BAS 082 Stables Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

Stables were the garages of the 1800s, and prospering Butte had plenty. In 1884, in the area bounded by Jackson, Caledonia, Arizona, and Silver Streets at least 102 stables protected an unknown number of horses and other stock.

Three of the largest commercial livery stables stepped up Main Street, beginning with T.M. Carr’s Livery & Feed at the southeast corner of Main and Mercury. Carr had carriages available, and a large fenced feed corral adjacent to the stable accommodated plenty of horses. A block north, at the southeast corner of Galena and Main, Star Livery also provided carriages. That location was more or less in Butte’s Chinatown and red-light district, both of which centered on Galena and Main in those days. Finally, at Park and Main stood the massive Owsley and Cowan Transfer Line Stables, on the site of today’s NorthWestern Energy headquarters.

The two-story iron-clad Star Livery building, built before 1884, included Sullivan & Kehoe’s Saloon on the corner, a lunch room on the ground floor, and lodgings and a gambling room on the second floor in addition to basement and first floor stables and feed storage.

By 1907 Star Livery had become Sloan’s, and it was slated for demolition for developer Adolph Pincus to erect a $50,000 three-story business block that was to include Turkish baths and lodgings. Pincus was born in Germany in 1859 and came to the U.S. in 1880. He died in 1929, and both he and his wife Hattie (1869-1932) are buried in B’nai Israel Cemetery in Butte. In 1928 they lived at 541 West Park (at Crystal), today the parking lot for the Hummingbird Cafe. Pincus’s real estate developments included the 1913 Thomas Block on Park and the 1894 Pincus Building on Main Street just south of Park, both still standing. He also owned the Five-Mile House for a time in the 1890s.

For some reason, Pincus’s proposed Northwestern Block fell through, and the stable survived at least another 14 years. In 1922, the Butte Daily Post constructed its new building, still standing on the corner of Main and Galena (Muddy Creek Brewery), and published there until 1950. The Post ultimately merged with the Montana Standard.

Another fortune was made in the livery business by Thomas Lavell. His stable on East Park Street, between the Vermont and Quebec Boarding Houses at Wyoming and Arizona Streets, respectively, advertised “omnibuses, hacks and baggage wagons meet the arrival of all trains.” It grew to become Montana’s largest taxicab and light trucking enterprise. Lavell’s French Second Empire home at 301 West Park was a social center of Butte for many years.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.