

City of Sacramento  
**Preservation Commission Report**  
915 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814  
www.cityofsacramento.org

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**File ID:** 2026-00808

4/15/2026

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**Hackett House Network to Freedom Nomination (M26-008)**

File ID: 2026-00808

**Location:** Pedestrian tunnel on K Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets, District 4

**Recommendation:** Pass a **Motion** supporting the draft National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (NTF) nomination for the Hackett House (Archy Lee Escape Site).

**Contact:** Sean de Courcy, Preservation Director, (916) 808-2796, sdecourcy@cityofsacramento.org, Community Development Department

**Presenter:** Henry Feuss, Associate Preservation Planner, (916) 808-5880, hfeuss@cityofsacramento.org, Community Development Department

**Attachments:**

1-Description/Analysis

2-Draft Network to Freedom Nomination for the Hackett House

**Description/Analysis**

**Issue/Detail:** With support from Groundwork Preservation and a National Parks Service grant of \$14,000, the City of Sacramento has prepared a draft nomination to the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (NTF) Program for the Hackett House (Archy Lee Escape Site), located at a segment of public right-of-way on K Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets. The nominated location is a commemorative site representing the former location of Hackett House, a Black-owned hotel that served as a place of refuge for freedom-seeking African Americans during the Antebellum Period.

Unlike a traditional National Register nomination, the NTF nomination does not designate an extant building or structure. Instead, it recognizes a site associated with documented events tied to the Underground Railroad and resistance to enslavement, even where the original resource no longer exists.

The Hackett House is significant as the location where Archy Lee, an enslaved man brought to California in 1857, sought refuge in January 1858 after escaping his enslaver. His arrest at this location led to a landmark legal case challenging the application of the Fugitive Slave Act in

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California. The case ultimately resulted in a ruling that Lee was a free man, establishing an important legal precedent and galvanizing California's Black abolitionist community.

The site represents a documented example of:

- Escape and refuge,
- Legal resistance to slavery, and
- Association with prominent individuals and organized abolitionist networks.

The nomination emphasizes that the Hackett House served as an early example of a broader network of Black-led advocacy and support systems that assisted freedom seekers in California, an often underrecognized dimension of Underground Railroad history.

This nomination builds upon prior work completed through the African American Experience Project and seeks to formally recognize and interpret underrepresented histories in Sacramento.

The Network to Freedom program, established by Congress in 1998, recognizes sites, programs, and facilities associated with the Underground Railroad and promotes education, preservation, and public understanding of resistance to enslavement.

Staff is bringing forward the draft nomination to the Preservation Commission for review and comment.

**Policy Considerations:** Since 2001, the City of Sacramento has been a Certified Local Government (CLG), participating in federal, state, and local historic preservation programs. While the Network to Freedom program is distinct from the National Register of Historic Places, it is administered by the National Park Service and aligns with the broader goals of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Participation in the NTF program supports the City's adopted policies and ongoing initiatives to:

- Identify and document underrepresented historic contexts,
- Promote inclusive historical narratives, and
- Expand public interpretation of significant cultural resources.

Bringing forward nominations such as the Hackett House advances the City's commitment to recognizing sites associated with African American history and civil rights, particularly those that may not be represented by extant buildings or traditional historic districts.

Review by the Preservation Commission provides an opportunity to incorporate local expertise, ensure accuracy, and strengthen the nomination prior to federal consideration.

**Economic Impacts:** None.

**Environmental Considerations:** This report concerns administrative activities that will not result in a

direct or reasonably foreseeable physical change in the environment and is therefore exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378(b)(5)).

**Sustainability:** Not applicable.

**Commission/Committee Action:** None.

**Rationale for Recommendation:** The Preservation Commission serves as the City's advisory body on historic preservation matters and plays an important role in advancing the City's broader preservation and cultural resource goals.

Although the Hackett House no longer exists as a physical building, the site represents a highly significant cultural and historical resource associated with one of the most important freedom-seeking cases in California history. The Archy Lee case reflects the legal, social, and political dimensions of resistance to enslavement in a free state and highlights the role of Sacramento's Black community in advancing civil rights.

Supporting this nomination allows the Commission to:

- Recognize a nationally significant story of resistance and legal precedent,
- Elevate underrepresented African American history in Sacramento, and
- Advance interpretive and educational opportunities associated with the site.

Unlike traditional designations, the Network to Freedom program emphasizes commemoration, education, and public interpretation, making it particularly well-suited for sites like Hackett House where the physical resource has been lost but the historical significance remains intact and well-documented.

Staff recommends that the Preservation Commission review the draft nomination, provide comments, and pass a motion supporting the nomination. Doing so will strengthen the nomination and demonstrate local support for inclusion in the Network to Freedom program.

**Financial Considerations:** Not applicable.

**Local Business Enterprise (LBE):** Not applicable.



## NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM APPLICATION

Please use Application Instructions to Complete

GENERAL INFORMATION				
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	<b>Resubmission:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <b>Round</b>	<b>Type (Pick One):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Site</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Facility</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Program</b>		
<b>Name (Of What You Are Nominating):</b> Hackett House, the Archy Lee Escape Site		<b>Street Address:</b> Pedestrian tunnel on K Street between 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Streets		
<b>City:</b> Sacramento	<b>State:</b> CA	<b>Zip Code:</b> 95814	<b>County:</b> Sacramento	<b>Congressional District:</b> 7th
<b>Physical Boundaries of Site/Facility</b> The designated site is a segment of public right-of-way controlled by the City of Sacramento, located on K Street between 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Streets, which runs beneath the Interstate 5 freeway and functions as a pedestrian tunnel connecting Old Sacramento and the Downtown Commons area.				<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Address Not for Publication?</b>
<b>Is there a website?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Web Address:</b> N/A		
<b>Is there a visitor phone number?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Phone Number:</b> N/A		
<b>Is the site open to the public?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Hours of Operation:</b> N/A		

**FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE USE ONLY**

I certify that this  site  facility  program is included in the Network to Freedom.

Signature of Certifying Official/TitleDate

**Summary: Tell us in 200 words or less what is being nominated and how it is connected to the Underground Railroad.**

On January 3, 1858, Archy Lee, an 18-year-old enslaved man from Mississippi, escaped from his enslaver and sought refuge at the Hackett House, a Black-owned hotel in Sacramento, California. Four days later, Lee was arrested there, sparking a landmark legal case over the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 in a free state. The case drew statewide and national attention and galvanized California's Black community to organize for Lee's freedom. The Hackett House proprietors' political connections, particularly through the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention of California, helped mobilize a network of African Americans in Sacramento, San Francisco, and beyond who publicly advocated for Lee and raised funds for his defense. On April 14, 1858, U.S. Federal Commissioner George Pen Johnson ruled that Lee was a free man, finding that his enslaver had voluntarily brought and settled him in California, where slavery was prohibited. The Hackett House is historically significant as the site where Lee first sought refuge and received early legal aid from its owners. It represents both an important location in Lee's freedom struggle and an example of an Underground Railroad site in California associated with documented escapes and legal resistance to slavery.

Contact information for <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Sean de Courcy, City of Sacramento Preservation Director		Phone: (916) 808-2796	Fax:	Email: sdecourcy@cityofsacramento.org
Street Address: 300 Richards Blvd		City: Sacramento		State: CA Zip Code: 95811
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Ettienn LeFebre, Groundwork Preservation LLC		Phone: (415) 640-0626	Fax:	Email: info@groundworpreservation.com
Street Address: P.O. Box 1514		City: Colfax		State: CA Zip Code: 95713
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name:		Phone:	Fax:	Email:
Street Address:		City:		State: Zip Code
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name:		Phone:	Fax:	Email:
Street Address:		City:		State: Zip Code
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				

### SITES

In addition to the responses to each question, applications must also include the following attachments:

- 1) Letters of consent from all property owners for inclusion in the Network to Freedom (see sample in instructions)
- 2) Text and photographs of all site markers
- 3) Original photographs illustrating the current appearance and condition of the site being nominated
- 4) Maps showing the location of the site

*All attachments supplement, but do not replace the text.*

S1. Type:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Object            | <input type="checkbox"/> District (Neighborhood) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure           | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape/Natural | <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site      |

Other (Describe):

S2. Is the site listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

- Yes     No    If yes, what is the listing name?

S3. Ownership of site:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Private, Non-profit (501c3) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public - Local Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public - State Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Public - Federal Government |   |

S4a. Type(s) of Underground Railroad Association (select the one(s) that fit best):

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Station           | <input type="checkbox"/> Kidnapping    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal Challenge | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Association with Prominent Person |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Escape | <input type="checkbox"/> Rescue        | <input type="checkbox"/> Maroon Community           | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic District/Neighborhood               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church            | <input type="checkbox"/> Destination   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Route       | <input type="checkbox"/> Commemorative Site/Monument                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military Site | <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe):                            |

**S4. Describe the site’s association and significance to the Underground Railroad. Provide citations for sources used throughout the text. Timelines are encouraged.**

In October 1857, 18 year old Archy Lee, an enslaved Black man, was brought to California from Mississippi by his enslaver, Charles Stoval, and the pair settled in Sacramento, California. There, Stovall opened a school and Lee worked as a cook for the hotel where they boarded until early January 1858 when Stovall purchased two steamboat tickets for them to begin passage back to Mississippi. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, Lee disappeared, and on January 6<sup>th</sup> he was arrested as a fugitive slave at Hackett House, a well-known Black-owned hotel on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between K and L Streets in Sacramento’s West End neighborhood. Lee’s arrest at Hackett House spurred a multi-month, high-profile California legal case related to the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The case ended on April 14<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco when a U.S. Federal Commissioner ruled that Lee was not subject to the federal fugitive slave act and was a free man. Archy Lee’s case was the first of its kind in California and represented a major victory for freedom seekers and abolitionists in the state. It clarified that enslaved people who escaped bondage within California, rather than by crossing state lines, were not subject to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.<sup>1</sup>

Archy Lee’s pursuit of freedom in court not only generated intense statewide and nationwide interest as tensions continued to rise between the pro- and anti-slavery advocates before the start of the Civil War, but also galvanized the Black community across California to support Archy Lee’s struggle for freedom through advocacy and financial support.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brian McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom: The True Story Of California Gold, The Nation’s Tragic March Toward Civil War, And A Young Black Man’s Fight For Liberty* (Connecticut: LP Lyons Press, 2020), 37-39.

<sup>2</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, xi, 37-39.

The network of individuals who aided Archy Lee began at Hackett House in Sacramento, where he found both a place of refuge and early legal aid and connections to high-profile members of California's Black abolitionist community through the Black proprietors of the property. Hackett House is associated with the Underground Railroad as the site of Archy Lee's documented escape and ensuing legal battle, one of the most well-known freedom-seeking stories of enslaved people in the American West.

## Sacramento's Black Community, 1849-1858

Sacramento's Black community first grew during the California Gold Rush, which brought thousands of African Americans to California for economic opportunities in the goldfields in the Sierra Nevada or in nearby growing cities such as San Francisco or Sacramento. The Gold Rush brought not only free Black settlers to Sacramento but also Southern enslavers who brought Black enslaved people and forced them to labor in the goldfields and cities, igniting debates over the legality of slavery in the newly acquired U.S. territory. In 1850, California was admitted to the United States as a free state, largely due to concerns that legalizing slavery would create an unfair labor market where white workers could not compete with unpaid enslaved people.<sup>3</sup> That same year 191 Black individuals lived in Sacramento, making up about 3% of the population, most of whom living in what later became known as the West End neighborhood close to the American River waterfront. Black residents often lived in neighborhoods shared with other marginalized communities, including Chinese and Mexican residents, though some Black-owned businesses and homes were concentrated along 3rd Street, the future location of Hackett House. Men and women were both well-represented in the community, which grew to 338 Black individuals in the city by 1852.<sup>4</sup>

Sacramento also became known for its Black civil rights activity due to the city's status as the state capitol. In 1855 and 1856, the first two Colored Conventions in California were held at St. Andrews African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the first Black church established in California in 1850 located on Seventh Street. The Colored Conventions brought 49 representatives from 10 counties to discuss strategies to advocate against discriminatory legislation in California. Many of these representatives came from cities in the Northeast, where they had participated in or were influenced by the national abolitionist movement, bringing those ideas and networks with them to California.<sup>5</sup>

At the Colored Conventions in 1855, 1856, and 1857, representatives addressed the state's ban on Black people giving testimony in court, how to establish and ensure the success of Black-owned businesses, the lack of public schools available for Black children, and the state of property ownership in Black communities across the state. Additionally, the convention established committees to establish statewide Black newspaper *The Mirror of the Times*, collect statistics and testimonies from California's Black population, and the establishment of a Contingent Fund funded by donations from Black Californians to support Convention-related functions across the state. The Colored Convention also asserted that Black people, free and enslaved, were obligated the promises of the United States Constitution and the rights afforded to American citizens across the nation and they distributed these speeches and writings introduced at the convention in newspapers and pamphlets around the state, which solidified them as the primary statewide organization promoting the political and social welfare of Black Californians. The Colored Conventions also served to connect and strengthen the network of Black abolitionists scattered throughout the state, a network that aided Archy Lee during his legal case in Sacramento in the following years.<sup>6</sup> People who participated in the first three Colored Conventions involved in the future

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<sup>3</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project: Historic Context Statement*, by Page & Turnbull with Damany M. Fisher, Sacramento, California, June 2023, 13.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 16-17.; Lawrence B. De Graaf and Quintard Taylor, "Introduction: African Americans in California History, California in African American History," in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, edited by Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (Los Angeles: Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2001).;

<sup>4</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 14, 15.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 87-89.; De Graaf and Taylor, "Introduction: African Americans in California History, California in African American History," 11.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 31-32.; Rudolph Lapp, *Archy Lee: A California Fugitive Slave Case* (The Book Club of California, 1969), xii.

<sup>6</sup> *Proceedings of the First State Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held at City of Sacramento, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>*, in *the Colored Methodist Church* (Sacramento, Democratic State Journal Print, 1855): 3-27, Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.; *Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held in the City of Sacramento, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>, 1856*, Sacramento, California, 1856, 133, Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>;

Archy Lee case include Reverend John Jamison (J.J.) Moore of San Francisco, Mifflin Wistar Gibbs of San Francisco, James Riker of San Francisco, Peter Anderson of San Francisco, Jacob Francis of San Francisco, D.W. Ruggles of San Francisco, and Richard A. Hall of Sacramento.<sup>7</sup>

## Black Enslavement and the Underground Railroad in California

By 1852, up to 1,500 enslaved African Americans lived in bondage in California despite the state's anti-slavery laws.<sup>8</sup> While the California Constitution barred enslavement, racism against the Black community was prevalent in state politics where a disproportionate number of legislators were originally from the South. From 1852 to 1855 a statewide fugitive slave law stated that Southerners in California could retain their enslaved people if they did not plan on permanently residing in the state, effectively legalizing slavery for three years. Even after the law expired there was little to no enforcement of the state's anti-slavery laws, perpetuating the practice in California. Despite the presence of slavery in California and ambivalence of many in the white community, Black abolitionist and anti-slavery Northerners did force many enslavers to acquiesce to demands of enslaved people they brought to California out of fear they would run away to sympathetic persons. Enslaved persons pushed the limits of their enslavement in California, sometimes demanding more compensation in the gold fields and mines, refusing to work, or running away.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which criminalized assistance to enslaved people seeking freedom, freedom seekers were brought to California, both overland and by sea, through the efforts of Black abolitionists in the state who maintained abolitionist and Underground Railroad connections to the East Coast. According to early twentieth century Black journalist Delilah Beasley in her book *Negro Trailblazers of California*, members of the Executive Committee of the Colored Peoples Convention was "on constant watch to defend the interest of the race in every part of the state" and that all Black people in California "were members of [the Colored Peoples Convention] and contributed to their funds to aid in covering the costs of different court trials."<sup>10</sup> Beasley elaborated that members of the Executive Committee formed a secret code system to facilitate their underground activities across the state, and did so "...by way of the barber's chair. The barbers at the time throughout the state were colored. It was through this channel they learned of any more for or against the Negro made in the legislative halls or elsewhere."<sup>11</sup> Underground activities that Beasley stated the Executive Committee conducted included involvement in the Underground Railroad on the West Coast in which they provided shelter, food, medicine, money, and legal aid to escapees. Beasley named several Black abolitionist founders of the Colored Convention as Underground Railroad operatives, including Mifflin Gibbs and David Ruggles of San Francisco and Reverend Jeremiah B. Sanderson of Sacramento. Sanderson specifically is reported to have been a prominent leader in freeing enslaved persons in California, including leading armed men into San Joaquin County to free enslaved persons. The Free Black community initiated almost every case to defend the rights of enslaved people in the California courts in the 1850s, petitioning for writs of habeas corpus, enlisting the defense of anti-slavery white lawyers, and paying for legal fees.<sup>12</sup> The Black community in Sacramento employed all of these techniques when Archy Lee was first arrested at Hackett House in 1858.

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*State Convention of the Colored People of California, San Francisco, October, 1857*, San Francisco, California, 1857, 1, 2, Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.

<sup>7</sup> *Proceedings of the First State Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held at City of Sacramento, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>, in the Colored Methodist Church* (Sacramento, Democratic State Journal Print, 1855): 3-27, Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.; *Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held in the City of Sacramento, Dec. 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1856*, Sacramento, California, 1856, 133, Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 69-70, 88.

<sup>8</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 87.

<sup>9</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 87.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 29.; Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle Over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 54.

<sup>10</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 81.

<sup>11</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 81.

<sup>12</sup> National Park Service Pacific West Region, "The Underground Railroad: The Quest for Freedom Moves West 1848-1869," Department of the Interior, accessed July 18, 2025, 2.; Rudolph Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 191.; Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 56.; Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 92.

## Establishment of Hackett House

Hackett House was an “elegant” two-story brick hotel situated on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between K and L Streets along an alley near the Sacramento waterfront. It is unknown when the building was built, although it is likely it was built after a fire in 1852 that burned 70% of the city’s building stock and prompted much of the city to be rebuilt using brick and stone. The first record of Hackett House as an institution is from a newspaper article reporting on a robbery at the hotel in March 1857. The establishment became a well-known, significant Black establishment in Sacramento, and in November 1857 the hotel was advertised as a first-rate establishment in *The Mirror of the Times* newspaper, a statewide newspaper for the Black community published in San Francisco. The advertisement noted that the hotel contained a bar, billiards room, and attached bathroom.<sup>13</sup> The proprietors of the hotel included three Black men; Jesse Hackett, Charles W. Parker, and Richard A. Hall. Hackett and Hall were both successful and respected members of Sacramento’s Black community.<sup>14</sup> Their status as community figures likely led to the success and social importance of the business in Sacramento’s Black community, as well as a possible motive for why Archy Lee chose to find refuge at Hackett House in January 1858. The building was reported in a May 1858 sale to have been “built with the wages of sin,” which is not explained in the article but implies there was a negative public impression of the building’s history within the white community, although the impression of Hackett House as an establishment and its proprietors are positive.<sup>15</sup>

Richard A. Hall may have been born in Ohio, although nothing is known of his life prior to 1856.<sup>16</sup> Hall definitively entered the historic record in 1856, in the printed “Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California” as the only representative of San Mateo County. Hall was also listed as an appointee of the convention’s Business Committee, or the committee tasked with discussing the conditions and affairs of Black-owned businesses in California, and a committee to determine if the convention should accept delegates from Placerville after they refused to send delegates to the first convention. Hall’s name is included in a newspaper article listing members of the Colored Convention’s Executive Committee in the San Francisco-based Black Californian newspaper, *The Mirror of the Times*, in 1857 as well. In this article, Hall is listed as being a representative in Sacramento, indicating that he moved from San Mateo to Sacramento between 1856 and 1857.<sup>17</sup> Hall’s status as a member of the Executive Committee of the Colored People’s Convention is notable, as members of the Executive Committee were involved in the Underground Railroad on the West Coast.<sup>18</sup>

Jesse Hackett (also spelled Hacket) was born in 1810 in Pennsylvania. Nothing is known of Hackett’s life prior to 1857, the year he is first identified in an article in *The Sacramento Bee* as the owner of the Hackett House and described as a “very deserving and highly-esteemed” Black man.<sup>19</sup> This description of Hackett in a white newspaper indicates that Hackett was respected and known amongst the white community in Sacramento as well, which may be a result of Hackett

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<sup>13</sup> “Hackett House Sold,” *The Sacramento Bee*, May 18, 1858, Newspapers.com.; “Robbery,” March 24, 1857, Newspapers.com.; “Hacket House,” *Mirror of the Times*, December 12, 1857, Mirror of the Times (San Francisco [Calif.] 1857-1862 Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83027100/>.; McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> “Dissolution of Co-Partnership,” *Mirror of the Times*, December 12, 1857, Mirror of the Times (San Francisco [Calif.] 1857-1862 Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83027100/>.

<sup>15</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 15.; “Hacket House Sold,” *The Sacramento Bee*, May 18, 1858, Newspapers.com.

<sup>16</sup> The assertion that Hall may have been from Ohio is based on the listing of a Black person named “R. Hall” in the 1857-1858 Sacramento City Directory who lived on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between J and K Street.; D. Valentine & Son, *Sacramento Directory 1857-1858*, San Francisco, CA, 1857, Sacramento City Directories Collection, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California.

<sup>17</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held in the City of Sacramento, Dec. 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1856*, 1856, Sacramento, California, 1856, 133, 135, 137, Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.; “Executive Committee,” *Mirror of the Times*, December 12, 1857, Mirror of the Times (San Francisco [Calif.] 1857-1862 Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83027100/>.

<sup>18</sup> Rudolph Lapp, *Archy Lee*, xii.; National Park Service Pacific West Region, “The Underground Railroad: The Quest for Freedom Moves West 1848-1869,” Department of the Interior, accessed July 18, 2025, 2.; Delilah L. Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1919), 92.

<sup>19</sup> Bureau of the Census, 1860 United States Federal Census, June 19, 1860, 1860 United States Federal Census Collection, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667/records/10174138>.; “Robbery,” March 24, 1857, Newspapers.com.

House's notoriety as a successful enterprise in Sacramento. In addition, Hackett's 1868 will named several beneficiaries who were active members of Sacramento's Black political community, including Black Republican advocate John Gale and Colored Convention member John G. Wilson, indicating Hackett's broader connections to local political networks beyond his business partner Richard A. Hall.<sup>20</sup>

## Archy Lee's Settlement in Sacramento and Escape

Archy Lee was born in ca. 1840 in Pike County, Mississippi as an enslaved Black person. According to Delilah Beasley's correspondence with Mrs. R.A. Hunt, a woman claiming to be Lee's niece, Lee was born to an enslaved woman named Maria and was one of four siblings, all of whom were enslaved by Mississippi plantation and mill owner Simeon Stovall. Lee arrived in Sacramento sometime around October 2, 1857, and was brought to Sacramento from Mississippi by the son of his enslaver, Charles A. Stovall, who was traveling to the state for his health. Lee was 18 years old and labored at the Stovall family's mill in Carroll County, Mississippi prior to his arrival in California. During the later legal proceedings, Lee and other members of Stovall's family stated that Archy left Mississippi with Charles Stovall after a family dispute led to Lee being physically assaulted by a white man. Subsequently, Stovall took Lee to Missouri and contracted him to labor for another plantation until his younger brother, William Stovall, took possession of Lee and transported him west across the Great Plains towards California. Part way through the journey Charles Stovall met up with his brother again and finished the journey to California with Lee. The Stovall's gave various contradicting statements about Lee's journey to California, but it is generally agreed that for most of the journey, Lee was with Charles Stovall and acted as his "body servant" on the journey. Lee cooked Stovall's meals and likely aided him with any activities related to their travel.<sup>21</sup>

When Lee and Stovall arrived in Sacramento they took up residence at the National Hotel on K Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, one block from the Hackett House. While there, Stovall hired out Lee as a cook for the hotel, as Black cooks were highly coveted at the time and compensated well (or in Lee's case, Stovall took a portion of the compensation). Stovall opened a school on K Street near 7<sup>th</sup> Street and taught there for the duration of their stay in Sacramento. One of Stovall's students, Copeland, stated during the later legal proceedings that Stovall told him he intended to remain in California for up to three years, that he knew Lee was a free man under California law, and that the two appeared to have an amiable relationship. Stovall stated during the proceedings that he did not believe Lee would leave him.<sup>22</sup>

Not much definitive information is known of Archy Lee's time in Sacramento other than his employment at the National Hotel, which was cut short after he became ill in late 1857.<sup>23</sup> Lee's early connection to Hackett House is elusive, and it is unknown when Lee became acquainted with the property, if he was familiar with any owners, employees, or boarders of Hackett House, or if he became a regular frequenter of Hackett House while he resided in Sacramento. It is unknown whether he interacted with or knew of Hackett House proprietor Richard Hall, who possibly had Underground Railroad connections or experience helping freedom-seeking enslaved people due to his associations with the Executive Committee of the California Colored Peoples Convention, or if Lee interacted with any Black abolitionist figures at Hackett House. However, it can be posited that Lee would have interacted with other Black Sacramentans at not only his place of employment in the National Hotel kitchens, but also possibly at Hackett House or other places of gathering for the Black community. Urban slavery, the practice of holding enslaved African Americans in bondage within city environments, differed markedly from rural slavery on plantations and mills that Archy Lee had known in Mississippi. Urban enslaved people often experienced greater mobility and opportunities for interaction beyond the direct control of their enslavers, including contact with free Black residents who lived and worked nearby. Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, reflecting on his time laboring in Baltimore, observed that an urban enslaved person was "almost free" and that "slavery

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<sup>20</sup> Sacramento County, "Hackett [Hackett], Jesse: Case Number 1091, July 25, 1868," Box 46, Folder 2, California Probate Court (Sacramento County) Records, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California.; "About the Meeting of Colored Voters Last Night," *The Sacramento Bee*, June 21, 1873, Newspapers.com.; "Funeral," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 8, 1864, Newspapers.com.

<sup>21</sup> "Affidavit of CA Stovall," March 17, 1858, Case Files of the U.S. Commissioner, ca. 1855-1912, Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009, National Archives and Records Administration, San Francisco, California.; "Archy's Story," *Daily Alta California*, March 31, 1858, California Digital Newspaper Collection.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 6-7.; Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 83.

<sup>22</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 20-21, 85.

<sup>23</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 21.

dislikes a dense population,” recognizing how proximity to diverse communities exposed enslaved people to different ways of living.<sup>24</sup> Although urban enslaved people remained in bondage, their circumstances sometimes allowed for meaningful connections with free Black laborers and abolitionists and offered tangible examples of what freedom looked like within a free Black community.

Lee’s place of residence and employment on K Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street placed him close to the concentration of Black businesses and residences along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, including Hackett House. Hackett House’s reputation as a popular center of Black life and recreation in Sacramento make it entirely possible that Lee interacted directly with Hackett House and its proprietors and/or customers. Rudolph Lapp, a historian and early scholar of the Archy Lee case, stated in his 1969 book on the case that Lee did in fact interact with and meet members of California’s Colored Convention, possibly at Hackett House. While Lapp’s information is not sourced, it is possible this account is true and accounts for Lee’s decision to seek refuge at Hackett House in January 1858. Executive Committee member Richard Hall’s partial ownership of Hackett House also increases the likelihood that members of the Executive Committee in Sacramento gathered at Hackett House and were known community members there.<sup>25</sup> Hackett House’s reputation as a successful and popular center of Black life in Sacramento, combined with its proximity to Archy Lee’s residence and place of employment at the National Hotel, makes it likely that he was aware of the boardinghouse through word of mouth and his associations within the city’s Black community, possibly while working alongside other Black cooks in the urban workforce. Additionally, Lee’s interaction with members of Sacramento’s Free Black community also would have likely alerted him to the fact that slavery was illegal in California and that he had the opportunity to become a free man. Whether through direct interaction at Hackett House or through word of mouth within Sacramento’s Black community and among other residents, it is clear that Archy Lee came to understand during his time in the city that he was free under the California Constitution. He also likely recognized Hackett House as a potential safe haven where he could claim that freedom, given its strong connections to free Black political and social networks in Sacramento.

In early January 1858, Stovall decided to return to Mississippi with Lee and purchased riverboat tickets to transport them to San Francisco before sailing to Mississippi via the isthmus of Panama. Stovall boarded the riverboat with Lee, but on about January 3, 1858, Stovall learned that Lee had sought his freedom, escaping Stovall and hiding at the Hackett House. Delilah Beasley states in *Negro Trail-Blazers of California* that “word came to a few colored gentlemen living in Sacramento that Mr. Stovall was intending to send Archy, the Negro slave boy, back to Mississippi to again become a slave,” possibly indicating that Lee was aided by these Black men in seeking refuge at Hackett House.<sup>26</sup> Lee hid at Hackett House for approximately three days until on January 6, 1858, Charles Stovall filed an affidavit with the justice of the peace. The justice of the peace issued an arrest for Lee on the grounds that he was a fugitive enslaved person, and that day the police arrested Lee at Hackett House. An article from *The Sacramento Bee* of the arrest describes Archy as having taken refuge at Hackett House “in the charge of some friends,” which indicates that Archy did know individuals associated with Hackett House.<sup>27</sup> It is unknown what transpired at Hackett House while Lee took refuge there, but it is clear that Black community members and abolitionists sheltered Lee and attempted to facilitate his freedom-seeking journey.

## Archy Lee’s Court Cases and the California Black Community

Hackett House’s involvement in the case did not end with Archy Lee’s arrest. The following day, Charles Parker, one of the three co-owners of Hackett House, filed a writ of habeas corpus on Lee’s behalf, compelling city officials to bring Lee before the court and justify his imprisonment. Delilah Beasley describes the Executive Committee of the Colored

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<sup>24</sup> Karwan Fatah-Black, “Introduction: Urban Slavery in the Age of Abolition” *International Review of Social History* 65, no. S29 (February 2020): 2.

<sup>25</sup> Rudolph Lapp, *Archy Lee*, 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 81.

<sup>27</sup> “Fugitive Slave – Habeas Corpus,” *The Sacramento Daily Union*, January 8, 1858, California Digital Newspaper Collection.; “Petition and Affidavit of C.A. Stovall,” January 8, 1858, Case Files of the U.S. Commissioner, ca. 1855-1912, Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009, National Archives and Records Administration, San Francisco, California.; Brian McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 162-163.; “A Fugitive Slave Case,” *The Sacramento Bee*, January 8, 1858, Newspapers.com.; “A Fugitive Slave Case,” *The Sacramento Bee*, January 8, 1858.; “Fugitive Slave – Habeas Corpus,” *The Daily California Express*, January 9, 1858, Newspapers.com.

Convention in Sacramento as dedicating themselves to securing a strong legal defense for Archy Lee, and “a test case as to the rights of Negroes to live in beautiful California.”<sup>28</sup> They believed that if Lee, who had lived in California as a free man under state law, could be returned to slavery in Mississippi, then any Black person in the state could likewise be enslaved or re-enslaved in the South. Beasley’s assertion that the Executive Committee quickly sought legal counsel for Lee and Parker’s role in securing said legal defense indicates that Charles Parker, while not a member of the Executive Committee in the historic record, was involved in their activities and helped implement the organization’s plan to support Lee. Beasley states that the Executive Committee in Sacramento sent word to members in San Francisco, Red Bluff, and Marysville among other cities to inform other members of their plans to support Lee.<sup>29</sup>

The next day on January 8, Parker appeared in Sacramento County Court with white attorneys Edwin B. Crocker, an anti-slavery Republican and brother of Big Four railroad tycoon Charles Crocker, and John H. McKune, an anti-slavery Democrat.<sup>30</sup> While appearing before Sacramento County Court on January 8<sup>th</sup>, Crocker and McKune argued to Judge Robert Robinson that Lee was free under California law. Stovall and his lawyer, John H. Hardy, argued that Lee was an enslaved person and therefore had no right to a writ of habeas corpus and that outsiders were attempting to free Lee, not Lee himself. Robinson asked Lee during proceedings whether he wanted to be free, but Lee remained silent. This prompted Robinson to suspend court and transfer the case to George Pendleton Johnson, a member of the U.S. Circuit Court in San Francisco and a U.S. commissioner with the authority to enforce the federal Fugitive Slave Act. The *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* reported in an article about the case that “Considerable interest is manifested in these proceedings by the colored people of Sacramento,” and Black Sacramentans were reported to have made up a large portion of courthouse attendees, highlighting the immediate interest and involvement by the local Black community in Archy Lee’s legal case for freedom. While the exact individuals in the courtroom are unknown, it is possible that Hackett House co-owners Richard A. Hall and Jesse Hackett or members of Sacramento’s delegation to the Colored Convention, such as Jeremiah B. Sanderson, Frederick Barbadoes, J.G. Wilson, W. Bedford, and G.W. Booth, were present since the organization was vested in the legal defense of Lee.<sup>31</sup> This early legal defense organized by Sacramento’s Black and white abolitionist community ensured Lee was not immediately released into Stovall’s custody and could continue to fight for his freedoms in the courts.

George Pen Johnson consulted with Judge Matthew Hall McAllister in San Francisco, and on January 13<sup>th</sup> returned to Sacramento and stated he did not have the jurisdiction to return Lee to Stovall’s custody because Lee did not cross state lines while seeking his freedom, but did so within California. On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, Lee appeared before Robinson in county court again, this time with attorney Joseph W. Winnans, who had been hired with funds from the free Black community to work on fugitive slave cases in support of enslaved Black persons in California before. This included the *In re Perkins* case in 1852, which was the first case under the California Fugitive Slave Act that Winnans worked on with attorneys Joseph Zabriskie and Cornelius Cole. Cole was another prominent anti-slavery lawyer based in Sacramento who had connections to anti-slavery advocates Edwin Crocker and Mark Hopkins and helped found the California Republican Party. In this case six years before the Archy Lee case, Charles Perkins brought three enslaved men, Carter Perkins, Robert Perkins, and Sandy Jones, to California from Mississippi to work in the California goldfields in Placer County, and months after freeing them from service he tried to re-enslave. Winnans argued on behalf of the enslaved men with enthusiastic support from California’s free Black community, but the three men were declared fugitive enslaved persons by the courts and returned to bondage. The free Black community’s decision to hire Winnans six years later in another fugitive slave case in the defense of Archy Lee showcases the importance of the legal relationships formed between members of the free Black community and white anti-slavery advocates in California.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 82.

<sup>29</sup> “Case of Archy, The Fugitive Slave,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 27, 1858, California Digital Newspaper Collection.; McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 37-39.; Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 82.

<sup>30</sup> “Case of Archy, The Fugitive Slave,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 27, 1858, California Digital Newspaper Collection.; McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 37-39.

<sup>31</sup> Rudolph Lapp, *Archy Lee*, 5.; City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 88-89.; Rudolph Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 191.

<sup>32</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 39-43.; Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 148.; Rudolph M. Lapp, “Negro Rights Activities in Gold Rush California,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1966): 6-7.; Jason A. Gilmer, “Litigating Slavery’s Reach: A Story of Race, Rights, and the Law During the California Gold Rush,” *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2023): 543-545.; Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 82.

During the January 23<sup>rd</sup> court appearance before Robinson, when Lee was asked by the judge if he wanted to be free again, he answered “I don’t understand what you are speaking of, but I want it to come out right. I don’t want to go back to Mississippi,” making it clear that Lee wanted to remain in California.<sup>33</sup> Stovall and Hardy argued in court that Stovall and Lee’s trip to California was meant to be temporary for Stovall’s health, not permanent, and that he opened his school and hired Archy out for wages only because he was short on money, not because he was establishing residency.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, Robinson ruled that Lee was a free man, but Lee was immediately rearrested and confined in county jail as Stovall’s attorneys filed a petition for the California Supreme Court to take up the case. Lee attempted to escape three times before his next court hearing. On February 5, the California Supreme Court, led by Justices David S. Terry and Peter H. Burnett, both known for their pro-slavery sympathies, ruled in the case *In re Archy* that although Archy Lee was legally a free man, he would be returned to Stovall’s custody and sent back to Mississippi. The decision was widely ridiculed by both Black and white observers, as Burnett’s written opinion acknowledged that the law was on Lee’s side but argued that, because this was the first case of its kind in California, Stovall could not have been expected to know the law. The court concluded that the law would be enforced in future cases, but not in this instance. The decision outraged not only abolitionists and anti-slavery Republicans, but moderate pro-slavery Democrats and even some Southerners alike, who saw the confusing and contradictory decision as harming the pro-slavery cause. The *Sacramento Union* described the ruling as “supremely ridiculous,” and the *Daily Alta California* reported the ruling as “curious and extreme” and asked if another ruling of its kind had ever been made in the history of the United States.<sup>34</sup>

Lee remained in jail for five days after the ruling, giving Sacramento’s Black community time to organize and spread word across the state about the illegal and discriminatory decision. On February 16, Lee was placed in a wagon with Stovall at the county jail. Conflicting newspaper reports stated that their destination was unknown, prompting members of the Black community to post lookouts along the levee and waterfront to monitor departing boats in hopes of locating Archy Lee. These lookouts were unsuccessful in locating Lee, but coverage of the search continued in popular California newspapers. On February 26<sup>th</sup>, the *San Joaquin Republican*, reported that a group of Black community members in Stockton were on the lookout for Lee, showcasing the widespread network California’s Black community had created and the determination from its members to find Lee. These community members claimed Lee was on a steamship bound for San Francisco, and about a week later the *Daily Alta California* reported that Lee and Stovall were making their way up to San Francisco.<sup>35</sup>

San Francisco, with the influential and most populous Black community in the state, was the hotbed of Black abolitionist activity in California at the time and home to many founders of California’s Colored Convention Movement, including Mifflin Gibbs, Peter Anderson, J.W. Townsend, W.H. Newby, and D.W. Ruggles. In San Francisco, James Riker, a ship’s steward, cook, and leader in the California Colored Convention, learned that Stovall planned to return to Mississippi aboard a steamship departing from the city’s port. Riker alerted San Francisco’s Black community and secured attorneys Elisha O. Crosby and Walter H. Tompkins, who prepared an affidavit stating that Archy Lee was a free man being illegally transported to Mississippi to be enslaved. The group of men presented the affidavit to the San Francisco County Court, which issued an arrest warrant for Stovall for kidnapping. Not only did the police post up at the harbor to find Stovall, but San Francisco’s Black community showed posted watches during day and night to rescue Lee. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Lee was rescued from Stovall at the harbor by both police officers and a massive crowd of Black San Franciscans, but police retained custody of Lee and place him in jail. Afterward, San Francisco’s Black community gathered at the Athenaeum, a prominent Black social and cultural venue, where Executive Committee member Peter Anderson chaired the meeting. Other committee members, including Mifflin Gibbs and D. W. Ruggles, also participated. The meeting demonstrated the continuity of involvement between Black community organizations in Sacramento and San Francisco and underscored the vital role of Sacramento’s Black abolitionist community in publicizing Archy Lee’s case from its earliest stages.<sup>36</sup> Members of the meeting, including influential Black Reverend J.J. Moore, created a committee to collect

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<sup>33</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 39-43.; Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 148.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Freedom’s Frontier*, 77.; McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 46-49, 57-59.

<sup>35</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 61-62.; Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 81.; “Still On The ‘Qui Vive,’” *San Joaquin Republican*, February 21, 1858, California Digital Newspaper Collection.

<sup>36</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 88.; Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 149.; McGinty, *Archy Lee’s Struggle For Freedom*, 63-69.

funds for Lee's legal defense. Over the course of the case, the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention raised and spent over \$50,000 to pay for Lee's legal expenses.<sup>37</sup> The vast amount of money amassed by the organization showcases their far-reaching network and organizing capabilities across the state and the importance the Black community had in ensuring Lee's freedom. Delilah Beasley stated in *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California* in reference to the Black community's dedication to paying for the case that "The battle was not for Archy alone, but because of the vital interest of the matter to all the people of color than living in California."<sup>38</sup>

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Stovall was arraigned in police court on the charge of kidnapping but charges against him were dismissed due to procedural issues. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, a new hearing opened before County Judge T.W. Freelon to discuss the legality of Lee's confinement in county jail at the request of Stovall. Lee's lawyers, Crosby, Tompkins, prominent San Francisco lawyer Edward D. Baker, argued that based on James Riker's affidavit issues for Stovall's arrest Archy Lee was a free man who had no right to be imprisoned by Stovall. Stovall's lawyer, Hardy, argued that the affidavit was invalid as James Riker was a Black man and it was illegal in California for Black people to testify against white people. These sessions in the County Courthouse were reportedly packed with spectators, Black and white, and ultimately it was decided Lee should be freed. However, almost immediately as U.S. marshal re-arrested Lee to appear before U.S. Commissioner George Pen Johnston again.<sup>39</sup>

Starting March 17<sup>th</sup>, the case was once again brought before U.S. Commissioner George Pen Johnston, and large crowds of Black community members, including many from outside the city, gathered outside the courthouse as they were not allowed inside of the courthouse. Although the courtroom itself was restricted to white attendees, Black community members remained outside throughout the proceedings, monitoring developments and spreading news about the case. Black community members also gathered at San Francisco's AME Zion Church. Stovall's lawyer John H. Hardy argued that Lee's new attorney, Edward D. Baker, had no right to defend him since fugitive slaves had no right to testify or have counsel under the federal Fugitive Slave Act. Baker argued that whether Lee was an enslaved person or not needed to be decided first. During the hearing, Stovall filed an affidavit revising his original account of traveling with Archy Lee to California, now claiming that Lee had fled Mississippi after assaulting a white man. This statement directly contradicted both Stovall's and Lee's earlier testimonies: Stovall had previously asserted that they came to California for his health, while Lee had stated that the white man had assaulted him. In response, Baker filed an affidavit from an associate of Stovall's named John P. Zane, who stated that Stovall had told him and others that he brought Lee to California on his own volition, that he planned to take up permanent residence in the state, and that he knew Lee was free and retained him "solely upon his affection."<sup>40</sup> Baker filed another affidavit from Lee in which he confirmed Zane's account. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, Stovall left San Francisco to obtain evidence that Lee was a fugitive enslaved person. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, Lee repeated his affidavit to a reporter from the *Daily Alta California*, confirming that Stovall, regardless of his enslaved status, voluntarily brought him to California.<sup>41</sup>

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, Commissioner Johnson ruled that Archy Lee was a free man and therefore not subject to the Fugitive Slave Act. Baker and a group of Black community leaders, including Peter Anderson and James Riker, led Lee to the Methodist AME Church from the county jail. For the remainder of his stay in San Francisco, Lee may have been housed at the boardinghouse run by Black abolitionist and millionaire Mary Ellen Pleasant, although this is disputed.<sup>42</sup> Among the Black community, Lee's freedom was cause for great celebration, and Black congregants at the Methodist AME Church in San Francisco sang and spread a hymn entitled "The Year of Archy Lee" to celebrate the legal victory. Reports of Archy Lee's case appeared in national newspapers, including *The New York Times*, as well as leading abolitionist publications such as *The Liberator* in Boston, the *True Northerner* in Michigan, and the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* in Ohio. The case was sometimes discussed alongside the Dred Scott decision, reflecting its national significance in the broader debate over slavery and freedom.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 82.

<sup>38</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 82.

<sup>39</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 73, 76.

<sup>40</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 80, 82.

<sup>41</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 86.

<sup>42</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 88-89.

<sup>43</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 99.

## Exodus to British Columbia

While Archy Lee was declared free, the string of court cases and strong anti-Black sentiments left many Black community members fearful of living in California. Additionally, a few weeks after Lee attained his freedom, the California legislature nearly passed a law banning Black migration into California, which angered many members of the Black community and left them feeling increasingly unsafe in the state. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, a large group of Black San Franciscans, including Lee, departed San Francisco on a steamship for Victoria in present-day British Columbia. There was a gold rush there along the Frazer River and slavery was illegal in all of Canada, making it a popular final destination for many freedom-seekers on the Underground Railroad. Other well-known Black abolitionists aboard the ship connected to Lee's case included Mifflin Gibbs and George Dennis. In May, another group of Black San Franciscans made their way north and reported back that "Archy Lee is here, engaged in making pickets, and is said to be doing well."<sup>44</sup> Reports of the satisfaction experienced by Black community members in Victoria continued to reach California, prompting several hundred more African Americans from across the state, including members of Sacramento's Black community, to migrate to Canada.

Two Black-owned hotels closed in Sacramento as a result of the migration, including Hackett House. In May 1858, Hackett House was sold at auction as part of the estate of Margaret Carr, also known as Margaret Davis, who had died in 1856. Following her death, the estate was administered by the County Public Administrator, during which time the building was likely rented and operated as the Hackett House by Hackett, Hall, and Parker. The May 1858 sale to Dr. C. H. Bradford described the property as being "kept as a hotel by colored people."<sup>45</sup>

On June 30, 1858, *The Sacramento Bee* reported that Black community members in Sacramento, including the three proprietors of Hackett House, were among the Black community members in California moving to the Frazer River. The article notes that they were "induced to migrate on account of extra privileges extended," exhibiting their continued involvement in Black political life and their own desire for equality.<sup>46</sup> On July 12, 1858, *The Sacramento Bee* reported that Richard A. Hall, Jesse Hackett, and Charles W. Parker were among a group of people boarding a steamer ship headed to Victoria that evening.<sup>47</sup> Both Jesse Hackett and Richard Hall eventually returned to Sacramento after the Civil War and passage of the thirteenth amendment outlawed slavery nationally. Hackett became a porter upon his return in 1861 and kept another boardinghouse at an unknown location in Sacramento in 1868. Hackett lived on the alley directly next to Hackett House between K and L Streets when he returned to Sacramento. Richard Hall remained a member of the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention committed to promoting Black Civil Rights in San Francisco into the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>48</sup> No information was found on Charles W. Parker after his departure for Canada in newspapers, city directories, or any other documentary sources.

Lee is reported to have lived between Victoria, California, and Nevada during the fifteen years after the Archy Lee case, and his whereabouts were reported on by the *Pacific Appeal*, a Black newspaper in San Francisco, and William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper *The Liberator*, illustrating the interest Archy Lee's story continued to have amongst Black communities in California and nationwide. In November 1873, the *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that Lee was ill and likely to pass away in Sacramento, California after being found camping along the American River. Black newspaper, *The Elevator: A Weekly Journal of Progress, Equality Before the Law*, in San Francisco and the *Pacific Appeal* confirmed the

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<sup>44</sup> Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 81.; McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 121-123.

<sup>45</sup> "Hacket House Sold," *The Sacramento Bee*, May 18, 1858, Newspapers.com.; Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 236, 239-254.; Sacramento County, "Estate of Margaret Carr, alias Davis: Case Number 366, Sacramento, California, September 23, 1856, California, U.S. Wills and Probate Records, 1850-1953, Ancestry.com.

<sup>46</sup> "Colored Men For Frazer," *The Sacramento Bee*, June 30, 1858, Newspapers.com.

<sup>47</sup> "Off For Fraser," *The Sacramento Bee*, July 12, 1858, Newspapers.com.

<sup>48</sup> John J. Murphy, *The Sacramento Directory*, Sacramento, California, 1861, U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 Collection, Ancestry.com.; Robert E. Draper, *Sacramento City and County Directory For 1868*, Sacramento, California, 1868, U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 Collection, Ancestry.com. "State Convention of Colored Citizens," *The Sacramento Bee*, November 25, 1873, Newspapers.com.; "Resolutions Adopted by Colored Citizens on Their Exclusion from Maguire's Theater," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 19, 1876, Newspapers.com.; "Fourth Ward Booth Ticket," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 24, 1871, Newspapers.com.; "A Banquet," *The Sacramento Union*, April 6, 1880, Newspapers.com.

reports and reaffirmed that Lee's case was a momentous decision in California's Black community's history and portrayed him as a hero for seeking his freedom.<sup>49</sup>

**S5. Provide a history of the site since its time of significance to the Underground Railroad, including physical changes, changes in boundaries over time, archeological work, or changes in ownership or use. Be sure to describe what is included in the present application and how that compares to what the site was historically.**

The site being nominated to the Network to Freedom for the "Hackett House, the Archy Lee Escape Site" is a City of Sacramento-owned segment of the public right-of-way located on K Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. The public right-of-way runs beneath the Interstate 5 freeway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and functions as a pedestrian tunnel connecting Old Sacramento and the Downtown Commons area. The entrance to the west side of the tunnel from Old Sacramento contains a wrought-iron sign that reads "To Downtown" when facing east and "Old Sacramento" when facing west. The tunnel is also accessible via stairs and an ADA-compliant ramp that flank the main pedestrian path. The entrance to the east side of the tunnel is a gently sloping concrete path. The tunnel is primarily comprised of concrete walls and floors and opens to a parking lot on the northwest side. Concrete stairs provide access to the parking lot. The tunnel contains two public art displays. Affixed to the southern wall of the west side of the tunnel are painted panels that display a timeline of Sacramento's history and interprets important events and peoples from Pre-Contact Period to 2000. The wall was installed in 2000 by the City of Sacramento, designed by Dunlavey Studios, and illustrated by Bob Miller. Wood siding flanks either side of the wall. The second public art display is a mural located on the northern and southern walls of the east end of the tunnel painted by Royal Chicano Air Force art collective and civil rights organization co-founder Esteban Villa and member Juanishi Orosco. The piece, entitled "LASERIUM: Light Art in Sacramento – Energy Resource in Unlimited Movement," depicts different tableaux comprised of indigenous imagery, colorful geometric shapes, and ceramic tiles to represent Chicano and Latin American heritage. The mural was completed in the early 1980s and restored and modified by the two artists in 1999. The City of Sacramento plans to install an interpretive display at this location to commemorate Archy Lee's escape to the Hackett House and associated legal battle in the 1850s at an unknown time in the future. The story of Archy Lee and his escape to Hackett House fits into the interpretive focus on Sacramento's history that is featured in the pre-existing interpretive displays in the tunnel.

The site has changed significantly since the 1850s and was previously an aboveground section of K Street accessible to pedestrians and vehicles. The street was lined primarily by brick buildings that contained primarily commercial businesses from the 1850s to the 1960s.<sup>50</sup> In 1954, the City of Sacramento planned the "Capitol Mall Project" with subsidies from the 1945 California Redevelopment Act, which razed a significant portion of the West End neighborhood that had become known for "disease, poor living conditions, and crime".<sup>51</sup> Racism was a major aspect of the redevelopment of the West End, as the neighborhood had for decades housed Sacramento's low-income and marginalized communities due in large part to city-wide racially restrictive housing covenants. Additionally, construction on Interstate 5 began by 1965 and destroyed additional portions of the West End, including the chosen site of the Hackett House nomination. A photograph of the construction of I-5 in 1968 shows the businesses along K Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street razed and the portion of the street containing the pedestrian tunnel no longer visible beneath I-5 construction.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> McGinty, *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom*, 153-156.; "A Bit of History, after 15 Years," *The Elevator*, November 15, 1873, California Digital Newspaper Collection.; "Archy, the Slave," *Pacific Appeal*, January 3, 1874, California Digital Newspaper Collection.

<sup>50</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Sacramento, Sacramento County, California*, Sanborn Map Company, 1895, Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00799\\_001/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00799_001/).; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Sacramento, Sacramento County, California*, Sanborn Map Company, 1915, Volume 1, Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00799\\_002/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00799_002/).; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Sacramento, Sacramento County, California*, Sanborn Map Company, 1951, Volume 1, Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00799\\_004/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00799_004/).

<sup>51</sup> City of Sacramento, *Mid-century Modern in the City of Sacramento Historic Context Statement and Survey Results*, prepared by GEI Consultants and Mead & Hunt, Sacramento, California, September 30, 2017, 2-8, 3-7.

<sup>52</sup> City of Sacramento, "The Grand Approach: Sacramento's Capitol Mall," prepared by PAR Environmental, Sacramento, California, 2014, 18.; "Aerial View of Interstate 5 Construction and Old Sacramento," from *The Sacramento Bee*, Sacramento, California, 1968, Sacramento Bee Collection, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California.

In response to the Capitol Mall Project and construction of I-5, the local historic landmarks commission and local groups pushed for the preservation of the city's historic core commercial district on Front and Second Streets between I and L Streets, which became the Old Sacramento Historic District and a National Historic Landmark in 1965. The Old Sacramento State Historic Park (SHP) was established soon after. The SHP is 296 acres and contains over 50 historic buildings, many of which were moved to or reconstructed on the site during the 1960s and 1970s. The state park commemorates the location of Sacramento's 1850s commercial district that was largely demolished during the Capitol Mall Project.<sup>53</sup>

The chosen site assumed its current use as a pedestrian tunnel to connect Old Sacramento to the parking lot of the Downtown Sacramento Macy's department store location after construction of I-5 in the late 1960s. The mural by Esteban Villa and Juanishi Orosco was installed in the east end of the tunnel in the early 1980s. By 1993, the Macy's parking lot was replaced by two buildings separated by a pedestrian walking path that provided access to the pedestrian tunnel. The City of Sacramento installed the wall panels depicting the history of Sacramento in 2000. In 2015, the Golden 1 Center and Downtown Commons Area was constructed just east of the tunnel, which prompted renovation and the installation of new lighting in the tunnel.<sup>54</sup>

The chosen site is not the location of Hackett House, which was located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between K and L Streets. Hackett House was also demolished during the construction of I-5 and its location presently contains the L Street on-ramp for I-5 North. This site is inaccessible for pedestrians. The chosen site is the most appropriate place to interpret the history of Archy Lee's escape to Hackett House and the Underground Railroad in Sacramento because it is a highly trafficked location that is dedicated to interpreting the history of Sacramento and its residents. Including interpretation of the Archy Lee case and Hackett House in the pedestrian tunnel also supports the City's ongoing efforts to share more diverse and inclusive stories from Sacramento's early history.

**S6. Include a bibliography or list of citations for sources used through the document. Discuss the reliability of historical sources of information and briefly discuss how you used them.**

**Archival Sources**

"Affidavit of CA Stovall." March 17, 1858. Case Files of the U.S. Commissioner, ca. 1855-1912, Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009, National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno, California.

- Source establishes one of Stovall's several narratives about himself and Archy Lee's journey to California. While the narrative provided in this source may be unreliable since it contradicts Stovall's previous and following statements, it establishes the shifting nature of his story during the Archy Lee legal proceedings.

"Aerial View of Interstate 5 Construction and Old Sacramento," from *The Sacramento Bee*, Sacramento, California, 1968, Sacramento Bee Collection, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California.

- Source confirms when the chosen site documented in the site history section assumed its present design as an pedestrian tunnel beneath I-5.

Bureau of the Census. 1860 United States Federal Census. June 19, 1860. 1860 United States Federal Census Collection, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667/records/10174138>.

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<sup>53</sup> City of Sacramento, *Sacramento African American Experience Project*, 3.; "Old Sacramento State Historic Park," California State Parks, accessed October 29, 2025, [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=497](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=497).

<sup>54</sup> "Flight CAS-3266, Frame 2-272," 1:20,000 Photograph, Sacramento, CA, March 1, 1972, Cartwright Aerial Surveys Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara Library, Santa Barbara, California, [https://mil.library.ucsb.edu/ap\\_indexes/FrameFinder/](https://mil.library.ucsb.edu/ap_indexes/FrameFinder/).; Center for Sacramento History, "LASERIUM: Light Art in Sacramento – Energy Resource in Unlimited Movement," Facebook, August 23, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/ctrsactohistory/posts/esteban-villa-a-retired-california-state-university-sacramento-professor-marks-a/939130411575920/>.; "Aerial Photograph of Downtown Commons Sacramento Area," Google Earth, June 15, 1993.; "Aerial Photograph of Downtown Commons Sacramento Area," Google Earth, March 30, 2015.; "Tunnel walk to Old Sacramento gets a new glow," Sacramento City Express, January 15, 2015, <https://sacramentocityexpress.com/2015/01/15/tunnel-walk-to-old-sacramento-gets-a-new-glow/>.

- Source provides biographical information about Hackett House proprietor Jesse Hackett, including date of birth, state of birth, and state of residence in 1860.

Cartwright Aerials Collection, University of Santa Barbara Library, Santa Barbara, California.

- Source provides documentary evidence of alterations and setting changes over time in the site history on the chosen site for the nomination, the pedestrian tunnel connecting Old Sacramento and the Downtown Commons area beneath I-5 and K Street.

D. Valentine & Son. *Sacramento Directory 1857-1858*. San Francisco, CA. 1857. Sacramento City Directories Collection, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California.

- Directory was used to provide biographical information about Hackett House proprietor Richard A. Hall. The assertion that Hall may have been from Ohio is based on the listing of a Black person named “R. Hall” in the 1857-1858 Sacramento City Directory who lived on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between J and K Street, meaning there is a possibility the individual listed in the directory is not Richard Hall, but the placement of the address for the name so close to Hackett House and the frequent use of Hall’s initials in official documents referencing him make it possible that this listing references him. The reliability of this source in providing Hall’s place of birth is also discussed in a footnote in the narrative of the text.

“Executive Committee.” *Mirror of the Times*. December 12, 1857. *Mirror of the Times* (San Francisco [Calif.]) 1857-1862 Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83027100/>.

- Source contains a list of the then-current members of the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention in *Mirror of the Times*, a regional and statewide popular Black newspaper, which was used to establish that by 1857 Richard Hall was a representative of Sacramento County in the organization.

Google Earth, Google.com.

- Source was used to review aerial photographs of the chosen site from 1993 to the present to assess how the site conditions have changed over time. This information was included in the site history of the nomination.

“Hacket House.” *Mirror of the Times*. December 12, 1857. *Mirror of the Times* (San Francisco [Calif.]) 1857-1862 Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83027100/>.

- Source names all three proprietors of Hackett House and describes the amenities in the physical building in the form of an advertisement in a statewide Black newspaper in San Francisco. Provides not only a physical description of Hackett House and confirms all three owners’ identities, but the advertisements placement in a prominent Black newspaper exemplifies the popularity of the business and means for the business to advertise in a regional and statewide newspaper.

“Petition and Affidavit of C.A. Stovall.” January 8, 1858. Case Files of the U.S. Commissioner, ca. 1855-1912, Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009, National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno, California.

- Source establishes one of Stovall’s first narrative about himself and Archy Lee’s journey to California. While the narrative provided in this source may be unreliable since it contradicts Stovall’s following statements, it establishes the shifting nature of his story during the Archy Lee legal proceedings.

*Proceedings of the First State Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held at City of Sacramento, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>, in the Colored Methodist Church*. Sacramento: Democratic State Journal Print, 1855. Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.

- Report of the proceedings of the First Colored Convention in California details proceedings and members of the First Colored Convention of Sacramento and was used to establish the political and social activities and goals of the Colored Convention in California.

*Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of California, Held in the City of Sacramento, Dec. 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1856.* Sacramento, California. 1856. Colored Conventions Project Digital Records, <https://www.omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/266>.

- Report of the proceedings of the Second Colored Convention in California details proceedings and members of the Second Colored Convention of Sacramento and was used to establish Hackett House proprietor Richard Hall's participation in the Executive Committee of the organization as a representative from San Mateo County.

Sacramento County. "Hackett [Hacket], Jesse: Case Number 1091, July 25, 1868." Box 46, Folder 2, California Probate Court (Sacramento County) Records, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California.

- Source contains biographical information about Jesse Hackett, a proprietor of Hackett House, and references to beneficiaries in death. This information was used to determine Hackett's connection with other members of the Black community political activity in Sacramento. The names recorded in this document were cross-referenced with period newspaper articles to determine that at least one of his beneficiaries were involved in Black political activism.

Sacramento County. "Estate of Margaret Carr, alias Davis: Case Number 366. Sacramento, California. September 23, 1856, California, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1850-1953, Ancestry.com.

- Source confirms the death date of Margaret Carr, alias Davis, of whom Hackett House was owned under the estate during Hackett, Hall, and Parker's proprietorship of the property.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection/>.

- Source provides information about Hackett House and K Street's physical appearance and changes over time in the site history section for the pedestrian tunnel beneath I-5 and K Street.

U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 Collection, Ancestry.com.

- Sources confirm Jesse Hackett's return to Sacramento and work as a porter and boardinghouse keeper following his exodus to Victoria, present-day British Columbia, with other members of California's Black community following the Archy Lee case.

## ***Newspapers***

*Daily Alta California.*

*Mirror of the Times.*

*Pacific Appeal.*

*Sacramento Daily Union.*

*San Francisco Chronicle.*

*San Joaquin Republican.*

*The Daily California Express.*

*The Elevator: A Weekly Journal of Progress, Equality Before the Law.*

*The Sacramento Bee.*

*The Sacramento Union.*

*The Sacramento Star.*

- These newspaper sources were used for various reasons, including establishing the sequence of events during the Archy Lee legal case, details about Hackett House and its proprietors, and perspectives from Black newspapers regarding major figures in the Colored Convention Movement and reflections and historical memory on the Archy Lee case from the point of view of the community. While accounts in the sources may not be entirely historically reliable, such as in the case of the *San Joaquin Republican* article stating that the Black residents of the city believed Archy Lee and Stovall had departed for San Francisco from the Stockton port, other aspects of the articles, such as the examples of the dedication the Black community had in locating and fighting for Archy Lee's freedom, can provide context for public sentiment during Archy Lee's case. The articles were accessed from the National Archives and Records

Administration, the California Digital Newspaper Collection, Newspapers.com, and referenced in *Archy Lee's Struggle for Freedom* by Brian McGinty.

## Secondary Sources

Beasley, Delilah L. *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1919.

- One of the first comprehensive studies of Black history in California completed by Delilah Beasley, a pre-eminent Black journalist in the early twentieth century. This source was used to describe the involvement of California's Black community in the Underground Railroad and the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention's role in the Archy Lee legal case. While Beasley's work is not sourced, it is agreed upon by historians to be a generally reliable source of information as Beasley conducted extensive interviews with and review of documents owned by members of California's Black community in the early twentieth century, including community elders with memory of Black history in California during the nineteenth century. While oral recollections are not always entirely accurate, they are essential in studying marginalized histories that are often not reflected in the written historic record, which is biased in the United States towards upper class white men. Therefore, Beasley's information is crucial in our understanding of the historic memory of the Black community in California.

Center for Sacramento History, "LASERIUM: Light Art in Sacramento – Energy Resource in Unlimited Movement," Facebook, August 23, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/ctrstactohistory/posts/esteban-villa-a-retired-california-state-university-sacramento-professor-marks-a/939130411575920/>.

- The educational online post by the Center for Sacramento History, a local archival repository for Sacramento history, was used to discuss the history of the mural by Royal Chicano Air Force members Esteban Villa and Juanishi Orosco that is located in the pedestrian tunnel. While the source is an internet post, it is by a reputable archival institution with the purpose of providing digital education on the history of places and people in Sacramento's history.

City of Sacramento, *Mid-century Modern in the City of Sacramento Historic Context Statement and Survey Results*, prepared by GEI Consultants and Mead & Hunt, Sacramento, California, September 30, 2017.

- Historic context statement published by the City of Sacramento provides context for urban redevelopment in Sacramento from the 1950s to 1970s, which is used in the site history of the nomination.

City of Sacramento. *Sacramento African American Experience Project: Historic Context Statement*. By Page & Turnbull with Damany M. Fisher. Sacramento, California. June 2023.

- Historic context statement published by the City of Sacramento contains a comprehensive history of African American history in Sacramento, including demographic information and the history of Black migration and settlement and political activity. This information was used to inform the historic context on Sacramento's Black community proceeding and during Hackett House's operation, the Archy Lee legal case, and various activities of the Colored Convention Movement in the capital city.

City of Sacramento, "The Grand Approach: Sacramento's Capitol Mall," prepared by PAR Environmental, Sacramento, California, 2014

- Source provides an overview of the timeline and history of the Capitol Mall Project, which is covered in the site history of the nomination.

Fatah-Black, Karwan. "Introduction: Urban Slavery in the Age of Abolition." *International Review of Social History* 65, no. S29 (February 2020): 1-14.

- Recent study on urban slavery during the Antebellum period that is used to establish the differences in urban and rural slavery in the United States and the experiences of enslaved people in urban settings. While the article primarily focuses on urban slavery on the East Coast and Brazil, the nature of urban

slavery is documented in a universal fashion that applies to the conditions Archy Lee was an urban enslaved person in Sacramento, California in 1858.

Gilmer, Jason A. "Litigating Slavery's Reach: A Story of Race, Rights, and the Law During the California Gold Rush." *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2023): 499-564.

- An in-depth study on the *In re Perkins* case, the first fugitive slave case in California. This case provides context for not only earlier fugitive slave cases in the state but showcases the role of Archy Lee lawyer Joseph Winnans in a previous civil rights case funded and supported by the Black community. This illustrates the relationships and connections between Black and white anti-slavery advocates in California.

Lapp, Rudolph. *Archy Lee: A California Fugitive Slave Case*. The Book Club of California, 1969.

- One of the first studies on the Archy Lee legal case and provides narrative of events in the case, including from the perspective of the Black community in California. While the source does not include in-text citations, it is considered a generally reliable source of information on the Archy Lee legal case and draws from earlier sources, such as Delilah Beasley's *Negro Trailblazers of California*, which were built on oral histories from members of the Black community in the 1910s.

Lapp, Rudolph M. "Negro Rights Activities in Gold Rush California." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1966): 3-20.

- A study on Black Civil Rights activities in California during the Gold Rush, which included a review of the Perkins Slave Case in 1852, the first fugitive slave case in California. This case provides context for not only earlier fugitive slave cases in the state but showcases the role of Archy Lee lawyer Joseph Winnans in a previous civil rights case funded and supported by the Black community. This illustrates the relationships and connections between Black and white anti-slavery advocates in California.

Lapp, Rudolph M. *Gold Rush California*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

- One of the first comprehensive studies on the Black community during the Gold Rush in California that provided information about the motives of Free Black migrants to the state, activities of the California Colored Convention, the state of enslaved labor in California, and the migration to Victoria in 1858. While Lapp's study on Archy Lee's legal case lacked in-text citations, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* is a fully cited and accurate historical text.

McGinty, Brian. *Archy Lee's Struggle For Freedom: The True Story Of California Gold, The Nation's Tragic March Toward Civil War, And A Young Black Man's Fight For Liberty*. Connecticut: LP Lyons Press, 2020.

- McGinty's study is the most comprehensive, up to date examination of the Archy Lee legal case and provides a clear narrative of the case, major figures in San Francisco's Black community involved in the case, and analysis of impact the case had on the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 in California, as well as the impact it had on public consciousness in California and nationwide during the politically fraught years preceding the Civil War. This content was used to establish the majority of the historic narrative regarding Archy Lee's legal case in the narrative for the nomination. Additionally, McGinty includes references to primary source newspaper articles used in the nomination.

National Park Service Pacific West Region. "The Underground Railroad: The Quest for Freedom Moves West 1848-1869." Department of the Interior.

- National Park Service source that discusses operations of the Underground Railroad in the West, and California, specifically. This source was used to establish the nature of Underground Railroad operations and freedom-seeking operations in California, including reported members in California's Black community.

"Old Sacramento State Historic Park," California State Parks, accessed October 29, 2025, [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=497](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=497).

- An overview of the California State Parks website of the administrative history of the Old Sacramento State Historic District. The state park is adjacent to the location of the chosen site to commemorate Archy Lee's escape to Hackett House.

*Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California.* Edited by Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor. Los Angeles: Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2001.

- A comprehensive study on African American history in California that was used to provide context of California's wider Black community proceeding and during Hackett House's operation, the Archy Lee legal case, and various activities of the Colored Convention Movement in the state.

Smith, Stacey L. *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

- A comprehensive study on enslaved labor in California used to establish the nature of unfree Black labor in California during the antebellum period and forms resistance from both the enslaved Black population and California's Black community.

"Tunnel walk to Old Sacramento gets a new glow," Sacramento City Express, January 15, 2015, <https://sacramentocityexpress.com/2015/01/15/tunnel-walk-to-old-sacramento-gets-a-new-glow/>.

- This source was used to assess the alterations and changes over time the chosen site for nomination has experienced. This information was included in the site history section of the nomination.

**S7. Describe current educational programs, tours, markers, signs, brochures, site bulletins, or plaques at the site. Include text and photographs of markers.**

Presently, there are two public art installations located at the chosen site. The mural on the northern and southern walls of the east side of the tunnel is entitled "LASERIUM: Light Art in Sacramento – Energy Resource in Unlimited Movement," and painted by Royal Chicano Air Force members Esteban Villa and Juanishi Orosco in the early 1980s. The piece depicts different tableaus comprised of indigenous imagery, colorful geometric shapes, and ceramic tiles to represent Latino heritage.

The second public art installation located on the southern wall of the west side of the tunnel are painted panels affixed to the tunnel wall that display a timeline of Sacramento's history and interprets important events and peoples in the city from Pre-Contact Period to 2000. The wall was installed in 2000 by the City of Sacramento, designed by Dunlavey Studios, and illustrated by Bob Miller. The timeline highlights thirteen themes: First Settlers, Pioneers, City Founders, Railroad Builders, the State Capitol, Philanthropists, Churches, Capitalists, Educators, Reformers, Authors, Community Activists, and Redevelopment Visionaries. Each theme depicts an illustration of one or more persons or buildings to represent it and smaller panels of interpretive text with historical images are located along the bottom of the timeline. These interpretive panels provide more specific information and context for each theme. The very bottom of the timeline displays the year, important national or worldwide events, and population updates for the city.

Listed below are the persons depicted on the timeline and what theme they are categorized into;

- First Settlers
  - Nisenan (A generalized depiction of the Nisenan, the California Indian group that is indigenous to the Sacramento-area.)
- City Founders
  - John Sutter: 1803-1880, Land Baron
  - James Marshall: 1810-1885, Carpenter and Discoverer of Gold
  - John Sutter Jr.: 1826-1897, City Founder
  - S. Clinton Hastings: 1814-1893, First Supreme Court Justice
  - Sam Brannan: 1819-1889, Merchant
  - Peter Burnett: 1808-1895, Miller and Governor
- Railroad Builders
  - Theodore Judah: 1826-1893: Railroad Engineer

- Leland Stanford: 1824-1893, Merchant and Railroad Baron
- Charles Crocker: 1822-1888, Merchant and Railroad Baron
- Mark Hopkins: 1813-1878, Merchant and Railroad Baron
- C.P. Huntington: 1821-1900, Merchant and Railroad Baron
- The State Capitol
  - E.B. Crocker: 1818-1875, California Supreme Court Justice
- Philanthropists
  - Margaret Crocker: 1822-1901, Philanthropist
  - Jane Stanford: 1828-1905, Philanthropist
- Capitalists
  - William Land: 1837-1911, Merchant and Hotel Owner
- Educators
  - Sarah Jones: 1847-1925, Teacher
- Reformers
  - Hiram Johnson: 1866-1945, Reformer, Governor, and U.S. Senator
- Authors
  - Ernesto Galarza: 1905-1984, Author, Activist, and Teacher
- Community Activists
  - Mary Tsukamoto: 1915-1998, Teacher and Activist
- Redevelopment Visionaries
  - V. Aubrey Neasham: 1908-1982, Teacher and Historian
  - Frank Durkee: 1892-1983, Preservation Advocate and Redevelopment Agency Commissioner
  - Eleanor McClatchy: 1895-1980, Publisher, *Sacramento Bee*
  - Frank Fat: 1904-1997, Restaurant Entrepreneur

**S8. Describe any local, State, or Federal historic designation, records, signage, or plaques at the site.**

The site contains the City of Sacramento-installed art installation of the timeline of Sacramento's history. An in-depth description of the timeline, themes, and persons interpreted can be found in Section 7 of the nomination form.

**S9. If the site is open to the public, describe accessibility conditions under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

The east entrance to the tunnel is an ADA accessible concrete pedestrian path. The west end of the tunnel contains an ADA-accessible concrete ramp adjacent to the main pedestrian path that facilitates circulation between the tunnel and the street-level in the Old Sacramento State Historic Park.

**S10. Describe the nature and objectives of any partnerships that have contributed to the documentation, preservation, commemoration, or interpretation of the site.**

In 2025, the City of Sacramento received a grant from the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (NTF) program to document Hackett House, the escape site of Archy Lee, the central figure in a California legal case centered around the enforcement of the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 in the state. The City of Sacramento selected Groundwork Preservation LLC as the cultural resources consultant team to prepare the NTF nomination. The NTF nomination is the first step to developing interpretive materials on Hackett House, Archy Lee, and freedom-seeking in Sacramento at the chosen site in the pedestrian tunnel on K-Street.

**S11. Additional data or comments. (Optional) These brochures and excerpts from sources do not replace the required narrative.**

- January 1857: Archy Lee departs Carroll County, Mississippi with the son of his enslaver, Charles Stovall.

- Early 1857: The Hackett House Hotel is opened in Sacramento, California by members of Sacramento's politically active Black community Richard A. Hall, Jesse Hackett, and Charles W. Parker.
- About October 2, 1852: Lee and Stovall arrive in Sacramento. While living there, Stovall opens a school and Lee works as a cook in a hotel.
- About January 3, 1858: Stovall puts Lee on a riverboat with the intention of transporting him back to Mississippi. Lee subsequently escapes to Hackett House on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between K and L Streets, which is owned by Richard A. Hall, Jesse Hackett, and Charles W. Parker.
- January 6, 1858: An arrest warrant is issued for Lee, and he is arrested at Hackett House.
- January 7, 1858: County Judge Robert Robinson issues a writ of habeas corpus filed by Charles W. Parker, requiring Lee be produced in court that day.
- January 8, 1858: Judge Robinson holds a hearing on the writ of habeas corpus, and Charles W. Parker appears in court with anti-slavery lawyers Edwin B. Crocker and John H. McKune. Stovall is represented by James H. Hardy and files a petition with U.S. Commissioner George Pen Johnston to return Lee to his custody under the federal Fugitive Slave Act.
- January 13, 1848: Commissioner Johnston states he does not have a jurisdiction to send Lee back to Mississippi as a fugitive slave because he did not cross state lines when he ran away from Stovall.
- January 23, 1858: County Judge Robinson resumes the case. Lee is represented by Joseph W. Winans, who was hired to represent the defendants in the *In re Perkins* case by the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention in 1852. Lee states in court that he does not want to return to Mississippi.
- January 26, 1858: Judge Robinson rules Lee is free, but he is rearrested after Stovall's attorneys file a petition before the California Supreme Court.
- February 12, 1858: Associate Justice Peter H. Burnett issues the Opinion of the Supreme Court, stating that Lee is technically free but orders him be returned to slavery in Mississippi.
- February 24, 1858: While Lee's exact whereabouts are unknown, Colored Convention member and San Francisco James Riker signs an affidavit for a writ of habeas corpus to free Lee.
- March 5, 1858: After rumors of Stovall and Lee's imminent departure for Panama from San Francisco, massive crowds of Black and white observers and police officers gather at the San Francisco waterfront and eventually apprehend Stovall and free Lee. However, Lee is held in county jail.
- March 6, 1858: Stovall is arraigned in San Francisco County Court for kidnapping, but his case is dismissed due to administrative errors.
- March 8, 1858: Lee and Stovall attend a hearing before County Judge T.W. Freelon to discuss the legality of James Riker's affidavit. Lee continues to be held in County jail.
- March 17, 1858: The case reappears before U.S. Commissioner Johnston.
- April 6, 1858: Closing arguments are made by Lee and Stovall's attorneys.
- April 14, 1858: U.S. Commissioner Johnston declares Lee is not subject to the Fugitive Slave Act and is a free man. Baker and California Colored Convention leaders James Riker and Peter Anderson accompany Lee out of jail and he takes up refuge with the Free Black community in San Francisco. It is possible Lee was housed in abolitionist and millionaire Mary Ellen Pleasant's boardinghouse, but reports of this are disputed.
- April 20, 1858: Lee and a larger group of San Francisco's Black population, including high-ranking members of the California Colored Convention, depart San Francisco for the Fraser River in Canada to secure more freedoms and join a Gold Rush.
- July 12, 1858: Hackett House proprietors Hall, Hackett, and Parker close Hackett House and depart for the Fraser River to join Archy Lee and the other Black migrants in Canada. Hall and Hackett eventually return to California, where Hall remains a member of the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention.
- November 14, 1873: Archy Lee is reported to be seriously ill in Sacramento County. He is sent to the County hospital and dies. Reports of his death reignite interest in the significant case.

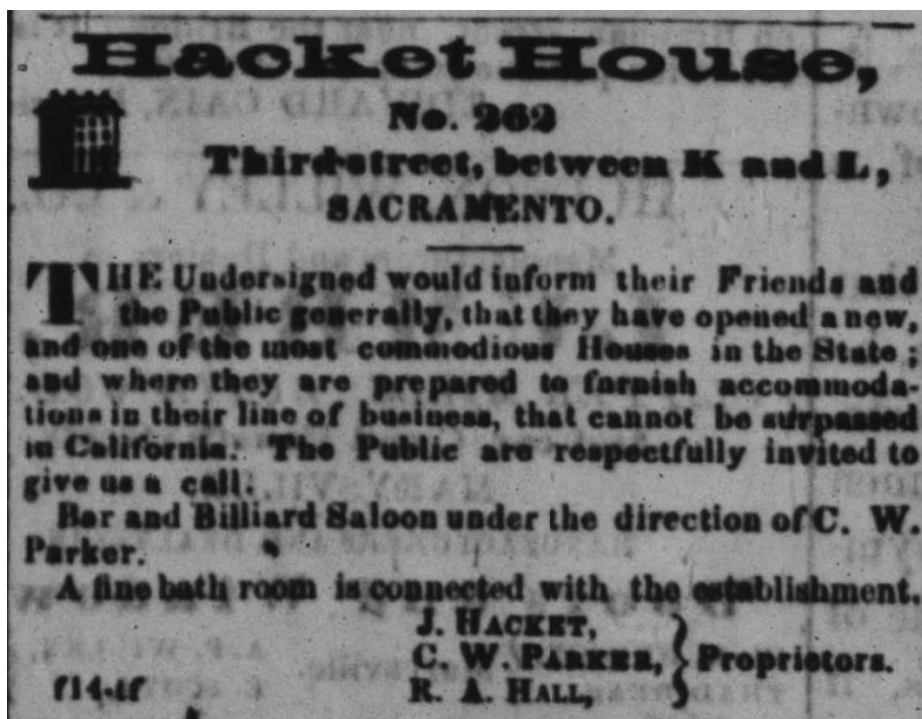


Figure 1: "Hacket House" advertisement, *Mirror of the Times*, December 12, 1857, Library of Congress.

State Executive Committee.	
M. W. Gibbs.....	San Francisco Co
J. P. Dyer,	"
J. H. Townsend,	"
J. G. Marshall,	"
E. J. Johnson,	"
F. G. Barbadoes.....	Sacramento Co
J. G. Wilson,	"
R. A. Hall,	"
W. Bedford,	"
G. W. Booth,	"
I. Morton.....	El Dorado Co
E. P. Duplex.....	} Yuba Co
G. R. Symes.....	
W. H. Hall.....	Butte Co
C. M. Wilson.....	Siskiyou Co
E. Reeves.....	Amador Co
Thomas Duff.....	Mariposa Co
R. Shorter.....	Santa Clara Co
G. W. Thomas.....	Nevada Co
G. W. Miller.....	Sonoma Co
W. H. Harper.....	Alameda Co
R. H. Johnson.....	Napa Co
A. Outley.....	San Joaquin Co
H. T. Smith.....	Tuolumne Co
W. H. Gordon.....	Sierra Co
D. McReynolds.....	Shasta Co

Figure 2: Members of the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention (See R.A. Hall, Sacramento Co.), *The Mirror of the Times*, December 12, 1857, Library of Congress.

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A FUGITIVE SLAVE CASE.—About three months ago, a gentleman named Stovall, arrived in this city from Mississippi, bringing with him a negro boy called "Archy," whom he owned. Stovall during his residence here, has taught school on K street near Seventh, but not being very successful concluded to return to his native State, and with that object in view, started for the Bay on Monday last, accompanied as he supposed, by his alleged slave, but the negro gave him the slip on the boat, and remained in this city in charge of some friends, at the Hacket House on Third street. Mr. Stovall immediately made search for him, found, arrested, and incarcerated him in the station house where he now is. Yesterday afternoon the City Marshall was served with a writ of habeas corpus ordering him to bring the body of the boy before Judge Robinson, this day, at 2 o'clock, when the case will be fully argued for the boy by Crocker & McKune, and for Stovall by James H. Hardy, but it is not probable that a decision will be rendered before to-morrow morning. It will be looked for with great interest, as it is the first case of the kind that has ever occurred in California.

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Figure 3: "A Fugitive Slave Case," *The Sacramento Bee*, January 8, 1858.

STILL ON THE "QUI VIVE."—A large delegation of the colored fraternity of the city was at the landing prior to, and at the starting of the San Francisco steamer yesterday, looking out for the slave boy "Archy," whom rumor had whispered to some of them was to leave en route for the East. We doubt whether "Archy" was put on board, although we heard an individual assert most positively that he was, and that he was passed on the steamer within ten minutes of her departure, without any of the curious lookers on being cognizant of the fact. "That's so," said the garrulous gentleman, "and I'll bet money on it."—*State Journal*.

The gentleman would have lost his money. Archy came to this city a few days after the decision of the Supreme Court was rendered in his case, and remained here for some days. He doubtless sailed for his old home in Mississippi, on the steamer yesterday.

Figure 4: "Still On The 'Qui Vive,'" *San Joaquin Republican*, February 21, 1858.

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**“ARCHY.”**

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**TO THE FRIENDS**

.....OF THE.....

**CONSTITUTION AND LAWS.**

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**T**HE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE Colored People having expended a large amount, and incurred heavy obligations in prosecuting and defending the case in the Courts of Sacramento, Stockton and San Francisco, and believing the principles to be vindicated are those which should interest all lovers of right and justice, independent of complexion, respectfully solicit contributions for this object, which will be faithfully appropriated, if left with

m20-3t E. J. JOHNSON, 184 Clay street.

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Figure 5: "Archy," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, March 20, 1858.

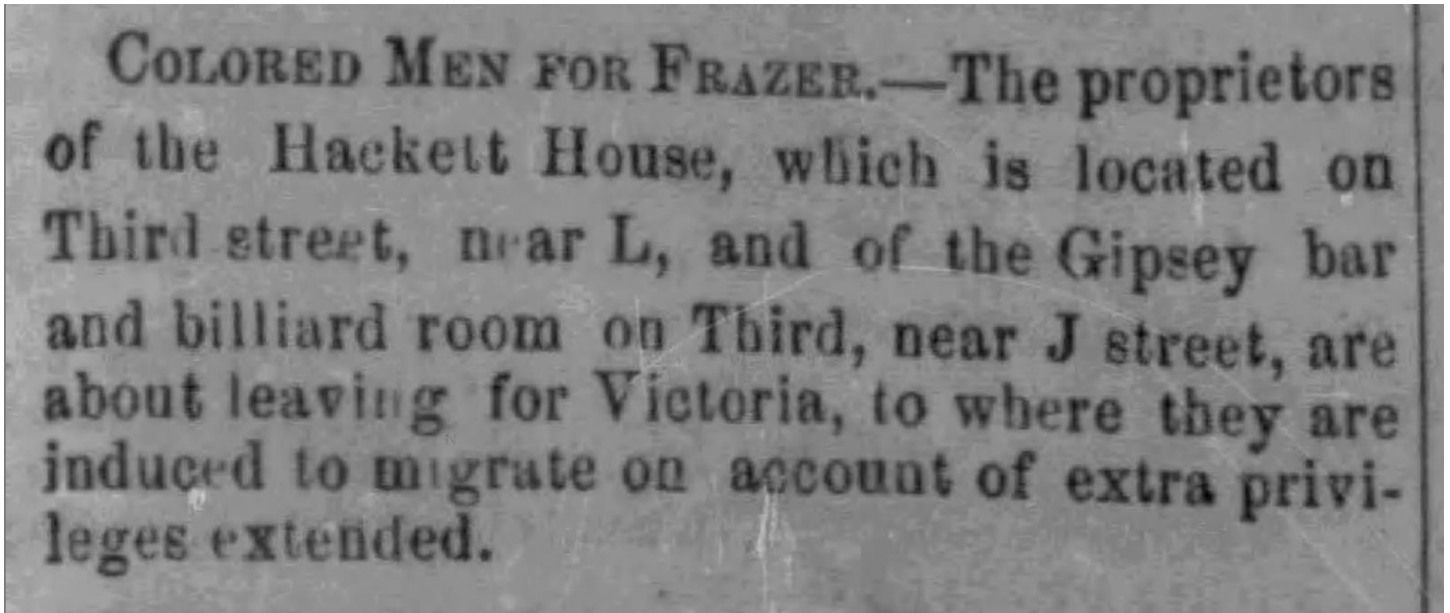


Figure 6: "Colored Men For Frazer," *The Sacramento Bee*, June 30, 1858.

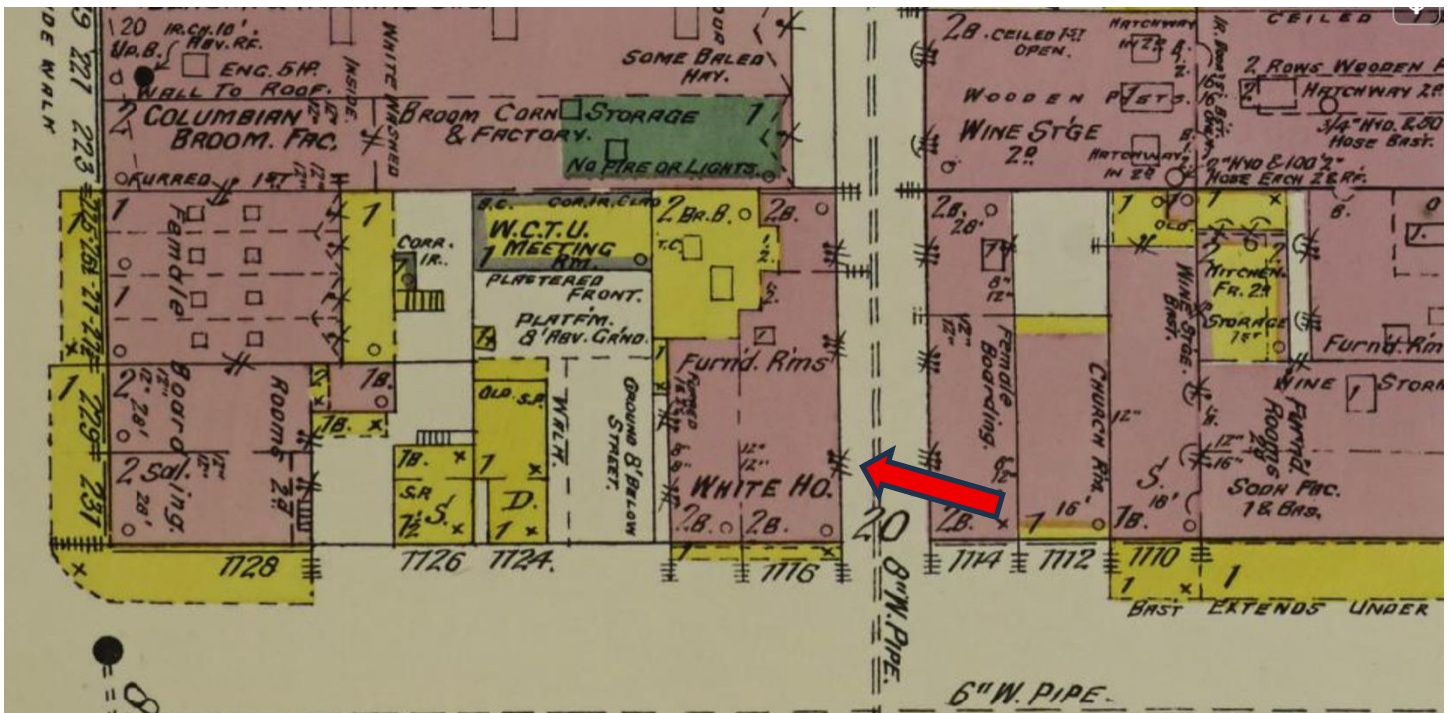


Figure 7: Sanborn Map, 1895, Library of Congress. Former location of the Hackett House marked by red arrow.

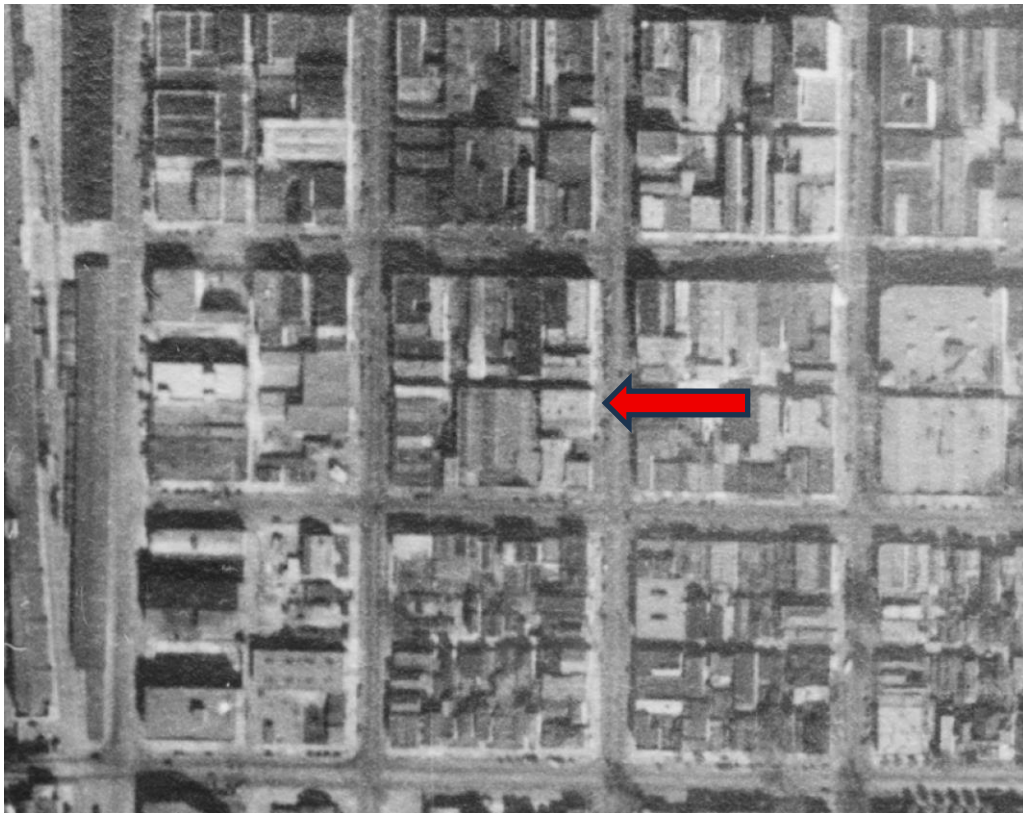


Figure 8: 1928 aerial of Hackett House, January 1, 1928, Cartwright Aerial Collection. Former location of the Hackett House marked by red arrow.



Figure 9: Entrance to pedestrian tunnel on K Street underneath I-5 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, facing east, February 2026.



Figure 10: Entrance to Old Sacramento from the pedestrian tunnel, facing west, February 2026.



Figure 11: Stairs at the Old Sacramento entrance to the pedestrian tunnel, facing east, February 2026.

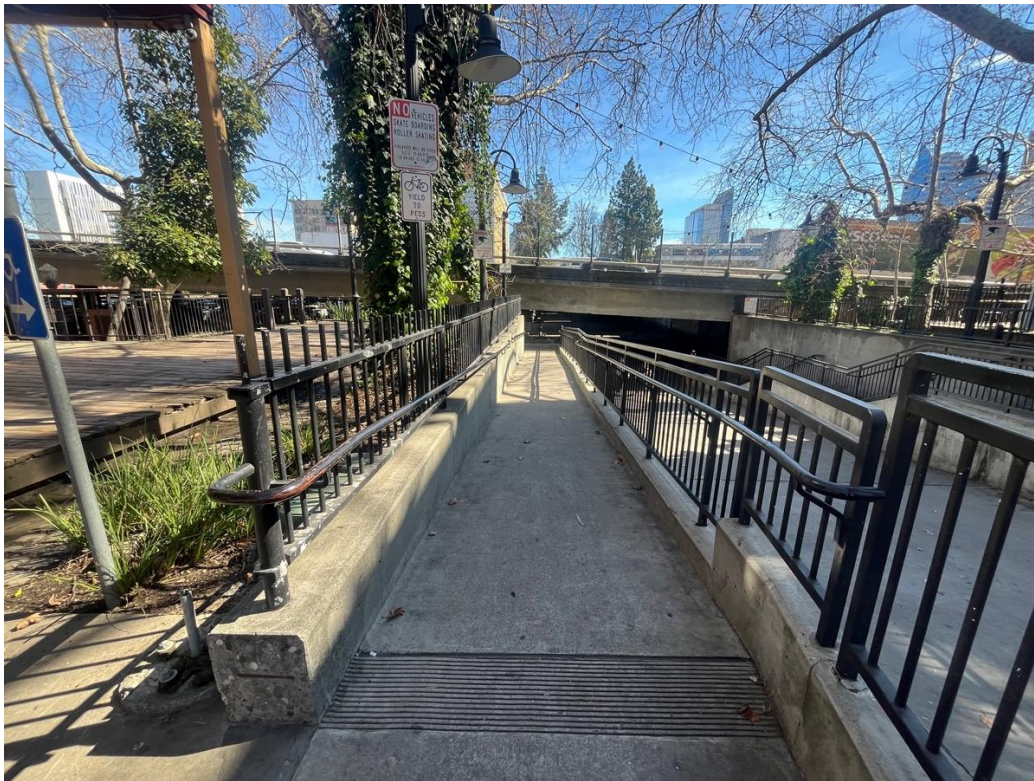


Figure 12: ADA ramp at the Old Sacramento entrance to the pedestrian tunnel, facing east, February 2026.



Figure 13: ADA ramp and adjacent parking lot, facing northwest, February 2026.



Figure 14: West side of the pedestrian tunnel, facing east, February 2026.



Figure 15: Southern wall with Sacramento history timeline art installation, facing south, February 2026.

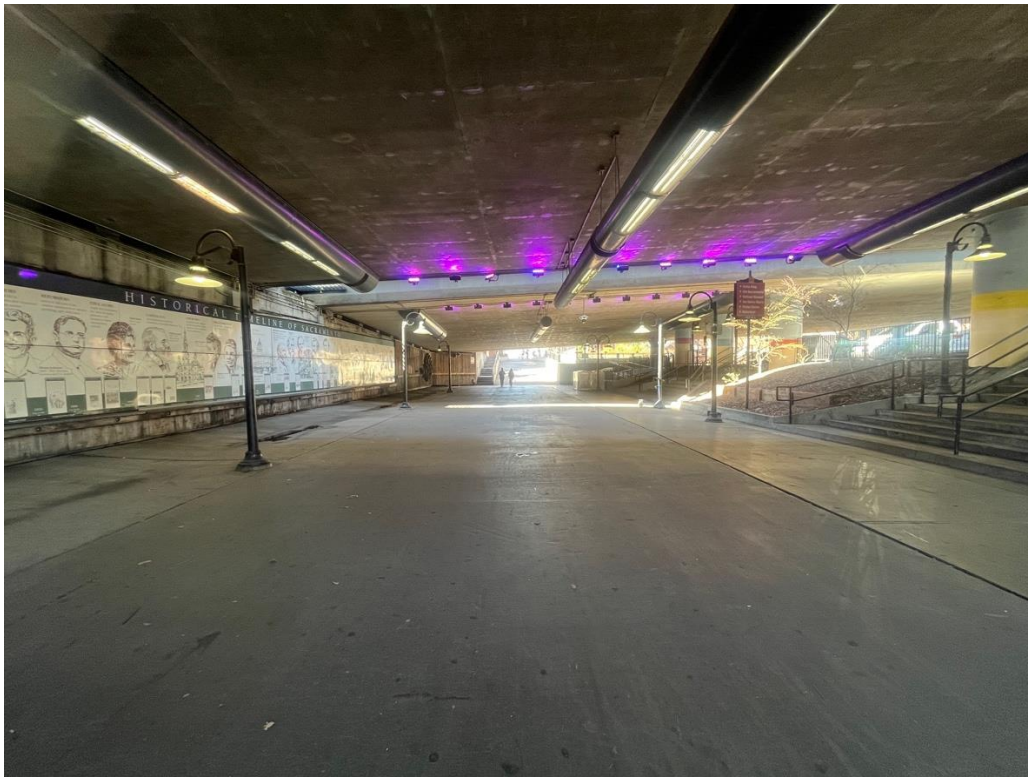


Figure 16: West side of the pedestrian tunnel, facing west, February 2026.



Figure 17: Pedestrian tunnel and adjacent parking lot, facing north, February 2026.



Figure 18: Portion of the Sacramento History timeline installation, facing south, February 2026.



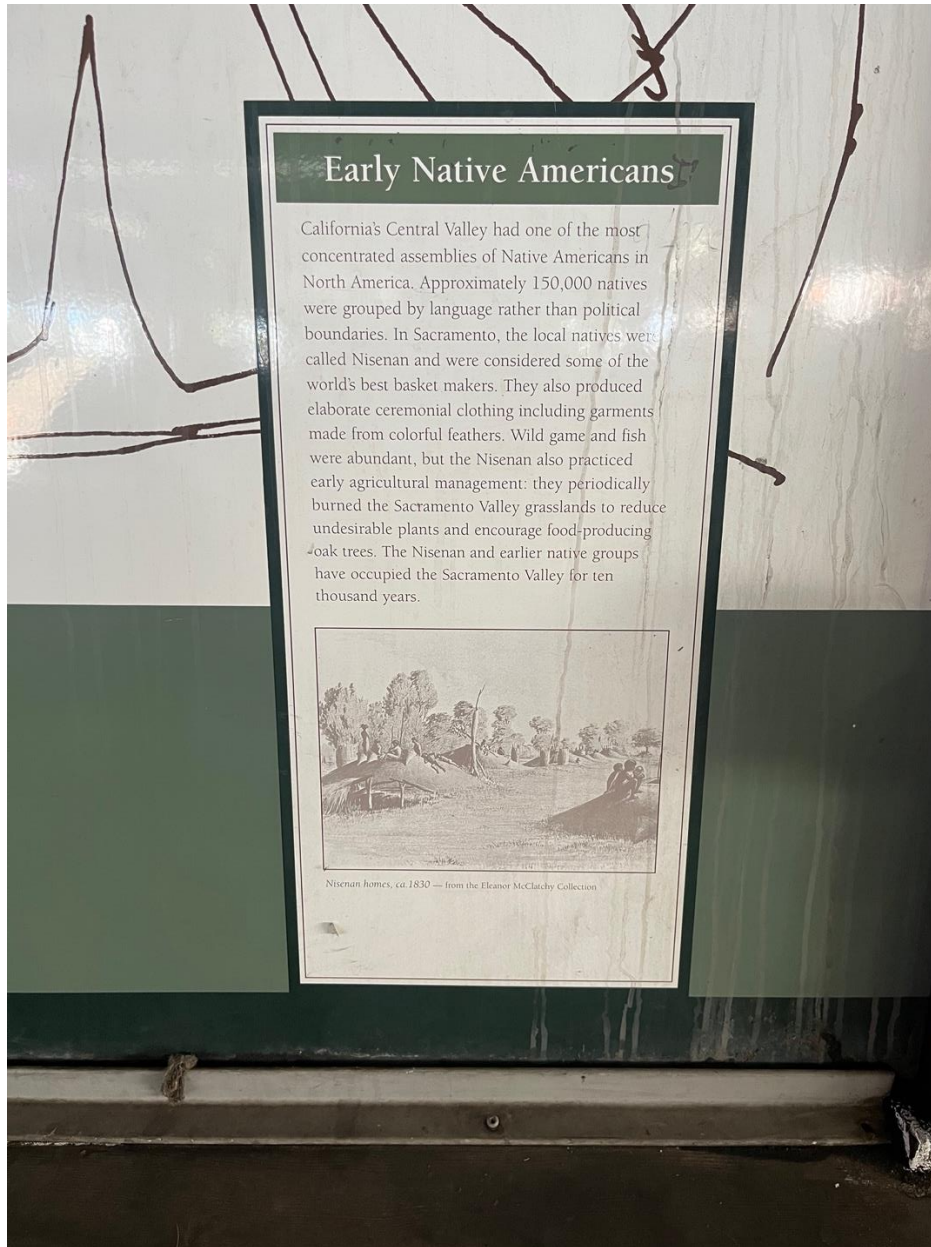
Figure 19: Portion of the Sacramento History timeline installation, facing south, February 2026.



Figure 20: Portion of the Sacramento History timeline installation, facing south, February 2026.

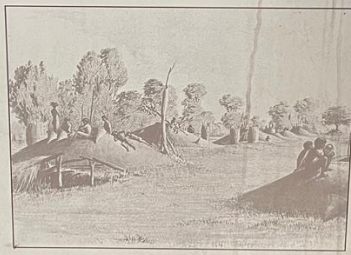


Figure 21: Portion of the Sacramento History timeline installation, facing south, February 2026.



## Early Native Americans

California's Central Valley had one of the most concentrated assemblies of Native Americans in North America. Approximately 150,000 natives were grouped by language rather than political boundaries. In Sacramento, the local natives were called Nisenan and were considered some of the world's best basket makers. They also produced elaborate ceremonial clothing including garments made from colorful feathers. Wild game and fish were abundant, but the Nisenan also practiced early agricultural management: they periodically burned the Sacramento Valley grasslands to reduce undesirable plants and encourage food-producing oak trees. The Nisenan and earlier native groups have occupied the Sacramento Valley for ten thousand years.



*Nisenan homes, ca. 1830 — from the Eleanor McClatchy Collection*

Figure 22: Representative interpretive panel, facing south, February 2026.



Figure 23: East side of the pedestrian tunnel, facing east, February 2026.

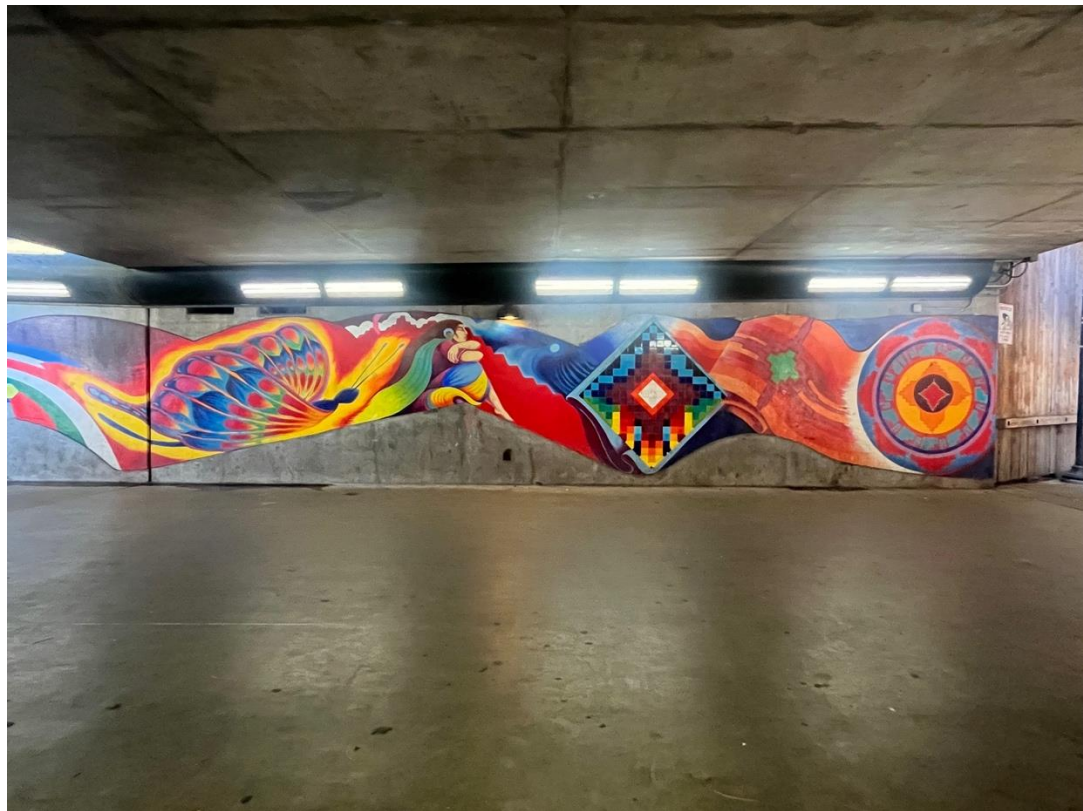


Figure 24: Portion of the southern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing south, February 2026.



Figure 25: Portion of the southern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing south, February 2026.

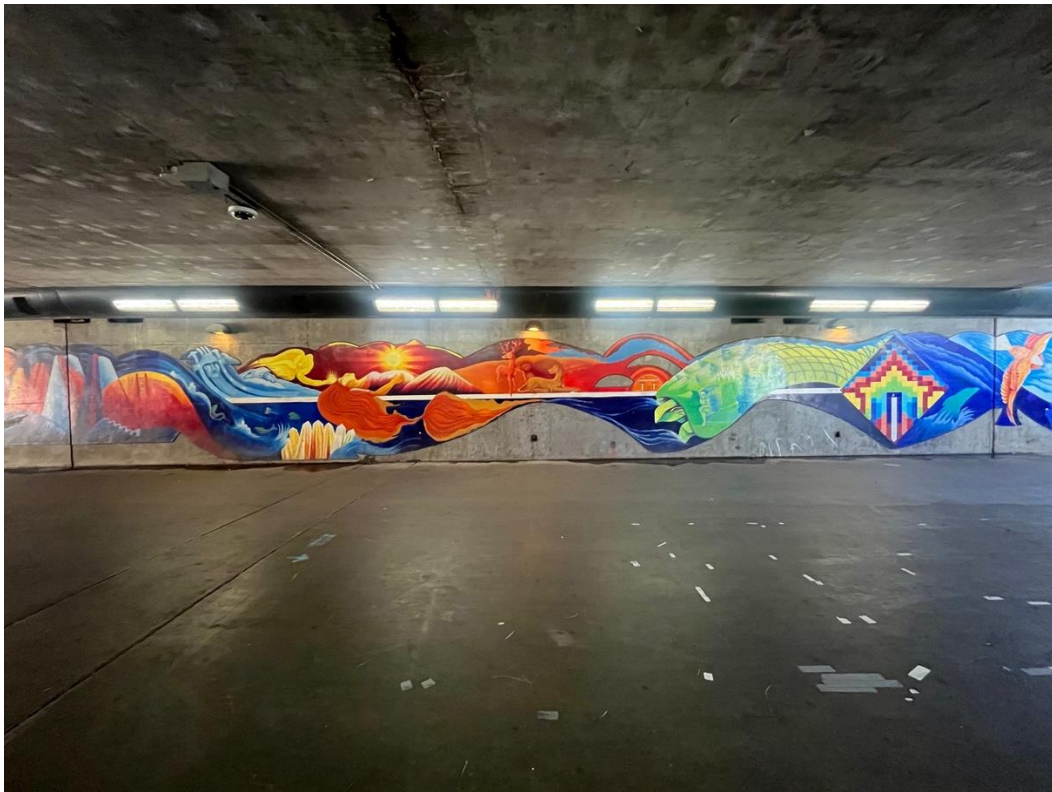


Figure 26: Portion of the southern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing south, February 2026.



Figure 27: Portion of the southern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing south, February 2026.



Figure 28: East entrance to pedestrian tunnel, facing west, February 2026.



Figure 29: Portion of the northern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing north, February 2026.

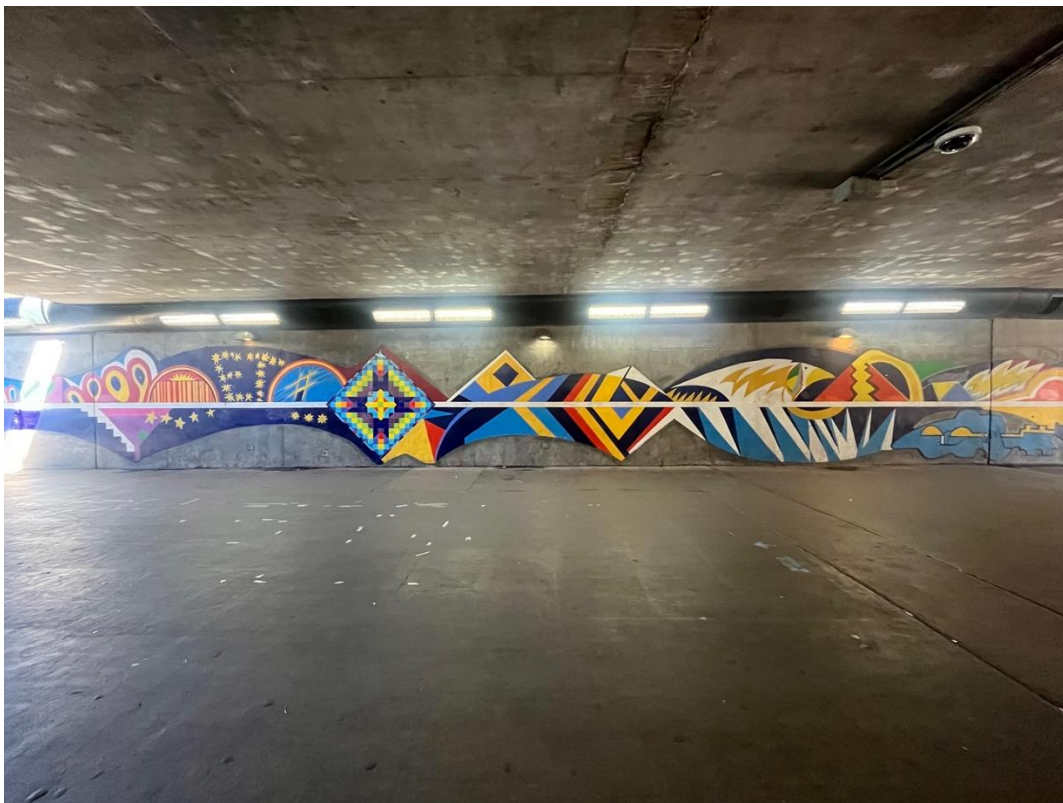


Figure 30: Portion of the northern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing north, February 2026.



Figure 31: Portion of the northern wall of the Royal Chicano Air Force mural, facing north, February 2026.