

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

P1. Resource Name: Fresno Daily Expositor Building

UPDATE 9.17.14

***P2. Location:** *a. County: Fresno

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Fresno South, 1963 revised 1981

c. Address: 1029-1031 Fulton Mall

d. Assessor's Parcel Number: 466-213-04

***P3a. Description:** The building located at 1029-1031 Fulton Mall is a 6,500 sf two-story brick masonry building which currently houses two separate businesses on the first floor: Mi Casita Astral (1029) and Botanica San Judas (1031). The second story is vacant and inaccessible from the street. The building has modern storefronts and has been stucco-wrapped sometime in the past. However, the original masonry brick building is extant under this modern coat. The stepped parapet once evident on the façade of the building is still clearly seen on the rear elevation.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP6 1-3 story commercial building

***P4. Resources Present:** ●Building ●Element of District



P5b Photo date: 14 August 2014

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** 1881/1888
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Expositor

***P7. Owner and Address:** Henry Liu, 432 Gibbons Court
Milpitas, CA 95035-6725

***P8. Recorded by:** Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
Historic Preservation Project Manager
City of Fresno

***P9. Date Recorded:** 14 August 2014

***P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** "Update to Survey Forms Prepared for 1029-1031 Fulton Mall, "Downtown Fresno (Fulton Corridor) Survey Report."

***Attachments:** ● Building, Structure and Object Report; ● Continuation Sheet

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*NRHP Status Code: 5B

*Resource Name: Fresno Daily Expositor Building

B3. Original Use: Newspaper Office/Printing Room

B4. Present Use: Mixed Commercial

*B5. Architectural Style: Commercial vernacular

*B6. Construction History: A one story brick building was purpose built at this parcel in 1881. In 1888 a second story was added. By the 1898 Sanborn map, the building had been extended to the property line on the alley with a one story addition on the rear. Editorial offices for the newspaper were located upstairs, printing presses were downstairs. By 1906 the one story room had been removed and the building was a saloon/restaurant on the first floor and a Lodge Hall on the second.

*B7. Moved? ■No

*B8. Related Features: The building has a zero lot line setback with adjacent buildings on the Fulton Mall.

B9a. Architect: N/A

B9b. Builder: N/A

*B10. Significance: Theme: social history Area: Fresno

Period of Significance: 1881-1898 Property Type: Commercial vernacular Applicable Criteria: i, ii

The building located at 1029-1031 Fulton Mall was evaluated in the *Downtown Fresno (Fulton Corridor) Survey Report* by consultants to the City of Fresno. It was found ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources and the Local Register of Historic Resources (2012/2014). City staff and members of the Facebook group Fresno Past conducted additional research which indicates that the 2-story masonry brick structure at this location dates to 1881/1888 and was the editorial offices and print room for the *Fresno Daily Expositor*, Fresno's first newspaper. The building has lost integrity due to façade "improvements" and therefore does not appear to be individually eligible for designation on the National Register or California Register. However, the building is individually eligible to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources due to its importance in Fresno history as the purpose built office for the *Expositor* (Criterion i) and for its association with its editor, J.W. Ferguson (see attached) (Criterion ii). The building is also a contributor to the Fresno Street Historic District, for the purposes of the Fresno Mall Reconstruction Project.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes:

*B12. References: 1885, 1888, 1898, 1906, 1919, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Building permits on file with the City of Fresno Planning Division; Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street*, Susan Baird Pappas, *Birth, Marriage and Death Notices Published in the Fresno Weekly Expositor, 1870-1886, 2012*; Wallace W. Elliott, *History of Fresno County, California....*, 1882; J.W. Ferguson, "Our New Building" *Daily Evening Expositor* 26 July 1888:1.

*B14. Evaluator: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
Historic Preservation Project Manager
Fresno, CA

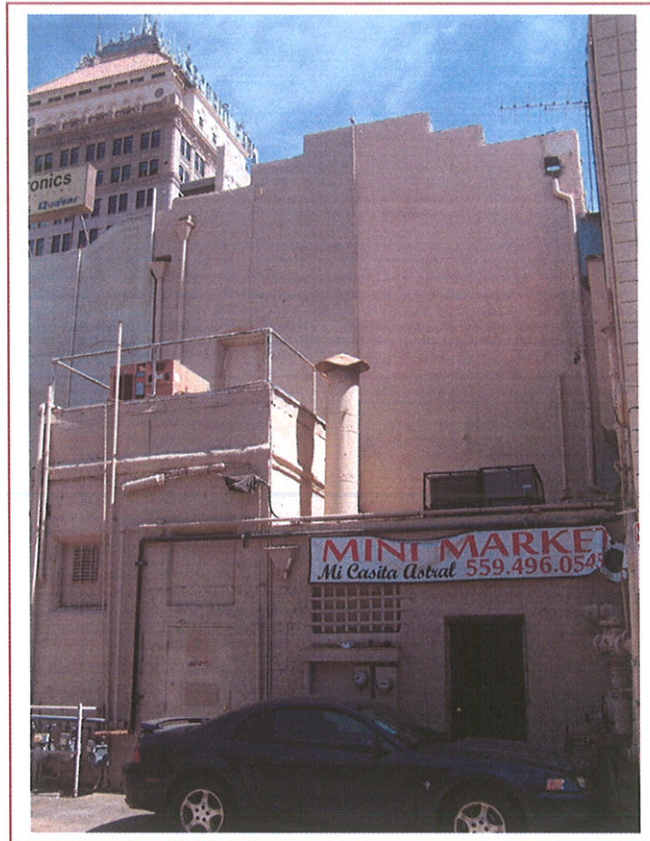
*Date of Evaluation: 17 September 2014

(This space reserved for official comments.)



*Rear elevation of
the Fresno Daily
Expositor Building
8.14.14*

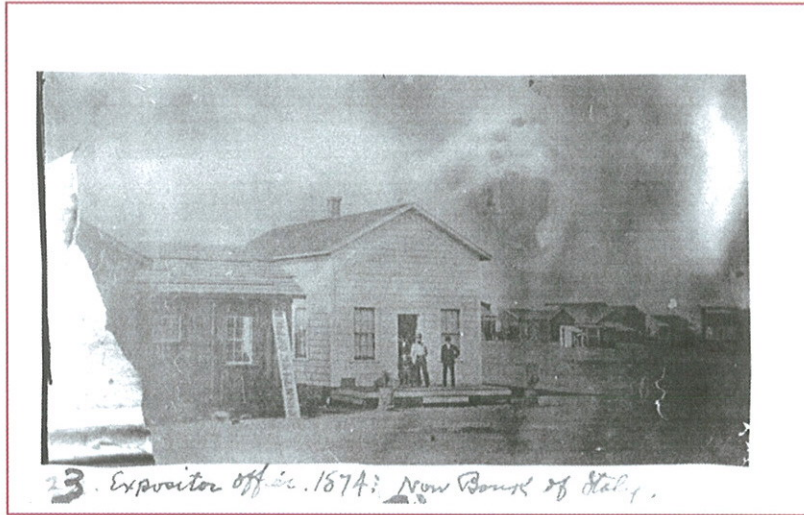
*Below: Storefronts
8.14.14*



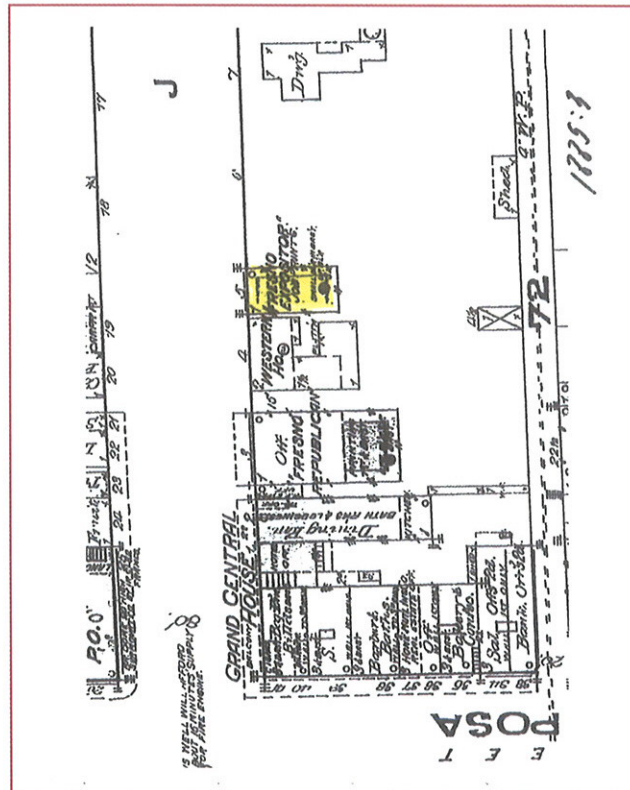
*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton

*Date: 14 August 2014

■ Continuation/Update



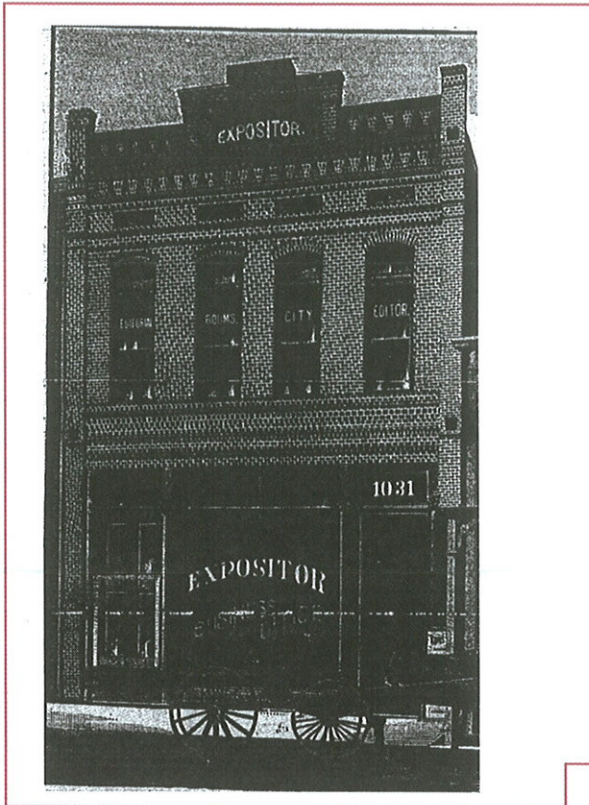
Expositor Offices, 1874 at northwest corner of J (Fulton) and Tulare (now Bank of Italy); Below 1885 Sanborn map indicating one story building at current location, 1029-1031 J (Fulton Street/Fulton Mall)



*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton

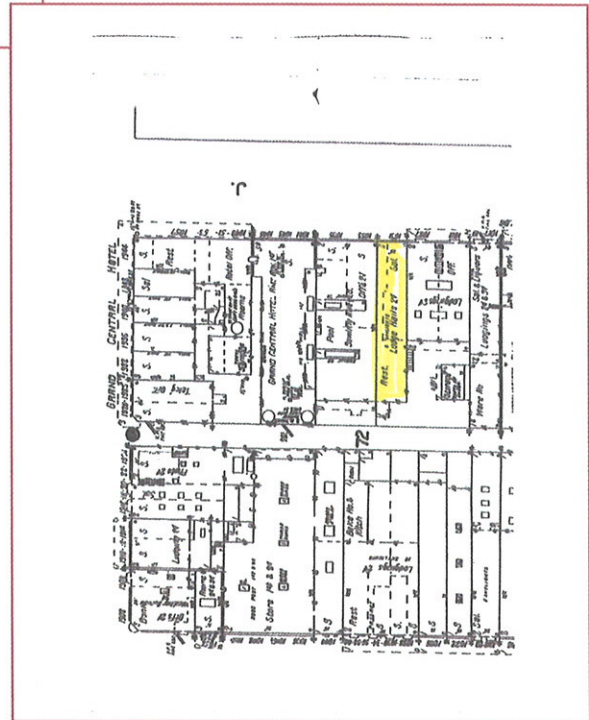
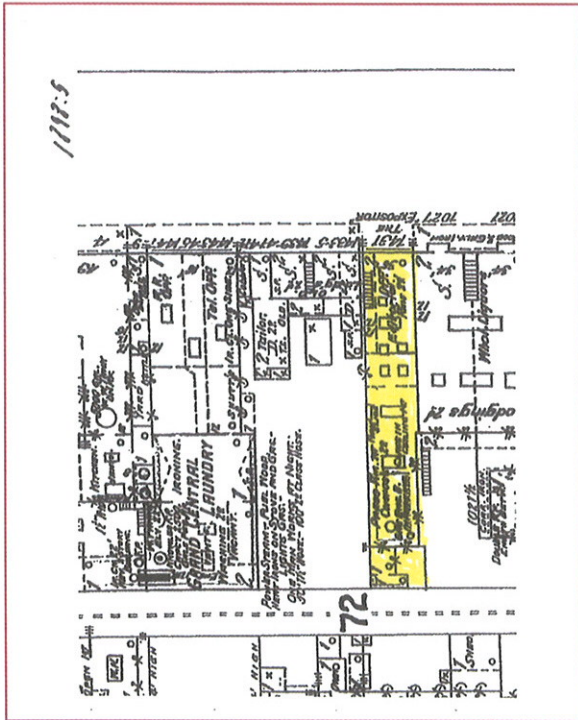
*Date: August 14, 2014

■ Continuation/Update



Façade Expositor Building, 1029-1031 J (Fulton) 1890. Photo courtesy Fresno County Library

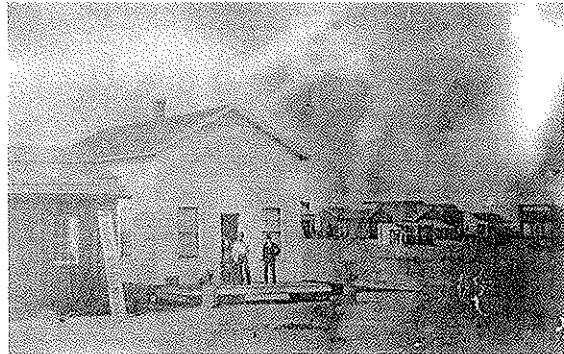
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1898:5 and 1906:14



J.W. Ferguson and the *Fresno Expositor*

By Sean Anderson.

John William Ferguson was born on March 14, 1846 in Mansfield Parish, Louisiana. In March 1849, Ferguson's parents decided to move the family west to California. Although his father, Walter, passed away while crossing the Isthmus of Panama, his mother, Marseillette, successfully brought the family out to San Francisco by August. Following years of attending schools throughout San Francisco, Ferguson worked a series of odd jobs, including positions in a drug store and railroad construction.¹ His first connection to the newspaper industry came in 1868, when Ferguson's brother-in-law, E.B. Boust, moved to Santa Barbara and left him in charge of the *Dutch Flat Enquirer*. As Ferguson gained connections and advanced within the industry, he eventually also became involved with the *Truckee Tribune*.² However, Ferguson soon moved to Millerton in 1870 and decided to start a newspaper of his own.



On April 27, 1870, J.W. Ferguson attempted to meet the growing demands for a good newspaper in Millerton by issuing the first copies of the *Fresno Weekly Expositor*.³ With a warm welcome and continued approval from the readers, the *Expositor* enjoyed much public support during its early days in Millerton. When the town of Fresno took over as the county seat in 1874, however, Ferguson moved his *Expositor* office from Millerton to

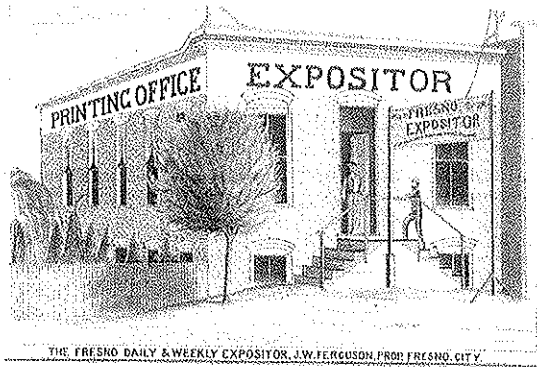
¹ Susan Baird Pappas, introduction to *Birth, marriage, and death notices published in the Fresno Weekly Expositor, 1870-1886* (Fresno County Genealogical Society, 2012).

² Pappas, introduction.

³ Wallace W. Elliott, *History of Fresno County, California* (W.W. Elliott & Co., 1882), 202.

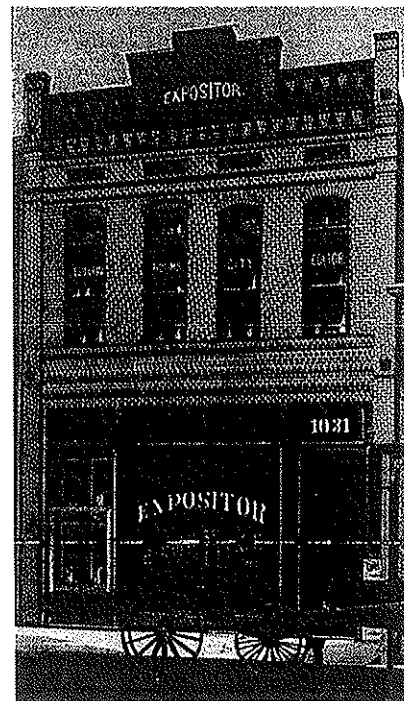
a new location in Fresno.⁴ This new building's location, on the northwest corner of Tulare and J (Fulton) Street, would eventually become the site of the current Bank of Italy building. With the move to Fresno, the *Expositor* became the first newspaper to publish in the city of Fresno.

With the move to Fresno, the *Expositor* entered a phase of major expansion. After remaining in this office for seven years, Ferguson decided to leave the small wood building



for a larger brick structure in 1881. The new office for the *Expositor* would be located just down the road from the previous site, on J Street between Mariposa and Tulare.⁵ This structure can still be found at the current location of 1029-1031 Fulton,

beneath a new facade. It was also around this time, in 1881, that Ferguson decided to channel Fresno's spirit of progress and began issuing the *Expositor* as a daily newspaper in addition to its original weekly format.⁶ After a further growth in popularity, the *Expositor* expanded its reach in other ways. In January 1887, the paper switched from a seven-to-eight column format, and by April of the same year, the *Expositor* became a six-column format of eight, rather than four, pages. This sense of expansion and growing influence for the *Expositor* was once again reflected by improvements



⁴ Elliott, *History of Fresno County, California*, 202.

⁵ J.W. Ferguson, "Our New Building," *Daily Evening Expositor*, July 26, 1888, 1.

⁶ Elliott, *History of Fresno County, California*, 202.

made to the publication's office in 1888, when the structure was turned into a 7,500 square-foot, two-story brick building. Some of the plans for additions to this building included an artistic wrought iron balustrade, French plate glass and galvanized iron with terra cotta trimmings on the first story front, and a thirty-foot flagstaff.⁷ With these final additions made, the building would serve as the home of the *Expositor* during its peak, as it became the biggest newspaper in the San Joaquin Valley by 1890.⁸ The *Expositor* had grown to such a level, in fact, that it was able to withstand a fire in 1890 that cost \$7,000 in damages, without missing a single issue.

Ferguson remained an influential member of the Fresno community throughout his life. Representing Fresno County in the Legislature in 1873 and 1874, Ferguson satisfied his constituents by serving in an able manner.⁹ After this short stint in politics, Ferguson devoted his full attention to informing his fellow citizens of the news through the *Expositor*. It wasn't until 1895, when Ferguson suffered a stroke, that he sold the *Expositor* to A.B. Butler. After multiple ownership changes, the *Expositor* was eventually taken over by the Fresno Publishing House in 1897, and published its final issue in 1898. One year after selling the *Expositor*, Ferguson re-entered the newspaper business through his publication of *The Watchman*. Following several more strokes and steadily declining health, Ferguson passed away on July 29, 1907.¹⁰ Ferguson left behind his wife and two children, Walter and Marseillette, and an illustrious career as the leading figure behind Fresno's first newspaper.

⁷ Ferguson, "Our New Building," 1.

⁸ Pappas, introduction.

⁹ Elliott, *History of Fresno County, California*, 202.

¹⁰ Pappas, introduction.