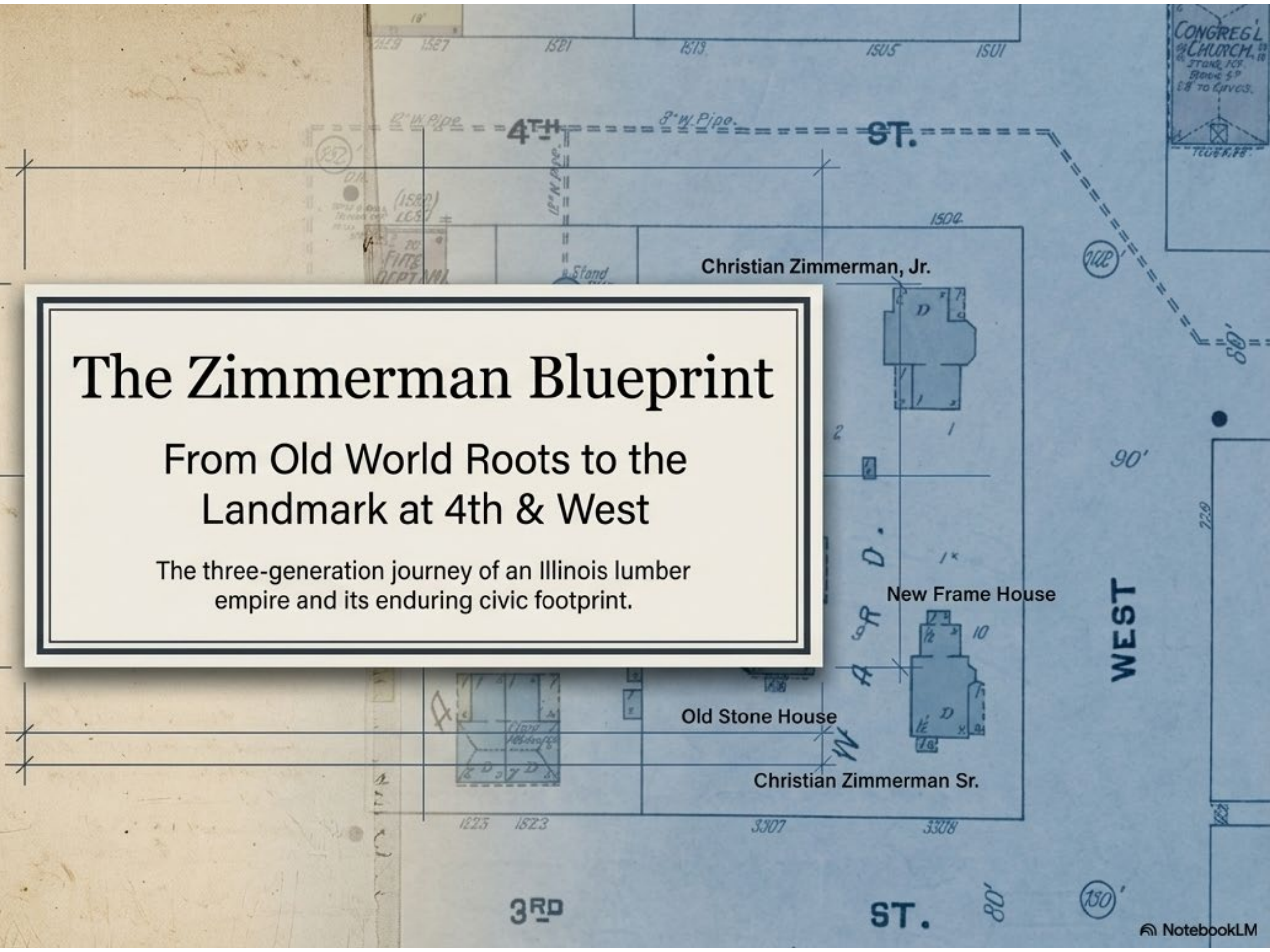


The Zimmerman Blueprint

From Old World Roots to the Landmark at 4th & West

The three-generation journey of an Illinois lumber
empire and its enduring civic footprint.



The Arc of a Legacy



Phase 1: The Pioneer (1847-1849)

Georg Michael Zimmerman flees Württemberg, Germany, planting the family in Illinois but succumbing to cholera within two years.

Phase 2: The Empire Builder (1856-1900)

Johann Christian Sr. parlayed local labor into the state's largest lumber yard, supplying the physical building blocks for Peru's expansion.

Phase 3: The Custodian & The Estate (1892-1930s)

Christian Jr. expands the empire, constructs the grand family home at 4th & West, and ultimately leaves a legacy transformed into civic infrastructure.

Handwritten German text on a piece of aged paper, likely a letter or document. The text is written in cursive and includes names like "Georg Michael Zimmermann" and "Katharina Friederike Kuhner".

Escaping the Old World

Name: Georg Michael Zimmermann (b. Mar. 4, 1787)

Origins: Horkheim, Württemberg, Germany

The Pivot (1847): Emigrated to America at age 60 with his wife Katharina Friederike Kuhner (b. Dec 1785) and family.

The Sacrifice

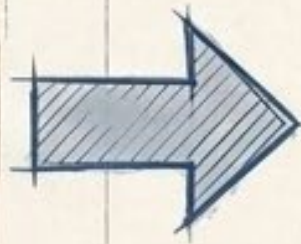
The American dream was brief for Georg Michael. He located first in LaSalle, then Peru, but tragically died of cholera on June 28, 1849, just two years after arriving. His sacrifice permanently planted the family in Illinois.

Constructing the Capital: The Rise of Johann Christian Sr.



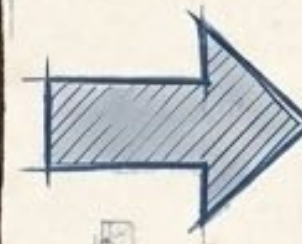
Agricultural Roots (1847–1856)

Arrives in America at age 24. Marries Louisa Gmelich. Builds initial capital through steady labor.



Hospitality Pivot (1856–1866)

Proprietor of the “Zimmermann Hotel” in LaSalle, executing a highly successful ten-year run to amass liquid capital.



Lumber Empire (1867 Onward)

Sells the hotel to enter the lumber business in Peru. Deals in massive quantities of lath, shingles, doors, blinds, and coal.

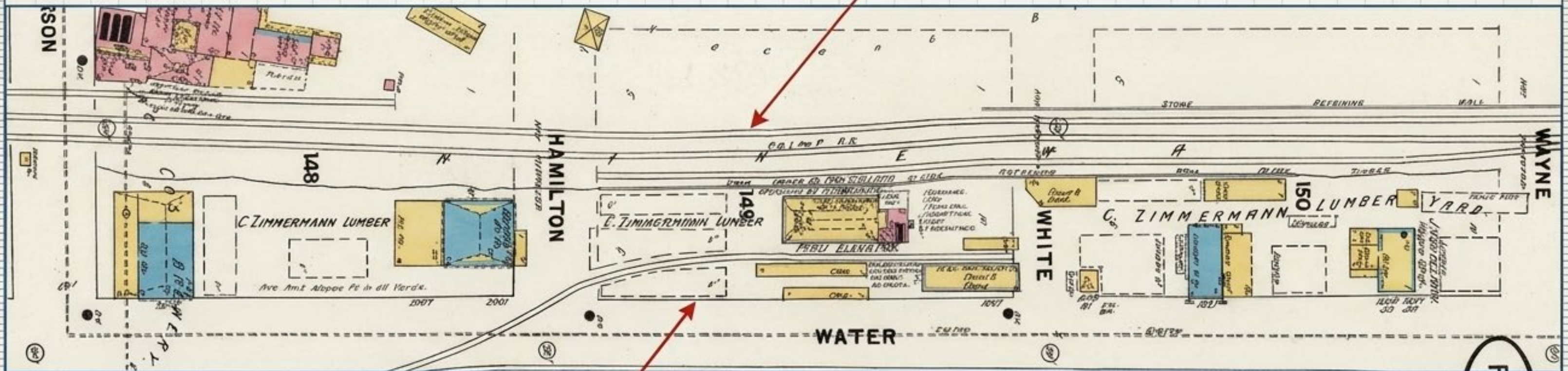
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Synthesis Insight:

Christian Sr. (b. May 30, 1823) didn't just build a private fortune; he became the primary supplier of building materials during the post-Civil War expansion of Peru and LaSalle.

The Economic Engine: The Largest Yard in the State

Logistical Nexus:
Bounded by the C.R.I. & P. R.R.



Product Scale: Massive dedicated sheds for lumber, shingles, and coal.

News of his death has deranged the prospective bride.

Christian Zimmerman died at Peru, aged 77 years. He was an old settler of La Salle county and operated the largest lumber yard in the state in 1867.

The warehouse and the storeroom of F. P. Watson & Bro. at Mount Vernon, Ill. with all their contents...

Data Callout

By 1900, local press recognized Christian Sr.'s operation as the "largest lumber yard in the state." This logistical monopoly funded the family's transition to the local aristocracy.

The Heir & The Custodian: Christian Jr. Takes the Helm

Johann Christian Sr.

Gradually withdrew from daily operations in his later years, attributing success to hard work and persistent application.

Passing the Torch

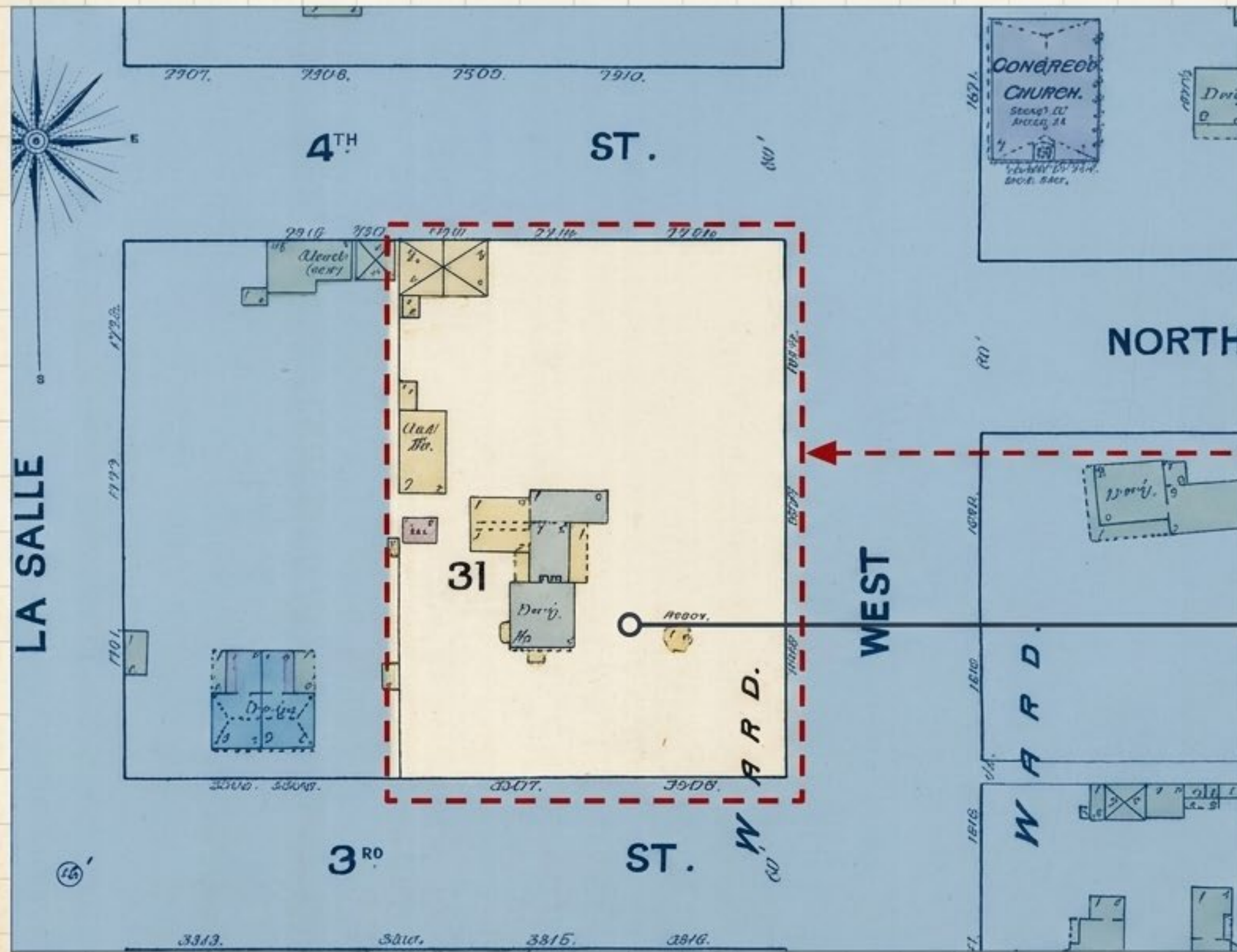
Charles Zimmerman, a young man of about 25 years of age, son of Chris Zimmerman, a prominent lumber dealer of Peru, was killed by the cars of the Rock Island road near the Peru round house on last Sunday night. Zimmerman had been drinking during the day and when last seen alive was going away from a saloon near the round house. A freight train was just moving out when a man cleaning an engine heard groans. Making search he found the young man under the cars. The train was stopped, but not until several cars had passed over the man. He was terribly mangled, one leg wholly crushed, the other broken, both arms broken, his body burst open and head cut. No blame was attached by the coroner's jury to any one, as the man must have attempted to cross over or under the train, when under the influence of liquor.

The Tragic Catalyst: In May 1880, Christian Jr.'s older brother Charles (25) was tragically killed by the Rock Island train. This devastating loss left Christian Jr. as the sole son positioned to manage the vast commercial interests.

Christian Jr. (b. 1857)

Educated locally.
Began working for his father at just 12 years old.
Relieved his father of responsibilities, praised for his "keen, shrewd business sense."

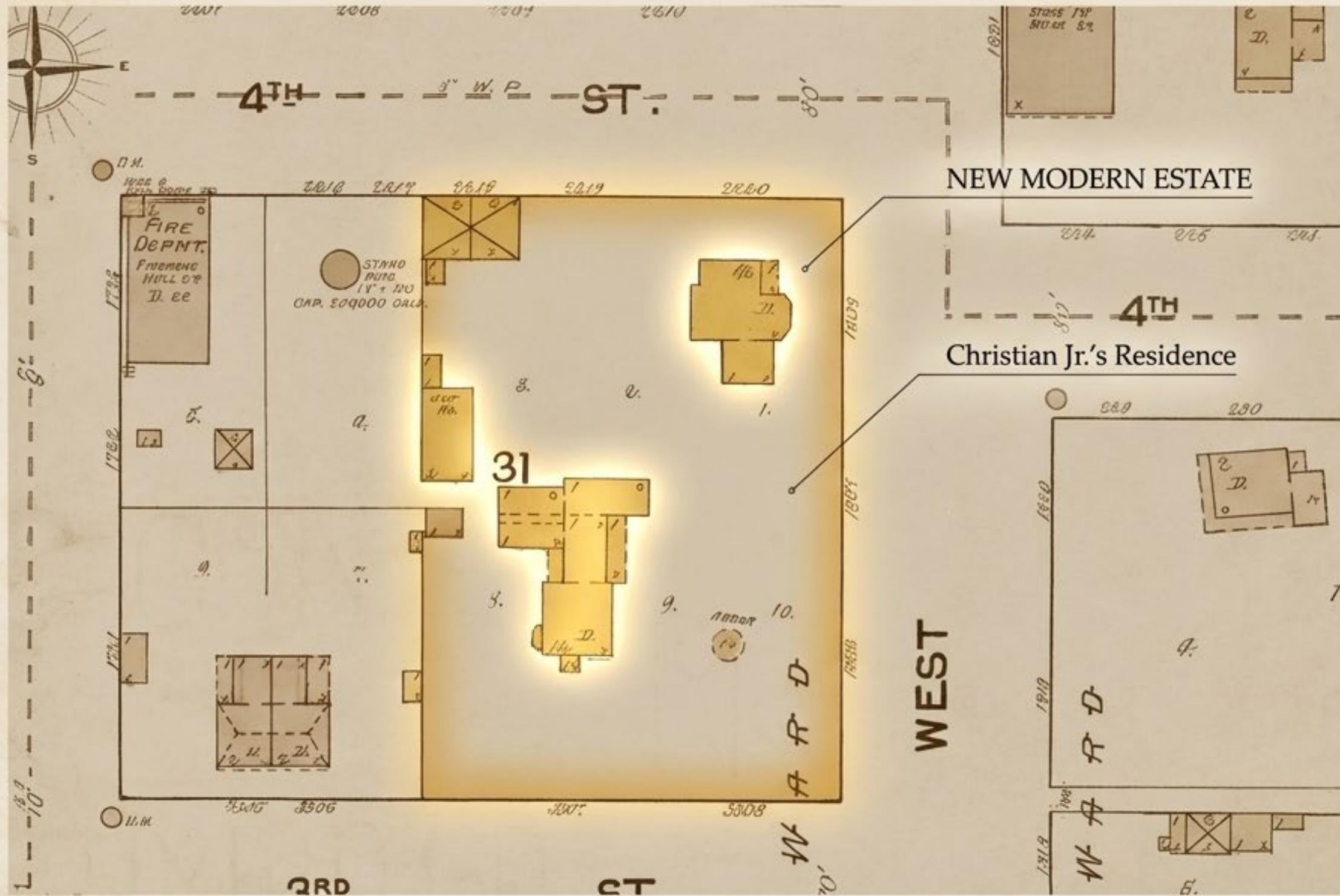
The Canvas: 4th & West (1888)



Prior to marriage, **Christian Jr.** lived in a **stone house** adjoining his future property.

The **prime corner lot at West and Fourth streets** sits largely **undeveloped**, holding only minor out-buildings and sheds, awaiting a structure befitting the family's elevated socioeconomic status.

Manifesting Success: The Modern Estate (1892–1894)



Key Event

In February 1892, Christian Jr. married Anna Lassig.

The Construction

To match his rising prominence and new family, he commissioned a "beautiful modern home" built between 1892 and 1894 on the prominent corner lot (1506 Fourth St).

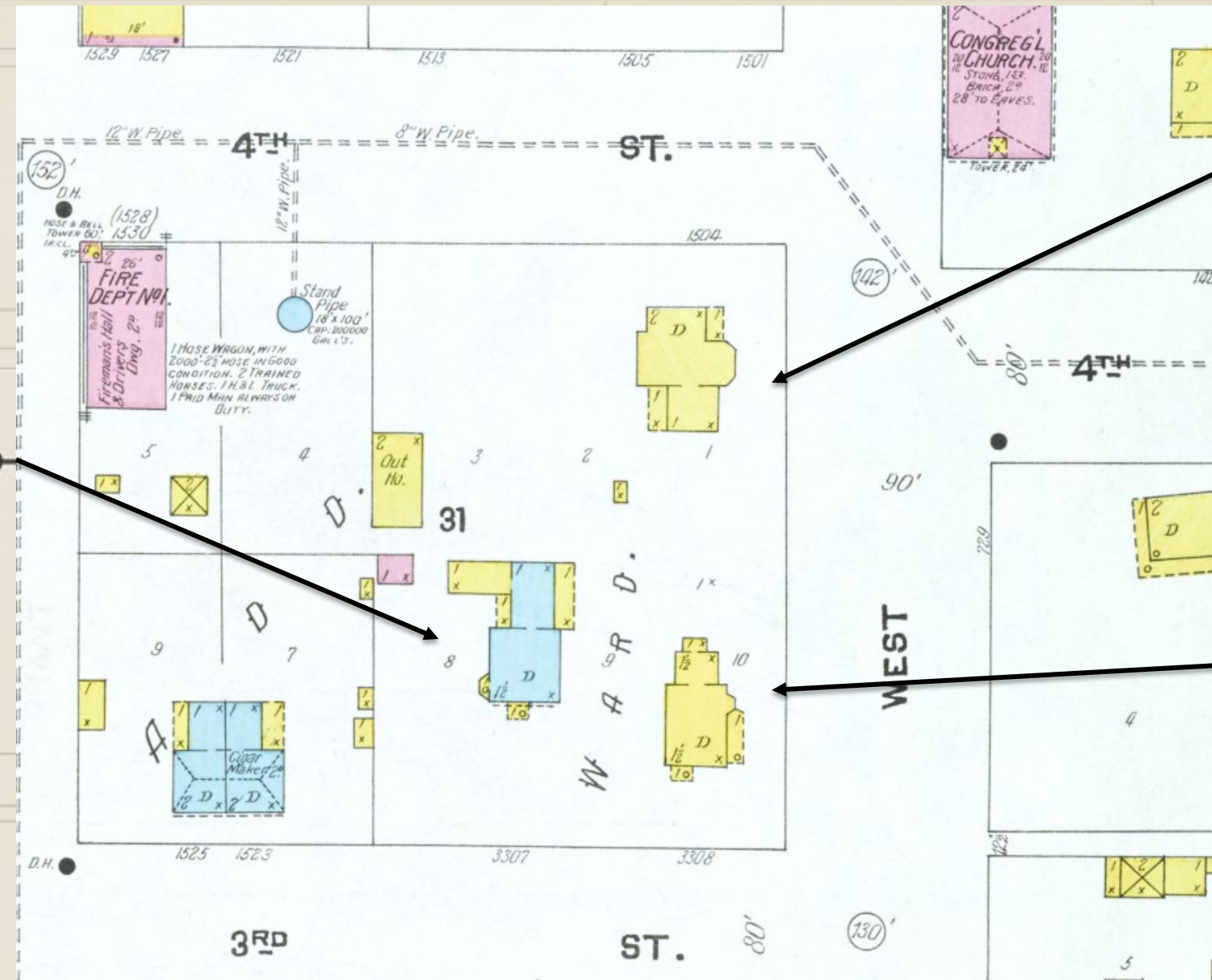
Design Details

Built from the finest materials supplied by his own yard, the home was furnished with elegance and fitted with all "modern conveniences of the times."

The Family Compound: Mapping the Wealth (1902)

The Old Stone House

The original adjacent dwelling where Christian Jr. lived prior to 1894.



Christian Zimmerman Jr.'s Estate

The sprawling, modern dwelling anchoring the prominent corner lot.

The New Frame House

Property developed by his father, Christian Sr.

Synthesis Insight: By the turn of the century, Block 31 wasn't just a residential street; it was a physical manifestation of the Zimmerman family's unified wealth and generational proximity.

Life Inside 1506 Fourth Street

The Household

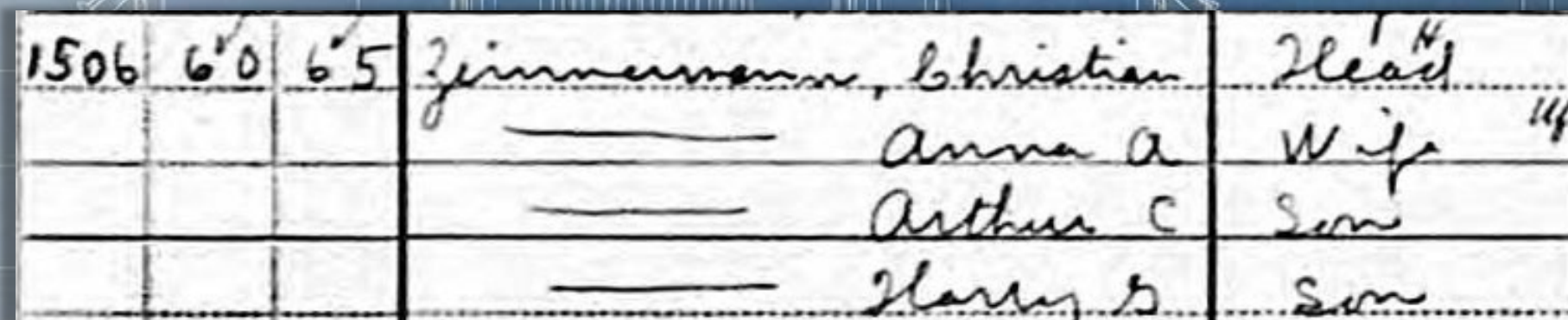
Christian Jr. and Anna (Lassig) raised two sons within the walls of the grand home: Arthur Charles (b. 1893) and Harry Gustav (b. 1896). Harry was born on Christmas Eve.

An Apt Profession

Growing up in a grand custom home funded by the region's largest building-supply empire had a clear impact. The youngest son, Harry, eventually moved up to vice president of Chicago Title and Trust. His brother Arthur studied architecture at the University of Illinois but also went on to a career in banking.

Education and Service

Harry attended the University of Illinois and served in World War I from 1918 to 1921.



1506	6'0	6'5	Zimmerman, Christian	Head
			Anna A	Wife
			Arthur C	Son
			Harry B	Son

The Turning of the Tide (1900-1920)

Construction note
From scale to death
drafting trathomansiom

1900: The Patriarch Passes

1920: The Exit

STATE OF ILLINOIS, PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

1. Name Chr. Zimmerman 2. Age 77 3. Sex Male 4. Date of Death Oct 10 1900 5. Place of Death Peru, Ill. 6. Social condition Merchant

7. Place of Birth Wurttemberg, Germany 8. Color White

9. Cause of Death Acute Rheumatism with lung & heart complication 10. Duration of Disease 3 weeks 11. Date and date of Birth Peru, Ill. January 13 1823

Dated at Peru, Ill. Oct 10 1900 Residence Peru, Ill.

Johann Christian Sr. dies on October 10, 1900, at age 77 from acute rheumatism. Christian Jr. assumes total control of the empire, managing it successfully for the next two decades.

1900

1920

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section.

CHANGES IN ILLINOIS RETAIL YARDS

CHILlicothe, Ill., Jaa. 2.—W. F. Stevens, of La. Salle, Ill., and B. F. and R. F. Hunter, of Chillicothe, have purchased the lumber and coal business of C. Zimmerman & Co., at Peru, Ill. and have taken possession, operating under the name of Peru Lumber & Coal Co. R. P. Hunter and B. F. Hunter are also interested in a deal in Versailles, Ill., with G. A. Allen, of Chapin, Ill. They have purchased the yord of N. Bast at that place and will operate under the name of Hunter, Allen & Co., which also conducts a number of ather Illinois yards. The Hunters are interested in several other companies, esch of which sprodute yards in Illinois towns. The firm of H. & E. P. Hanter, of Chillicothe, is perhaps the best known of thsse.

After 53 years of the Zimmerman name dominating the Peru lumber trade, the era ends. Christian Jr. sells the Peru Lumber & Coal Co. to F. Stevens and R.F. Hunter, converting his industrial assets into liquid wealth.

The End of an Era (1927)

The Data

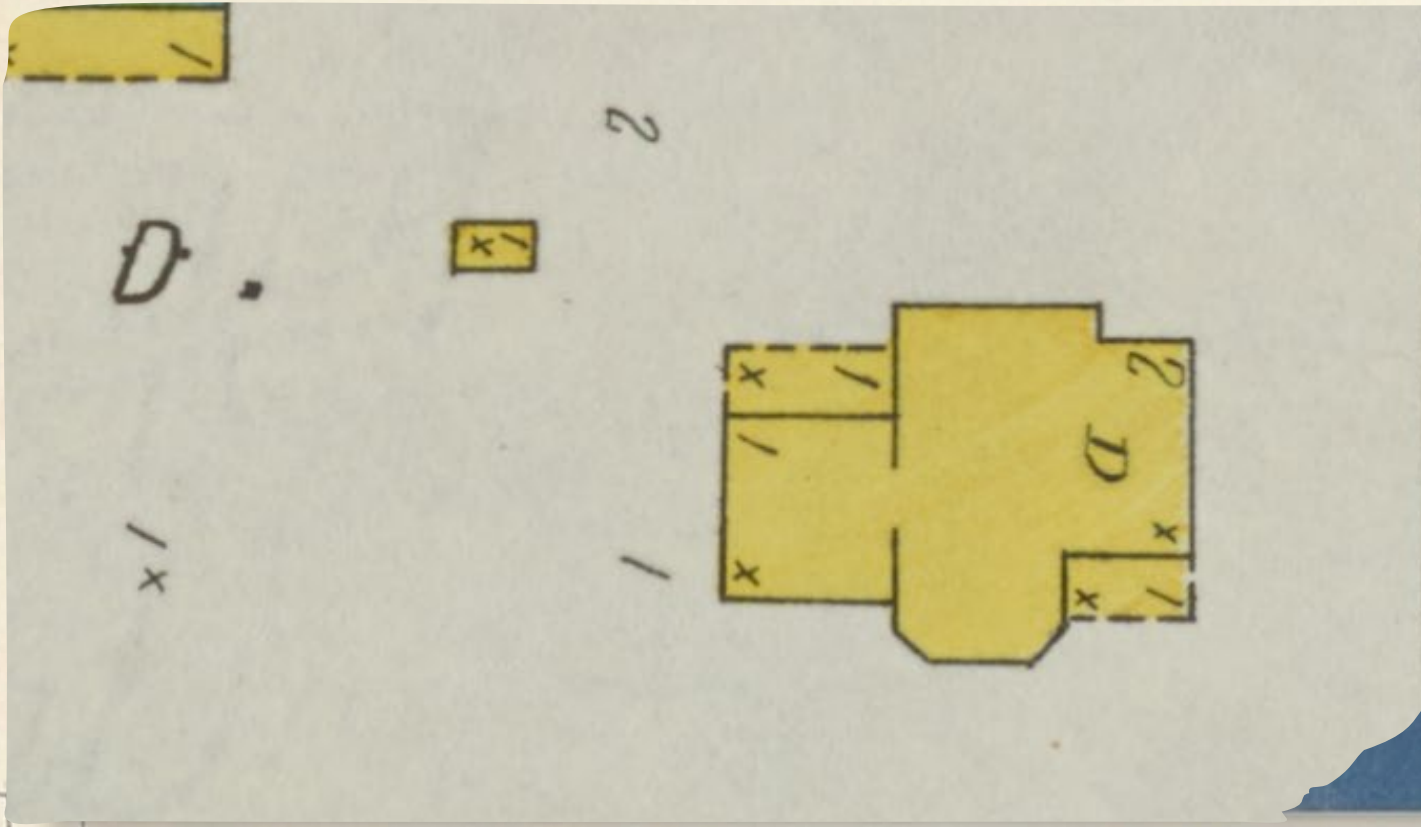
Christian Zimmermann Jr. passed away on June 19, 1927, at age 70, following a battle with stomach carcinoma.

The Symmetry

He drew his final breath inside 1506 Fourth Street—the exact home he had built 35 years earlier. A life that began as the son of an immigrant laborer ended as an esteemed local aristocrat in a landmark estate.

1. PLACE OF DEATH		Registration		STATE OF ILLINOIS		ORIGINAL	
County of <u>La Salle</u>		Dist. No. <u>511</u>		Department of Public Health—Division of Vital Statistics			
2. PLACE OF DEATH				STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH			
Country of <u>Peru</u>				Registered No. <u>51</u>			
3. PLACE OF DEATH				22507 (Conservative No.)			
4. PLACE OF DEATH				Primary Dist. No. <u>3362</u>			
5. PLACE OF DEATH				Ward _____ Hospital _____			
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99. PLACE OF DEATH				Ward _____ Hospital _____			
100. PLACE OF DEATH				If final occurred in hospital or home, enter its name instead of street and number			
FULL NAME		Christian Zimmermann		Ward _____ Hospital _____		If final occurred in hospital or home, enter its name instead of street and number	
Residence No.		1506 Fourth		Ward _____ Hospital _____		If final occurred in hospital or home, enter its name instead of street and number	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL CERTIFICATE		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		Ward _____ Hospital _____		If final occurred in hospital or home, enter its name instead of street and number	
1. SEX		2. COLOR OR RACE		3. SINGLES MARRIED, WITH OWNED TO RENTING		4. DATE OF MONTH (month, day, year)	
Male		White		Married		June 19 1927	
5. IF widowed, widowed or married		6. DATE OF BIRTH		7. DATE OF DEATH		8. DATE OF DEATH	
Anne Laessle Zimmermann		January 31 1857		June 19 1927		June 19 1927	
9. AGE		10. YEARS		11. YEARS		12. YEARS	
70		4		19		19	
13. OCCUPATION OF DECEASED		14. OCCUPATION OF DECEASED		15. OCCUPATION OF DECEASED		16. OCCUPATION OF DECEASED	
Lambert coal dealer		Lambert coal dealer		Lambert coal dealer		Lambert coal dealer	
17. BIRTHPLACE (City or State)		18. BIRTHPLACE (City or State)		19. BIRTHPLACE (City or State)		20. BIRTHPLACE (City or State)	
La Salle		Illinois		La Salle		Illinois	
21. NAME OF FATHER		22. NAME OF FATHER		23. NAME OF FATHER		24. NAME OF FATHER	
Christian Simmermann		Christian Simmermann		Christian Simmermann		Christian Simmermann	
25. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER		26. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER		27. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER		28. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER	
Germany		Germany		Germany		Germany	
29. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER		30. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER		31. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER		32. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER	
Lola Isb Oellich		Lola Isb Oellich		Lola Isb Oellich		Lola Isb Oellich	
33. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER		34. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER		35. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER		36. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER	
Germany		Germany		Germany		Germany	
37. F. R. Address		38. F. R. Address		39. F. R. Address		40. F. R. Address	
Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	
41. F. R. Address		42. F. R. Address		43. F. R. Address		44. F. R. Address	
Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	
45. F. R. Address		46. F. R. Address		47. F. R. Address		48. F. R. Address	
Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	
49. F. R. Address		50. F. R. Address		51. F. R. Address		52. F. R. Address	
Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	
53. F. R. Address		54. F. R. Address		55. F. R. Address		56. F. R. Address	
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57. F. R. Address		58. F. R. Address		59. F. R. Address		60. F. R. Address	
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69. F. R. Address		70. F. R. Address		71. F. R. Address		72. F. R. Address	
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81. F. R. Address		82. F. R. Address		83. F. R. Address		84. F. R. Address	
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85. F. R. Address		86. F. R. Address		87. F. R. Address		88. F. R. Address	
Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	
89. F. R. Address		90. F. R. Address		91. F. R. Address		92. F. R. Address	
Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	
93. F. R. Address		94. F. R. Address		95. F. R. Address		96. F. R. Address	
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Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.		Peru, Ill.	

From Private Estate to Civic Legacy



The Transition

Following Christian Jr.'s death in 1927 and Anna's later relocation to Chicago, the grand family estate at 4th and West could no longer be sustained.

The 1930s Sale

The surviving family eventually sold the prime corner property and its sprawling footprint to the United States Government.

Final Insight

The physical site of the Zimmerman family's greatest personal triumph was transformed into the Peru Post Office, while the home itself was moved to a different location in Peru. The private wealth generated by supplying the builders of Peru was ultimately given back to the city as an enduring piece of public infrastructure.