

# I

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## A HISTORIC HOTEL *EIGHT DECADES, 1920s–1990s*

To label the Terminal Building demolition a "preservation failure" is to claim that, for historical, cultural, or other reasons a case can be made for its "significance" and, therefore, its "designation" and, perhaps, preservation.

The chapters in Part I try to make that case. In addition, each chapter is designed to provide some of the larger, Davis context.

- **Chapter 2** describes the site on which the Terminal Building sat **before** it was there.
- The building itself was erected in two phases in 1924 and 1926–27 and opened with great Davis fanfare (**Chapter 3**).
- Through the 1930s and '40s, the Terminal Cafe, retail stores in the building, and the hotel were central institutions of Davis life (**Chapter 4**).
- Along with downtowns elsewhere, after World War II the Davis downtown went into what was perceived as decline and this decline included the Terminal Building. As was done in downtowns across the nation, the "cure" for decline was "redevelopment" and "urban renewal." This also happened in Davis in the 1950s–70s, although a few G Street buildings were spared (**Chapter 5**).
- Demolition slowed towards the 1980s and programs of local history and historic preservation picked up. Strong policies to keep the Davis downtown economically vibrant worked, except for the Terminal Building, which continued to decline through the turn of the millennium (**Chapter 6**).



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## BEFORE THE BUILDING

Laid out in 1868, Davisville/Davis existed some five and one-half decades before the 1924 construction of the first part of the Terminal Building at the northeast corner of Second and G streets. Because the location was proximate to the railroad depot, we can correctly guess that there were prior uses of the site. For the sake of historical depth and context, I want in this chapter to describe uses about which we know at least a little.

There are only a few early photographs of the northeast corner of Second and G. We are therefore especially fortunate that the Sanborn Map Company, which made maps of American towns and cities for fire insurance companies, included Davis in its mapping from the fairly early year of 1888.

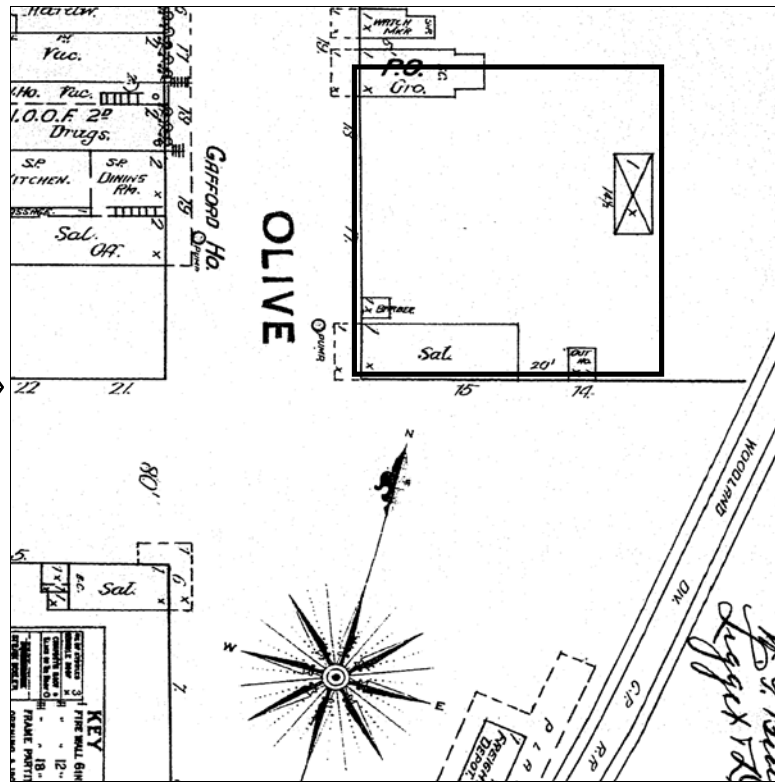
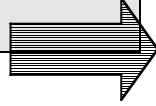
This company periodically updated its maps. For Davis, we have such “snapshots” of the town for at least nine different years between 1888 to 1955. Of these, in this chapter I excerpt the relevant portions of six years that show the site before the construction of the Terminal Building. (The six excerpts are from the digital scans on Chadwyck-Healey’s compact disk titled *Davis, California Sanborn Maps* [Chadwyck-Healley, Inc., 1999].)

In Fig. 2.1 we see the portion of the 1888 map that shows the northeast corner of Second and G. The approximate footprint of the future Terminal Building is shown with a thick-line rectangle on this map (and on subsequent maps). Here, we see that the three occupants of the site were a barber shop, saloon, and outdoor toilet.

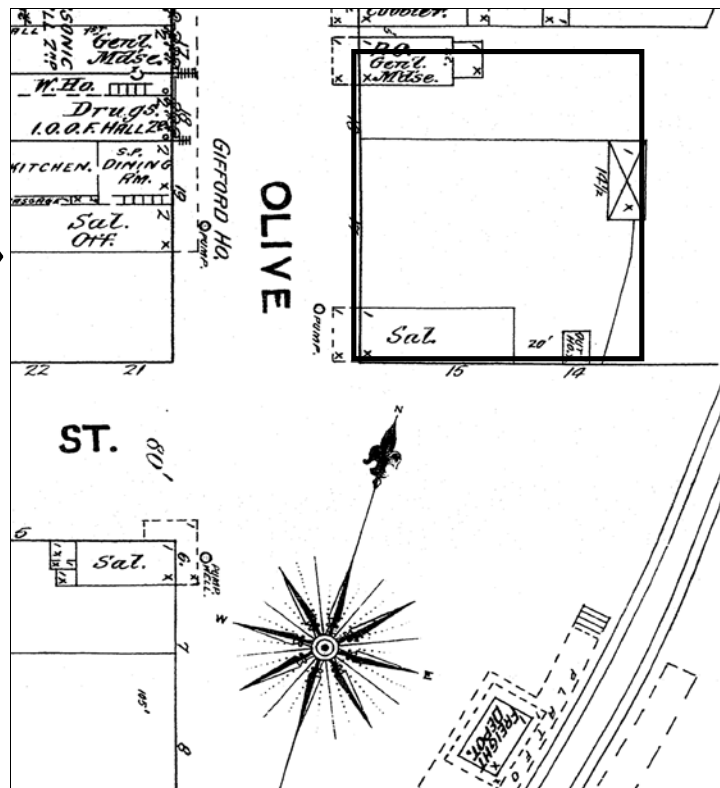
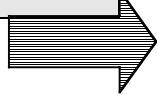
On the 1891 map (Fig. 2.2), the barber shop building has been removed, although the outhouse remains. (In all likelihood, it burned down, as fires were frequent in this era.)

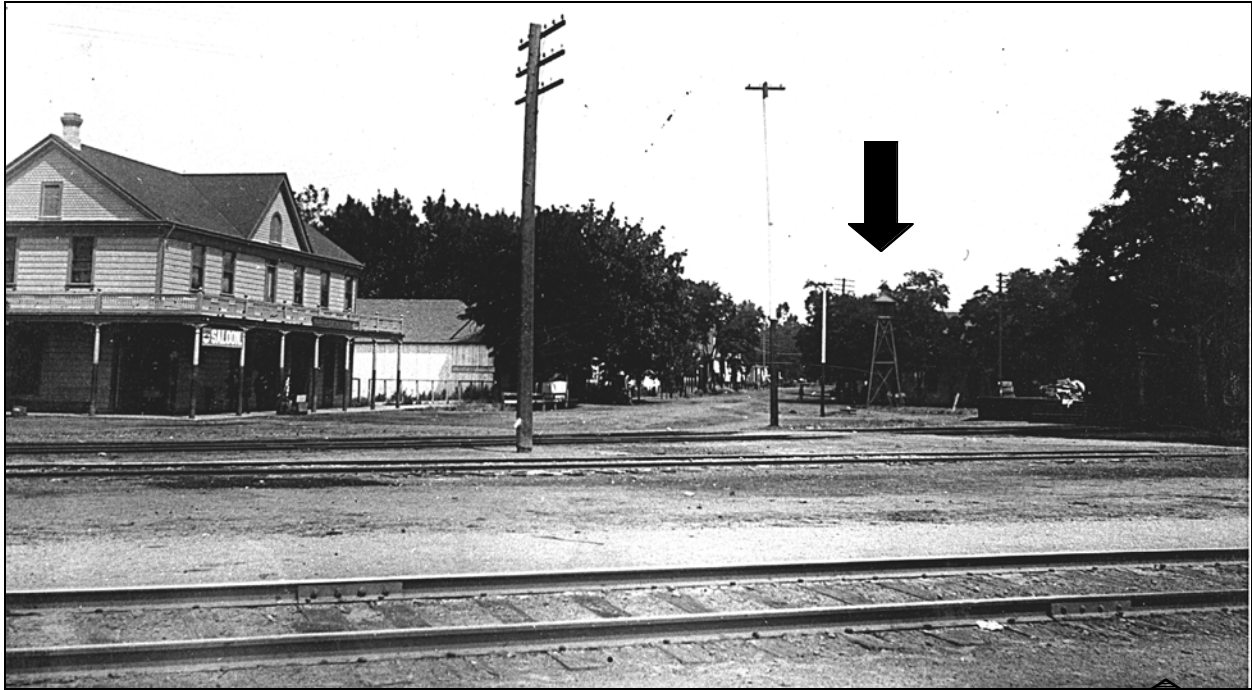
2.1. 1888 Sanborn map of Davisville/Davis showing the intersection of G Street (here named Olive) and Second Street (running horizontally).

In this and each of the following maps, the dark-line rectangle in the upper right is the approximate area of the future Terminal Building.



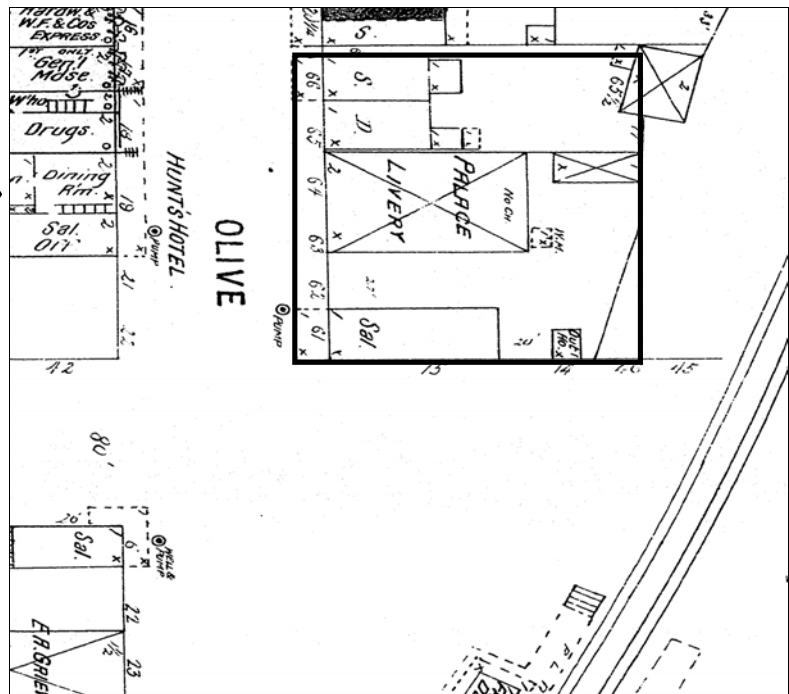
2.2. 1891 Sanborn map of the Second and G intersection. The barber shop seen on the 1888 site is gone, although the outhouse remains.





2. 3. Circa 1895 view looking north from the southern end of G Street, which is just beyond the tracks running across the middle of the picture. The black arrow points to the fire alarm bell tower at Second and G, an installation also shown on the 1907 Sanborn map reproduced in Fig. 2.6. The building on the left is the Lillard Hotel that was built in 1884 and burned down in 1898.(Larkey Collection.)

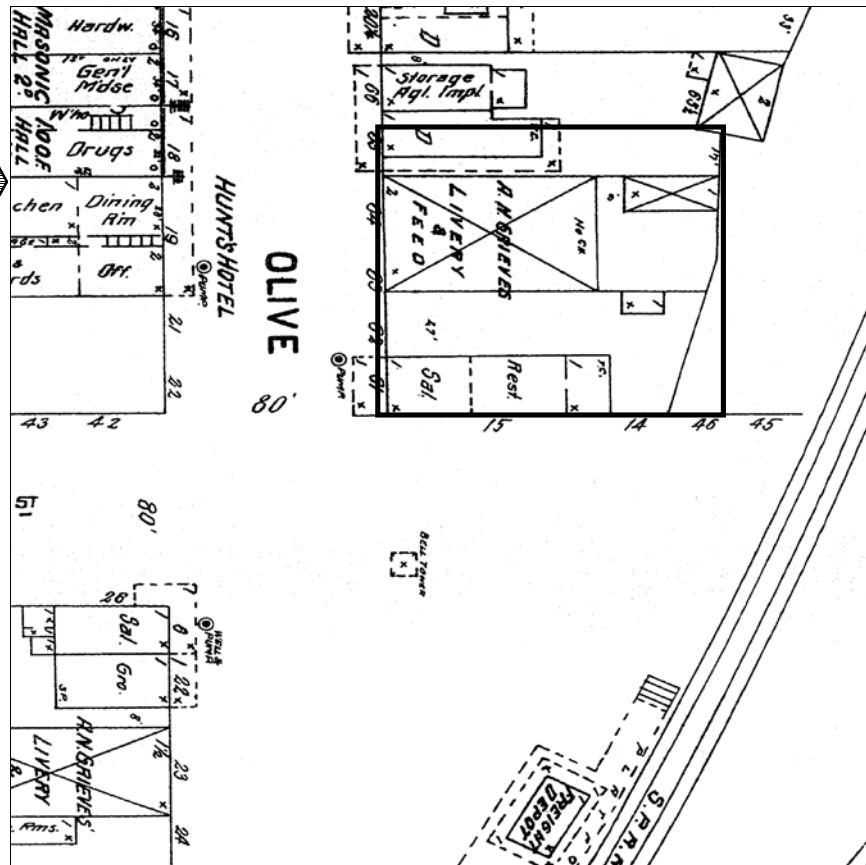
2.4. 1900 Sanborn map of the G (here called Olive) and Second intersection.



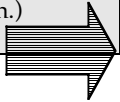
2.5. The 1900 Sanborn (Fig. 2.4) shows the Palace Livery covering a portion of what would become the Terminal Building site. This is a photograph of that livery, here labeled a "stable." (Hattie Weber Museum.)



2.6. 1907 Sanborn map of the Second and G intersection.

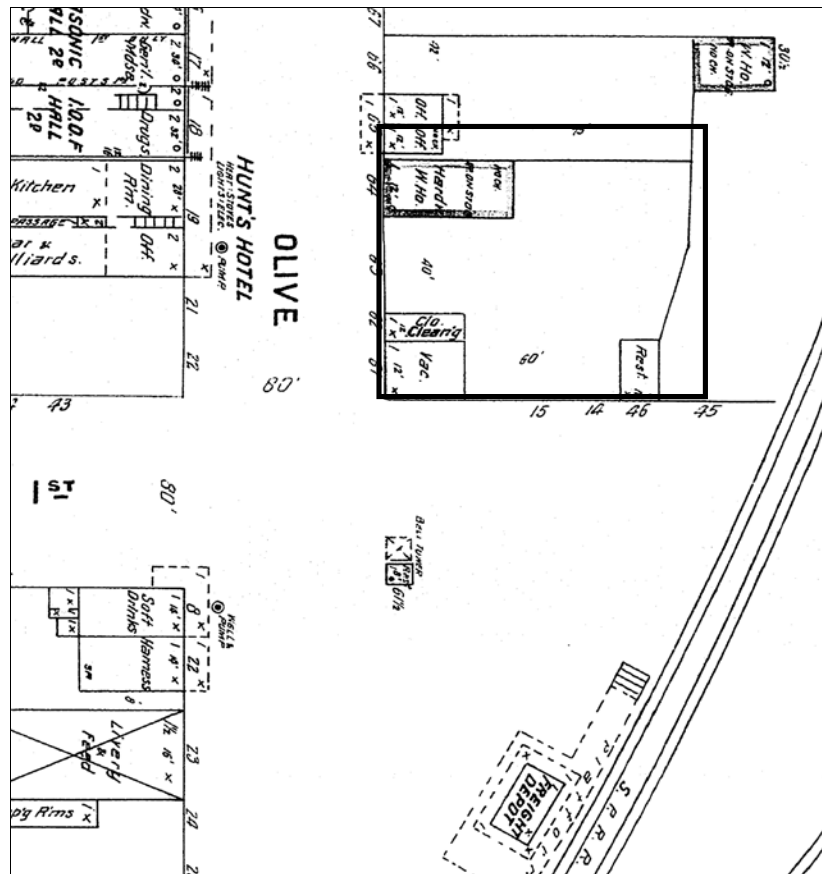
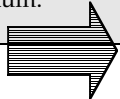


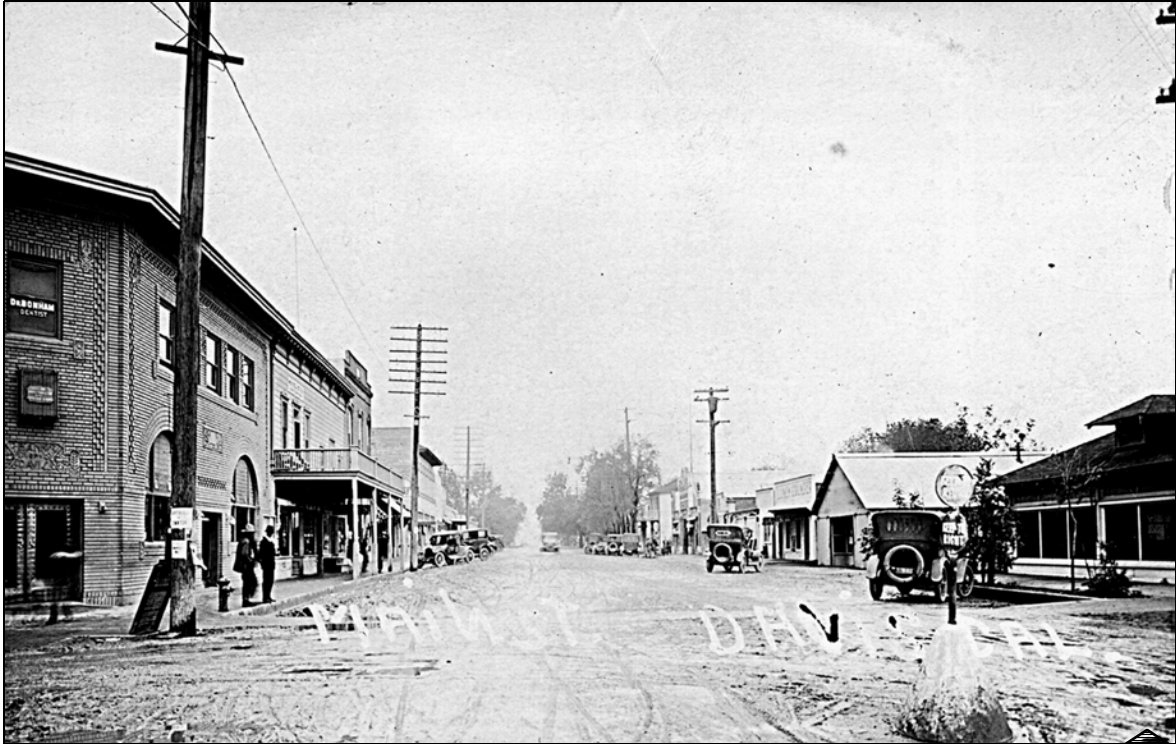
2.7. This circa 1907 photo was apparently taken to show the delivery of the first almond huller to Davis, shown in the lower foreground. But it also shows G Street looking north from Second. The fire bell tower in the middle distance also appears in Figs. 2.3, 2.6, and 2.8. (Larkey Collection.)



2.8. 1911 Sanborn map of the Second and G intersection. The three previous maps show a "saloon" on the Terminal Building site, together with a second saloon on the southeast corner of this intersection.

Here, the Terminal site saloon is vacant and the southwest corner building has become "soft drinks." These closings—and the closing of several other saloons north of here on G Street—were the result of a successful effort by Davis Prohibitionists to get the state legislature to ban the sale of alcohol in Davis as a way to protect "fragile" University Farm students from Demon Rum.





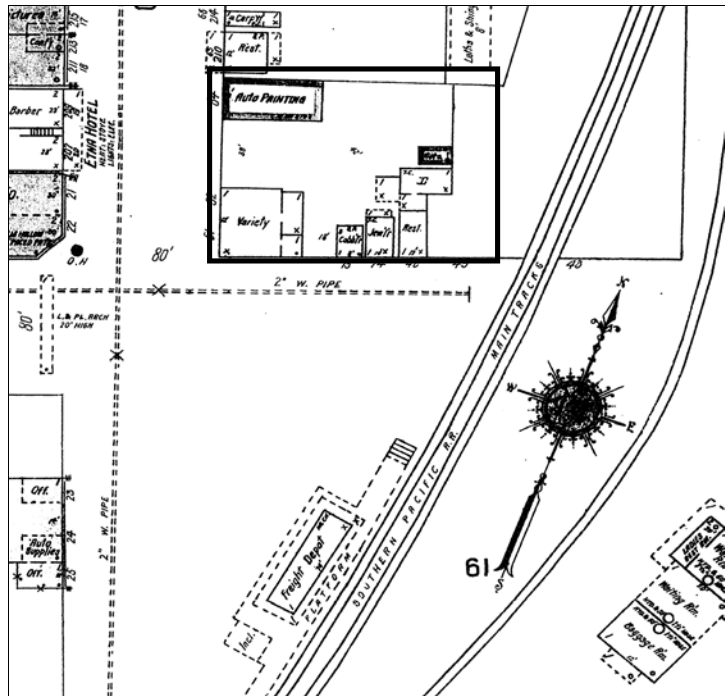
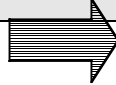
2.9. Circa 1915 view looking north up "Main Street" (the everyday but unofficial name of Olive/G Street). The building on the extreme right occupies the Terminal Building Site. The recently (1914) constructed Anderson Bank Building is on the left (with its original corner door). (David Herbst.)



2.10. Circa 1918-19 view looking west through the Davis Arch on Second and toward the University Farm. This photograph is reproduced from the 1919 edition of the University Farm yearbook, *El Rodeo*. The building seen on the far right in Fig. 2.9 is just out of view to the right in this photograph.



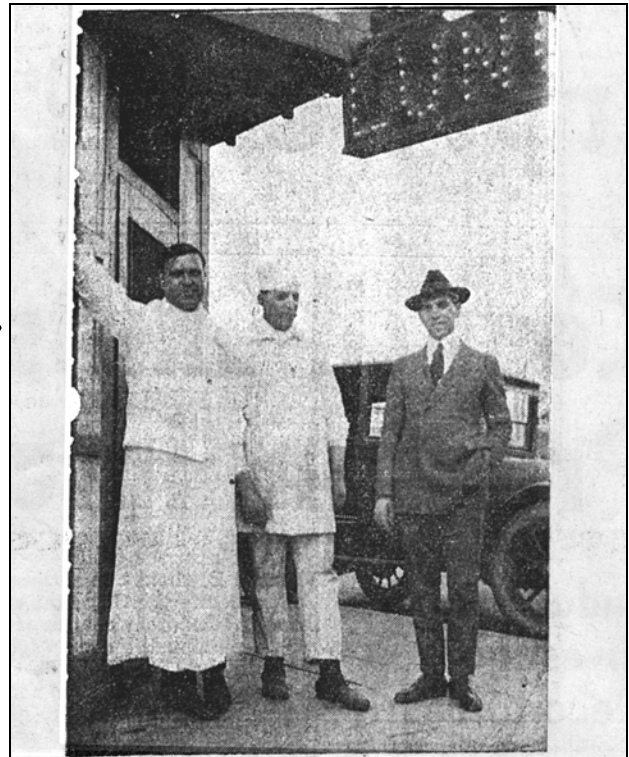
2.11. 1921 Sanborn map of the Second and G intersection. There has been a flurry of construction on the Terminal site since the 1911 map (Fig. 2.8). According to the labels on the buildings, the new activities include a cobbler, jeweler, restaurant, and a dwelling.



2.12. Circa 1919 photo of the structure that will be moved in 1924 to make way for the new Terminal Building. Before Tingus and Belenis opened the Terminal Cafe in this building, its uses included those of a pool hall and variety store. (Larkey Collection.)

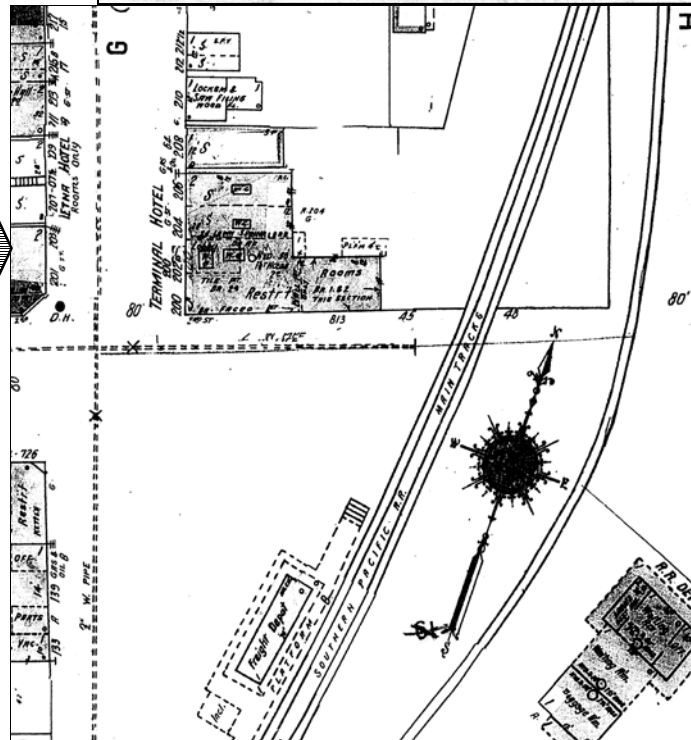
2.13. 1921 view of the corner door of the Terminal Cafe at Second and G. This photograph and caption are reproduced from the *Davis Enterprise* of December 18, 1958.

The year 1921 is based on the claim in the caption that this photograph was taken 37 years before this publication in 1958.



37 YEARS AGO IN DAVIS—From left, Jim Belenis, Pete Belenis and John Tingus, partners for 24 years in the old Terminal Cafe, are shown standing under their new electric sign. The cafe was located on the corner of Second street across from the SP Depot, where the Aggie Hotel is now located.

2.14. 1945 Sanborn map of the Second and G intersection. As will be elaborated in the next chapter, the Terminal Building was erected in two phases in 1924 and 1926.



This, then, was the location at which the Terminal Building was constructed. We turn now to the coming of the building itself.