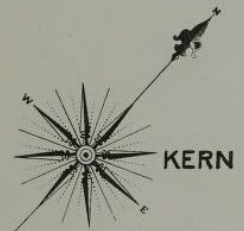
41

# 1906 SANBORN

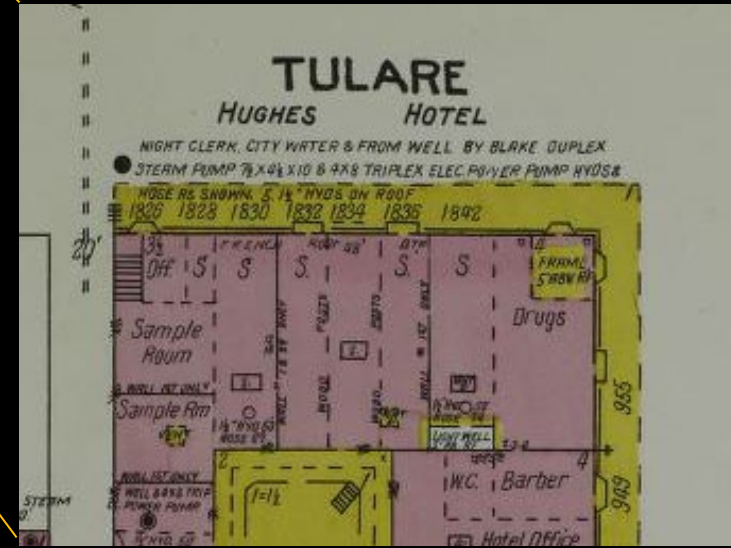
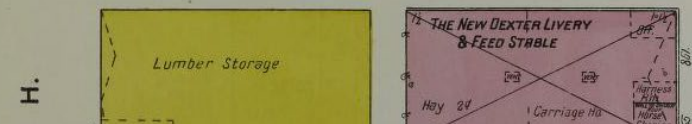


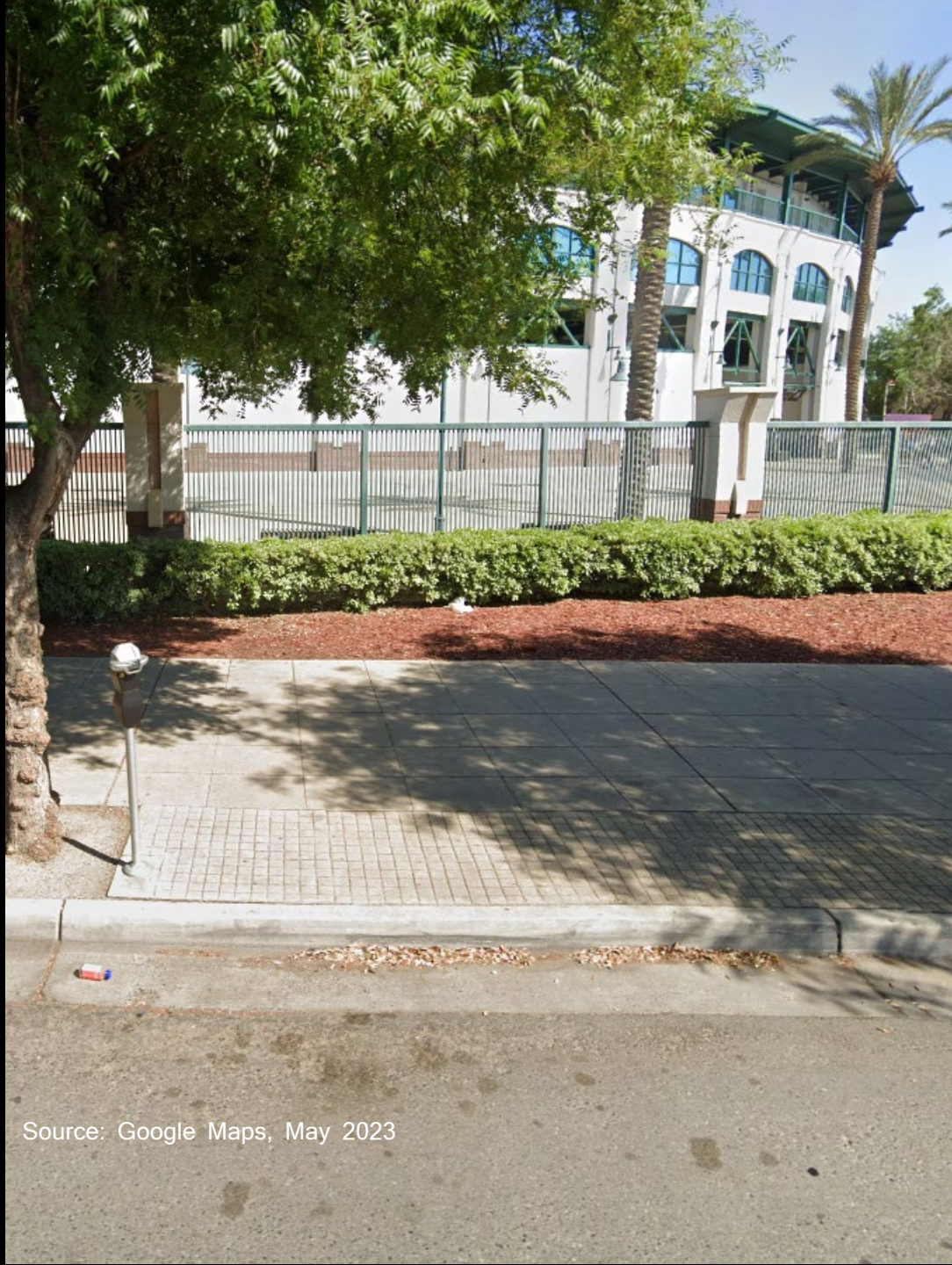
- Reason for street number change was in 1903, the City of Fresno had a renumbering event in which they formalized street blocks and numbers. Prior to 1903, all street numbers ended at 0 were the street ended. After 1903, all streets were set to specific 0 starting points resulting in a change of street number of some places to reflect the new number. Hughes Hotel went from being at the 1700 block of Tulare St. to the 1800 block of Tulare Street.

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Source: 1906 Sanborn Fire Maps, Fresno Ca, Library of Congress, Page 45





Source: Google Maps, May 2023

# CURRENT LOCATION

1830 TULARE STREET

- This location is the current site of Chukchansi Park and the perfect location for an installation noting this brief yet significant event.