

P4C
510 King
Monday, July 13, 2015: D5

Sokol speculation

Even before Joe Sokol announced he will close the 94-year-old Morris Sokol Furniture business named after its founding father, speculation swirled about what will become of the retailer's downtown Charleston location.

A few years back, there was talk the Ritz-Carlton Hotel was interested in the three-story property at King and Reid streets. Owner Joe Sokol called that a rumor. "I was never approached by anyone," he said.

Talk now centers on the possibility of a grocery store. Sokol said he expects the site to remain retail, but beyond that he isn't talking.

"No contract has been signed yet," he said.



FILE/GRACE BEAHM/STAFF

Morris Sokol Furniture Co. announced last week it will be closing after it wraps up a liquidation sale.

The building opened at about half its current size in 1929, eight years after Morris Sokol started peddling his wares

on the streets in a cart. The 37,000-square-foot ground-floor showroom was expanded to its current size in 1957.



Freida and Joe Sokol

At 1921, we were little more
than a horse-drawn delivery cart.

Things have changed!

SOKOL STORY

"A Trip Downtown"

722-3874

Our Charleston: Lowcountry Photos, People, and Places (Charleston: Post 7 Courier, 007)



504 - 510 1910 Jacobs Shoe Store *Jacobs Shoe Store* specialized in men's and ladies shoes. *Isaac Jacobs*, son of the original proprietor, *Louis Jacobs*, describes the store for us. "My father had at one time a very large shoe store. As big as the Morris Sokol Furniture—it belonged to the Hughes family who owned Hughes Lumber Company, the property. They wouldn't sell it to him. He had an interesting store—three showcases, beautiful showcases, in front. One was a long one that faced the door and one on each side of that. The big one had curves around the front. He also had ladders attached to the ceiling on a rail on the right hand and left hand side that were attached to the ceiling. He had a high shelf: when you wanted to reach to the top shelf you had to climb that ladder. In the back of the store, he had a circular bench made of black leather which he finally gave to the Charleston Museum. It was round and circular and he kept that in the back for people coming back for rubber shoes or children's shoes to try on."

Isaac recalls a story about the store's addition machine. "The funny part of that adding machine—I think it was before 1910—[my father] had a bookkeeper who was filling out a deposit slip. He asked my father to check his addition of the checks he was depositing and my father checked it and got a different figure than the bookkeeper. They both checked it again and finally agreed to a figure. My father says, 'You know, I've heard of such a thing as a mechanical adding machine. I ought to try to buy one.' It wasn't two minutes later, they tell me, a young man came in from the corner. His father ran a grocery store on the corner named Knobloch. He comes to my father and told him who he was and said, 'I'm selling adding machines. I'm taking orders and shipping from the factory.' My father said, 'Let me see a sample.' He said, 'All I've got is a catalogue, prices.' He showed him a drawing of a Wales adding machine. Must have been from England, I don't know. It was on a stand, thirty inches high. He asked how much it was. He told him. My father said, 'I'll take it.' Mr. Knobloch says, 'You're gonna take it? Just like that? You know, you are the first person I've called on to try to sell these adding machines and you buy one in less than two minutes. I don't know whether I ought to continue this work or not. It's just too easy! You know, I ought to quit while I'm ahead.'" Isaac also told of how his father got into the wholesale business. A sock peddler who called regularly sold him a batch of mismatched patterns for a very cheap price. This enabled the store to sell them for five or ten cents a pair. A man could afford to wear them and then throw them away. "Well, after Christmas my brother had a half year more in college and he and my father said, 'Maybe we ought to buy some of these socks from Joseph (the peddler) and resell them and job them' That's how they got in the wholesale business (see 331 East Bay) 1900 Thomas Hughes building materials

505 1930 Morris Shoe Store 1920 Miss M.R. Craver 1910 Mrs E.H. Graver 1900 Mrs E.H. Graver fancy goods

506 1930 Isadore Greenberg / Jacob's Shoe Store 1900 Louis Jacobs shoes etc

KING STREET

507 1996 Jonathon Kerr ½ Rose's Gifts and Things 1990 Vacant 1950 thru 1970 George Savvas furnished rooms ½ Liberty Lunch 1940 Liberty Café / George Savvas *George T. Savvas* came to America just after 1900 from Vachlia, Greece. His uncles had built the Savvopoulos Building at 507-509 in 1896. Savvas purchased the property from the uncles when they returned to Greece in the 20s. Savvas operated the Liberty Lunch Café and the Liberty Ice Cream Parlor before opening a successful liquor business. In the early 30s Savvas returned to Greece and married Alexandra Panopoulou. Shortly after, the couple returned and had one child, Christina (see 26 Rutledge). Known by many patrons as "Mr. Michi", he lived in an apartment above his store at 507 King until he retired in the 1960s. He died in 1971 at the age of 89 in his home in Athens, Greece. Savvas was a founding member of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church and a member of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Christina Homer, his daughter, received a Carolopolis Award for preservation of the building in the 1990s. 1930 Liberty Ice Cream Parlor 1920 Delmonico Ice Cream & Candy Co. 1910 G.A. Pannchopoulo 1900 William Scott © fruitier

508 1920 C.J. Takacs 1900 Bernstein's Department Store

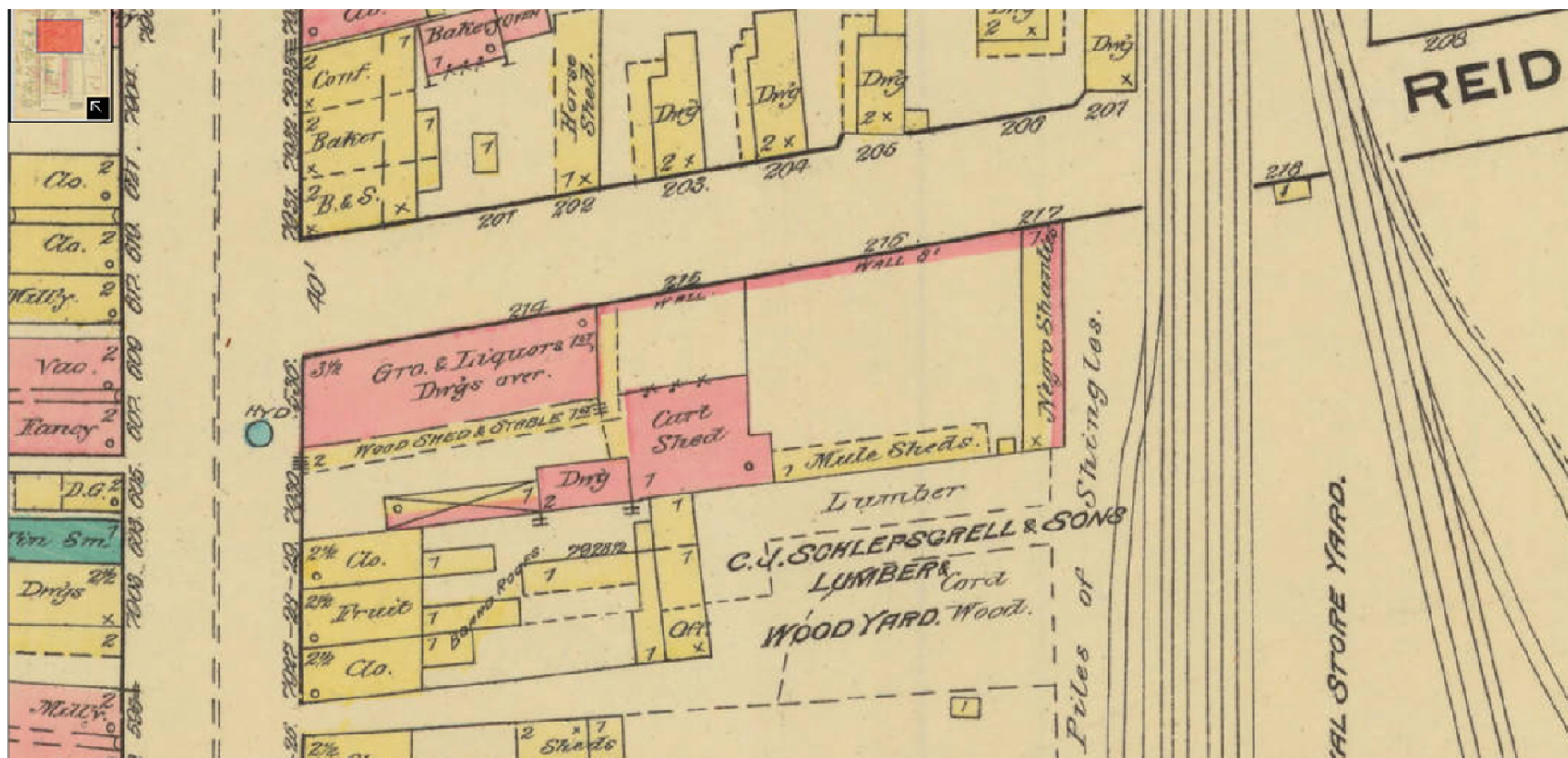
509 1980 thru 1999 Honest John's Record Shop / Honest John TV Repair Shop 1970 Mrs. Christina S. Homer liquor (see 507 King) 1960 George T. Savvas retail liquor / Arthur Homer 1950 Liberty Lunch 1920 Delmonico Ice Cream & Candy Co. Restaurant

510 1940 thru 1999 Morris Sokol Furniture Co. At the end of the century *Morris Sokol Furniture Co.* was the largest furniture store in the city. It was founded by *Morris Sokol* who came to Charleston from Poland in 1921 at the age of 17. He used a bicycle and later a horse and buggy to peddle his wares from house to house. In 1925, he bought his first automobile. In 1930, he opened his first store with two employees at 637 King street and in 1931, he moved to 510 King Street and there have been a number of expansions at this address, the largest being in 1957. At the end of the century the company occupied much of the block with 47,000 square feet of showroom and warehouse space at the King Street location plus an additional 38,000 square feet of warehouse space at various locations around town. *Morris Sokol* died in 1985 at the age of 81. His son *Joe Sokol* took over the store. The vast amount of floor space in the store allowed *Morris Sokol* to keep a considerable amount of furniture in stock, compared with most furniture retailers at the end of the century. 1970 Ros-Mor Builders & Realty Co. 1930 The Auction House-Birlant & Hirsch Auctioneers (see 191 King) 1920 Jacob's Shoe Store 1900 Bernstein's Department Store

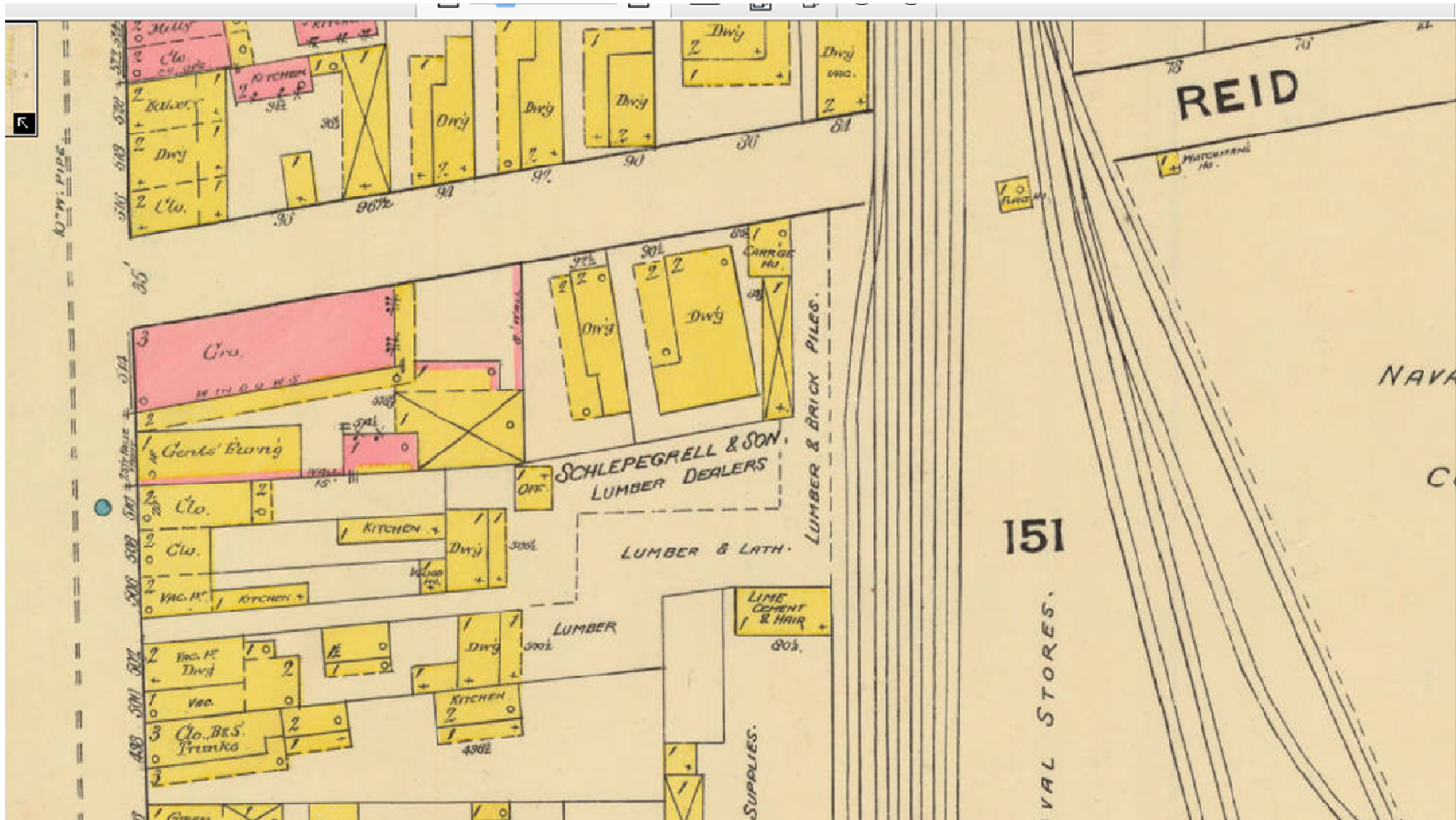
511-515 1996 Vacant 1960 thru 1980 Shoe Box Inc. 1950 Max Rudich Shoe Box. 1940 Ralph's Men's Store clothing 1930 Horres Market / W.A. Winter 1920 Oscar Levy / Mrs M.W. Lindenbeerg 1910 M. Levin & Son

512 1940 Hyman Bluestein department store 1930 Joseph Banner Army Store 1910 thru 1920 Jacob Needle 1900 Bernstein's Department Store

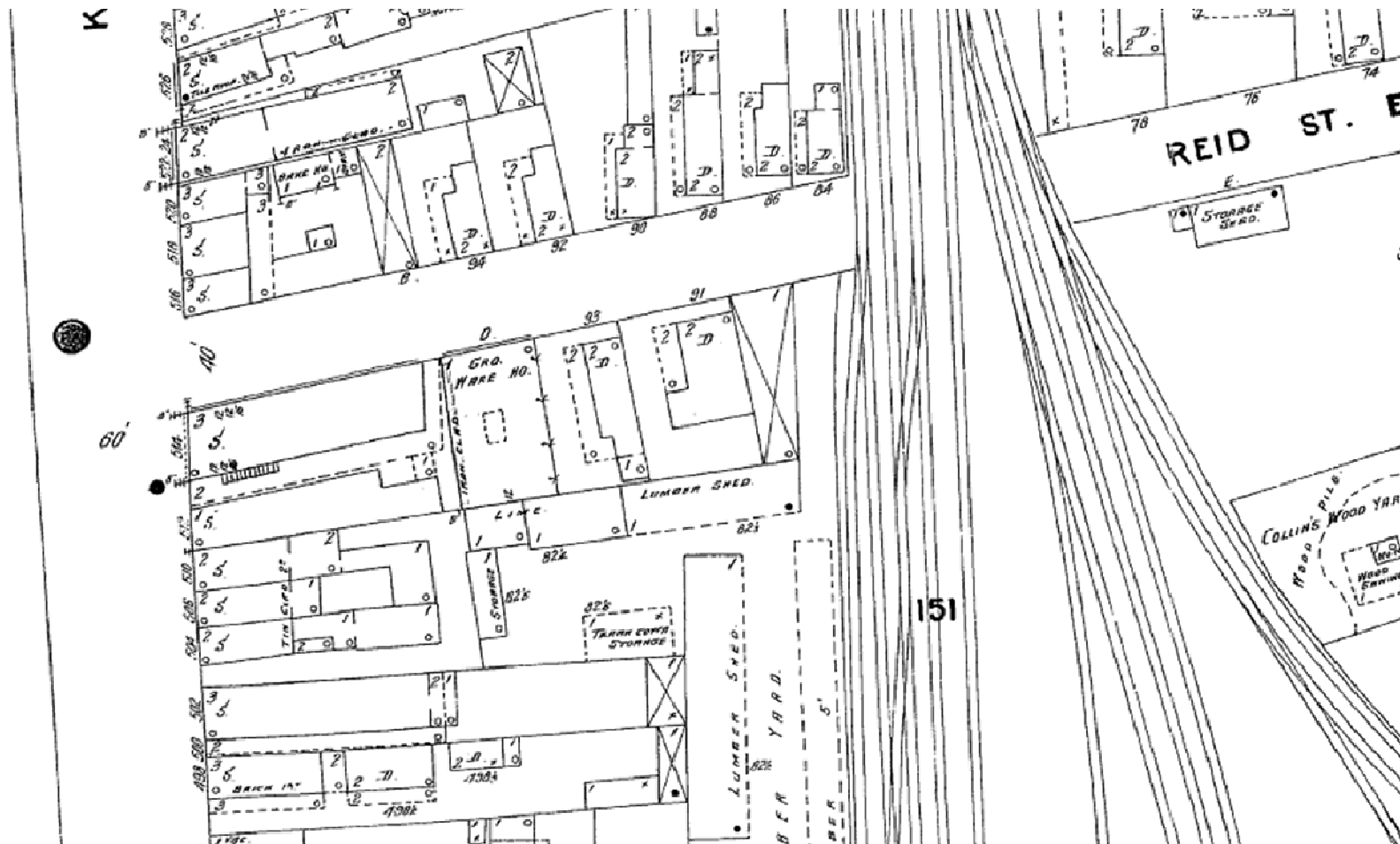
1884 Sanborn



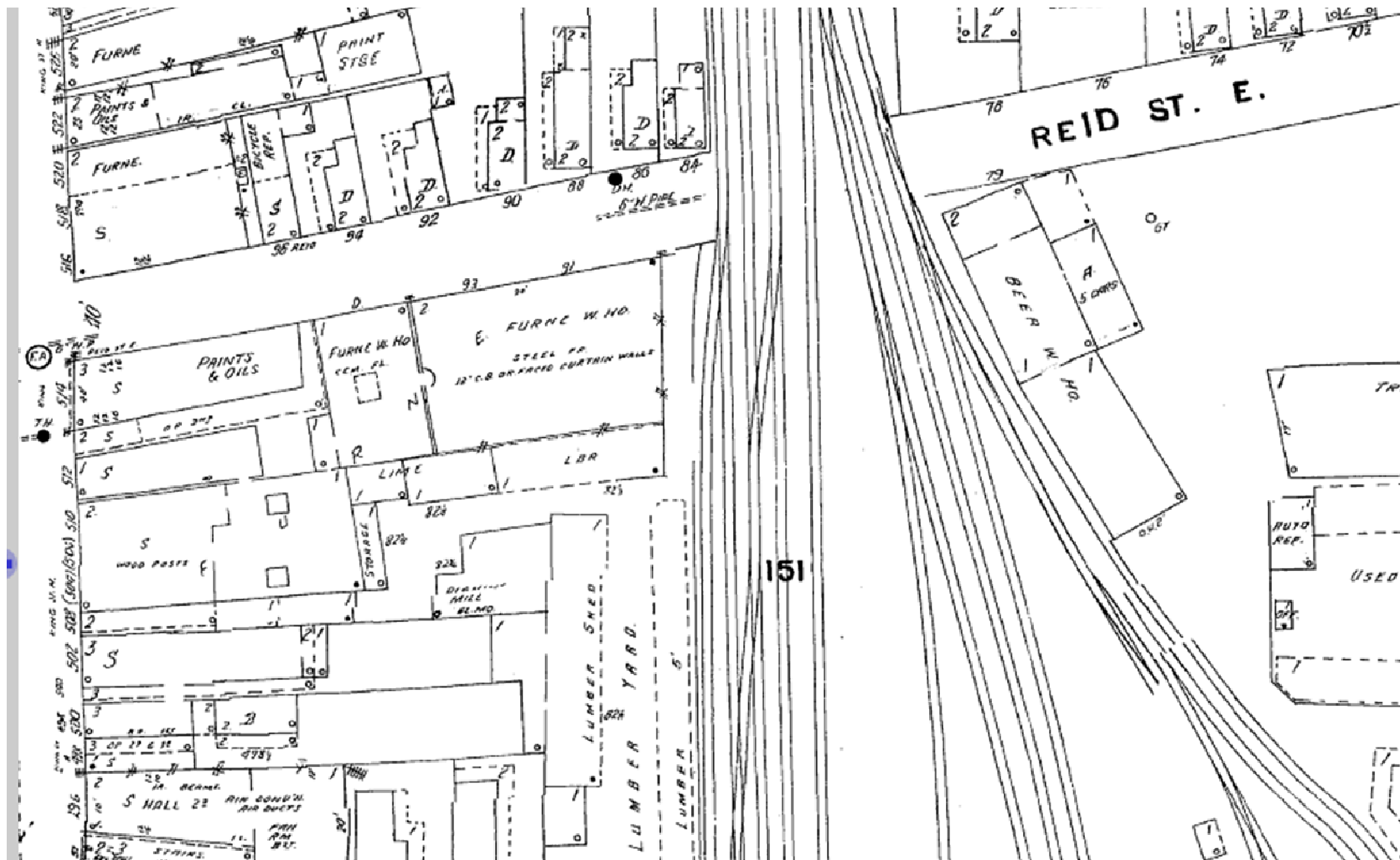
1888 Sanborn



1902



1902 – 1955



Charleston City Directories
510 King Street

1910	Jacobs Shoe Store
1920	Jacobs Shoe Store
1930	Vacant
1940	Sokol Furniture
1950	Morris Sokol Furniture Company
1960	Morris Sokol Furniture Company
1970	Morris Sokol Furniture Company
1980	Morris Sokol Furniture Company

Post and Courier 1938

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 Down

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Post and Courier 1950

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510 King Present Day Aerial (Google

