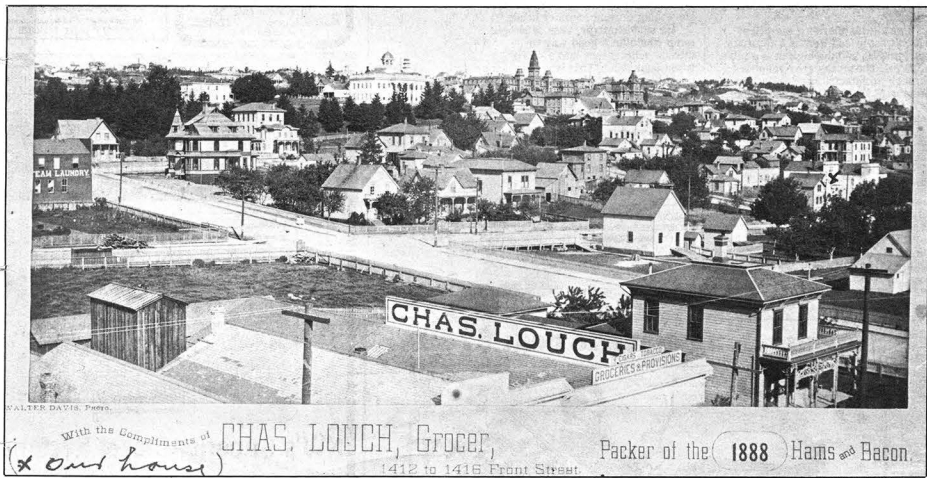


Compliments of Charles Louch



WALTER DAVIS, PHOT.

With the Compliments of **CHAS. LOUCH, Grocer,** Packer of the **(1888) Hams and Bacon.**
 (x our house) 1412 to 1416 Front Street.

COURTESY OF WILLIAM MIX

In 1888, Seattle's quiet residential neighborhood along Union Street boasted the popular Charles Louch grocery.



PAUL DORPAT

A century of change has transformed the quiet neighborhood into the city's central business district.

FREE PHOTOGRAPHS
AND POPULAR HAMS

WRITTEN BY PAUL DORPAT

I

n 1888, grocer Charles Louch hired photographer Walter Davis to shoot across his roof sign to part of the Seattle neighborhood he served. Louch's Grocery was on First Avenue, two lots north of Union Street, which runs diagonally through the historical photograph.

Louch gave copies of this scene to his customers — so many of them that they are still commonplace in local collections. On the bottom border of the prints, the grocer had the photographer inscribe "with the compliments of Chas. Louch packer of the 1888 hams and bacon."

The 1888 brand hams were a Louch creation which were even more popular than his give-away photograph. An 1880 Seattle Chamber of Commerce publication, Seattle Illustrated, reported that Louch's hams were "universally used by nine-tenths of the citizens of this city."

Louch, as a young English sailor, landed in Elliott Bay in the mid-1800s, left his ship for a little sightseeing and decided to stay to open a fruit stand. Louch's quick success was furthered by the Great Fire of 1889 which did not reach him at Union Street but wiped out many of his competitors.

He later took on a partner, M.B. Augustine, and in 1893 the partners moved their grocery into the Colman Building at First Avenue and Columbia Street. There the pair continued their mastery of local food fare, developing their own brands of coffee, candy and baked goods. Later, they even opened branch stores throughout the city. By the time he retired in 1903, Louch could afford to return to England and purchase his own estate.