

Date July 19, 2023

Submitted by Paul A. Garcia

Application for Designation of an Historic Resource

Property Owner(s)	Phone Number 559-223-0232
JOSE ACEVEDO	Phone Number
	Email
Property Address	APN
1405 E CALIFORNIA AVENUE. FRESNO, CA 93796	46730206
Circle one Building Structure Object Site Other X	If other, explain here
Detailed Description	
SEE ATTACHMENT A	
Date of Construction/Architectural Style	
N/A	
Explain any significant alterations	
N/A	
Description of the Physical Condition and Appearance	
N/A	
Owner submission/Owner statement attached SEE ATTACHMENT D	
Photos/Renderings/Sketches/Descriptive Materials attached.	
SEE ATTACHMENT B AND C	
Additional information	
THE LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL SITE OF THE EDISON SOCIAL HALL IS NOW A PRIVATE RESIDENCE.	

Historical Preservation Specialist _____

Information Requested _____ Application Complete _____

Notice Date _____ Date of Hearing _____

ATTACHMENT A

The national farmworker movement is over 60 years old. Its genesis can be traced to a pivotable event in mid-March of 1962 when Cesar Chavez resigned from the Community Service Organization (CSO). At their annual convention he proposed a resolution for CSO to organize farmworkers, but the motion failed. Chavez abruptly resigned to start his own organization. Chavez immediately travelled the state of California to determine the pressing needs of farmworkers. Through a brief and simple survey, he asked farmworkers what they preferred in wages, benefits, and working conditions. Chavez drew a map of all the towns between Arvin and Stockton. He estimated there were 86 communities, including farm labor camps. After six months some 80,000 cards were collected from eight Valley counties.

On September 30, 1962 Cesar Chavez, Gilbert Padilla, and Dolores Huerta gathered about 250 farmworkers in Fresno for the inaugural convention of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), now the United Farm Workers (UFW). It was a daunting struggle to organize laborers who lived in small isolated rural communities, most spoke only Spanish, many were migrant workers, and some lived in labor camps. Many had no transportation. The deliberate and thoughtful manner by which the convention was conducted formed the basis for the Union's success.

Prior to the meeting, Chavez sent invitations to selected farm workers that authorized their participation as delegates [Exhibit A]. In a personal letter inviting workers to the convention, Chavez proposed the farmworkers' burden and his vision. It clearly referenced the determination to spawn a movement:

This movement is a drive by the workers themselves to...seek solutions to their problems. It is simply a movement of the farmworker to end all the injustices committed against him... Finally, this movement is made up of those workers, who are strong men and women, who understand that only through their own association will they, as workers, find a solution to the problem. [Exhibit B]

Examination of the sign-in sheet and printed convention roster suggests there were 42 delegates representing 21 communities [Exhibit C]. Invited guests included individuals who had already joined Chavez as supporters and who would later make their mark with the union; Chris Hartmire and John Ralph Duggan [Exhibit D]. Chavez opened the meeting with an explanation that it would be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedures. In such fashion, delegates made motions that were approved for dues to be set at \$3.50 a month, the benefit of a group insurance plan, and the establishment of a credit union [Exhibit E]. Confident the Union would eventually secure labor contracts, motions were made to create hiring halls and *seek to win legislation that would cover farmworkers with unemployment insurance* [Exhibit F]. Most of these benefits were codified just four years later with the first ever labor contract directed by farmworkers, signed by Schenley Incorporated [Exhibit G].

The three leaders had long established farmworkers would be the face of the Union. At the convention, the elected president was not Chavez, but a farmworker as were most of the officers. [Exhibit H]. Chavez was elected as general director, while vice presidents were elected to represent each of the counties in attendance [Exhibit I].

In early strikes, the nascent union demonstrated its commitment to farmworkers beyond member services and improved wages. It became a nationwide social movement that unlocked the tenacity and unyielding voice of this disenfranchised population. The union fought for affordable housing, sanitary restrooms and clean drinking water, and the safe use of pesticides. The civil rights of farmworkers were also a priority. In 1967, Chavez deployed Padilla to Starr County, Texas to lead a floundering melon strike. The corruption between growers and law enforcement agencies ended when Padilla, as a plaintiff, filed a lawsuit against the Texas Rangers that was successfully litigated.

There has never been proper recognition of the site and location of the first NFWA meeting. Perhaps because it was held in a nondescript building in an inconspicuous part of Fresno, with representatives from a largely neglected labor population. The Fresno Bee did not find the meeting newsworthy. The location is often incorrectly described as an abandoned downtown movie theater. However, convention invitations, farmworker delegate credentials, and meeting minutes clearly indicate the location was the Edison Social Hall at 1405 E. California street. A map depicts the location of the Edison Social Hall at the California street address [Exhibit J]. A photo of the event depicts a group of delegates proudly holding paper placards with names of the rural communities they represented; Kettleman City, Hanford, Corcoran, Lamont, Bakersfield, Delano [Exhibit K].

Designation of the site of the inaugural meeting of the NFWA as a local historical resource will not be the first time the work of Cesar Chavez has been recognized. In 2012, President Barack Obama signed a Presidential Proclamation that created the César E. Chávez National Monument in Keene, CA. It is the national headquarters of the United Farmworkers of America and the home of César Chávez from 1971-1993, known as Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz.

The citation reads in part:

During the 1970s the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) grew and expanded from its early roots as a union for farm workers to also become a national voice for the poor and disenfranchised. The enduring legacies of César E. Chávez and the farm worker movement include passage of California's Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, the first law in the U.S. that recognized farm workers' collective bargaining rights.

Currently, there is pending federal legislation to create the César E. Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park. This bill (Senate Bill, S.1097) would preserve the nationally significant sites associated with César E. Chávez and the farm worker movement in California and Arizona. Additionally, there would be recognition of the historic trail of

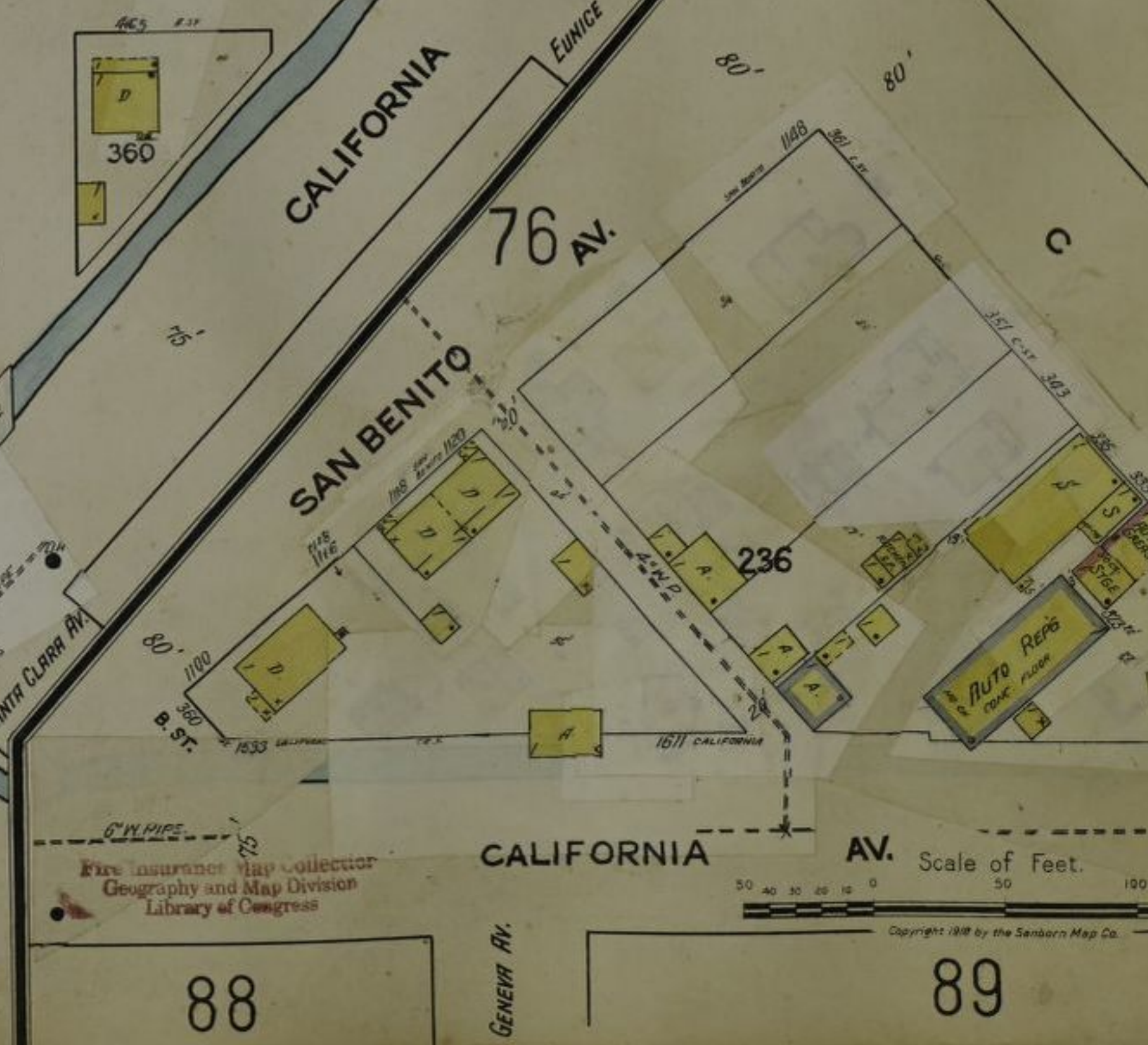
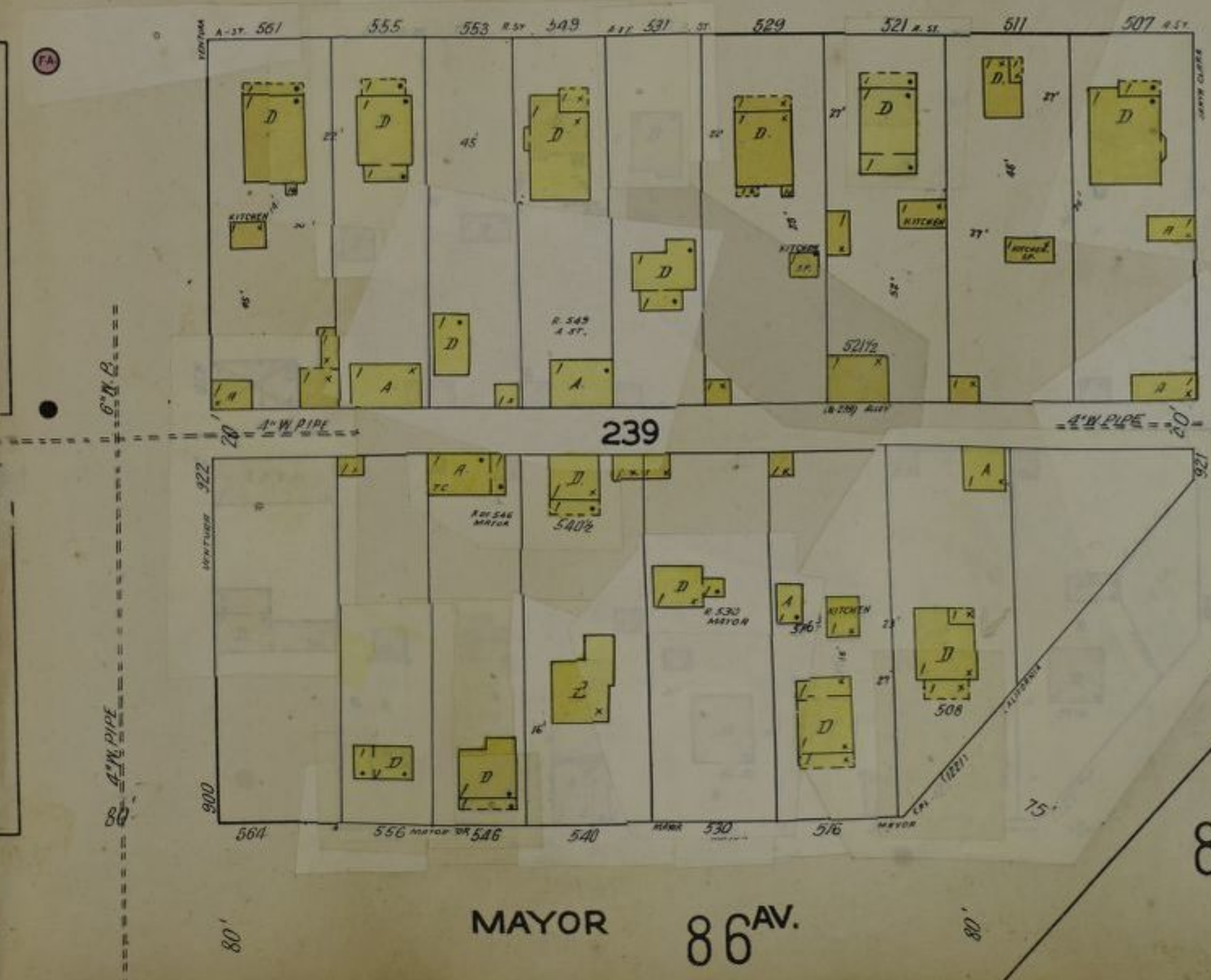
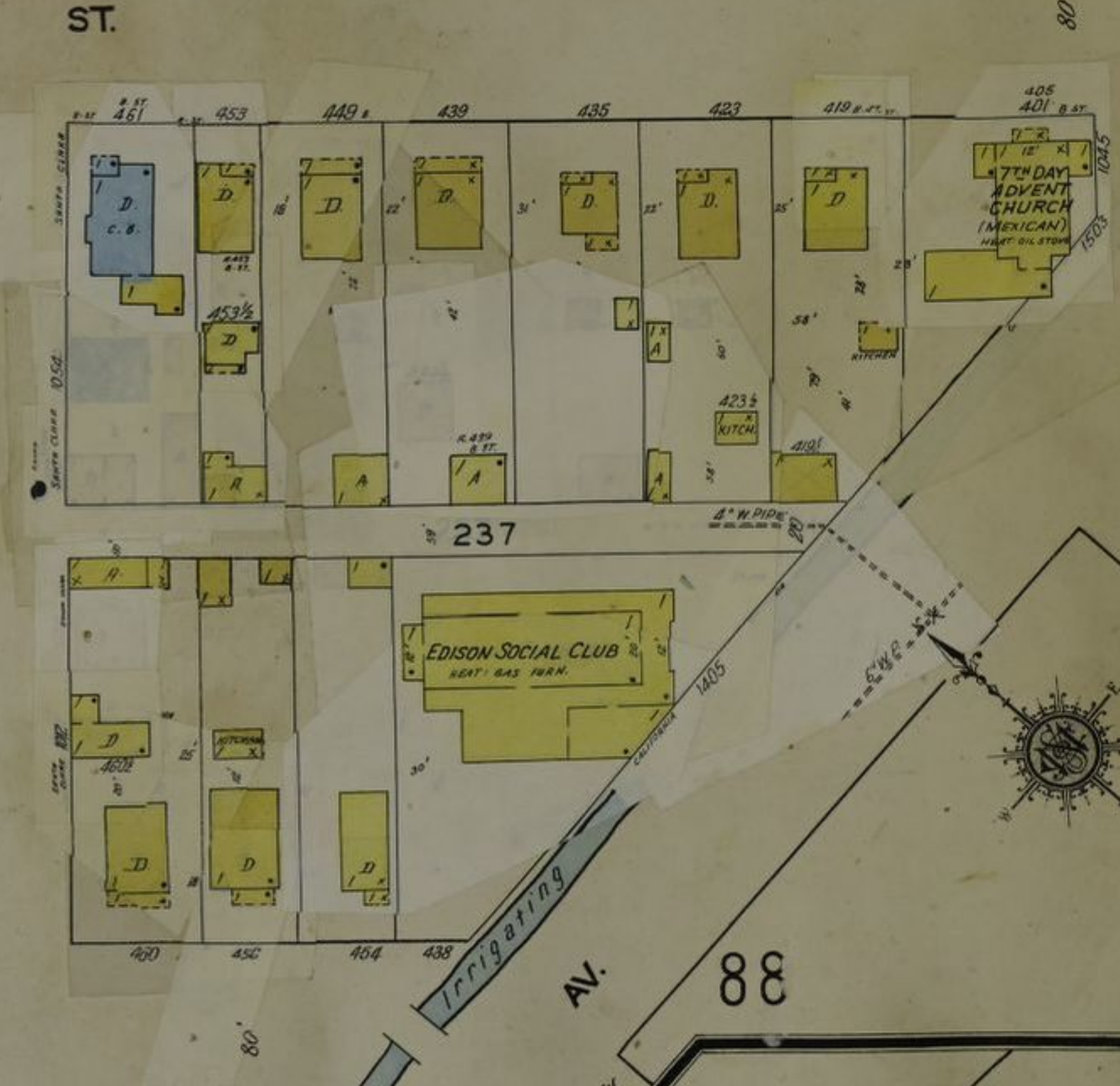
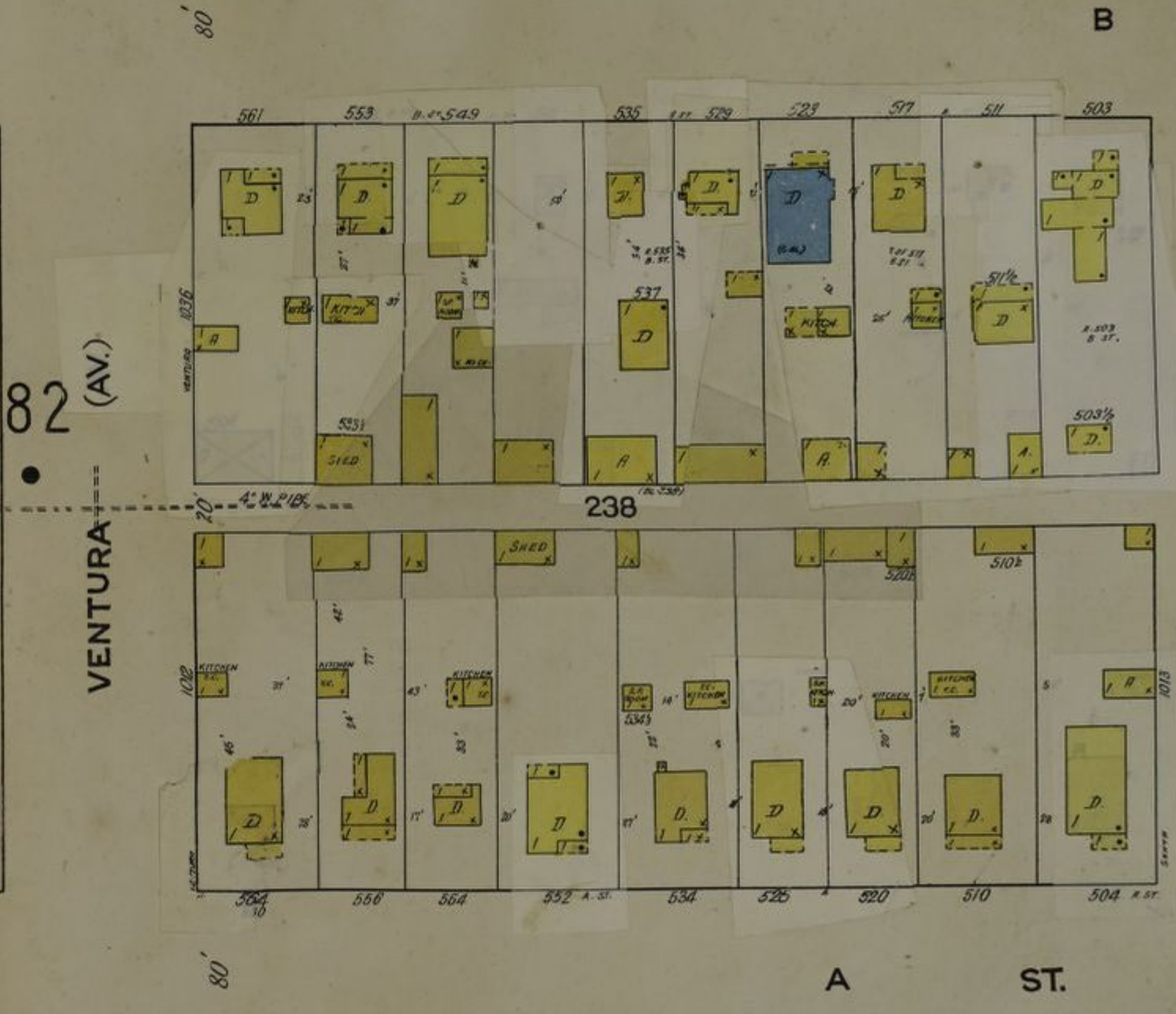
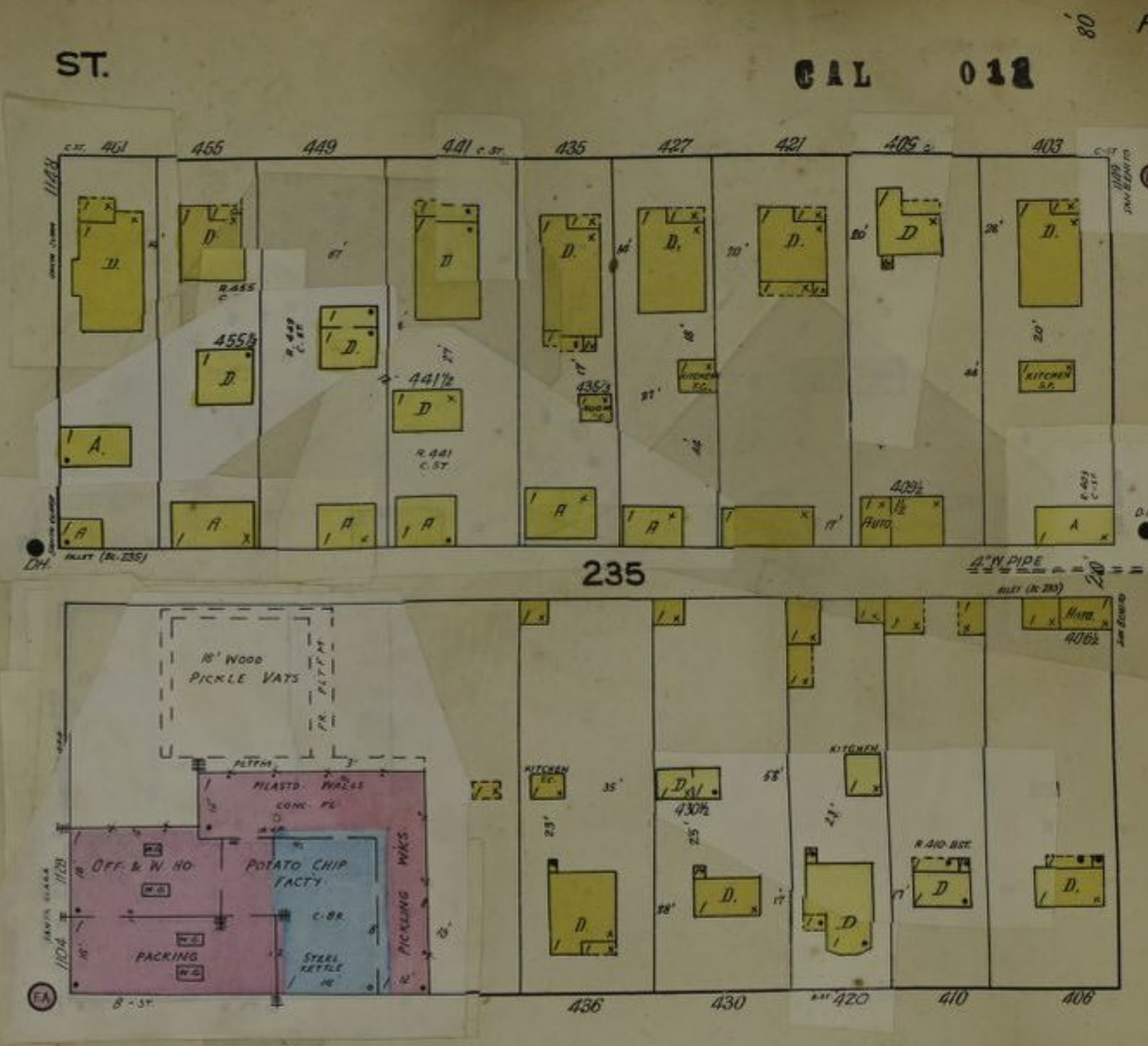
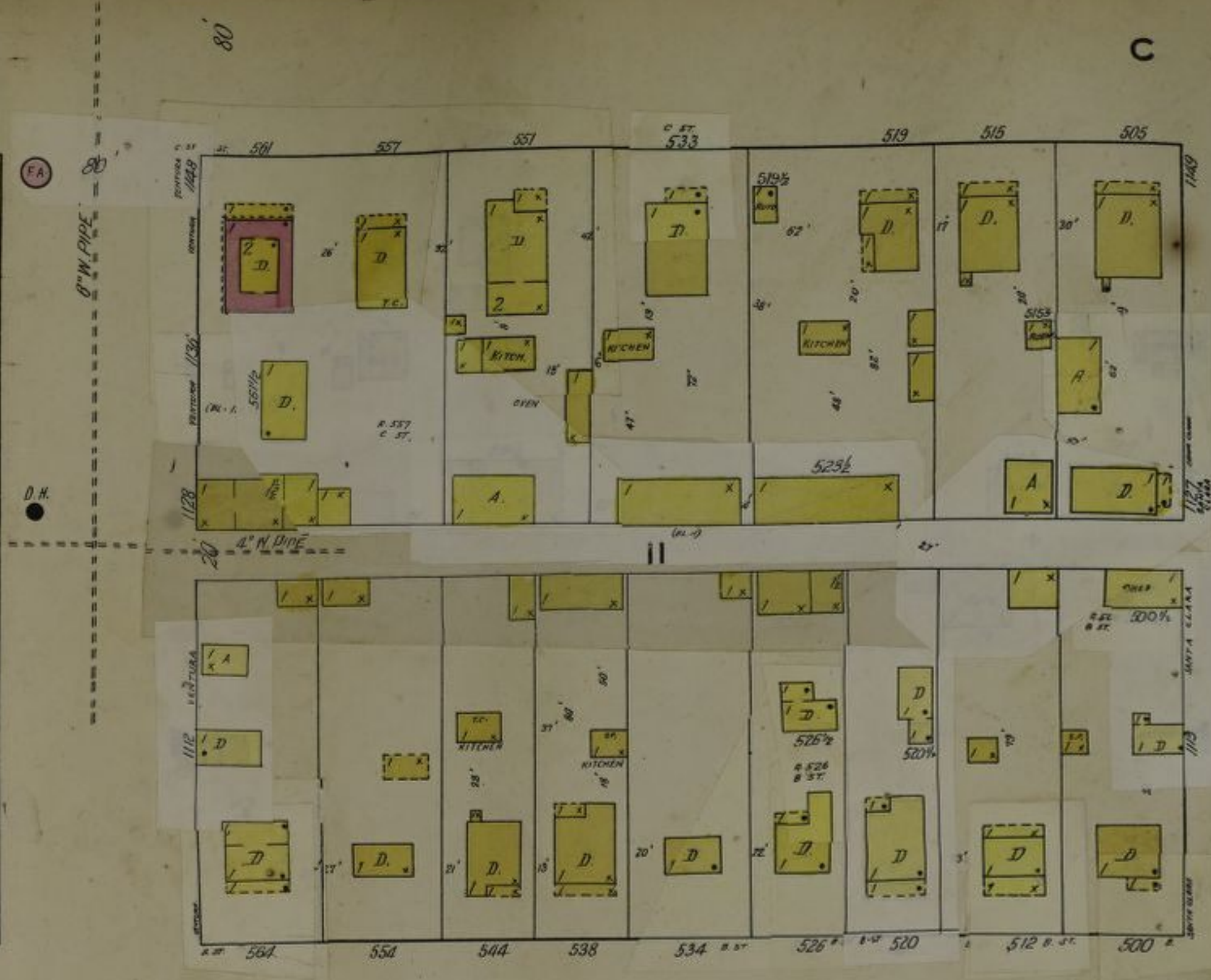
the 300-mile farmworker march from Delano to Sacramento in 1966. The march brought national attention to the plight of farmworkers. Locally, the Azteca Theater served as one of the key stops during the march. Prior to the rally, Arturo Tirado, the owner met with Mayor Floyd Hyde and the chief of police to provide an escort when the marchers came through Fresno. Due to Tirado's influence, Chavez and marchers did not meet with the hostility that greeted them in some other Central Valley towns. The rally staged by Chavez and the marchers at the Azteca on March 24, 1966, drew more than 1,000 people. Azteca Theater is listed on the Fresno City register of historical sites. The 1405 E California site should be included.

After 60 years, it is time to finally establish the exact location and commemorate a marker memorializing the heritage site that spawned a social movement and served as the birthplace for the UFW. The site where a few hundred farmworkers met to form the genesis and chart the direction of a movement that changed the way they were treated, the conditions under which they worked, and the agency and tenacity necessary to demand their civil rights. The marker should read in part, *here marks the cradle of the momentously pivotal and enormously consequential national farm workers movement.*

ATTACHMENT B



ATTACHMENT C



SANTA CLARA (AV.)

VENTURA (AV.)

87

88

89

75

MAYOR 86 AV.

CALIFORNIA

AV. Scale of Feet.

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Geography and Map Division
Library of Congress

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ATTACHMENT D

Letter of Owner Authorization**Name and Address of Owner(s) of the Property**Name: Jose AcededoAddress: 1405 CaliforniaCity: Fresno State: CA Zip Code: 93706Phone: (559) 223-0232 Email: _____**To Whom It May Concern:**

As owner(s) of the property located at

1405 California Fresno, CA 93706Paul A Garcia I/we authorize _____ to act as Agent for the following:To designate property
as site of historical interest

Sincerely,

Jose Acededo

Owner's Printed Name

X Jose L. Acededo

Owner's Signature

1-22-23

Date

Letter of Owner Authorization

Name and Address of Owner(s) of the Property

Name: RAFAEL LOPEZ

Address: 1413 E. CALIFORNIA

City: Fresno State: CA Zip Code: _____

Phone: (559) 412-8846 Email: _____

To Whom It May Concern:

As owner(s) of the property located at _____

1413 E. CALIFORNIA I/we authorize

_____ to act as Agent for the following:

PAUL A. GARCIA

to designate property as site of historical interest.

Sincerely,

RAFAEL LOPEZ

Owner's Printed Name

X Rafael Lopez R.

Owner's Signature

4.21.23

Date