

TO KEEP THOSE RED LIGHTS BURNING:

DALLAS' RESPONSE TO

PROSTITUTION,

1874 TO 1913

by

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I began graduate school with the full intent of writing my master's thesis on some aspect of infant adoption. As a reunited birthmother, the history of modern adoption was especially fascinating to me, and throughout my undergraduate and graduate years, my professors allowed me the freedom to pursue my interests in the topic, including Progressive "rescue homes," Holiness reformers, and a study of over 300 hundred women who relinquished their babies between 1950 and 1979. With only one seminar class in Urban History left before beginning work on my thesis, I approached my professor with the topic of maternity homes. My request was denied. Remembering that early rescue homes were originally created for prostitutes, I quickly suggested prostitution in Dallas as the topic for my research. I will forever be grateful to Dr. Robert Fairbanks for denying my initial request. Discovering that no serious study of prostitution and red-light districts in Dallas, Texas existed opened up one of the most challenging, but exciting projects I have undertaken thus far. Before the seminar paper was completed, I knew that a paper of the history of adoption and unwed mothers would wait until another day and time. I could not resist the lure of writing one of the first serious papers of the "Golden Age of the Bordello" in Dallas.

This was not an easy task or one undertaken alone. I owe a debt of gratitude to Carol Roark and her incredible staff at the Texas History Archives of the Dallas Public

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the responses of city leaders, purity reformers, and citizens to prostitution within two red-light districts in Dallas between the years 1874 and 1913. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States, prevailing social and moral standards judged prostitution both illegal and illicit. Yet sexual double standards, urban anonymity, and predominately male populations (especially in frontier and boomtowns) meant that it was often ignored or tolerated in segregated areas, or red-light districts. As towns grew into urbanized centers, houses of ill fame, which contributed to the financial development of many towns through fines and court fees, became more entrenched. Dallas followed this trajectory between 1874 and 1890, as a

large red-light district, “Boggy Bayou” thrived on the city’s southwestern side. One famous bordello keeper, Lizzie Handley Duke made a fortune that allowed her to retire out of state with her reputation intact.

But by the end of the nineteenth century, the visibility of these bordellos, and the “social evil” of prostitution more generally, became increasingly controversial.

Beginning in 1886 in Dallas, purity reformers along with the city mayor initiated a call for action against commercialized sex, which had little effect on most of the city council. Here, as elsewhere in the nation, attitudes about prostitution and prostitution reform were never uniform. Some held to the Gilded Age notion that prostitution was a necessary evil, protecting virtuous women from males unable to control their sexual urges or desires. Others, such as Tony Upchurch of the Church of the Nazarene, sought to end prostitution as a means of saving souls. Still others followed the national Progressive movement that perceived prostitution as a force of moral erosion in society and lobbied for laws abolishing “the vicious trade”. While Dallas did not lack anti-prostitution reformers, those reformers competed with a frontier past, entrenched prostitution interests, and an urban political culture that believed the eradication sought by social purists was unworkable (and unprofitable).

In the first decades of the early twentieth century, the controversy over prostitution came to a crisis point. In 1906, at a point when major cities across the nation were closing down their red-light districts, and after the city had begun to develop a reputation for cultural conservatism, local officials took the amazingly liberal position of legalizing prostitution in a small, segregated district. Immediately, a

citizen's group emerged to protest the existence of the district "in their backyard"—but not the concept of a red-light district per se—and sought to use new state laws to subvert the city's plan. Between 1907 and 1910, Dallas' new urban commission resisted their efforts, believing they had found a workable middle ground. Neither open tolerance nor total annihilation would persist, but would be replaced by a segregated district in a marginal and "obscure" location. By 1913, however, a critical alignment between backyard protectionists, purity reformers and state law overcame the urban commission. Though prostitution did not disappear in Dallas, officials abandoned all efforts to regulate it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	viii
INTRODUCTION	xii
CHAPTER	Page
1. GOLDEN AGE OF THE BORDELLO: 1874 – 1890	1
2. THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SOUTH CITY 1890 – 1905	37
3. THE LAST BATTLE FOR A RED-LIGHT DISTRICT IN DALLAS 1906 -- 1913.....	69
4. CONCLUSION.....	123
REFERENCES	130
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	137

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. The Rose Room in the Everleigh Club.....	xvii
2. “Cribs” located in Waco Red-Light District.....	xx
3. Photograph of Lizzie Handley.....	1
4. Map of City of Dallas, 1870.....	7
5. Lizzie Handley’s First Bordello.....	13
6. Bordellos of Lizzie Handley and Annie Wilson.....	15
7. Georgia Carlin’s Bordello.....	20
8. Map of Bordellos on Emma Street.....	24
9. Photograph of Three Emma Street Bordellos.....	25
10. “Birds Eye View” of Lizzie Handley’s and Annie Wilson’s Bordellos.....	34
11. Photograph of Boggy Bayou.....	37
12. Photograph of Frogtown.....	66
13. Map of Dallas including Frogtown and Boggy Bayou Reservations and North Dallas Wards.....	78
14. Street Car Route Map, North Dallas/Frogtown Route.....	79
15. Map of Dallas Political Wards.....	81
16. Bawdy Houses in Boggy Bayou cited with Writs of Injunction.....	88
17. Frogtown Reservation (Bawdy Houses cited with Writs of Injunction shaded).....	89

18. Bawdy Houses between Wood and Young	92
19. Frogtown Sanctioned Reservation.....	101
20. Photograph of Bordellos owned by Dr. W.W. Samuel and R.W. Chastain	105
21. Photograph of Delivery Boy in Frogtown Reservation	115

INTRODUCTION

On April 1, 1912, Judge Barry Miller, who as an officer of the court and bound by his oath to uphold the laws of the City of Dallas and the State of Texas, publicly avowed his support for a legal red-light district. Miller advised the incoming Grand Jury of the 14th District Court that he personally believed segregation—that is a protected red-light district—was the best solution to dealing with the rising problem of prostitution in the City of Dallas. He claimed that during 1911, hundreds of indictments against women and men charged with moral crimes were returned, and the only gain from the prosecutions was \$10,000 in legal fees to the attorneys of Dallas. Judge Miller maintained that prostitutes had always been in the city and they would continue to stay in the city.¹

Both city ordinances and state penal codes explicitly spelled out the illegality not only of commercialized sex, but also managing, owning, or leasing a bawdy house or assignation house. In 1911, the City of Dallas had defied a ruling by the Texas Supreme Court (which found the ordinance sanctioning and segregating prostitution in a northwest Dallas neighborhood illegal), by deciding instead to pass a new ordinance resegregating the same geographical locale for prostitution. Furthermore, the city denied its citizens their legal right under state law to file for injunctive relief against owners of the houses of prostitution in the segregated Reservation.

¹ “Urges Grand Jury to Continue Work,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 2, 1912.

Trying to understand how a city could ignore and defy state law, and how a Texas judge in the middle of the Bible Belt would take such a stand, requires understanding of the nature of prostitution in this era, the development of changing urban geography, policy, in addition to the rise of moral reform and the importance of social science experts. This study explores these issues through the lens of urban history, legal history, social history, and women's studies.

Between the years 1874 and 1913, the geographical landscape of Dallas, Texas, included at least two, if not more, spatial areas with a concentration of saloons and houses of prostitution. Much like cities across the nation, the preponderance of commercialized sex defined certain public areas and urban real estate in Dallas. The response to the highly volatile and divisive issue of prostitution swung between sufferance and toleration of its existence, to all-out campaigns of elimination, which mirrored much of the rest of the United States. In 1910, however, Dallas broke rank with most other cities, as Miller's charge indicates. While the city did not lack Progressive era reformers, those reformers competed with a frontier past, entrenched prostitution interests, and an urban political culture that believed the eradication sought by social purists was unworkable (and unprofitable). Between 1907 and 1910, it seemed as though Dallas' new urban commission had arrived at a workable middle ground, in which neither open tolerance nor total annihilation would persist, but would be replaced by a segregated district. By 1913, that middle ground was no longer viable. That loss of viability resulted from a critical alliance between purity reformers, backyard

protectionists, and state law. That it did not testified to the critical alignment of reformers and state law against Dallas' new urban commission

Long before reformers, Texas Supreme Court justices and social science experts weighed in, Dallas was a small town on the frontier undergoing rapid growth after the arrival of the railroads. Like other boomtowns further west, Dallas established a red-light district featuring saloons, dance halls, gambling halls and prostitutes, all provoking a minimum of police action. The current literature on the history of prostitution gives clues to why the "vicious trade" became so entrenched in Dallas.

As the most prominent recent studies of commercialized sex illustrate, prostitution was a persistent factor in frontier societies and thrived in predominately-male populations, in spite of being deemed illegal and illicit by moral and social standards. Mining communities and boomtowns created a symbiotic relationship between society and prostitution. Two simple conditions explained the necessity of prostitution in the western part of the United States during the nineteenth century. Most mining camps or boomtowns of the West typically had few "respectable" women. "Men needed sex in a place where it was hard to come by, and women needed jobs in a time when they were hard to come by."² The business of commercialized sex evolved in tandem with frontier legal structures. The numerous city ordinances against

² Andrea C. Vermeer, "Making the West: Approaches to the archaeology of prostitution on the 19th-century mining frontier". Ph.D. diss., The University of Arizona, 2006. In *Dissertations & Theses: Full Text* [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> (publication number AAT 3219738; accessed May 8, 2009).

commercialized sex did little more than provide a key source of revenue for local courts and city coffers; they did little to stem the trade. Historians Anne Butler and Jan MacKell suggest that the boom years created an atmosphere wherein the sex trade flourished. Prostitutes provided more than sexual services to the single or unattached men filling new mining or boomtowns--they provided companionship and entertainment. As the male-to-female ratio evened out and wives and families brought a “civilizing” affect on communities, tolerance and semi-acceptance of the prostitute ebbed.³

The growing number of prostitutes was not limited to frontier towns of the west. Urban historians show prostitution as equally viable, indeed extraordinarily profitable, in large urban centers. That profitability stemmed in part from Victorian ideology, which posited different sexuality principles between women and men. To fit the requirements of the “Cult of True Womanhood,” society expected women to remain in the domestic sphere, embodying domesticity, purity, piety, and submissiveness, while work and control of the public sphere was the male domain. “True women’s” purity meant that they were not expected to accommodate men’s natural sexual desires. However, men could turn to impure women within the anonymous space of the city, and prostitution came to occupy a public and prominent place in urban life for most of the nineteenth century. Interrelationships between status and role of women, American

³ Jan MacKell, *Brothels, Bordellos, & Bad Girls: Prostitution in Colorado, 1860-1930* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 3; Anne M. Butler, *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery; Prostitutes n the American West, 1876-90* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), xvi-xvii.

ideas about sex, effects of urbanization and immigration, real estate speculation, vigilantism, and politics shaped the development of urban prostitution. Historian Timothy Gilfoyle describes commercial sex earlier in the nineteenth century as geographically and culturally marginalized. After 1820, dramatic shifts in the New York City real estate market occurred as landowners recognized brothel keepers as stable tenants. As brothels began to appear, market forces redefined the “vicious trade,” making commercialized sexual activity increasingly secularized. The Gilded Age notion that prostitution was a “necessary evil” and a double standard between men and women created a sporting culture in growing urban cities. This expansion of prostitution reinforced changing patterns of male leisure, and the sporting male subculture flourished.⁴ The “sporting male” culture, organized around gambling, horseracing, and other “blood” sports promoted and defended male sexual aggressiveness and promiscuity.⁵

Landowners and sporting men were not the only ones finding profit in prostitution. Mark Thomas Connally argues that it was often undisturbed, even tacitly allowed, because it was woven into a web of payoffs and corruption involving political machines, municipal officials, the police, and others profiting from the trade. Red-light districts were as fundamental to the city scene as street trolleys, sweatshop factories,

⁴ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790—1920* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 99.

⁵ Mark Thomas Connally, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 4.

and tenements.⁶ The fines and court costs generated from the arrests of prostitutes added to the city coffers as much-needed income.

Thus the literature on prostitution demonstrates that commercialized sex was very profitable to any number of people. Many madams accumulated great wealth and notoriety. The brothel was necessary for the gratification of a man's natural passions, or so many claimed. Many in the sporting world believed prostitution should be legalized, that brothels were "as essential to the well-being of society as churches."⁷ Although the sporting men normally frequented upscale brothels or parlor houses, houses of pleasure existed to attract men from the highest class to the lowest, from lavish mansions to squalid dives.

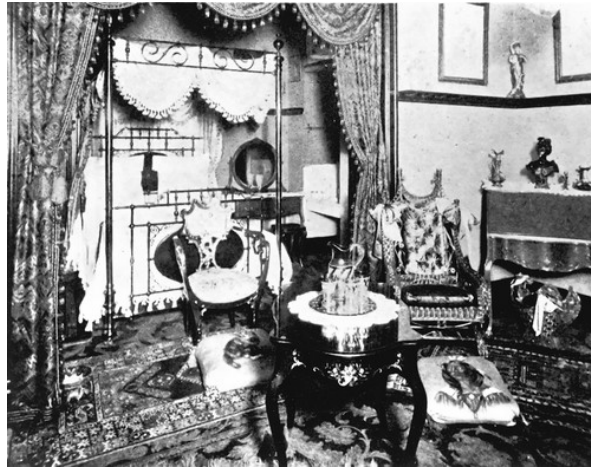


Figure 1. The Rose Room in the Everleigh Club in Chicago, Illinois.

The upscale bordellos and parlor houses typically were located in prime locations of a city. Most were furnished in a lavish display of luxury, but often they

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 98-9.

were not in accordance with the dictates of good taste. One of the highest ranked parlor houses in America was the Everleigh Club on South Dearborn Street in Chicago. Clientele at this exclusive house included the local elite, industrialists, politicians, and European nobles or royals. Letters of introduction were required of visitors before admission. Only the wealthy could afford the exorbitant prices charged by the Everleigh Sisters--\$10 admission fee; \$50.00 dinner; \$25 supper; plus \$12 for a bottle of wine (during a period when beer usually cost a nickel) — all before paying \$50 for sexual services. A gentleman failing to spend at least \$50 was advised not to return.⁸

Parlor houses in the New York Bowery included magnificent furniture crowded together “without taste or judgment for the sake of ostentation.” Like the Everleigh Club, the clientele typically included wealthy men from the upper crust of society, celebrities, and men of property, attended to by servants, entertained by in-house professional musicians, and served fine wines or champagne before moving upstairs with the woman of his choice for more intimate “entertainment.” As Herbert Asbury notes in *The Gangs of Chicago*, the disgusting practices of lower grade bordellos or

⁸ Sean Parnell, Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of Chicago* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 1940), 249-251; Karen Abbott, *Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul* (New York: Random House Publishing, 2007), 66-69. This opulent house included mahogany and walnut paneling, statuary, oriental rugs, a \$15,000 gold-leaf piano in the music room, and a library complete with expensively bound volumes. A hedonistic den on the first floor consisted of themed parlors catering to groups. Guests could choose the Turkish Room, the Rose Parlor, the Copper room where beaten copper covered its walls, the Gold Room featuring a miniature gold piano and gold-rimmed fishbowls, or the Japanese Throne Room. Each room included a gold spittoon and a fountain spraying perfumes. The lavish fare offered in the dining room prepared by a cordon bleu chef often included duck, lobster, oysters, capon, and caviar.

cribs were rarely, if ever, seen in parlor houses; there was “no palpable obscenity, and but little that can outrage propriety.”⁹

In both western boomtowns and big cities in the nineteenth century, a wide diversity existed in the class of prostitutes, ranging from the fair Cyprian to lowly streetwalkers, and all classes in between. Historians have defined both the classification of prostitutes and the establishments where they worked. Women working in upscale parlor houses were generally young, attractive, educated, and with the social skills expected in relating to men in upper classes. The common brothel or whorehouse, lacking the niceties and reputation of the upscale bagnio or parlor house, could be anything from a one or two-story house to a rented room above a gambling hall or saloon. Women either unable to fulfill the requirements of a first-rate house, or who had aged or lost their looks might work in the lower-class brothels.¹⁰ Almost all establishments in this classification were madam-managed.

Lower-class prostitutes who worked out of tents or ramshackle shacks known as “cribs,” were often addicted to drugs or alcohol, worn out, and/or diseased, and exhibited neither discretion nor class in their dealings or conduct. (Figure 2 is a photograph of a number of cribs located in a Waco red-light district, which illustrates the typical architecture of these structures.) Many bawds would stand on their front porch or at their front window in full view of the street, scantily dressed, and loudly

⁹ Hilary Evans, *Harlots, Whores, and Hookers* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1979), 155-59; MacKell, x-xi.

¹⁰ MacKell, 13-14

solicit for business. This establishment offered neither dinner nor socialization as part of an evening's entertainment. The customer was there for one purpose and one purpose only—and she wanted him in and out as quickly as possible to make way for the next client. Although some “cribbies” had a “cadet” to aid in soliciting customers, most worked alone.¹¹



Figure 2 "Cribs" located in Waco Red-Light District. *Lewis Hines Collection*.

Streetwalkers were the lowest class of their profession. They conducted their business out of run-down hotel rooms, borrowed rooms, or simply in back alleys. Many lacking a place to live slept in alleys, back streets, and gutters. They were more likely to be unclean and unhealthy, addicts and often prone to violence.¹² There was nothing remotely “romantic” about the lives of the “cribbies” or streetwalkers. They were the

¹¹ MacKell, 15-6, 38

¹² MacKell, 16.

dregs of society and few had any hope. There were great numbers of these women, yet we know little or nothing about them.

Most are difficult (if not impossible) to find in historical literature or sources. We know few of their real names. Those arrested and put into jail often used bogus names in calaboose or jail records. Many evaded census reports and city directories, or again, used bogus names. While the high-class demimonde may have captured the essence of prostitution, their use of false names and make-believe pasts blurred their historical identity.¹³ Prostitutes came from all walks of life and upbringings. MacKell suggests the category most harlots fell in tended to be consistent with their backgrounds. The prostitute from middle-class and upper-class families typically worked in upscale houses, many advancing to position of madam or owner of their own house. Those from a poor background or abusive families often remained slovenly and remained at the bottom rung of the class of sex workers.¹⁴ Until the late nineteenth century, prostitution was essentially a local problem and did not emerge as a national issue until the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵

An increasing sense of the importance of regulation had been developing since the nineteenth century, but it was not until the twentieth century that reform became the province of individual moral reformers and small-scale state action. William Novak argued that the public framework for reform (including state power, local government

¹³ Butler, xvii.

¹⁴ MacKell, 19-20.

¹⁵ Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 5.

and the community) shaped the response to economic and social change in the antebellum era. Reforming manners and morals was a political and legal movement, and certain definitions of public morality were empowered while others silenced. Morality regulation did not begin and end with penal codes in the nineteenth century. Strong traditions of private prosecution and local regulation coupled with a loosely structured and decentralized state allowed for experimentation, diversity, and discretion in dealing with threats against a community's moral standards. Municipalities maintained an open-ended authority in dealing with moral problems. Illegal saloons and brothels remained under the common law jurisdiction of town and county officers and justices of the peace. The morals' regulatory apparatus included inspection, licensing, search and seizure, prohibition, private abatement and summary abatement of morals nuisances. Novak argues that depictions of nineteenth-century as lax in enforcement and toleration are misleading; that the nuisance and equity laws marginalized one of the most extensive police and moral reform movements in American history.¹⁶ While Novak's argument might have merit in many other municipalities during the antebellum period, Dallas did experience a greater laxness in both enforcement and toleration until the 1880s.¹⁷

¹⁶ William J. Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 154-6, 166.

¹⁷ As the research below indicates, few women were arrested for actual prostitution, and their abodes were rarely called houses of ill repute, but rather they were commonly arrested for being "disorderly" and their houses were termed "disorderly house." The disorderly house, according to Novak, was a "paradigmatic case of nuisance." The overall definitive ingredient to determining "disorder" was publicity—the more public the behavior, the greater number of constraints from courts. Public nuisances were any

But in the Progressive era, all types of prostitutes, from elegant Cyprians to drug-addicted streetwalkers, caught the eye of reformers who were shocked not only by immorality, but also urban disorder and decay in the late nineteenth century. Different reformers concentrated on different groups and saw solutions in a variety of ways. An outline of the history of Progressive reform (a literature too vast to cover in its entirety), suggests why they would have difficulty in talking to each other as they sought to combat the “social evil” of urban prostitution.

The anti-prostitution movement was a loose alliance of diverse groups with different reform agendas, sexual politics, and political ideologies, organized around a single strategy and issue—suppressing prostitution and opposing the licensing or regulation of vice. According to Barbara Mell Hobson, policies represented different forms of segregation or control to make prostitution invisible, rather than tolerant or intolerant systems. She argues that two overriding assumptions were at the heart of the Progressive reform activity: first, a more active role in regulating citizens’ social welfare was the responsibility of the state; and secondly, the public and private spheres could not be separate. The issues of prostitution underscored the interrelationship between street life and home life, between low wages and the wages of sin, between transmission of venereal disease to infants and a double sexual standard. The notion of prostitution as a “necessary evil” where men were exempt from guilt as willing participants in illegal and immoral acts was no longer tolerated by some Progressives,

means of employment or action that tampered with public morals, promotion of evil behavior, or perceived as idleness. See Novak, 158-9.

who took a role in regulating social welfare of private and public spheres of activity. A new secular condemnation of the “vicious trade” faced a competing paradigm. The solution involved regulation and limitations rather than elimination altogether. Many cities developed *de facto* systems of sanction to regulate prostitution through segregation.¹⁸ Although in the United States reform campaigns against prostitution were to some extent symbolic crusades, real issues were at stake. The religious reformers who accepted sanctioned prostitution turned their backs on sin; the doctors ignoring prostitution left alone what they knew to be a major contagious disease.¹⁹

It was not an absence of solutions to prostitution that characterized these years, but perhaps too many. Indeed, from the closing years of the nineteenth century into the first decade of the twentieth century, significant reform movements addressed problems developing in burgeoning urban centers in the form of poverty, overcrowding, and the social evil. Vice reform and the civic ideal, according to historian Paul Boyer, were central in identifying common concerns and divergent strategies among Progressive reformers.²⁰ By the beginning of the twentieth century, every city had its red-light district. The American Purity Alliance and creation of “rescue” work focused on prostitutes and unwed mothers. Meanwhile, anti-vice commissions, often made up by

¹⁸ Ann R. Gabbert, “Prostitution and Moral Reform in the Borderlands: El Paso, 1890-1920,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 12, No 4 (Jan 2003), 580. A loophole in Texas law allowed cities the right to regulate prostitution through their city charters. Four Texas cities (Dallas, Houston, Waco, and El Paso) created legal vice zones.

¹⁹ Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 4-5, 139.

²⁰ Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 252-276.

elite city figures, emerged in many cities to examine vice conditions and develop legal remedies through their state legislatures.²¹

A significant part of Progressive ideology was the elimination of the sexual double standard. Here, those reformers interested in social justice took yet a different avenue. Vice reformers questioned why prostitutes were more culpable than their male clients. The prostitute was characterized as a victim, forced into the “vicious” trade by poverty and social conditions. Historian William Link argued that moral reformers viewed sexual morality and prostitution as immorality with sociological sophistication.²² Indeed while they may have disagreed on purity versus social welfare, coalitions of disparate and diverse Progressive reformers shared a notion that objective scientific experts in social science and medicine held the key to solving problems experienced by urban industrialized society.²³ Reformers claiming expertise in new disciplines of psychology, statistics, sociology, and economics gathered data on human behavior. These social scientists believed the human condition was improved through knowledge of natural laws, accepted interventionists, and environmentalist assumptions. By using the application of social-science knowledge and investigation of facts, these trained experts determined the needs and mandated government to execute reform. Progressives blended religion and science, and pursued both social justice and social

²¹ Ibid, 179-196.

²² William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 52, 115.

²³ Gabbert, 12, 575-605.

control.²⁴ However, the debates between causes and cures for reform of the social evil manifested itself differently. Social scientists fluctuated between seeking regulation, suppression through public education, and absolution through criminalization.²⁵ The spectrum of reformers from Holiness reformers to social scientists; from those who saw prostitutes as victims to those who just wanted them gone or relegated to an “orderly” location in the city. These differences between the Progressives’ ideologies of dealing with prostitution in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century resulted in upheaval over how city leaders dealt with the problem. It is not too surprising that a range of perspectives persisted in the City of Dallas. Although several historians have attempted to figure out what views and urban strategies dominated in Dallas, we still do not have a clear picture.

What we know about Dallas is provocative, but leaves many questions unanswered. The secrecy that surrounded prostitution across the nation and lack of primary documents create a challenge to historians. This is especially true for studying prostitution in Dallas. To create a social history of prostitution in Dallas we are confined to analyzing how the profession affected the city as a whole, using newspaper and magazine articles, maps, legal documents, along with local and state laws. Little secondary literature exists relating to the vice centers in Dallas between 1874 and 1913, and even less about the women that lived and worked under the veil of secrecy in the red-light districts.

²⁴ Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1983), 24, 69.

²⁵ Gabbert, 577.

While local scholar Darwin Payne provided some lively stories of prostitution in his book *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century*, they are generally limited to events of 1912 and 1913. Prostitution reached the point where it outnumbered every other profession in the city. Dallas had more saloons than restaurants. The significant increase in vice was evident in city court records reflected by the alarming increase of arrests for drunk and disorderly conduct, and vagrancy. Payne makes an interesting claim relating to local leaders. He asserts that neither government, civic, nor moral leaders “ever spoke publicly about one very visible aspect of Dallas—its flourishing trade in prostitution.”²⁶ While there are periods when Dallas’ leaders were strangely silent about the “flourishing trade”, the research that follows proves the topic generated great attention and debate.

Elizabeth York Enstam chronicles Dallas’ growth from farm town to metropolis and explains how the demographics of a boomtown with uneven sex ratio of men to women created conditions favorable to prostitution and vice. However, her larger point is that Dallas provided women who lived there exceptional opportunities for employment both inside and outside their homes. Although Enstam characterizes the overnight transformation as explanation for loss of traditional community, higher rates of crime, and growing poverty, she fails to provide a deep view of prostitutes’ lives. She mistakenly claims the Frogtown Reservation was Dallas’ first red-light district, while

²⁶ Darwin Payne. *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2000), 35-6. According to Payne, in 1913 Dallas had more prostitutes than any other profession, and more saloons (200) than restaurants (150). Between May 1, 1912 and May 1, 1913, the city courts saw 4,515 cases of drunk and disorderly conduct and 3,202 cases of vagrancy.

this study proves that Frogtown did not contain a concentration of prostitutes until after the first years of the twentieth century.²⁷ The first red-light district located on the southwestern side of downtown not only existed some twenty-five years before the Frogtown district, it was the focus of heated debates within Dallas city government.

William McDonald identifies three main “red-light” districts. In spite of the significant growth of population and industry experienced by Dallas into the late nineteenth century, McDonald argues Dallas was a disorderly, reckless, and outrageous frontier town attracting hustlers, gamblers, rowdies, and the demimonde who threw up shanty saloons and “cribs” on the edges of town. He identifies three red-light districts, the oldest predating the railroads. The first district, located directly east of where the T&P and H&TC railroads met near Freedman’s Town, is not included in this present study. The focus of this study is two red-light districts located on the western edge of Downtown Dallas. The red-light district located south of the courthouse stretched from Young and Lamar Streets southward to a river near a Negro area called Boggy Bayou. A third red-light district was located in Frogtown. He argues prostitutes began catering to working men in the late 1870s in decaying frame houses (located in the present-day West End Historical District).²⁸ While McDonald’s claims of prostitution in Frogtown during the late 1870s may well be true, the geographical area of Frogtown that was eventually sanctioned and segregated by Dallas Commissioners in 1910 was not only

²⁷ Elizabeth York Enstam. *Women and the Creation of Urban Life*, 37, 46-47.

²⁸ William L. McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870—1925* (Dallas: The Dallas Historical Society: 1978), 25-6

north of present-day West End Historical District, it was demographically home to men and their families until 1905.

Robert Fairbanks does not specifically address prostitution in his study of the commission form of government adopted by Dallas in 1907. However, his work is important in understanding how the different forms of city government related and reacted to prostitution in Dallas. In particular, understanding the city's council-mayor government explains why the city allowed the Boggy Bayou district to flourish for some thirty years with a minimum of interference by the city or the police. While the tolerance enjoyed by the workers in commercialized sex in the early years might be attributable to Gilded Age notions and lack of great societal concern, this is not the case after the mid-1880s. The city government, often described as weak, ineffective, and self-serving, not only failed to act and enforce many of its own laws against prostitution, it was made up of members who personally profited from the red-light district. Fairbanks argues the lack of attention to physical needs of the city (particularly its streets) was a factor in adopting a commission government.²⁹ While the condition of city streets is irrelevant to this study, the council's problem with addressing problems and getting things done is important in understanding the longevity of red-light districts in Dallas. As Progressive-era historian Boyer notes in reviewing William T. Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago (1894)*, a municipal government linked to vice interests

²⁹ Robert Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press: 1998), 12-13.

“poisoned the moral atmosphere of the entire city.”³⁰ Dallas city government during the Gilded Age had all the elements requiring urban moral reform, including saloonkeepers doubling as aldermen and police simultaneously tolerating and shaking down brothels. Thus, it is not surprising that the government prior to 1906 advocated accommodation to prostitution. Less understandable is why the reform of that government, an urban commission government, also believed that the solution to the growing problem of commercialized sex was to segregate the “vicious trade” in specific geographical boundaries.

This study adds to the scholarship of social history in Dallas by examining how the city dealt with prostitution between 1874 and 1913, and specifically its two red-light districts--Boggy Bayou and Frogtown. Chapter 1 examines the “Golden Age of the Bordello” when saloons, gambling halls, and prostitution were accepted as part of the natural landscape. Special attention is paid to Lizzie Handley, an extraordinarily successful Dallas madam who not only amassed a fortune during her years in the Boggy Bayou Reservation, but also was able to leave the city and live a different life in New York. As the end of the nineteenth century approached, the acceptance and tolerance of the “social evil” met new Progressive era concerns about urban disorder; at the heart of this concern was opposition to vice centers that seemed to highlight that disorder. Chapter 2 explains the growing conflict between new Progressive reformers and city government over urban disorder. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the old

³⁰ Boyer, 168-170, 184-5,

tolerance of prostitution and the red-light district met opposition. Two camps with opposing agendas squared off against each other—the religious reformers who wanted prostitution eliminated and the city leaders (many with a financial interest in the vice center) who sought to regulate or segregate the “social evil.” When the city proposed moving the red-light district to a marginal “obscure” neighborhood, a third group joined the debate, those who now found the “vicious trade” in their own “backyard.” Chapter 3 traces the final interaction between the three forces. It examines the two forms of city government, assessing whether a new, stronger commission government would effectively deal with the prostitution problem. One question addressed was why city leaders and a respected judge defied a Supreme Court ruling and kept the Frogtown Reservation protected between 1910 and 1913. It is clear that city commissioners did close the Reservation in November 1913. Finally, I will identify who was successful in finally persuading the district judges and many city leaders to close down the infamous Frogtown Reservation.

CHAPTER 1

GOLDEN AGE OF THE BORDELLO: 1874 - 1890



Figure 3. Lizzie Handley, circa 1910. *Confederate Veteran Magazine*

The death of Lizzie Duke in New York City on April 12, 1912, meant more than ordinary sorrow and interest to the confederate veterans of Kentucky. An active member of the New York Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy and the Dixie Club, she was beloved and known for her qualities of gentleness and sweetness. In addition to her generous donations to the Kentucky Confederate Home, she was

credited for giving unstingingly of her time. Among her many donations was the L.Z. Duke Hall at the Soldiers' Home in Pewee Valley, Kentucky, and a monument in memory of General Felix Zollicoffer and the soldiers killed at the battle of Mill Springs or Fishing Creek. So beloved and respected was Lizzie Duke, she was the second woman ever buried in ground set aside for soldiers of the Confederacy in the Cave Hill cemetery.¹

Her obituary noted she was a native of Kentucky and of distinguished ancestry, and had lived for many years in New York City.² Most of this is true. She was born in Kentucky and she did live in New York City for at least twelve years. However, most of her claims of a "distinguished ancestry" fail upon closer inspection. The fact that she successfully negotiated a manufactured past derives from her ability to appear and act like a woman of wealth and class. What the obituaries and articles failed to mention were the years she lived in Dallas, Texas, and how she accumulated the wealth that allowed her to make generous gifts to the Confederate Home in Kentucky. Lizzie had a shady past that she successfully hid from both New York and Kentucky society. Between 1874 and 1900, Lizzie Handley Duke was one of Dallas' most successful and wealthy madams during its golden age of the bordello.

Lizzie was a larger than life character, whose own experiences reflect the wild days of bordellos in boomtown Dallas. She arrived with the first expansion of the

¹ "Mrs. L. Z. Duke's Grave To Be In Confederate Lot," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, April 12, 1912, Sec. I, 4, col. 78.

² "Donor of Hall at Home of War Veterans Dead," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, April 11, 1910, 14.

railroads into the city, and came to own and operate some of the most lavish and stable bordellos of Dallas during an era when commercialized sex was accepted as a “necessary evil” by local authorities. The true measure of Lizzie’s “success” is that she so completely created for herself a new identity, her shady past as the Queen of the Bordello remained secret.

By examining the origins and extent of Lizzie’s success, including her ability to stay mostly on the right side of the law, we can understand how organized prostitution thrived in Dallas. Moreover, a comparison of her experience with two other well-known madams, Annie Wilson and Georgia DeBeck Carlin, suggests that others shared Lizzie’s status within the demimonde, but that not all enjoyed quite so favorable a reputation. Wilson and Handley arrived at about the same time, having survived at least one marriage before becoming prostitutes in Dallas. Both acquired a great deal of wealth and property as both owners and madams of some of the most lavish bagnios in Dallas. They maintained a close relationship during their days as bawds and madams of the elite demimonde of Dallas. There was, however, a dramatic difference between the two at the time of their deaths. Annie Wilson’s obituary called her “wicked,” while Lizzie Handley’s obituary called her “beloved,” and made no mention of her “past” life. Carlin was younger than the other two and began her career with fewer resources. However, her story also reveals that tolerance and profits awaited enterprising brothel keepers at the end of the nineteenth century. Although we do not know all of the particulars in each woman’s career, all three epitomized the successful status of Dallas’ first red-light district between 1880 and 1890.

Sarah Elizabeth “Lizzie” Howe was born April 1, 1844, in Greenup County, Kentucky, to one of the oldest Kentucky families.³ Her early story, which coincided with Dallas’ early years of growth, provides only minimal clues as to why she became a brothel queen. According to Lizzie, her father, Daniel Boon Howe was a direct descendant of renowned British Admiral, Lord Richard Howe, who enjoyed a close friendship with George Washington.⁴ Further, she claimed that Montgomery County, Kentucky was named after her mother’s father, Richard Montgomery, and that her great-uncle, General John Bell Hood, was commander of the “whole southern army of Kentucky and Tennessee” from 1860 to 1864.⁵ Most of this is untrue. Lord Richard Howe had no sons. Richard Montgomery had no children. Her story is undone by the 1880 Census. Lizzie’s brother Charles, his family and parents, migrated to Johnson County, Texas, from Missouri around 1876 and they all appear in the 1880 census together. Lizzie’s father, Daniel B. Howe is listed as disabled, and his father’s birthplace is listed as Germany.⁶ Lizzie came from an ordinary family to Texas, not trailing clouds of British or Confederate glory.

Lizzie’s marital history is significantly less mundane. It hints of both her sexual appeal and how she arrived in Dallas with money to invest in red-light district property.

³ U. S. Passport Application (#6070) for Lizzie Duke, issued June 17, 1889, in the City of New York, New York. Depository: National Archives, Archives I Reference Branch (NNRI).

⁴ *Confederate Home Messenger*, Vol. I, No. 1, October 1907, 1-2.

⁵ Application for Mrs. L. Zebbeon Duke, Application No. 532, for membership in the New York Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, March 3, 1906. Records held by Columbia Univ., New York.

⁶ Johnson Co., Texas federal census, June 4, 1880; Enumeration District 80, sheet 7, 232, dwelling #53.

Lizzie married at least three times in twelve years. Her marriage to Joshua B. Thomas in 1860 produced two children. William Nathaniel was born in 1867 and died at the age of nineteen. Her daughter Mina was born in 1870 near Rochester, Minnesota. It is unknown why or when this marriage ended, or who raised her children after 1872.⁷

In 1872, Lizzie had intimate relationships with at least three different men while living in Jefferson, Texas. She married two of them and reportedly lived with the other one. At some point in 1872, Lizzie lived with Julius C. (J.C.) Bogel, owner of a wholesale house in Jefferson.⁸ During the same year, she married Captain Silas Handley in Marion County, Texas, on March 11, 1872.⁹ Four days later, Lizzie paid \$20.00 for a 12x20-foot plot in Lot No. 9, Block II of the Oak Hill Cemetery in Jefferson, Texas.¹⁰ Silas died five days later at the age of 35, with burial in the newly purchased plot in the Oak Hill Cemetery.¹¹ Her marriage history after Handley's death suggests her respectability was in decline. She married Charles Goff, a mulatto, in December of the same year.¹² This interracial couple moved to Dallas shortly after their

⁷ "Appears to Claim a \$500,000 Estate," *The New York Times*, October 5, 1912. Lizzie's daughter, Mina Schoudel, appeared in New York to claim her mother's estate. She claimed she and her mother grew apart after Lizzie's move to Dallas.

⁸ J.C. Bogel would relocate to Dallas sometime before 1873, where he would not only work as a saloonkeeper, but as Dallas City Tax Collector and Assessor from 1878 to 1892. *Butterfield & Rundlett's Directory of the City of Dallas*, 1875; *John Henry Brown's Memorial & Biographical History of Dallas County* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1892), 278 - 285.

⁹ Marriage Records, Marion Co., Tex., Vol. A, 282-283.

¹⁰ City of Jefferson to Lizzie Handley, Marion Co., Tex. Deed Records, Grantor Index, Vol. M, 180.

¹¹ Affidavit of Lizzie Duke. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 151, 235. (affidavit rendered September 23, 1891, in Monmouth Co., New Jersey).

¹² Marriage Records, Marion Co., Tex., Vol. C., 31 (1872).

marriage, and divorced on November 5, 1873.¹³ Lizzie would use the surname of Handley during most of her time in Dallas. She left no direct explanation for her decision to begin a career in prostitution. However, her marginal social status, together with the possibility of earning a great deal of money in commercialized sex during Dallas' boomtown days in the 1870s, possibly played a role.

Lizzie's move to Dallas could not have occurred at a more opportune time. The coming of the railroad lines created an environment tailor-made for an industrious prostitute. As historical literature bears out, an influx of single and unattached men seeking female companionship or entertainment in a locale with an uneven sex ratio creates a definite market for commercialized sex. Lizzie's career mirrored the rising profile of prostitution in the city overall.

The little farming community of Dallas, Texas, began a dramatic transformation into a burgeoning boomtown after two railroads ran their lines through the city. In early 1872, Dallas had a population of approximately 1200.¹⁴ Primitive roads and an unnavigable river inhibited further growth of Dallas. Furthermore, travelers or newcomers had few options in the way of lodging other than two hotels. Not a single

¹³ Jim Wheat website – Lizzie Handley.

<http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jwheat/biographies/lizzie1.html>

¹⁴ Elizabeth York Enstam, 'How Dallas Grew. . .and Why,' in *Dallas Reconsidered: Essays in Local History*, ed. Michael V. Hazel (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1995), 22-27.

boardinghouse existed in the little Southern market town in 1870.¹⁵ Main, Elm, and Commerce were the principal streets of Dallas and extended only as far as Murphy, Ross Avenue, and Bryan Streets.

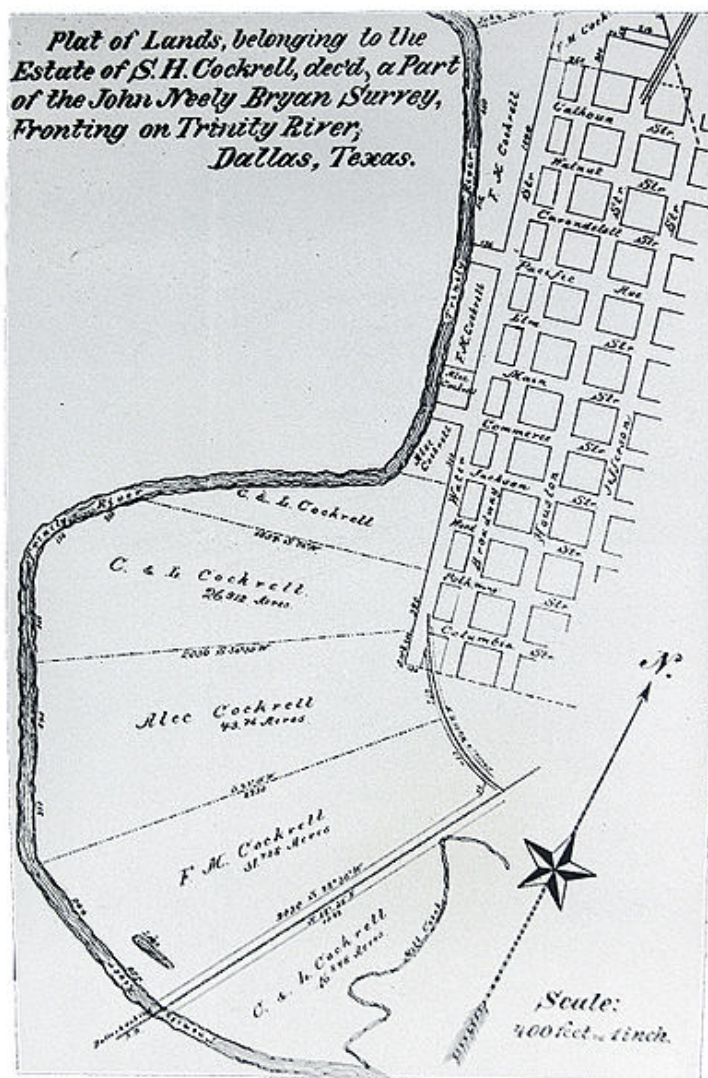


Figure 4. Map of City of Dallas, 1870.

¹⁵ Elizabeth York Enstam. "Boardinghouses in Dallas: Frontier Institutions," in *Dallas Reconsidered: Essays in Local History*, ed. Michael V. Hazel (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1995), 31.

Resorting to bribery and chicanery, civil leaders successfully negotiated construction of railroad lines through Dallas.¹⁶ In July 1872, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad came to Dallas, and the Texas and Pacific Railroad followed in February of 1873. Soon after, the population doubled turning the small town into a “wide open boom town”—almost overnight. For example, in one day in 1874, two hundred twenty people moved to Dallas.¹⁷ The population swelled to over 7,000. Catharine Cott came to Dallas in September 1872 for a shopping trip. She wrote relatives, “All Dallas has gone wild. There is such a rush to get rich that everybody is trying to do something to get money to invest in lots before it’s too late. Ladies [are] turning teachers, dressmakers, boarding house keepers, etc.”¹⁸ Job seekers were attracted to growth in the cattle industry, cotton processing, and flour milling. Between freight-wagon companies and the trains, Dallas transformed itself into a booming inland distribution center not only for local markets in nearby towns, but also to towns hundreds of miles to the west.

When Lizzie arrived, Dallas’ growth was creating a new urban landscape. In the mid 1870s, two residential areas developed on opposite sides of Main Street. The First Ward (informally referred to as “Boggy Bayou”) was located south of the courthouse, and included not only businesses and homes, but also a number of saloons, dance halls,

¹⁶ Michael V. Hazel, *Historic Photos of Dallas*, (Nashville. Turner Publishing Company, 2006), 1.

¹⁷ [untitled report], State Fairgrounds Folder, Dallas Police Archives Collection, Dallas Public Library.

¹⁸ Elizabeth York Enstam. *Women and the Creation of Urban Life: Dallas, Texas, 1843-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 34.

and houses of prostitution. The Second Ward was located on the north side of the courthouse, and informally referred to as “Frogtown” (probably due to the nightly chorus of frogs from the nearby Trinity River). Although Frogtown contained a number of small businesses and saloons, it was primarily a residential neighborhood of middle-class families, as well as a small number of African-American residents. Alex Sanger, of Sanger Brothers Department Store, recalled the early years of Dallas. “Back in the 70’s there were no classes. I knew every man, woman and child in the village. . . . I was happy living in a room 12’x12’ in the rear of a one-story frame building on Elm Street.”¹⁹ His brother, Philip Sanger, first lived in Frogtown on Griffin Street one block north of Ross Avenue. Many early families lived in the Frogtown area.

As the population of Dallas grew, a number of upscale residential areas sprang up. In the mid-1870s, the Cedars, Dallas’ first exclusively residential area, emerged southeast of Boggy Bayou and became home to upper-middle and upper-class families. In 1875, Philip Sanger purchased a new home in the “Cedars” on the corner of Ervay and Canton Streets.²⁰ A few years later, a new development in North Dallas offered finer homes along Ross Avenue and beyond. One of the selling points that appealed to many Frogtown residents was that the new neighborhood was “free of dust, smoke, noise of trains, and unwholesome odors” associated with the factories, wagon yards, and railroad shops located in their area.²¹ The relocation of the more prosperous

¹⁹ John William Rogers, *The Lusty Texans of Dallas*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company 1951), 121.

²⁰ John William Rogers, 121.

²¹ “New Era for North Dallas,” *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, March 9, 1889.

families to the new North Dallas area left Frogtown almost entirely populated by poorer, lower-class wage earners.²² A large group of Russian Jews moved into Frogtown. The neighborhood became a melting pot of poor and working-class African Americans, Italians, Swedes, Irish Catholics, and Russian Jewish immigrants surrounded by the warehouses and the towering smoke stacks of a wholesale manufacturing district. It soon evolved into a slum area filled with a mass of close-packed, flimsy, tumbled-down frame shanties and “shotgun” houses threaded by narrow, twisting, unpaved streets.²³ Although a number of prostitutes lived in Frogtown in the early boom years, they were interspersed in the population rather than concentrated in one general area. The rundown neighborhood was impoverished and squalid, and increasingly invisible to the more respectable citizens who had once lived there.

In spite of the growing residential areas in Dallas, the population consisted predominately of single or unattached men seeking not only their fortunes, but also excitement. By 1874, Dallas earned a reputation as a “fancy town,” boasting 167 saloons that attracted not only cowboys and farmers, but notorious characters such as Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. Professional gamblers added Dallas to their regular

²² Enstam, *Women and the Creation of Urban Life*, 46.

²³ *WPA Dallas guide and history* : written and compiled from 1936 to 1942 by the workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the City of Dallas / introduction by Gerald D. Saxon ; edited for publication by Maxine Holmes and Gerald D. (Dallas Public Library: Texas Center for the Book University of North Texas Press, 1992).

circuits.²⁴ During the early years of Dallas' rapid population growth, new migrants boarded with friends, employers, or in boarding houses. The lack of stable settled family units and private homes sent many lonely men to vice centers where "soiled doves" provided not only sexual favors, but also companionship and entertainment for a price. Saloons and gambling halls lined the north side of Main Street from Austin to Houston Streets, and dance halls and "houses of pleasure" filled Boggy Bayou. Wood Ramsey, a former resident of Dallas during the 1880s, recalled Dallas as a "hustling frontier town."²⁵ He claimed a large gambling house opened on Main Street in 1878. Two years later, several more larger houses opened. On this occasion, Charles Clint, County Attorney, put them out of business, perhaps because they crossed the line of tolerance into dangerous territory where vice led to victims. Throughout the "wild and woolly period," Dallas enjoyed the reputation of being a "square gambling town." Ramsey claimed that law enforcement was so successful that when a "bad man felt a call to shoot up a town or otherwise go on a rampage, he selected some other town."²⁶

Lizzie Handley's former lover, J.C. Bogel apparently was able to ascertain that good but wild fun did not challenge the city's need for order. In 1873, he opened a saloon in Dallas. In addition to owning what some residents described as the "swellest saloon in town," he and his partner, Billy Henser, also owned a row of "houses of

²⁴ Enstam. *Women and the Creation of Urban Life*, 36.

²⁵ "Dallas Suppressed Gambling Long Before Several Other Texas Cities Undertook to do so." *The Dallas Morning News*, January 21 1923.

²⁶ Ibid.

pleasure” located between Market and Austin Street.²⁷ It was in this area that Lizzie Handley began her successful career as a madam in Dallas.

Between 1870 and 1874, Lizzie experienced the death of one husband and two divorces. It is unknown whether she received money from the divorces or whether she inherited any from her husband of two weeks. However, less than one year after her divorce from Charles Goff, she purchased a 50x100-foot lot in block 98 ½ on Jackson Street near St. Paul Street for \$1000.²⁸ Lizzie opened for business at 1112 Jackson Street in 1875. By 1878, one of Lizzie’s “girls” was Annie Wilson. Annie’s subsequent success as a madam herself demonstrates networking among the upper isolated or idiosyncratic. Lizzie trained a number of girls, as Annie’s name is not the only one that went from “boarder” to “keeper,” and in some cases to “owner.”²⁹

The most successful of these girls was Anna I. (Annie) Wilson who came to Dallas in 1873, claiming to be Mrs. James M. Wilson. Although much can be written about Annie’s legal and real estate dealings along with her recorded residences from year to year, details of her life before 1873 are a mystery, including exactly when and

²⁷ Rogers, 142-3.

²⁸ John S. M. Record to Elizabeth Handley, Record of Deeds, Dallas County, Vol. X, June 8, 1874, 379-382.

²⁹ Known madams Georgia Carlin, Clara Barklow, and Carrie Burnell first appeared as “boarders” in one or more of Lizzie Handley’s bordellos in city directories or U.S. Census Reports prior to appearing as “keeper” of their own establishment in subsequent years. *Morrison & Fourmy’s City Directories*, 1888-89. Eva Howard appeared as a “boarder” of Annie Wilson in *Morrison & Fourmy’s City Directories* 1878 to 1890, when she took over as madam of the establishment. Clara Barklow worked for Lizzie between 1888 and 1889. By 1900, she had her own establishment according to the U.S. Census report.

where she was born, and even if she was actually married.³⁰ According to one census report, she was born in Louisiana. Her obituary states she moved to Dallas from Missouri and that she was a “member of one of the most prominent families of that state.” Perhaps that was true. Annie did acquire the social graces to interact with upper-class clients at some time in her life, most likely as a child. If the Anna Wilson listed in the St. Louis census of 1870 is the same Anna I. Wilson of Dallas fame, she also came to Dallas with experience working as a prostitute in a large bordello.³¹

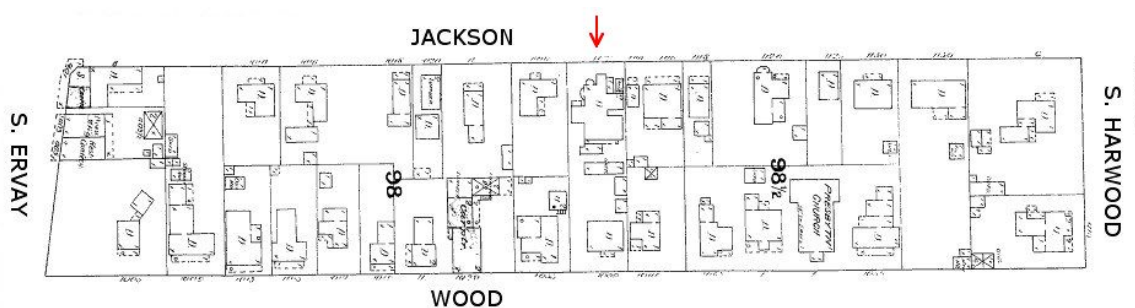


Figure 5 Lizzie Handley's First Bordello. Located at 1112 Jackson St (between S. Harwood and S. Ervay). 1888 Sanborn Historical Fire Map, Dallas, Texas

Annie and Lizzie had a close working relationship, both as employer-employee, and as equals. The first appearance of Annie in a Dallas city directory was in 1878, in Lizzie Handley's bordello located at 1112 Jackson. (As Figure 5 illustrates, Lizzie's bordello was the largest structure on the block.) She was one of several other known

³⁰ Anna and James Wilson did not reside together as man and wife during any of the years she lived in Dallas, Texas. Real estate records including both their names were only for properties sold. Only Anna's name appeared on properties purchased.

³¹ The U.S. Census of 1870 for St. Louis, Missouri lists an Anna Wilson, age 24, with the occupation of “whore” (along with ten other women living at the same address).

prostitutes (listed as “boarders”).³² Annie may have started working for Lizzie Handley well before this date, because by 1879 she would take steps to open her own establishment.

On October 1, 1879, Annie purchased a 90x140 foot tract of land for \$750.00 at the foot of S. Market Street and the corner of Austin Street.³³ There she built a three-story mansion with 20 to 25 rooms. Annie’s establishment, known as an “ultra-fashionable parlor house,” soon opened for business. The Dallas County federal census of 1880 lists her as a 37 year old female with an occupation of “Ill Fame.”³⁴ Business must have been very good for she bought the adjoining 40x140 foot tract on August 4, 1881.³⁵

Annie’s bordello was part of the expansion of the Boggy Bayou red-light district that included most of the southwestern side of downtown. The geographical boundaries extended eastward from Record Street to Jackson Street on the north, Mill Creek on the south, and the Trinity River on the west (present-day Union Station). Ultra-fashionable parlor houses such as Annie’s covered the area presently occupied by the WFAA-TV

³² C. D. Morrison & Co.'s General Directory of the City of Dallas, 1878-1879

³³ John J. Good, and wife, Susan A. Good, to Anna Wilson, October 1, 1879. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 44, 351 & (with corrections at Vol. 49, 637-638).

³⁴ Dallas Co., Texas federal census, June 9, 1880; 1st Ward, Enumeration District #54, sheet 33, (stamped) page 17-A, line 32, family #394.

³⁵ John T. Long, to Anna Wilson, August 4, 1881. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 52, 305. NOTE: The lot previously owned by Kittie Chamberlain, a frequent employee of Annie Wilson.

station. Between Record Street and the present-day courthouse were cribs with prostitutes' names printed over the doors.³⁶

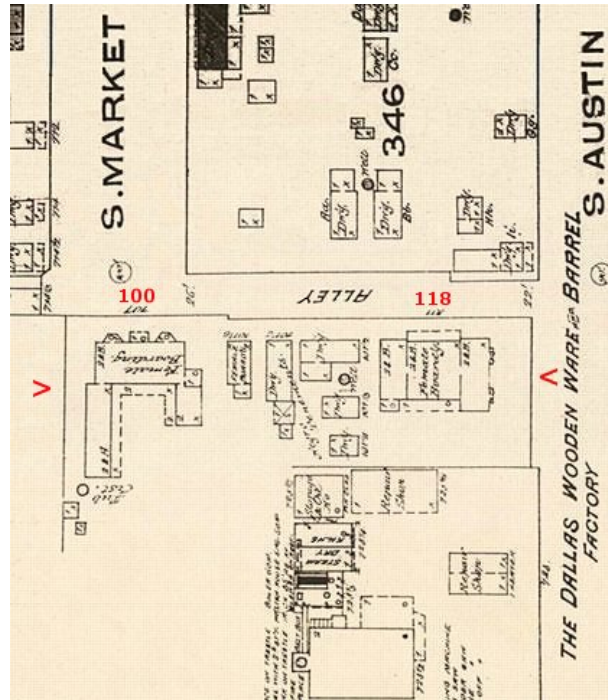


Figure 6 Bordellos of Lizzie Handlie and Annie Wilson. The alley would later be named Sam Cross Street. The 2-story brothel at 118 Sam Cross St. was occupied by Lizzie Handley, and the 3-story brothel at 100 Sam Cross Street was owned by Annie Wilson. 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance map.

Over the course of the decade, Lizzie's and Annie's careers thrived, just as prostitution did. In 1884, Lizzie paid \$1,600 for a 100x140 foot parcel of land, located on the same block as Annie Wilson at the south end of Market Street, where she had a two-story parlor houses built.³⁷ An earlier fire had severely damaged Annie's establishment. Workers completed work on both houses in May of 1884. Annie paid

³⁶ Ted Dealey, *Diaper Days of Dallas*, (Nashville: Aringdon Press, 1966), 74-5.

³⁷ John Woods to Lizzie Handley, January 8, 1884, Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 65, 57.

\$5,000 for repairs to her establishment and Lizzie paid \$9,000 for construction of her second brothel.³⁸

Both Lizzie and Annie were astute businesswomen. They bought and sold property on a regular basis. Property was not limited to bordellos in the city. Annie paid \$10,000 for property located in a prime location at Main Street and Lamar.³⁹ Annie's real estate ventures were not limited to Dallas. In October of 1887, she purchased a lot on Coronado Beach, South Island in San Diego County, California for \$1,000.⁴⁰ Lizzie bought a saloon on Main Street for \$7,500 on April 20, 1888. She paid \$4,250 in cash and conveyed the remaining \$3,250 by transferring one of her properties on Bryan Street.⁴¹ By 1889, City of Dallas tax rolls listed Lizzie as owner of: half of Lot 6, Block 31 on Main street; a 500x100 lot on Block 98 on Jackson Street; a 75x120 lot on Block 124 on Pacific Street; a 800x200 lot on Block 424 on Town Branch; a 40x100 lot on Block 424; and a 100x140 lot on Block 425 on Austin Street. She also bought Lot 24 on Elm Street (east of Sycamore) in 1890 for \$32,000.⁴²

Part of the success of these women was not only their use of a tight network between women, but also their ability to make alliances with enterprising (and particularly well-connected) men. The *Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas*

³⁸ "Building Boom—List of Improvements," *Dallas Weekly Herald*, May 22, 1884, 4.

³⁹ J. E. Henderson to Anna I. Wilson, February 26, 1886. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 72, 555.

⁴⁰ Coronado Beach Co to Annie Wilson, Vol. 86, 531-533 re Block 42, Lot 24; Oct 1887; Coronado Beach, San Diego Co., Calif.; "Real Estate Transfers," *Dallas Daily Herald*, October 27, 1887.

⁴¹ J. J. Brick to Lizzie Duke, April 20, 1888. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 94, 354.

⁴² "The Courts—Real Estate Transfers," *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, May 22, 1890.

County included Daniel Stuart in its mention of prominent citizens. According to the biographical sketch, he was considered one of the most progressive and prosperous men of Dallas. He moved to Dallas around 1879 and opened a restaurant, saloon, and gambling house on the northwest corner of Main and Poydras streets. His business was so prosperous he purchased seventy-five feet of frontage on the south side of Main Street (east of Lamar) and established the highly successful Coney Island Jockey Saloon in 1885. Described in the article as “a man who thoroughly understands his business,” Stuart had a national reputation as a prizefight promoter and owned a racetrack. His extensive dealings in Dallas real estate totaled \$200,000 at his death in 1909.⁴³

Dan Stuart and Lizzie Handley had a close relationship over the years, both as friends and business associates. In 1889, he bought Lizzie’s original bordello located at 1112 Jackson Street and converted it into the Dallas Athletic Association headquarters.⁴⁴ Lizzie also sold Stuart one-half interest in her Elm Street property, and when she left Dallas (and the life of a prostitute) for France in 1892, she gave him power of attorney to manage the sale of her remaining one-half interest of the same property.⁴⁵

In their years as bordello queens, Annie and Lizzie cultivated relationships with successful men, but they also remained patrons to enterprising young prostitutes. One such woman was Georgia DeBeck Carlin. While Carlin was not noteworthy on the scale

⁴³ *Memorial & Biographical History of Dallas County* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1892) 547.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Handley to D. A. Stuart, April 11, 1889. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 104, 390-391.

⁴⁵ Lizzie Duke to Dan A. Stuart, Power of Attorney, October 11, 1892. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 160, 587-588.

of Handley and Wilson, her story further reveals how intertwined this red-light district remained for decades. Her nine-room bordello was much grander than a common “whorehouse,” but was not as extravagant as Annie or Lizzie’s palatial parlor houses. However, it is through Georgia that we gain a rare glimpse of the inside of a house of prostitution, and on a small scale, how her profession affected at least one member of her extended family. Georgia may not have reached Lizzie’s pinnacle of success in her short life, but like Lizzie, she developed her business relatively free of legal interference, and was usually treated as simply a colorful character.

Georgia DeBeck was born in August 1863 in Pennsylvania.⁴⁶ The family moved from Chesterfield County, Pennsylvania, to Dallas sometime between 1870 and 1880. Georgia married Andrew Drone on September 15, 1878, in Dallas County, Texas.⁴⁷ The couple is listed in the U.S. Census of 1880 as Dallas residents, Georgia as an eighteen-year-old housewife.⁴⁸ Georgia filed for divorce in September 1890, claiming her husband deserted her on June 30, 1886, leaving her without property or means of support. Kate Murray (a Dallas prostitute) submitted a statement in the proceedings, claiming that Andrew told her of his plans to leave his wife and go to Mexico. Murray

⁴⁶ Dallas County, Texas Federal Census, 1900; Enumeration District 9, sheet #3A, lines 14-15; enumerated on June 4, 1900.

⁴⁷ Georgia Drone vs. Andrew Drone, Civil Court papers, case # 8076, 14th District Civil Court, Dallas County; 14th District Civil Court Minutes, Volume Y, 375. Dallas Public Library, 7th Floor.

⁴⁸ Dallas County, Texas Federal Census, 1880; Enumeration District #57, sheet 7; 1522 Elm Street, City of Dallas; dwelling #'s 66 and 67, lines 5-10; enumerated on June 2, 1880.

described Georgia as a “true and devoted wife.”⁴⁹ The motivation for desertion is unknown, and the alleged date prompts more questions than answers. If Andrew did, in fact, leave in 1886, Georgia had worked as a prostitute at least two years before his departure.

In February of 1884, her 14-year-old cousin Annie DeBeck went to Lizzie Handley’s house of ill fame determined to begin her own “life of shame.” Her schoolmates in East Dallas continually taunted her about her notorious cousin, Georgia. Accused of living an unchaste life herself, she might as well get the monetary rewards. To Handley’s credit, she called the City Marshall to return the teen to her parents. Georgia began using the alias, Georgia Carlin (apparently to minimize embarrassment to her family).⁵⁰

As the story suggests, Georgia traded her life as a “devoted housewife” for that of a known prostitute prior to her divorce of 1890. In 1889, she lived at 110 Market Street, near the corner of Young Street with Madam Essie Watkins. On June 7, 1889, Georgia and another prostitute were involved in a jealous row over a lover in a house of ill repute on Rusk Street in Fort Worth, Texas. Georgia hit the woman and pulled her hair. The woman pulled out a pistol and shot Georgia in the groin.⁵¹ The following year Georgia received a great deal of publicity in a high-profile embezzlement case involving another of her lovers, Fred Walton, a clerk at the Pacific Express Office in

⁴⁹ Georgia Drone vs. Andrew Drone.

⁵⁰ “Saved,” *Dallas Weekly Herald*, February 21, 1884.

⁵¹ “Fort Worth Local Notes. One Woman Shoots Another.” *Dallas Morning News*. June 8, 1889.

Dallas. Headlines such as “A Dallas Demimonde Secures the Arrest of Walton's Betrayers” and “The Dashing Georgie Carlin with the Embezzler,” along with description, “Dallas Cyprian” illustrate a bemused tolerance of the demimonde by the press.⁵² The newspaper articles of prostitutes during this era, although not sympathetic, were rarely harsh, nor did they characterize prostitutes as the scourge on society.

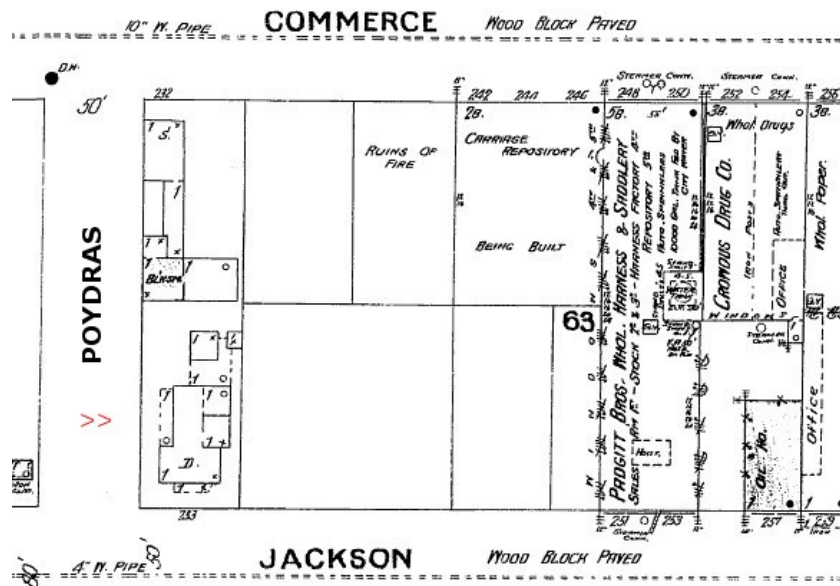


Figure 7 Georgia Carlin's Bordello. The one-story frame bordello was located 233 Jackson St. at Poydras. (The arrows are pointing in an east-northeasterly direction).
1899 Sanborn fire insurance map

Between 1889 and 1897, Georgia worked in Annie Wilson’s establishment at 100 Sam Cross, both under Annie, and after Annie’s death, under Anna Peppers. She undoubtedly received excellent training in running a successful upscale bordello, and was one of the wiser bauds in managing money.⁵³ In 1897, Georgia purchased a lot at

⁵² Georgia was often called “Georgie” by the press.

⁵³ Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Dallas, 1894-95; Evans & Worley Dallas City Directory, 1896.

Jackson and Poydras streets for \$4,000.⁵⁴ Her new, nine-room bordello opened for business in 1898.

Georgia Debeck Carling died intestate on December 19, 1901, of cardiac failure at the age of 40. The inventory of Georgia's probate papers has left a public window into the inside of a Dallas bordello. One bedroom contained a white iron bedstead, white dresser, table, combination bookcase and desk, wardrobe, white easel, washstand, red plush sofa with two footstools, two rockers, a bamboo screen, seven pictures, and green window treatments. The hall contained an inlaid umbrella stand. A second bedroom decorated with oak furniture, included a bedstead, dresser, washstand, wardrobe, center table, lounge, a rocker, music box, two pictures, and an electric light and globe. The third bedroom included walnut bedroom furniture, three chairs, and an electric lights and globes. Still another bedroom contained oak furniture, including a table, oak screen, wicker rocker, easy chair. All bedrooms included ceiling fans, carpets, shades, and lace curtains. The parlor had a davenport, chiffonier, washstand, two stuffed couches, a rocker, armchair, stuffed chair, bolsters and covers, an album and one Bible. The dining room sported an oak table, chairs, and china closet. In addition to household furnishings, Georgia left over \$3000 cash, one pair of diamond earrings, three diamond rings, gold locket, foreign coins, and 114 volumes of books. Her estate was valued

⁵⁴ "Real Estate Transfers," *Dallas Morning News*, August 14, 1897.

between \$11,000 and \$20,000, including real estate valued at \$8000, which had a rental value of \$110.00 per month.⁵⁵

Georgia's estate illustrates the financial gain possible to an enterprising madam at the end of the nineteenth century. Although her bordello was not as large as those of Lizzie Handley or Annie Wilson, the inventory of furnishings provide us a sense of a well-decorated and furnished house of at least the middle-class home of that era. Not only did Georgia have one of the first telephones of that time, her house even had electricity. Her library of bound books suggests she was educated and well-read—or at least wanted to appear so.

As the stories of Handley, Wilson and Carlin attest, prostitutes in this era were relatively easy to find in the public record. Prostitutes were more visible and identifiable in the nineteenth century United States than they came to be in the twentieth century. That Dallas reveals such evidence testifies to the widespread acceptance of prostitution in the Gilded Age. Dallas was not the only place, of course. U.S. census takers often used one or more of the common euphemisms to identify such women. The occupation of a St. Louis “keeper” and her boarders in the U.S. Census of 1870 was “whore.” Ten years later, the same woman’s occupation was “ill repute” in the Dallas County federal census of 1880. The same census listed a well-known madam, along with the women residing at her address, as “prostitutes” under the column for occupation. Not only were

⁵⁵ Probate Case #3145, Estate of Georgia A. DeBeck, County Clerk's Office, Dallas County Records Building.

some women identified in reports as prostitutes, historical maps identified certain establishments as houses of ill repute. The Sanborn Fire Maps classified all structures in the city. Homes were noted as “Dwgs,” boarding houses as “boarding,” saloons as “sal” and bordellos as “female boarding.” Clues are found in the U.S. Census that a “female boarding house” was not a legitimate boarding house for women. Some literally list the head of household and all “boarders” as prostitutes, “whores,” or “ill repute,” Others did not openly imply the female boarding house was a house of prostitution. However, the inhabitants were generally young, unattached women, listing “none” for occupation, and the head of the establishment was a known madam. The 1880 Census lists Lizzie as divorced, 30 years old, head of household, with occupation of prostitute. Likewise, the occupations of the women living at her residence were also “prostitute.”

These transparent public records reveal a good deal more about prostitution in Dallas. Lizzie, Annie, and Georgia may have ranked at the top echelon of prostitution in Dallas. However, they were not alone and commercialized sex was not limited to women of their means. Indeed, a person would be remiss to assert that the Boggy Bayou district only contained large, luxurious bordellos and all of the prostitutes were “high-class.” There were many cribs and common bawdy houses in the Boggy Bayou district, as well as on the northwest side of town. Yet, the northwest area never had as many high-class bordellos as Boggy Bayou, nor for as long.

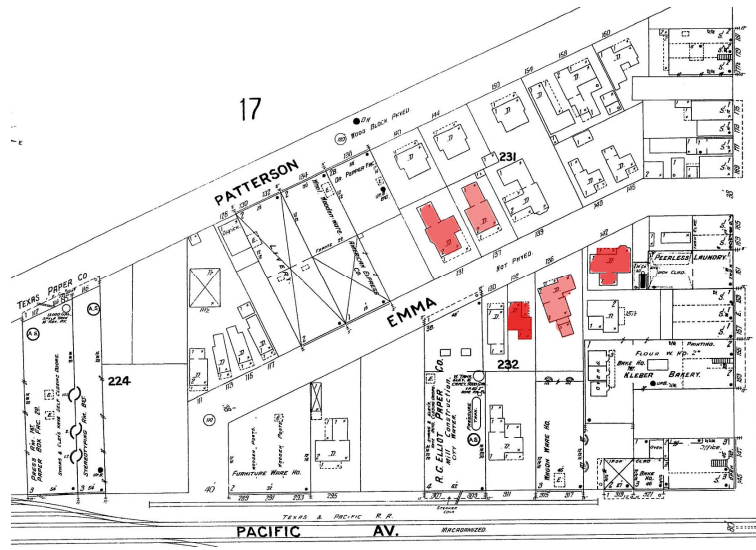


Figure 8 Bordellos on Emma Street. *Sanborn Fire Map of Dallas, 1910*

One small area on the northwest side of downtown Dallas contained structures comparable to many bordellos of Boggy Bayou. Emma Street, located between Pacific Avenue and Patterson Streets and N. Akard Street was only one block long. Figure 7 includes a photograph of two bordellos on Emma Street. Five of the thirteen dwellings on Emma Street were bordellos The American Express Company, Pearless Laundry, and Elliot Paper Company each had a bordello as a direct neighbor. Leigh Watts, a well-known prostitute, was madam at 137 Emma. The Dallas census of 1910 lists eleven women at this address. Most were in their early to mid-20s, listing “none” for an occupation. Single women, also claiming no occupation, occupied the four other structures labeled “female dwelling” which are shaded in Figure 8.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Dallas County, Texas Federal Census, 1910, Enumeration District 26, Page 6 A, enumerated on April 20, 1910.



Figure 9 Photograph of Three Emma Street Bordellos. (View from Southland Life Center).

With only a bit of research, maps, city directories, and censuses provide a clear picture of exactly where many houses of prostitution were located—at least those establishments managed by a madam.⁵⁷ However, tracking individual prostitutes over time is problematic. Not only was it common for women to change their names or identities, prostitution was a transient profession. Nationally, most women did not stay long at one establishment and the same held true for prostitutes of Dallas. While some did go on either to manage or to own their own establishments, few remained in the upper-class houses as an inmate more than a few short years. Most of those listed as inmates appeared in a city directory one or two years, and then disappeared. A new

⁵⁷ However, this ease of identification is limited to establishments managed by madams. Prostitutes working from cribs or single-family dwellings are difficult, if not impossible, to identify using these sources.

group of women would appear in subsequent directories. The list of “boarders” of Annie Wilson in the Morrison & Fourmy City Directories of 1884-85 is entirely different from those in the 1886-87 city directories. Identifying most of the individual prostitutes in Dallas during the golden age of the bordello is impossible. Most remain hidden behind a veil of secrecy impossible to penetrate. However, noteworthy madams such as Lizzie, Annie, and Georgia have left a trail of news items, real estate transactions, and legal records that afford us a glimpse into the red-light districts of Dallas, and how the city and the legal system responded to the “social evil” at different times.

Legal records indicate that the government more or less accepted prostitution. During this time, the laws that governed prostitution reveal an open acceptance of commercialized sex. During the years following the Civil War, frontier legal structures for the most part tolerated prostitution and frontier society evolved in tandem with the business of prostitution. Although city ordinances and state penal codes explicitly spelled out the illegality of commercialized sex and gambling, enforcement of the law and codes was lax during most of the nineteenth century. The attitudes of public officials were ambivalent at best.⁵⁸ They found themselves at a crossroad between enforcement of laws and laxness of justice. Men and women seeking new homes, respectable businesses, and a decent way of life were at the center with the force of law and order behind them. However, this group represented only a small fraction of the

⁵⁸ Anne M. Butler, *Daughters of Joy, sisters of misery; Prostitutes n the American West, 1876-90* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1985), xvi-xvii.

population. Just like the transient prostitutes in Lizzie's bordello, the majority of Dallasites were the jetsam and flotsam of the frontier and individualists. Those refusing to abide by social order far outnumbered the civic-minded citizens. These realities resulted in a sort of compromise. The law-abiding citizens could live their lives within limits without interference, if the denizens of the vice centers would be left undisturbed.⁵⁹

Dallas passed local vice laws in response to public sentiments concerning prostitution. One of the first ordinances passed in 1871 was to control order, public morality, and safety of the city. A charge of practicing prostitution, associating with a prostitute, or operating a house of prostitution was punishable by a fine of between one and one hundred dollars. The following year, a second ordinance was signed by Mayor Henry Ervay to prevent immorality and vice and preserve the peace and order of the city. Added to charges associated with prostitution were punishments for public indecency, obscene publications, saloons, harboring prostitutes, and a variety of gambling and gaming infractions including "suffering minors to play billiards."⁶⁰ Although city ordinances were explicit in identifying the "social evil" and its legal remedies, police enforcement was lax, no doubt attributable to the lack of officers to concentrate on vice crimes.

A Dallas Grand Jury Report of 1875 illustrates the laxity of enforcement toward gambling and prostitution. The foreman of the jury pointed out the manner in which

⁵⁹ Rogers, 140-4.

⁶⁰ John H. Slate, "Harlots, Hopheads, and Policy Men: Combating Vice in Dallas, 1871-1960." *Legacies* (Spring 2006): 24-6: 32.

some laws of the city were enforced. Offenders brought before the court on gambling or public prostitution charges were arraigned only once a month, assessed a nominal fine and court costs, and “turned loose upon the community to ply their nefarious trades for, perhaps, a month longer.” This practice was characterized as, in effect, licensed gambling, and prostitution.⁶¹ For a short period in either 1878 or 1879, Dallas passed an ordinance allowing prostitutes to pay their court costs and fines on the installment plan.⁶²

Lizzie Handley’s experience at the hands of the law once again illustrates the toleration of the “vicious trade” during this “golden age.” Her first court appearance in Dallas was not for breaking the law or immoral purposes, but rather for failing to pay a Dallas carpenter the balance of a \$12.50 bill for construction work done on her bordello between July and August of 1875.⁶³ In 1876, Lizzie sued the Houston & Texas Railway Company in Dallas County for injuries received during a train wreck. Evidence presented during the course of the trial revealed Lizzie and her traveling companion were not legally man and wife (as they had pretended to be), and in fact, were using another individual’s railway pass. After losing her case, she appealed. The Appeals Court upheld the original verdict and she lost her case.⁶⁴ Like Lizzie, Annie filed suit

⁶¹ “Report of the Grand Jury,” *Dallas Daily Herald*, January 30, 1875.

⁶² “City Council Proceeds-Terminating Ethical Row,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 11, 1886.

⁶³ *Mechanics Lien Book*, Dallas Co., Tex., 169; Dallas County 14th Civil District Court Case Files, Case #2383. Dallas Public Library, 7th Floor.

⁶⁴ Handley v. H. & T. C. R’y Co., Posey's Unreported Cases (Texas), II, 282.

against a railroad company for injuries received while traveling on their line. While attempting to climb a stepladder to reach her upper berth, the ladder broke under her weight. Annie claimed the fall resulted in “wounds, bruises, and hurts of a serious and permanent character,” and asked for \$10,000 in damages. While in San Diego, Annie stayed at the Hotel del Coronado. During the discovery process of the trial, the manager of the hotel answered interrogatories relating to Annie’s stay in the hotel. He claimed she attended several balls and concerts without displaying any signs of injury. One of his most damaging statements related to her character. “I took particular notice of Mrs. Annie Wilson on account of her loudness of dress. I saw a number of young men visit her apartments, and because of this, and because of reports derogatory to her character reaching me, I had determined to ask her to leave the house, when she saved me this necessity by leaving herself.”⁶⁵ Although the jury did find for Annie and awarded \$1,400 in damages, the judge set aside the verdict, allowing only \$500.⁶⁶ In both trials, evidence inferred questionable morals or character of the women. However, most of Lizzie and Annie’s court appearances did not merely hint of immorality. They regularly answered charges as defendants for morals charges in city or district courts.

⁶⁵ Annie Wilson v. Pullman Palace Car Co., District Court of Tarrant Co., case #4533, and U. S. Circuit Court, Northern District of Texas, case #1217; filed together as: entry 48N037B, box 137, location A3006923, National Archives-SW Region, Fort Worth, Tex.

⁶⁶ “The Federal Court—Miss Wilson gets \$500,” *The Dallas Morning News*, June 2, 1889.

Lizzie, along with other madams, keepers, and inmates of bawdy houses faced arrest and fines for “keeping a disorderly houses” on at least a monthly basis.⁶⁷ Those found guilty faced fines between \$50 and \$100, plus court costs. The fact that women faced charges did not testify to intolerance. In fact, not all charges resulted in a guilty verdict. In June of 1883, Lizzie pled not guilty in Dallas Mayor’s Court on charges of keeping a disorderly house for the purpose of public prostitution and requested a jury trial. The jury found her “not guilty.” The Dallas County Court, however, reversed the Mayor’s Court jury’s decision and convicted Lizzie of the same charge. Lizzie appealed the conviction, interposing a plea of the former acquittal of the Mayor’s Court of Dallas. The Opinion of the Appeals Court concluded the County Court had erred. Therefore, judgment was reversed and Lizzie’s case remanded. The Opinion also affirmed that under the charter of the City of Dallas, the County Recorder’s Court and the Mayor’s Court shall have concurrent jurisdiction and cognizance of all misdemeanors (including disorderly houses of prostitution) committed within the corporate limits of the City of Dallas.⁶⁸ This would not be the last time conflicts over jurisdiction involving morals cases would occur between city and county courts.⁶⁹ It does suggest that the city’s effort to protect its turf included protecting its right to convict or *not* convict prostitutes.

⁶⁷ The term “inmate” refers to women working as prostitutes in a house of prostitution.

⁶⁸ Lizzie Handley v. The State, 16 Texas Court of Appeals, 1883, 444-448.

⁶⁹ A mayor’s court, usually presided over by the mayor of a municipality, had jurisdiction over violations of city ordinances or other minor criminal and civil matters. The Recorder’s Court replaced the Mayor’s Court in 1888.

Women were rarely charged with prostitution, but rather “vagrancy,” “indecent conduct,” or “keeping a disorderly house.”⁷⁰ The arrests of most prostitutes were for crimes such as being drunk and disorderly, fighting, or disturbing the peace rather than sexual crimes. The fines and court costs in no way eliminated the business of commercialized sex. At most, the bawd would need to turn a few extra “tricks” to make up for the monetary loss.⁷¹ The fines assessed against the individual prostitutes were typically \$5.00 to \$25.00. The courts released those able to pay their fines. Madams normally paid fines and court costs assessed against their “girls,” who were released to carry on business as usual. Bordello girls rarely spent any time in jail. However, streetwalkers and other women unable to pay their fines faced a few days in jail.

Madams had to maintain a working relationship with not only the law and court officials, but also bankers. An amusing antidote illustrates that bankers had no qualms conducting business with even those of the “vicious trade.” In *The Lusty Texans of Dallas*, John Rogers writes of an encounter between a Dallas banker and a Dallas madam. A fashionably dressed woman, “almost aggressively refined,” approached J.S. Armstrong and asked to borrow \$5,000. One of his clerks slipped him a note identifying the visitor as a madam of one of the most elegant sporting houses in town.⁷² Armstrong

⁷⁰ In 1883, the City of Dallas defined a disorderly house as “one kept for the purpose of public prostitution or as a common resort for prostitutes or vagrants, or to which persons resort for the purpose of smoking or in any manner using opium.”

⁷¹ Senator O.B. Brewer made the point in an 1896 *Dallas Morning News* article entitled “The City Charter.”

⁷² Rogers does not give the date of this encounter. However, it was probably shortly before October of 1879 when Annie Wilson paid \$5,000 for her bordello at S. Market

asked her when she would be able to repay the loan. “Well, I know I can pay it back in October after the State Fair,” she replied. Armstrong approved the loan. Much to his surprise, she appeared a month early with cash to settle her debt. The banker commented that he thought she would not be able to repay her note until after the State Fair. “That’s so,” she replied. “But do you know I forgot all about the preachers’ convention coming in August.”⁷³

On occasion, the tolerance waned in the last years of this era, but the assaults were brief, and the chief female beneficiaries were able to finish off their time in Dallas in style. In October 1883, the same year Lizzie won her appeal against the County Court’s conviction of keeping a disorderly house, the district attorney initiated a campaign to drive gamblers out of Dallas. His plans were thwarted when a delegation of Dallas businessmen pointed out how detrimental such a move was for the city’s economy. The businessmen further advised him of Fort Worth’s shrewd policy of offering free rents and \$3500 for gamblers removing to its city.⁷⁴ Red-light districts generated great monetary gains for not only Dallas madams, but also investors, owners, and managers of saloons, bordellos, and gambling halls. The fact that some city aldermen, the Tax Collector, and prominent businessmen had a vested interest in the Boggy Bayou District created a veil of protection over the commercialized sex business.

Street. Prior to opening her own house, Annie was a madam in Lizzie Handley’s elegant parlor house.

⁷³ Rogers, 146.

⁷⁴ Rogers, 144.

The district was imminently profitable. Both Lizzie and Annie's successes are attributable to this tolerance and ambivalent attitude that prevailed until the end of their reign as queens of the golden era of bordellos.

Annie's reign ended upon her death on March 8, 1891. She had been madam of one of Dallas' most noted bagnios for fifteen years, and no challenge had seriously interfered with her business. Her obituary headline read: "Once the 'Wickedest Woman' in Dallas." Annie's internment was at Greenwood Cemetery in Dallas. As of December 1999, her grave was the only one within a 12-space lot.⁷⁵ J.W. Webb served as executor of Annie's estate.⁷⁶ The estimated value of her estate was \$20,000 including real estate and personal property.⁷⁷ While Annie's last years are sketchy, we do know that her fellow bordello queen was not around to attend her funeral.

⁷⁵ This gives rise to the question of whether she was legally the wife of James Wilson when she first moved to Dallas. Had she been his widow, one might assume she would have been buried next to her deceased husband—unless he did not die in Dallas.

⁷⁶ Annie Wilson died intestate and without any next of kin. It is not clear why Webb applied to manage the estate. It is clear that they did have a business relationship. In 1888, J.W. Webb, a well-known Dallas jeweler, bought a lot located at Main at Lamar from Annie for \$16,000. It is possible that Annie purchased jewelry from Webb over the years.

http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jwheat/biographies/annie_wilson.html (accessed November 1, 2009).

⁷⁷ Dallas County probate file for "Ann Wilson," case #1311, County Clerk's office, Records Building, Dallas. Annie's personal property included jewelry. While the probate documents do not specify the value of the jewels, it is likely the value of her diamonds were around \$1800 if a news article of January 1891 is true. The *Dallas Daily Times Herald* printed a story on January 14, 1891, that Annie reported the loss of her diamonds (valued at \$1800). Two days later an article states she denied the loss of her diamonds.

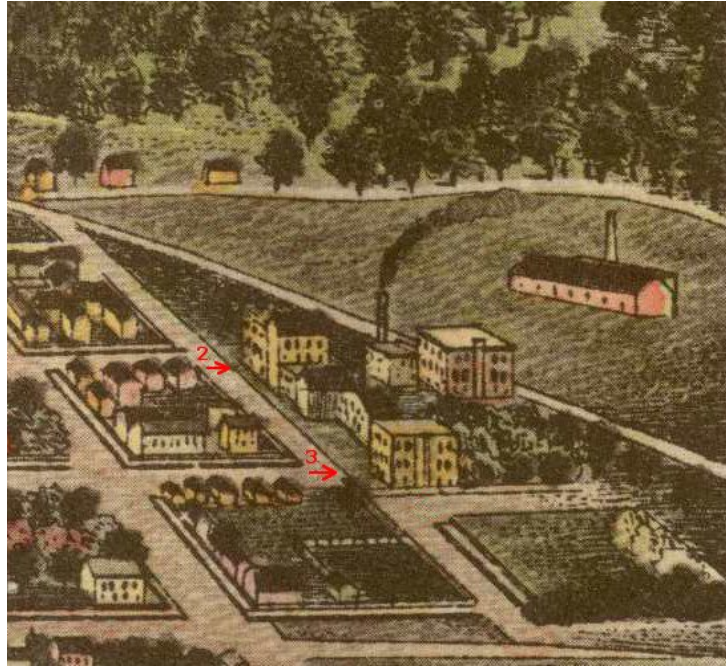


Figure 10 Birds Eye View of Lizzie Handley (“2”) and Annie Wilson (“3”) Lavish Bordellos on S. Market.

Before Annie’s death, Lizzie began the process of creating a new persona and life for herself that did not include the title of “madam,” a life undoubtedly funded by her substantial financial gains in Dallas’ red-light district. In 1888, Lizzie dropped the surname “Handley” and assumed the new name of “Duke.”⁷⁸ In June of 1889, Lizzie left Dallas to travel to France. On her passport application, she described herself as 5 feet, 3-3/4 inches tall, dark brown hair, bluish-gray eyes, medium mouth, medium forehead, wide nose, small chin, fair complexion, and a small face.

⁷⁸ This was not the first occasion Lizzie claimed the surname “Duke.” In 1872, the marriage records of Marion County, Texas record the marriage of Lizzie Duke to Silas Handley. One story claims she married Edward Duke as a young woman—against the wishes of her family who possibly had the marriage annulled.

According to her Affidavit on September 23, 1891, in Monmouth County, New Jersey, Lizzie was wife to Edward J. Duke.⁷⁹ After her stay in France, Lizzie moved to Manhattan and opened a legitimate boarding house on W. 72nd Street.⁸⁰ While Mrs. Lizzie Duke was insinuating herself in polite society in Manhattan, her alter-ego, Lizzie Handley, continued to manage her business and growing real estate interests in Dallas long-distance—including purchasing Annie’s bordello and hiring madams to run the business.⁸¹ Figure 10 is a “Birds Eye View” of the S. Market Street at Sam Cross area of town where Lizzie Handley and Annie Wilson built and operated their “empires.” As depicted in the map, the two parlor houses are the largest structures in the area except for the building directly behind Lizzie’s house.⁸² A *Dallas Daily Times Herald* article on July 14, 1893, described Annie Wilson’s palatial house as “one of the old landmarks of the city and well known over north Texas.”.

The two “Grand (Ma)dames” who reigned during the nineteenth century would disappear from Dallas’ landscape, one through death and the other by reinventing herself and successfully leaving her notoriety behind. Lizzie so successfully ingratiated herself into polite society, her obituary called her “beloved.” By 1902, the palatial palaces of sin created by these two women were leveled to make way for a new prong of the Rock Island Railroad coming through Dallas.

⁷⁹ Affidavit of Lizzie Duke. Record of Deeds, Dallas Co., Tex., Vol. 151, 235. (affidavit rendered September 23, 1891, in Monmouth Co., New Jersey).

⁸⁰ Borough of Manhattan, New York Co., New York federal census, June 12, 1900; Enumeration District 469, sheet 12, line 61; 255 W. 72nd St.

⁸¹ “Real Estate Transfers,” *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, March 31, 1893.

⁸² The structure was the Dallas Cooperage Company (manufacturer of barrels).

Lizzie Handley Duke had incredibly good timing in both when she arrived in Dallas and especially when she left. In fact, the “golden era” of Dallas bordellos coincides with her arrival and departure. The young boomtown filling with unattached men created a great demand for women like Lizzie who were willing to compromise their morals and reputations for what could result in a great deal of money. Lizzie illustrates the incredible wealth to be made during an era of Victorian double standards. The tolerance toward women of ill repute experienced in the early years of the bordello period had already experienced some disintegration before Lizzie left for France. By the time she sold her interests at the turn of the century, transitions involving a rise in regulation and reform were making their way into society.

Beginning in the 1890s, Dallas citizens increasingly believed the problem of prostitution could no longer “be swept under the mat.” The toleration and ambivalence of frontier legal structures toward the vicious trade began dissolving. As the male-female ratios moved toward equalization, public sentiment hardened against the “social evil” and looked toward established legal options for solutions.

CHAPTER 2

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SOUTH CITY 1890—1905

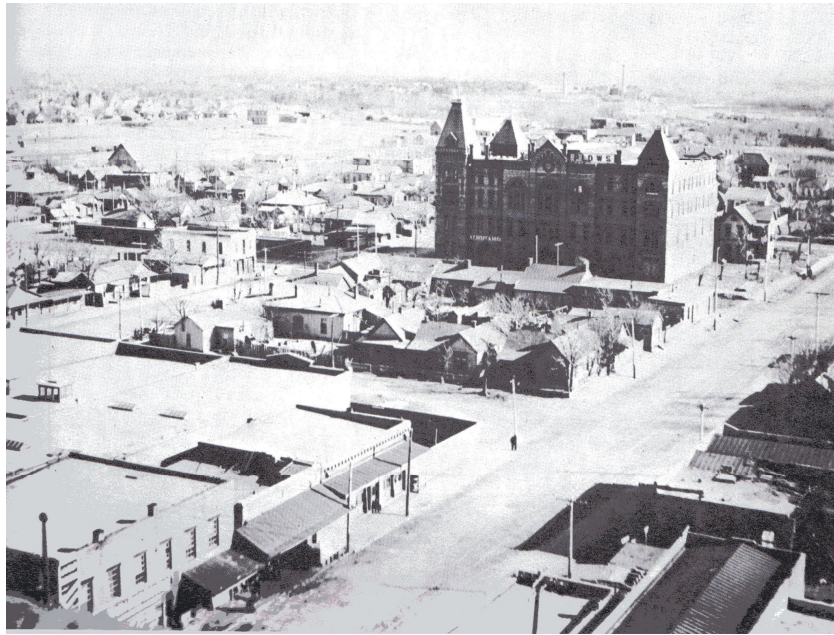


Figure 11. Boggy Bayou from the Courthouse towers. The large building dominating the landscape is the Farmers' Alliance Exchange warehouse located at the southwest corner of Market and Wood streets. Surrounding the warehouse is a juxtaposition of large sporting houses and dilapidated frame houses (cribs) which made up part of the Boggy Bayou Red-light district. *Dallas Historical Society Archives*¹

Although brothel keeper Lizzie Handley could convince a jury not to convict her for keeping a disorderly house in 1883, and go on to live a retirement marked by

¹ According to William McDonald, legend had it that a secret, underground tunnel connected Boggy Bayou to the Courthouse for convenience of dignitaries of Dallas. William McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered*, (Dallas: the Dallas Historical Society, 1978), 24.

prosperity and influential friends, her experience was one of a particular place and a particular time in Dallas' history. Just three years later, in 1886, Dallas Mayor John Henry Brown declared war on prostitution. John Henry Brown served as Mayor of Dallas from 1885 to 1886. His political career also included serving as a council member of the First Ward and Justice of the Peace.² He had grown up in the First Ward surrounded by bordellos. Brown had no tolerance for the existence of red-light districts—especially Boggy Bayou. As Mayor, he presided over the Mayor's Court and was well aware of the characters that made up the colorful vice centers of Dallas. He declared war on houses of ill fame during two city council meetings in July 1886. He announced that the refuge of protected infamy of the Reservation was so great that a well-known madam from Fort Worth was trying to build a house in Boggy Bayou and she had claimed Dallas officers had assured her she would encounter no police resistance. Although he did not believe society was imperiled or likely to be ensnared by the elite demimonde of the “big, fine mansions” in Boggy Bayou, the “trollops” in the common bordello were a different matter.³ He was so disgusted with the Boggy Bayou vice district, he threatened to move out of the First Ward if something was not done to rid it of the prostitutes.⁴ But as the rest of Brown's story suggests, Dallas' council was still very split in 1886.

² John Henry Brown, *Memorial & Biographical History of Dallas County* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1892), 278 - 285.

³ “City Council Proceedings,” *Dallas Dispatch*, July 4, 1886.

⁴ *Ibid.*

In the end, Mayor Brown was not successful, but he was a harbinger of things to come. The acceptance of the “social evil” met Progressive era worries about urban disorder, including new concerns about drinking, gambling, and prostitution. Dallas’ red lights burned brightly between 1890 and 1905, although increasingly strident efforts attempted to turn them out.

Boggy Bayou was the tolerated red-light district Mayor Brown attacked in the city council meeting of 1888, but it would not always be the only district with houses of ill repute in Dallas. Even in 1888, prostitutes began infiltrating the smaller and seedier area of Frogtown. The presence of such districts in the urban landscape (as well as new reformers who rallied against them) was common in Texas as in other states. At least one vice center encompassed several city blocks in the state’s eight largest cities. Austin had “Guy Town,” El Paso had the Utah Street Reservation, “Happy Hollow” was Houston’s vice center, “The District” was San Antonio center for vice, Fort Worth was renowned for “Hell’s Half Acre,” and Waco had the “Two Street” center.

Vice centers featuring gambling houses, saloons, and “ladies of the evening” were usually located a few blocks from a city’s railroad depot and downtown business district. Prostitutes mainly worked out of bawdy houses or cribs, but some worked in

dance halls or variety theatres. There were prostitutes from all walks of life and from every class available to attract customers from the lowest to the highest social class.⁵

By the mid-1800s, the Boggy Bayou red-light district in the First Ward had grown so large that there were houses of ill repute on almost every corner. The streets in Boggy Bayou District, lined by sporting houses, saloons, and gambling halls, was the city's fashionable amusement area of Dallas' most prominent men.⁶ As Mayor Brown's attack on the ordinance of 1878 that limited arrests of prostitutes to once a month suggest, the growth of the vice trade was the product of the lax enforcement of limited laws against prostitution. He characterized the council's passing of such an ordinance as "horrible" and that the ordinance was not worth the paper it was written on. One news report had him demanding "Do not tell me nothing can stop this business!"⁷ Alderman J.C. Louckx responded that he did not believe it was the responsibility of the city council to remove women of ill repute from Boggy Bayou. "They were brought by force of circumstances. As wealthy people built in other sections—drove them to one part of it." Louckx, who had been one of the original founders of La Reunion but was now a local businessman, questioned whether suppression was possible; and if so, whether it would be for the good of the city. Although Louckx believed prostitution was detrimental to any part of a city, he saw no remedy other than regulation and sanitary

⁵ *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/PP/jbp1.html> (accessed August 20, 2009).

⁶ William L. McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870—1925* ((Dallas: The Dallas Historical Society: 1978), 27

⁷ "City Council Proceedings—Terminating in an Ethical Row," *Dallas Dispatch*, July 11, 1886.

laws controlled by the police department. Brown suspected the source of Louckx's reluctance was less high-minded; he accused Louckx of renting two houses to women of ill fame on Brown's own street.⁸ Brown continued his tirade at the City Council meeting a week later, charging that the special committee responsible for preparing petitions relating to bawdy houses in the First Ward should be discharged for doing nothing. Brown was particularly upset that another "magnificent palace of sin" had been built during the time the committee was to be completing its work. "I tell you that if you do not hit the tee iron while it is hot, you will never stop that business." One committee member advised Brown that he opposed postponing the report and should decline to sign it. He believed the existing law was "strong enough for the emergency if enforced." This naysayer, like Louckx, believed it was the responsibility of the people to make the proper changes. In essence, he did want the prostitutes suppressed. From his perspective, it was no surprise that Dallas was full "of such cattle" because the environment was favorable; they were licensed, and the business was still profitable after paying the fines. D.F. Mahony disagreed with the notion that existing law was strong enough for enforcement.⁹ Mahony did not see how the women could be convicted and did not believe anyone had been legally convicted of anything. The courts had ruled a woman could not be convicted for prostitution just based on her reputation or the reputation of an establishment. Mahony's solution was to cover over

⁸ "City Council Proceedings--Terminating in an Ethical Row," *Dallas Dispatch*, July 11, 1886.

⁹ Dennis P. Mahony, secretary, treasurer and superintendent of Texas Elevator and Compress Company, also served as Alderman. *Morrison & Fourmy's Directory of the City of Dallas*, 1886-87.

the problem. “The less said about the matter, in his opinion, the better it would be for the council.” As the paper put it, some councilmen were concerned that ignoring the problem would cause it to “slop over and inundate the Second Ward” (Frogtown). Loss of city revenue became an obvious deterrent for refusing abatement of the social evil. Brown believed this revenue ought to “prove a curse to the city that received it.”¹⁰ There is little doubt why the Golden Era of the Bordello flourished as long as it did. City leaders could not find a common ground to address the problem of commercialized sex; much less find a solution.

Brown’s fruitless effort to reform Boggy Bayou would sound familiar to reformers elsewhere. The problems and challenges Dallas faced in dealing with growing vice centers in 1886 was not unique to the city, but rather a national problem. Three policies that were enforceable and morally acceptable to the more enlightened sections of society were (1) make prostitution a criminal offence and brothels illegal; (2) criminalize brothels but allow prostitution within defined limits; or (3) define limits requiring compulsory registration for both brothels and prostitution.¹¹ By far, the most palatable, indeed most moral, to religious reformers was the first option. Like cities nationwide, Dallas had seen the emergence of strong, passionate, and to some extent influential faith-driven anti-prostitution efforts by the 1890s. The reformers came from

¹⁰ “The councils of two cities,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 12, 1886.

¹¹ Hilary Evans, *Harlots, Whores, and Hookers* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1979), 180.

two different, but related religious groups, the purity movement and the Holiness movement.

The Texas purity movement was born out of a larger nationwide concern for the rising problems of poverty and immorality that mushroomed in Texas urban centers following rapid industrialization and urbanization. Concern about intolerable living conditions in crowded urban tenements and slums, and especially the alarming problems of immorality, attracted the attention of both religious and non-religious members of the middle class, who marshaled their forces to organize reform movements. Believing rising prostitution was the result of “white slavery,” religious reformers created “rescue homes” for the express purpose of offering “fallen” women a place to escape from bordellos and red-light districts. One of the best-known of all the rescue homes coming out of the Social Gospel Movement was the Florence Crittenton Homes in New York.¹²

Dallas followed the national movement closely. Following the national urban moral awakening movement, in 1891 the King’s Daughters, a Methodist women’s missionary society, formed to respond to rising problems of poverty, poor living conditions, and other charitable efforts for the poor in Dallas.¹³ Two years later,

¹² Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls – Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work 1890-1945* (Cambridge: Yale University, 1993), 8-13.

¹³ Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America 1820—1920*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1978), 168.

Virginia Johnson, president of the group, received a letter from a well-known Dallas madam appealing for help in starting a new life. This appeal transformed the King's Daughters focus to that of moral reform, and specifically the rescue home movement. Believing the request was a "direct call from God," she convinced the King's Daughters to respond to what she concluded was a serious social problem and open a home for "fallen women."¹⁴ Sheltering Arms opened in South Dallas as a rescue home. The home was furnished not only the King's Daughters, but also women of the Congregational Church, Methodists, Baptists, and members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The ministry attracted twenty young women by the end of the first year and realized a steady growth. Sheltering Arms was not the only program reaching out to fallen women in Dallas.

Missions formed not only to minister to fallen women, but also to needy or fallen men as well. The Bethel Mission in Dallas began in 1894 to evangelize the city, paying particular attention to "slum work." The Bethel Mission in Dallas was fashioned after the Young Men's Christian Association in its outreach to the destitute, in addition to being an evangelical outreach to the unsaved in neighborhoods like Boggy Bayou and Frogtown. This ministry included street ministry and tent meetings reaching out to both men and women, and a Sunday School for children living in the slums. A library and reading room offered the "wayward" a place to read or write letters.¹⁵ A plan of

¹⁴ Elizabeth York Estam. "Virginia K. Johnson: A Second Chance for the Wayward," Michael V. Hazel, Ed. *Dallas Reconsidered: Essays in Local History* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1995), 214-5.

¹⁵ "Bethel Home to the Public," *Dallas Morning News*, February 25, 1894.

action by a “slum brigade” (comprised of women of Bethel Mission) meant going into disreputable places in the city to offer those wishing to change their lives protection at Sheltering Arms.¹⁶ The mission was interdenominational and supported by a number of local pastors. One headline of the *Dallas Morning News* read, “Bethel Mission Workers to Invade the ‘Reservation’ To-Night” when announcing a two-week tent revival in the “South End Reservation,” and continued a “strong effort will be made to reclaim the outcasts of the district.” Bethel’s regular mission at 581 Elm Street held regular morning and evening services, in addition to tent revivals.¹⁷ Prostitutes responding to Bethel Mission’s appeal were sent to Sheltering Arms rescue home.

As Sheltering Arms outgrew its original location, it relocated first to five acres in East Dallas in 1897 and eventually to eighteen acres in Oak Cliff. The three-story brick building accommodating 200 young women, included dorm rooms, dining rooms, sitting rooms, kitchen and pantry, plus offices, administrative rooms, guest rooms, a chapel, library, gymnasium and schoolrooms.¹⁸

A second evangelical reform effort came from the Holiness movements, another national movement with an active wing in North Texas. Two notable families creating rescue homes in North Texas came out of the Holiness Movement with the specific goal of ministering and “rescuing” the poor souls trapped in red-light districts in Texas urban centers. The rescue ministries of these individuals drew them into a life’s work that

¹⁶ “The Bethel Mission—Slum Brigades to be Appointed” *Dallas Morning News*, February 19, 1894.

¹⁷ “To Evangelize the South End,” *Dallas Times Herald*, April 30, 1894.

¹⁸ Elizabeth York Estam. “Virginia K. Johnson: A Second Chance for the Wayward,” 215

would result in lifelong economic and social hardships. The missionary zeal of these individuals would lead to establishing several rescue homes in Texas.¹⁹

Charles B. Jernigan and his wife, Johnnie, were pioneers of the Holiness Movement in the south. Johnnie Jernigan, a pioneer in rescue work, was also an ordained minister who felt the “call” to mission work. Rather than ministering in foreign countries, she reached out to the “poor, despised, and outcast of the earth” in her own home town of Greenville, Texas.²⁰ Early in her ministry, she addressed a group of women preaching, “Jesus came to save the lost Magdalenes as well as the lost Gadarenes.” A young woman rose at the close of the sermon and asked to speak. Holding the hand of her two-year old daughter, the mother admitted the deception of a man had wrecked her life. Disowned by family and shunned by friends, she and her baby were homeless. Jernigan wrote that after praying with the young woman, she did not know what to do with her or where to take her. She found friends willing to care for the woman. Jernigan was so touched by the experience she began to search for outcast girls in the red-light districts of Greenville, Texas.

¹⁹ Historical Statement: from the “2001 Manual of the Church of the Nazarene,” Available from http://www.nazarene.org/files/docs/historical_statement (accessed March 2008). The Holiness Revival created division within the Methodist Church. New denominations splintered off, including the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1843, the Free Methodist Church in 1860, and the Salvation Army in 1865. By the 1880s, a new wave of uniquely Holiness churches sprang into existence, including the Church of God, and the Church of God (Holiness). These entities included independent churches, urban missions, and rescue homes.

²⁰ Johnnie Jernigan, *Redeemed by the Blood Or the Power of God to Save the Fallen* (Peniel: Holiness Data Ministry, 1920), 2.

I met a beautiful girl who had been well reared, but who was living an awful life of sin. I begged her to quit sin and become a Christian. She looked me straight in the eyes, while her own soft, blue eyes filled with tears and said, "Where will I go if I do? Nobody cares for a girl like me. The world hates me; the churches won't have me; nobody cares for a girl like me" Then she turned and walked into her room.²¹

The young woman's cry, "Where will I go? Nobody cares for me" haunted Jernigan.

Soon after this, she received a "call" to help "a poor, fallen woman, ill and without friends or money." Having no knowledge of rescue homes, Jernigan took it upon herself to go to the woman. "I found her a penniless, friendless, deceived widow, with two baby boys." Putting the children in an orphan's home, she attempted to find a home for the mother. Finding no place for the woman, the Jerrigans took her into their own home, and sold their organ to pay her doctor bill. As her work became known, she was besieged with pleas for help. Learning of the Crittenton Rescue Homes, Jernigan determined to learn more about their work.²²

Like other rescue workers of this period, Jernigan believed many prostitutes were trapped into the lifestyle of prostitution. Jernigan also found the double standard between immoral men and immoral women intolerable. The church and society praised a "fallen" man who repented and turned his back on an immoral lifestyle. A "fallen" woman's reputation, however, remained forever tarnished, and many religious people continued to shun and ostracize her. Reformers such as Jernigan believed a change of environment, finding a new home and new friends seemed vital for securing a second

²¹ Johnnie Jernigan, "Why have Rescue Homes?" *Herald of Holiness* (March 19, 1913), 6.

²² Johnnie Jernigan, "Why have Rescue Homes?" 6.

chance at life. Rescue workers believed “there is no other place for her. . .the churches will not take her case; in fact, they can not until she changes her surroundings and moves away from the old crowd.”²³ Jernigan’s compassion and empathy toward the “fallen woman” led her into a close relationship with leaders of local rescue homes. Johnnie would evangelize and lead erring women to the Berachah Home, where she had a close relationship with its founder, J.T. Upchurch

James Tony Upchurch was born on October 29, 1870 near the little town of Bosqueville, on the outskirts of Waco, Texas. Jimmie’s father died when the boy was three years old. At the age of seven, the boy witnessed the arrest of a prostitute. After seeing the pathetic woman weeping as the police locked her in a paddy wagon, he rushed home to tell his mother. “Hush, my dear, that was a bad woman and they are taking her up to preserve the order.” At his young age, he had no idea what a “bad woman” was, but felt the girl had been wronged.²⁴ Little did he know that the seeds of compassion he felt for this unfortunate girl would blossom into a full-blown quest to “redeem” or “reclaim” women like her later in his life. That seed came to fruition when Upchurch underwent a religious conversion experience at age 18.²⁵

Consumed with a zeal to spread the Gospel, he looked for ways to spread Christ’s message into the “highways and byways” to witness to lost souls. One evening

²³ Ibid. 6.

²⁴ Binnie Fisher, "Unwed Mothers found a Home," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, 280-1-2 Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington. .

²⁵ Dorothy Upchurch Betts, *Berachah - the Life and Work of J.T. and Maggie Upchurch* (Arlington, Texas: D.U. Betts, 1993). Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington.

while taking a shortcut through Waco's red-light district, he noticed a woman staring out of a second story window peering down with a sad face."²⁶ That night, he dreamed of the woman. Interpreting the dream as "a message from God," he determined to go into the red-light district to reach the women he believed were lost and lead them to Christ. Renting an empty room over a saloon at the edge of the district, Upchurch and his wife opened a mission they named "The Penile Mission."²⁷ This decision would result in rebuffs from society, their church, and family.

Like Johnnie Jernigan, Upchurch discovered that women converted in street meetings and desiring to leave the district found few doors open to them. The Upchurches brought new converts into their own home. In 1894, he organized The Berachah Rescue Society to combat social evils. After the Methodist church in Waco opposed their missionary work with prostitutes, the couple decided to move their ministry to Dallas in 1899.²⁸

Upchurch quickly discovered vice centers in Dallas were as ripe a "mission field" as Waco's district. He found a bevy of attractive prostitutes in a "drunken, midnight revel," dope fiends, and an area filled with "blood-curdling screams, and

²⁶ J. T. Upchurch, "Rescue Work in Texas United," *The Purity Journal Supplement*, April 1905, Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington .

²⁷ Dorothy Upchurch Betts, *Berachah - the Life and Work of J.T. and Maggie Upchurch*, 7. Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

laughter” under the protection of the police and city government.²⁹ Believing many girls had not entered prostitution of their own accord, he was determined to find a way the young women could escape their life of sin. His ministry in Dallas began as a prayer meeting in his home, and then moved to a small room over a saloon in the vice district. A few months later, he rented a house that became the first Berachah Home.³⁰ Upchurch found a permanent home for fallen women at the edge in Arlington, Texas. On May 14, 1903, Berachah Industrial Home for the Redemption and Protection of Erring Girls was formally dedicated and opened its doors.³¹

The Berachah Home and Sheltering Arms enjoyed a large degree of success overall in intervening and redirecting “fallen women” into society.³² However, like rescue homes nationwide, they failed in reaching their intended recipient—the

²⁹ Darwin Payne, "Where the Men were," *Dallas Life Magazine*, January 14, 1999, Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington.

³⁰ J. T. Upchurch, "A Little Journey through Berachahland - Touching the High Spots in Rescue Work," The Purity Crusader, December 1925, Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington.

³¹ Upchurch, "Lights and Shadows of Rescue Work," Berachah Home Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington. One reason for choosing Arlington as the site of the Berachah Home was its altitude, water supply, soil, and citizenship. In addition, it offered seclusion for its residents that removed temptations of the urban environment and protection from prying neighbors.

³² All of the rescue home organizers in Dallas published newsletters or magazines to subscribers as a means of informing the public of their accomplishments, and for fundraising. Sheltering Arm’s quarterly magazine, the King’s Messenger, began publication in 1896 with 5,000 subscribers attracting a “surprising degree of community interest and sympathy for rescue work.” Upchurch was a prolific writer and his monthly newsletter, The Purity Crusader attracted support from some of Dallas’ leading business leaders, including George Dealey of the Dallas Morning News.

prostitute. They were more successful with unwed mothers than prostitutes.³³ Unwed mothers, many with no place to go and no way to support a baby, were far more willing to stick with the one-year program of reform. The economic reality for most prostitutes was they could not earn as much money outside the vice districts. Many were not willing to exchange the freedom they enjoyed, albeit degrading, for the confining and marginal life as a much lower paid domestic worker.³⁴ Unfortunately, the social reformers and religious reformers met very little success in eliminating prostitution in larger cities. This is no doubt attributable to the nature of their program, which was to influence individuals, one at a time, rather than the entire population of prostitutes. They did however motivate many middle-class reformers.

While religious reformers believed any attempt to regulate the “social evil” implied, at best, recognition and, at least, some measure of respectability, most city governments saw the issue as a matter of sanitation and order. For them, social science, rather than religious or moral doctrine, led them to act more pragmatically. They rationalized total suppression was impossible and sought instead for a way to contain the social evil—away from “respectable” neighborhoods—and control the rising spread of disease. The uncontrolled rise in vice in every city in the United States had reached

³³ Elizabeth York Enstam, “Virginia K. Johnson: A Second Chance for the Wayward,” Michael V. Hazel, Ed. *Dallas Reconsidered: Essays in Local History*, (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1995), 216-219.

³⁴ Rescue homes that remained open into the 1930s and beyond were transformed into maternity homes of unmarried expectant mothers. Virtually all rescue homes saw this transition as prostitutes typically did not want to stay one or two years being trained for work that paid far less than they already earned in commercialized sex.

the point by the last decade of the nineteenth century that influential people realized some form of regulation was necessary.³⁵

All of these positions existed in Dallas in this era. In 1886, as Mayor Brown sought to make brothels too expensive to maintain, others on the council wanted to simply marginalize vice in one area. In September 1886, Mayor Brown introduced an ordinance stipulating that anyone found guilty in the Mayor's court of keeping a disorderly house would face a fine not less than \$100 or more than \$500 for each day the house was used for immoral purposes. (This ordinance actually conformed to state law.) The potential impact of this ordinance was extraordinary. Madams had long paid fines of \$100 for the charge of keeping a disorderly house. However, they were rarely required to answer charges more than once a month. This new ordinance would target not only the madam or keeper, but also the owners or agents, and the fines compounded *daily* for every day the property continued to be used for immoral purposes. Alderman Dennis Mahony strongly objected to the ordinance, claiming the council was not capable of coping with the issue. "I do not want to be placed in the position of being pointed at by lewd women as one of the jackleg councilmen." His assessment that strong actions by the council would appear incompetent illustrates his position that eradication-based legislation was a joke, and had no hope of working. His solution was to confine the evil, although he did admit that if it were situated in his ward, he would "draw up stakes and leave." Alderman J.D. Carter, who voted against the amendment

³⁵ Hilary Evans, *Harlots, Whores, and Hookers* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1979), 180-1.

before and promised to vote against it again, offered a different remedy. He blamed saloonkeepers for prostitution, adopting the rationale of the national purity movement, which characterized prostitution and saloons as “evil twins” existing in tandem with each other. “No sober man would go into a bawdy house,” he stated. “No man should be allowed in a place he would not take his wife.” Like Progressive reformers across the nation, Dallas’ leaders could not come to terms with a workable solution to the “vicious trade” problem that was growing out of control. But the majority did not agree with eradication, and so the council voted down Brown’s ordinance to enforce fines against owners or keepers of bawdy houses.³⁶

Cities did not work alone on this reform, however, which was problematic. In July of 1887, the Texas State Legislature amended the Penal code, defining “orderly” houses as:

A place of business in which no music, loud and boisterous talking, yelling, or indecent or vulgar language is allowed, used or practiced, or any other noise calculated to disturb or annoy persons residing in the vicinity of such house or places of business or those passing along the streets or public highways. By an orderly house is meant one in which no prostitute or lewd woman or women are allowed to enter or remain. The house also must not contain any vulgar or obscene pictures³⁷

State efforts further complicated the situation, especially since they were one of many such new regulations passed. This attempt to define and abolish all houses of ill repute was part of a flurry of action between 1887 and 1889. After the state weighed in, the

³⁶ “City Council Proceedings,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 19, 1886.

³⁷ “The Penal Amendments,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 1887; Tex. Civ. Stat., 62a 3226a (1887).

city considered and passed three new ordinances, including one that Mayor Brown would have appreciated.

Between 1887 and 1889, both the city and the state expanded their definition of a disorderly house, and included language to separate the “evil twins” of prostitution and alcohol. In 1887, Carter’s anti-alcohol position won out, and Dallas passed a new law forbidding “saloon men” from allowing women inside their establishments. Any saloon found with a woman inside would be considered a “disorderly house” and faced charges and fines in City Court.³⁸ Two years later, the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Penal Code relating to disorderly houses. Article 339 amended the definition of a disorderly house to include not only a location where prostitutes plied their vocation, but also “any theatre, play-house, or houses where spirituous, vinous or malt liquors are kept for sale, and prostitutes, lewd women, or women of bad reputation for chastity, are employed, kept in service, or permitted to display or conduct themselves in a lewd, lascivious or indecent manner, or to which persons resort for the purpose of smoking or in any manner using opium.”³⁹ Dallas’ days as a “fancy town” were coming to an end, and the toleration enjoyed by prostitutes in Boggy Bayou since the mid-1870s was definitely changing.

A second article was one of the powerful tools available to cities wanting to close down houses of prostitution. It actually mirrored Mayor Brown’s proposed

³⁸ “New Law,” *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, July 29, 1887.

³⁹ Sam A. Willson, ann. *Revised Penal Code of Code of Criminal Procedure and Penal Laws* (St. Louis: The Gilbert Book, 1888), 103-4. (Although the book shows a publication year as 1888, the Article is noted as amended in 1889.)

ordinance of 1886 (that the Dallas city council voted down). Article 341 charged that any “owner, lessee or tenant” who knowingly permitted a house, building, or tenement to be used as a disorderly house would be deemed guilty of keeping a disorderly house unless immediate action were taken to remove the offending perpetrator. Each day the property remained open for immoral purposes would be deemed a separate offense, with a penalty of not less than \$100 and not more than \$500 for each offense could be assessed against the owner, madam, or agent.⁴⁰ There were ample city ordinances and state penal codes to close down every house of prostitution in the city. Article 341 was especially powerful because the smallest fine for owning or managing a disorderly house for even one month was \$3000.00. While the city leaders continued to ignore legal options to close down the Boggy Bayou Reservation, on a national level, Progressive reform movements gained strength.

This spate of legal reforms (which still needed enforcement by city authorities) was not the only signal that the winds of change were blowing by the last decade of the nineteenth century. Nationwide, anti-prostitution movements turned against the “social evil” in force. Anti-vice commissions were established in many cities to study vice conditions and develop legal remedies through their state legislatures.⁴¹ The openness and tacit acceptance of the “social evil” was disintegrating. In September of 1890, a judge for the Fourteenth Judicial District Court would take a step unheard of in Dallas’

⁴⁰ Sam A. Willson, ann. *Revised Penal Code of Code of Criminal Procedure and Penal Laws*, (St. Louis: The Gilbert Book, 1888), 104.

⁴¹ Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 192-4.

history. Judge R.E. Burke, who came to Dallas in 1870, had a long and distinguished career in public service, first as a city councilman, three consecutive terms as an elected county judge, district judge for two terms, and as a member of the fifty-fifth Congress. As an opponent to segregated, regulated prostitution, he would have appeared to be a formidable foe. (Upon his death, *the Dallas Morning News* eulogized him as known for his personal popularity and unquestioned honesty of motive as a judge.⁴²) In his charge to the Grand Jury, Judge Burke lambasted the city's bawds and called for their immediate "extermination." Judge Burke's actions give evidence of the new progressive force of anti-prostitution. A reporter for the *Dallas Times Herald* described the Judge's charge as "the most sensational and most blistering to wrong-doers ever heard in this city." Burke claimed:

The temple of justice is surrounded on all sides by bawds white, black and partly-colored. It is necessary for a judge and the officers of the court to plow through these human cattle on their way to the hall of justice. An officer of the court or gentlemen doing business in the building would hardly dare to have his wife drive to the Alliance building for fear that she would be insulted, so notorious had that section of the city become as the territory, stamping ground, the rendezvous of the countless number of harlots who brazenly flaunted their shame in the face of society and plied their calling by night and by day without regard for decency or anything else.⁴³

The Judge charged the grand jury to use all its power to "exterminate the evil complained of, including the men frequenting the houses of shame." Progressives increasingly held the men participating in immoral activity responsible, rather than

⁴² "Tribute to Burke--Eulogies of the late Congressman from Texas spoken in the House yesterday." *Dallas Morning News*, February 9, 1902.

⁴³ "Burke's Blast," *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, September 8, 1890.

holding the woman totally culpable.⁴⁴ Burke did not only limit the scope of the cleanup to commercialized sex—he was equally adamant about eliminating gambling, characterizing the elegantly furnished gambling houses in the city as where “the tiger was concealed entirely in velvet.” Burke directed that both the gamblers and their friends “should be looked after and the laws of the state enforced.” According to the news article, the jurors immediately began their investigation of the “rottenness in social and criminal doings and rottenness in social and criminal doings of all character and of every shade. If Judge Burke's instructions are carried out, there will be “fun on the Potomac”.⁴⁵

The twenty years of tacit acceptance and toleration of vice centers was clearly under assault. Moreover, the geographical landscape of Dallas, including the Boggy Bayou District, was about to undergo dramatic changes. In November 1891, rumors circulated in Dallas that the Rock Island Railroad planned to add another prong to its line traversing western Texas by building a line right through Dallas. The next month, the engineering corps of Rock Island in Indian Territory confirmed its plan to extend the road to some point in Texas.⁴⁶ Dallas would, in fact, be the recipient of the new railroad line by the turn of the twentieth century. The Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad Company planned to purchase land along the proposed lines, including the luxurious parlor houses along South Market Street. Development took a while, but by 1902, the

⁴⁴ William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 52, 115.

⁴⁵ “Burke’s Blast.”

⁴⁶ “Rumblings of the Rail,” *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, December 3, 1891.

sale of both of Lizzie Handley Duke houses (one formerly owned by Anna Wilson) earned her \$28,000.⁴⁷ The destruction of some of Dallas' largest and finest parlor houses forced the madams and inmates to find new localities to conduct business and sounded an ominous warning of the end of the fashionable red-light district on the southwest corner of downtown.

On January 26, 1892, the District Court grand jury responded to Burke's plea at last. Invoking state law, this grand jury indicted the keepers of all bawdy houses in Dallas—something that had not happened in several years and never by this higher court. Fannie Howard, Belle Wood, Mary Black, Dollie Housel, Mary Burleigh, Maggie Johnson, Maud Shirley, Tillie Morris, Georgia Carlin, Emily J. Merrill, Jane Manley, Hattie Melville, Gertie Kahn, Carrie Burnell, Nina Fleming, Fannie Hamilton, and Clara Barklow were arraigned on April 11. In addition to the keepers of bawdy houses, the court indicted a number of owners of the houses of ill repute. This bold move by the district courts created a controversy with the city courts regarding jurisdiction. A court official reported to a *Dallas Times Herald* reporter that the indictments were a mistake. "The city has exclusive jurisdiction over these cases and they are prosecuted in the city."⁴⁸ The city's response could well have been more than just a jurisdictional dispute. A second explanation probably related to the potential loss of revenue that came from collection of fines and court costs of women found guilty of disorderly conduct or operating a bawdy house. Dallas was in a financial crisis at this point.

⁴⁷ "Bought by Rock Island," *The Dallas Morning News*, July 30, 1902.

⁴⁸ "A Day in the Courts," *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, January 26, 1892.

Like other cities in the country, the depression of the 1890s hit Dallas hard. The city was practically bankrupt and forced to borrow money to pay expenses. The school board was not only unable to pay its running expenses, it was overdrawn.⁴⁹ The monies collected as fines and court costs in city courts was increasingly vital to the city's financial health. By late 1893, not was the city concerned about losing much needed monies to the District Court, a new problem developed with prostitutes invading "respectable" neighborhoods.

On September 12, Chief of Police J.C. Arnold reported to the city council that scores of lewd women were moving into the residential areas of the city. He proposed driving them out of the "respectable" parts of city and relocating them into one of the least objectionable areas of town. To his mind, the only workable strategy was not to close down public bawdy houses, but rather relocate them away from "decent" people and regulate them. According to the Chief, closing down vice centers would create a worse situation. The lewd women would scatter over the city, invading hotels, boarding houses, and rent houses. He reminded the council that past attempts to close bawdy houses proved a failure. The ordinance fining prostitutes once a month had no effect on closing or even slowing down the trade. Most aldermen were in favor of control rather than abolition. The chief recommended the city designate a specific location for segregating the "social evil." He personally believed the least objectionable location for

⁴⁹ Philip Lindsey, *A History of Dallas County and Vicinity* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), 224-5.

a Reservation was Jackson Street on the north, the Santa Fe Railroad on the east, Mill Creek on the south, and the Trinity River on the west.⁵⁰

There was a problem with this proposal. The city attorney, in a legal opinion, advised the city council that under the Dallas City Charter, the city had no power to relocate disorderly houses or in any manner consent to the existence of such houses. The ordinances absolutely prohibited the existence of such houses or businesses. The city, however, could instruct the police to prosecute violations only in selected locations of the city and ignore violations in another. Another option was to remit all fines in only a certain part of the city. The council expressed familiar sentiments in the ensuing debate. Unlike the mayor in 1886, Mayor Pro Tem J. H. McClellan characterized the prostitutes as a “necessary evil,” lamenting that “the poor wretches are somebody’s darlings.” Alderman A.W. Cochran parroted the Victorian Age sentiments of McClellan, asserting prostitution was not only a “necessary evil,” but it was their duty to protect the virtue of decent women by regulating vice. The ambivalence of many on the city council toward prostitution was most likely due to their own personal interests.

Alderman Patrick O’Keefe offered a surprising new view, claiming he *wanted* the red-light district in his ward. “While some of you elderly men may not be aware of it, I know by my own free will that the women are scattering all over the city and I want them all located in my ward.”⁵¹ O’Keefe, a colorful character, was not only a city alderman for the First Ward, he was also a saloonkeeper and proprietor of the Oriental

⁵⁰ “The Dallas City Council,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 13, 1893.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Saloon that had just relocated from the corner of Ervay and Jackson Street at 346 Main Street.⁵² O’Keefe was not, however, the only city official with a conflict of interest over vice district issues. J.C. Bogel, City Tax Collector and Lizzie Handley’s former lover, not only owned a saloon in the red-light district, but also several “houses of pleasure” between Market and Austin Streets.⁵³ J.C. Louckx, the city alderman who had fought Mayor Brown in 1886 over vice district issues, allegedly owned two houses of prostitution. The city leaders personally profiting from the red-light district were not anxious to close it down—especially in their own ward.

With a council whose vested interests lay with continuing prostitution, and after a bevy of toothless laws had been passed, the decision to follow San Antonio’s example of licensing gambling and prostitution was not surprising.⁵⁴ The city marshal was to raid and close down any establishment without a license.⁵⁵ Both gambling halls and houses of ill repute could continue business as usual (notwithstanding state and city statutes). The justification for passing the controversial ordinance was financial—the city stood to reap a “rich harvest” from collecting fines from prostitutes, revenue that would relieve

⁵² *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, September 6, 1893.

⁵³ *John Henry Brown's Memorial & Biographical History of Dallas County* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1892), 278 - 285.

⁵⁴ San Antonio passed an ordinance in 1890, licensing both gambling and prostitution.

⁵⁵ “Compound Legal Case Question of final jurisdiction intruding its huge presence. Great Evils Under Mask,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 3, 1890.

the city's debt. The city government was not only plagued by feuding aldermen; the treasury was almost bankrupt.⁵⁶

The new ordinance gained widespread comments from not only Dallas citizens but elsewhere in the country, including severe condemnation from moralists. Nevertheless, those who preferred a regulated district won the day. The boundaries of the newly-recognized Boggy Bayou Reservation began at Jackson Street on the North, the Santa Fe Railroad on the East, Mill Creek on the South and the Trinity River on the West. Dallas City Council Minutes from September 12, 1893 recorded that a council member instructed the chief of police to enforce the law by arresting all parties violating the disorderly house ordinance who resided outside the sanctioned limits of the Reservation. This Reservation included parlor houses, saloons, and gambling halls. In addition to Lizzie Handley's magnificent parlor houses, the Reservation including other well-known establishments such as Miss Lillie Cain's Red Light Saloon, the Two Johns Saloon, and Charlie Chunn's, an opium den. The prostitutes working out of parlor houses or upscale bordellos were described as "the finest and most beautiful west of New Orleans' fabled Storyville." In 1893, parts of Boggy Bayou might have been the favorite amusement area for some of Dallas' most prominent men, but the city's attempt to keep all of the prostitutes inside the Reservation's boundaries failed.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Barney Randolph McDonald, "The Growth of a City: Business, Politics, and Boosterism in Dallas, Texas, 1872—1914, (masters thesis: Texas Tech University, 1979), 53.

⁵⁷ William McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A photographic chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870 – 1925* (Dallas: The Dallas Historical Society, 1978), 27-8.

Despite the desire of local sporting men and profiting saloonkeeper/Aldermen to contain and control prostitution through licensing and regulation, the rest of the state and nation increased their efforts to do away with the red-light districts. By the end of the nineteenth century, prostitution, although a local problem, had escalated to state and national concern. In 1899, the Texas Senate addressed the plenary power of the Dallas City Charter, hoping to strike the section giving authority to license, regulate, locate, or prohibit disorderly houses and houses of prostitution and prostitutes, believing the commission had entirely too much power. At the heart of the debate was the belief that self-government was the essence of civil liberty.⁵⁸ Dallas city leaders, while weak and ineffective, were determined to keep a red-light district operational, regardless of state or national opinion. The most pressing problem was finding ways to control the “vicious trade.”

As the new century dawned, one of the few issues the apathetic and feuding city council agreed on was prostitution control. While they lamented the growing number of prostitutes plying their trade all over the city, the economic progress of a new railroad line created a situation that made the situation worse. The Rock Island Railroad line in 1902 resulted in demolishing bordellos along Market Street, displacing a number of bawds, who joined the already growing number of prostitutes migrating to respectable neighborhoods. The city’s attempts to suppress or control the “vicious commerce between men and women” had already proven impossible. Moreover, where it was

⁵⁸ “Work of Texas Lawmakers,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1899.

suppressed, legitimate businesses complained. The public demanded regulation of the social evil into a “precise, controlled location”—far away from their neighborhoods.⁵⁹

The city council continued to procrastinate, feud, and pass laws that it did little to enforce. In January of 1904, Alderman Charles Morgan presented a resolution to the council to create a new Reservation, this time in a more marginal region of the city. He argued that two successive grand juries had advocated a segregated Reservation.⁶⁰ In fact, a Dallas Grand Jury had suggested segregation of prostitutes in an “obscure portion of the city” in 1900.⁶¹ Morgan argued that “few, if any property owners will object” to relocating the bawdy trade to the new location. Under the new resolution, the Chief of Police would designate a plot of land whereby prostitutes would be free from arrest, so long as they conducted themselves in an orderly manner. All prostitutes found working outside the new boundaries would face arrest by the police beginning thirty days after establishing the new Reservation.⁶²

Two weeks later, the municipal commission referred the question of transferring the “Reservation” back to the city council, recommending passing an ordinance controlling the location or prohibiting saloons within any area known as a Reservation. Initially, the councilmen disapproved of Morgan’s plan to move the prostitutes to Frogtown. They determined that his resolution would move vice scattered over various

⁵⁹ Darwin Payne. *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2000), 49.

⁶⁰ “Council in Session—Important Action is Taken,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 12, 1904.

⁶¹ “Grand Jurors Report,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 30, 1900.

⁶² “Council in Session—Important Action is Taken,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 12, 1904.

neighborhoods exclusively into one section of the city, causing serious complaints from the residents and property owners. The city council prescribed boundaries for the “new” Reservation as north of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas station.⁶³ Almost a year would pass before the city revealed any steps taken relating to a new Reservation

The idea of creating a district in Frogtown moved ahead once again when Police Commissioner Louis Blaylock, Police Chief Knight, and two councilmen toured Frogtown to ascertain its condition. They reported to the city council in January of 1904 with the results of their investigation, which seemed to imply that the region could work, but needed a few modifications. Blaylock reported, “We found them bad enough. That section of the city must be made more decent. The question is how? Some very desperate characters live there and these we must apprehend. The women must be made to keep out of sight of persons who pass through the district on street cars, and furthermore, they must not parade the other parts of the city.”⁶⁴ Blaylock advocated keeping such a Reservation for prostitution in as orderly a district as possible. Chief Knight agreed with Blaylock’s proposal that the new Reservation be located in the Second Ward on the northwestern part of the city in the area referred to as Frogtown. He was not oblivious to problems relocating the “vicious trade” to Frogtown, and especially to the specific area inside this geographical location. Like Blaylock, he found the streetcar line running adjacent to the area particularly troublesome. Not only would the bawdy houses be in full view of women and children passengers on the street car

⁶³ “Back to the Council,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 26, 1904.

⁶⁴ “Tour of Inspection,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 1904.

line, but residents of Frogtown using public transportation would be forced to walk through or go around the Reservation.⁶⁵



Figure 12. Photograph of view of Frogtown. Foreground is intersection of Elm and N. Jefferson, known today as the West End Historical District. Beyond the warehouses are the MK&T depot and Frogtown. *Dallas Historical Society Archives*.

The announcement of the proposed Frogtown Reservation evoked a serious outcry. Members of the Dallas Free Kindergarten and Industrial Association lodged an official complaint and expressed strong opposition.⁶⁶ The Dallas Kindergarten Association had opened a Neighborhood House in Frogtown to teach the children of immigrants living in and around the area.⁶⁷ The society matrons did not want a vice

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Poles Coming Down," *Dallas Morning News*, January 15, 1904.

⁶⁷ In 1899, middle-class matrons of Dallas began running three kindergartens in Dallas, and formed the Dallas Free Kindergarten and Industrial Association in 1900. They provided teachers, lunch, and daily baths for the children. The children came from

center in the vicinity of children or in an area they would be traveling themselves. The original urban landscape of this neighborhood had degenerated from a family neighborhood in the late 1880s of socially mobile citizens, to a multicultural neighborhood of marginalized and subordinated poor and working class people. By 1904, the demographics of Frogtown included Russian, Swedes, Italians, Spaniards, blacks, and poor whites. Housing was predominately small, run-down structures, a great number of shotgun-styled houses. A number of saloons dotted the landscape.

What is significant about the announcement selecting Frogtown as the new Reservation in 1904 is that although there were prostitutes in this neighborhood at that time, they were scattered and not located in the small area selected by police officials. The announcement would spark a dramatic change in the demographics of this area. Both real estate investors and prostitutes would create a concentrated area of the “vicious trade” in a small area formally home to poor families.

Between the end of 1904 and 1906, little mention of the proposed Frogtown Reservation appeared in the newspapers. The council, however, did debate the issue of saloons in and around bawdy houses. In addition, in October 1905, the city attorney discussed the decision of the Garza Case (in San Antonio), which related to licensing disorderly houses in the face of the State statute prohibiting the existence of same. The Garza ruling was significant because the justice declared emphatically that the legislature did not intend to grant cities power like those wielded by San Antonio in

German, English, French, Polish, and Russian backgrounds. By 1905, the enrollment for the three kindergarten schools numbered 370.

enacting an ordinance to create a Reservation contrary to State law. He characterized the ordinance as “repugnant to the general law of State.”⁶⁸ The Garza ruling should have made it clear to city leaders that their plans to follow San Antonio’s example and license houses of prostitution would meet the same fate in the courts. Yet Dallas was determined to find a way to keep a red-light district in operation, whether its methods met the letter of the law or not.

By 1905, the battle against prostitution stretched from city hall to the church house and mission to the legislature. But for all his rhetoric of “repugnance,” the city attorney was no closer to taking serious action against prostitution than had been Mayor Brown in 1886. Many judges, including those at the district level and the state, had expressed outrage over the “vicious trade.” The city council had experimented with higher fines, lower fines, licensing, both more and less tolerance, and had already created one red-light district in Boggy Bayou, despite pressure not to do so. Old-school politics, with saloonkeepers as aldermen and city officials cozy with brothel keepers, as well as dependence on prostitution fines as a revenue source meant Mayor Brown and other campaigners against tolerance of prostitution of Dallas had lost this battle. But a new one was coming.

⁶⁸ “Common on Opinion,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 15, 1905.

CHAPTER 3

THE LAST BATTLE FOR A RED-LIGHT DISTRICT IN DALLAS: 1906-1913

Whereas, It is currently reported and is admitted by the Chief of Police that he and the Police Commissioner have established a “Reservation” in the Second Ward, where they propose to locate the disreputable element of the city: and

Whereas, in accordance with their program, they have begun to establish these dregs of society among the good people of the Second Ward, the effect of which will be to destroy the property values of the citizens thereof and drive them and their families from their homes; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Police Commissioner and the Chief of Police be and are hereby requested to report in writing at the next regular meeting to this body just what steps have been taken by them with reference to the establishment of said “Reservation” and by virtue of what law, or what provision of the charter or ordinances of the city they have assumed the authority to thus invade the property and home rights of the citizens of the Second Ward.

Resolution of Alderman W.G. Edwards, Aug 6, 1906

Alderman Edwards’ facetious rant in 1906 reveals several problems reformers of prostitution still faced in Dallas, despite the emergence of so many opponents in the years between 1890 and 1905. His effort to isolate the police chief and police commissioner as responsible for justifying the “Reservation” strategy invoked a problem that would occupy the city government intensively over the next few years, and a reorganization of urban government. By 1907, Dallas ended its alderman system, moving instead to a more responsive and rational city-commission form of government.

As calls for this government reform heated up, citizens groups emerged, one of which specifically addressed the location of the new segregated district in Frogtown. Their arguments reflected another aspect of Edward's diatribe, the impact a segregated district policy had as the "disreputable. . . dregs of society" established their presence among "good people." Thus over the period between 1906 and 1913, shifting urban demographics, new reform initiatives, and the disorganization that accompanied first urban government reform and then a dispute between state and city authority meant that the battle over the last red-light district in Dallas, Frogtown, was protracted. In the end, an alliance between those groups that had emerged in the 1890s with citizens who had the power of state law and the Texas Supreme Court behind them, eventually triumphed.

As Chapter One indicated, the City of Dallas had battled with prostitution since 1874. The fact that the first red-light district flourished for almost thirty years bears proof that a weak city government did little to stem the growth of the "vicious trade" in spite of passing numerous ordinances. This toleration of commercialized sex allowed women such as Lizzie Handley and Annie Wilson to amass personal fortunes, and move and operate freely within business and legal venues. With the exception of the occasional fine and court cost, prostitutes met little resistance or reason to change their ways or leave the city. By the turn of the century, the Boggy Bayou red-light district had grown to the point that almost every block had at least one house of ill repute, if not more.

By the year 1906, the *de facto* Reservation in the Boggy Bayou area had been in existence for thirty-two years, and encompassed a large geographical area on the south side of downtown Dallas. The only event that had any impact on the Reservation was the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad line in 1902, and even that affected only the bordellos located along South Market Street. Nothing the city officials, state legislators, or private citizens attempted minimized the “social evil.” It not only continued to thrive but spilled over into residential neighborhoods. Although prostitution was not limited to Boggy Bayou, it was not concentrated in another geographical area prior to the 1904.

In 1904, the city councilmen debated finding an “obscure” location to relocate the “social evil” and selected a small section in the Second Ward as the proposed Reservation. On several levels, Frogtown was a logical choice. It was a large area inhabited by subordinated and marginalized immigrants and African Americans, who the city believed would be least likely to launch objections.¹ The problem with the city’s proposal was not that the new Reservation was to be in Frogtown, but *where* in Frogtown the Reservation would be located. There was nothing “obscure” about the geographical area selected by the city. The proposed area was closest to the central business district and situated along side a major streetcar line. A second problem was the geographical area was entirely too small to accommodate the number of prostitutes in the city. Undoubtedly, a number of prostitutes already lived in the area. However, until after the announcement of 1904, they did not live within the boundaries of the proposed Reservation. Actually, the city council’s announcement in 1904 to set aside a

¹ “Tour of Inspection,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 1904.

portion of Frogtown for a sanctioned Reservation had precipitated an influx of young, single, or unattached, females into the proposed legal boundaries. During the interlude between the city's first announcement in 1904 and their second announcement in 1906, the Frogtown area steadily filled with prostitutes. In 1906, a North Dallas resident complained to the city council, "Lewd persons are steadily and rapidly insinuating themselves into the section from which we are trying to exclude them. Only a matter of time before a Reservation will have been established here if something is not done to rid the ward of objectionable characters." A reported twenty-five "disorderly characters" were moving in a day.² The city's announcements in 1904 and 1906 literally created a red-light district where one had not existed before.³

The City Council's propensity to procrastinate did not improve. After the announcement in 1904, little was mentioned about the proposed Reservation until 1906. In November of 1906, they once again announced plans to segregate an area within the Frogtown area as the "legally" sanctioned red-light district.⁴ By this time, the little shotgun-styled shacks in the Griffin Street area of the proposed Reservation (formerly home to the working poor) had transformed into "cribs" for low-class prostitutes. Typically, if women of vice centers kept a low profile and avoided offending the "decent" folk, they were left in relative peace, except for the occasional arrest. As the

² "Reach No Definite Decision," *Dallas Morning News*, September 22, 1906.

³ A review of the Dallas County census reports for 1900 and 1910, together with city directories of 1900 to 1906 reveal that up until 1905, the demographics of the area was mainly men, or families with children. Beginning in 1905, the demographics changed to show single females living in the area. A review of Murphy & Bolanz real estate maps of the same area show a high number of real estate transactions prior to the city officially sanctioning the Frogtown Reservation.

⁴ "Board has Fixed Lines," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 14, 1910.

Griffin Street cribs filled with bawds, the women regularly offended by passers by standing on their front stoops, generally dressed in flimsy underwear, loudly soliciting for business.⁵ Ted Dealey, son of *Dallas Morning News* mogul, George B. Dealey, remembers the red-light districts from his boyhood days. “You could see a weekly parade on horseback on Griffin Street of those painted lovelies. And the brazen hussies rode astride in their saddles!”⁶

Frogtown was already the focus of a number of Progressive reform and help movements. In addition to a Settlement House and free kindergarten program, several churches were located within the neighborhood to see to the residents’ needs. Rev. James Kirkland, pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church commented on “great and sad change taking place in personnel of residents of the ward.”⁷ He lamented that the young people of his parish were subject to sights not fitting for the young. Both children, as well as adults were forced to pass through “disorderly neighborhoods” on their way to and from work and school. Respectable women were afraid to ride streetcars at night or walk in the area without enduring insults by rowdies or half-drunk men. The close proximity of the only streetcar line leading to and from North Dallas brought all passengers in contact with Frogtown inmates. In spite of the growing problems, city leaders, legal officials, and a number of citizens still believed segregation was the only solution to prevent the “vicious trade” from spreading further throughout the city.

⁵ Payne, 48.

⁶ Dealey, 75.

⁷ “Reach no Definite Decision,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 22, 1906.

Not everyone agreed with the city's proposal.⁸ Major opposition came from two very different groups—for two very different reasons, and initially delayed passage of the 1906 Frogtown proposal. Religious leaders and reformers opposed the proposal for moral reasons. Sanctioning what was not only morally wrong, but also clearly illegal, was in their eyes the same as giving the city's approval for sin. While the city might well have anticipated objections from religious reformers, the second group came as a surprise. These objectors aggressively opposed not the notion of sanctioning prostitution, but rather the location of the Reservation. The motivations of the group stemmed from the proposed Reservation's location in the center of the city, not on its margins, as Houston's red-light district would be. Much of the literature has failed to recognize the role of citizenship groups of this nature.⁹ Still, the distance between those who opposed the red-light district for moral reasons versus those who simply objected for geographical reasons, meant that for several years the proponents could hold them off.

When the city announced its plans in 1906 to create a sanctioned and segregated Reservation in the Frogtown neighborhood, a new citizenship group mounted an

⁸ "Poles Coming Down," *Dallas Morning News*, January 16, 1904; "Reach No Definite Decision," *Dallas Morning News*, September 22, 1906

⁹ Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue, The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 148-9. Certain residents in Houston, Texas filed law suits against brothels located in a traditional vice area. When some of the brothels dispersed and invaded respectable neighborhoods and others moved next to a local school, the citizens mounted a campaign to create a new Reservation in an obscure location. They pressed for a change in the city charter to allow the creation of a separate district for prostitution. The ordinance passed in 1907, and a new vice district was located in an undeveloped area on the outskirts of town. The Reservation remained in operation until the federal government forced Houston to close it down at the start of World War I.

offence. The announcement, together with the continuing and progressively offensive public behavior of lewd women in the area prompted protest from residents of adjoining wards.¹⁰ Although Frogtown was home to mainly poor and working-class residents, the neighborhoods immediately north of its boundaries included many of the elite citizens and business leaders of Dallas. Prominent residents included William H. Abrams, Land and Tax Commissioner of the Texas & Pacific Railroad; Jean B. Adoue, President of the National Bank of Commerce and later Mayor of Dallas; James Harry, vice president of a local bank; William C. Kimbrough, partner of the law firm of Wooten & Kimbrough; J. S. Mayfield, founder of Mayfield Lumber; and George Dealey, publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*.¹¹ Unlike religious reformers or churchmen, objections based on immorality or sin were *not* the issue. The strenuous debates over the ordinance centered not on morals but rather real estate. From their perspective, the idea of segregating all the prostitutes of Dallas within blocks of this upscale bastion of Dallas society was intolerable. Had the city officials selected any other neighborhood away from these upper- to middle-class residents, there would have been much less opposition.

North Dallas residents mounted a campaign against the proposed ordinance. The North Dallas Citizens Alliance actually supported the concept of segregating a vice center in an effort to contain and control prostitution--just not in their backyard!¹² They undertook an aggressive four-year campaign to persuade the City of Dallas to change

¹⁰ "Comment on Opinion," *Dallas Morning News* October 15, 1905.

¹¹ "Allen House Details and History," available from <http://www.firstlondon.com>. (Accessed November 28, 2008).

¹² "Prepared to Fight," *Dallas Morning News*, August 18, 1906.

the segregated red-light district to a different area of the city, vowing to take matters into their own hands and “invoke the majesty of law to protect them and their property from objectionable characters of these kinds.”¹³ In spite of their opposition to the ordinance, their ideology of containment of commercialized sex conformed more to city officials, law enforcement, and jurists in Dallas than with religious reformers and church groups. Although none actually “approved” of prostitution or red-light districts, most adopted a pragmatic view that controlled and licensed prostitution was the lesser evil to growing numbers of the trade invading “decent” neighborhoods and spreading across the city. This orientation meant they made poor allies with purity reformers like Virginia Johnson or holiness reformers like Tony Upchurch. While all of them wanted the Frogtown Reservation closed down, the North Dallas Citizens Alliance had no problem with relocating the bawds to another locale in Dallas.

The North Dallas crusade, although unusual, was not unique. In 1903, the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, decided to relocate and combine the First Street district with the Eleventh Ave district in the Sixth Ward. The citizens of the Sixth Ward initiated a movement not only to prevent the relocation, but to wipe out prostitution altogether on Eleventh Ave. Like the North Dallas group, their movement was in the nature of an abatement of a local nuisance rather than a crusade against vice on moral grounds. Like the North Dallas group, they insisted they had the right to clean up their own backyard.¹⁴ The North Dallas group’s crusade to dissuade the City of Dallas from passing an

¹³ “Many Sign Protest,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 12, 1906.

¹⁴ Edwin R.A. Seligman, Ed, *Prostitution in America—Three Investigations, 1902-1914* (New York: Arnot Press, 1976),

ordinance segregating the “vicious trade” into the Frogtown area would continue until the ordinance was passed in November 1910.¹⁵

The North Dallas Improvement League No. 1. initially formed to review city ordinances affecting civic improvement, joined forces with the North Dallas Citizens Alliance.¹⁶ A committee of fifty was formed to canvass North Dallas wards and gather signatures to present to the city council. Several committee members were lawyers; many were presidents or general managers of companies such as the Brown Cracker and Candy Company, Continental Savings & Loan, American & Exchange National Bank, Doolittle & Simpson Company, Keating Implements & Machines, Ogburn-Delchase Lumber Company, A. G. Wills Lumber, Black Land Lumber, and Dallas Lumber Company. Committee members worked in positions such as wholesale commission merchant, store manager, buyer, clerk, and even a peddler. This group was comprised of some of the leading and most influential businessmen of the city.¹⁷

Considering the large geographical area the three North Dallas Wards covered, the question that arises is how close the Reservation was to the “backyard” of the League members.

¹⁵ The group was so committed to their cause, they would eventually carry their lawsuit against the City of Dallas to the Texas Supreme Court. As they saw it, the red-light district was detrimental to businesses in close proximity and standing menace to the morals of the community.

¹⁶ “North Dallas Improvement,” *Dallas Morning News*. February 03, 1910.

¹⁷ Worley’s City Directory, 1910 (*Dallas Public Library*)

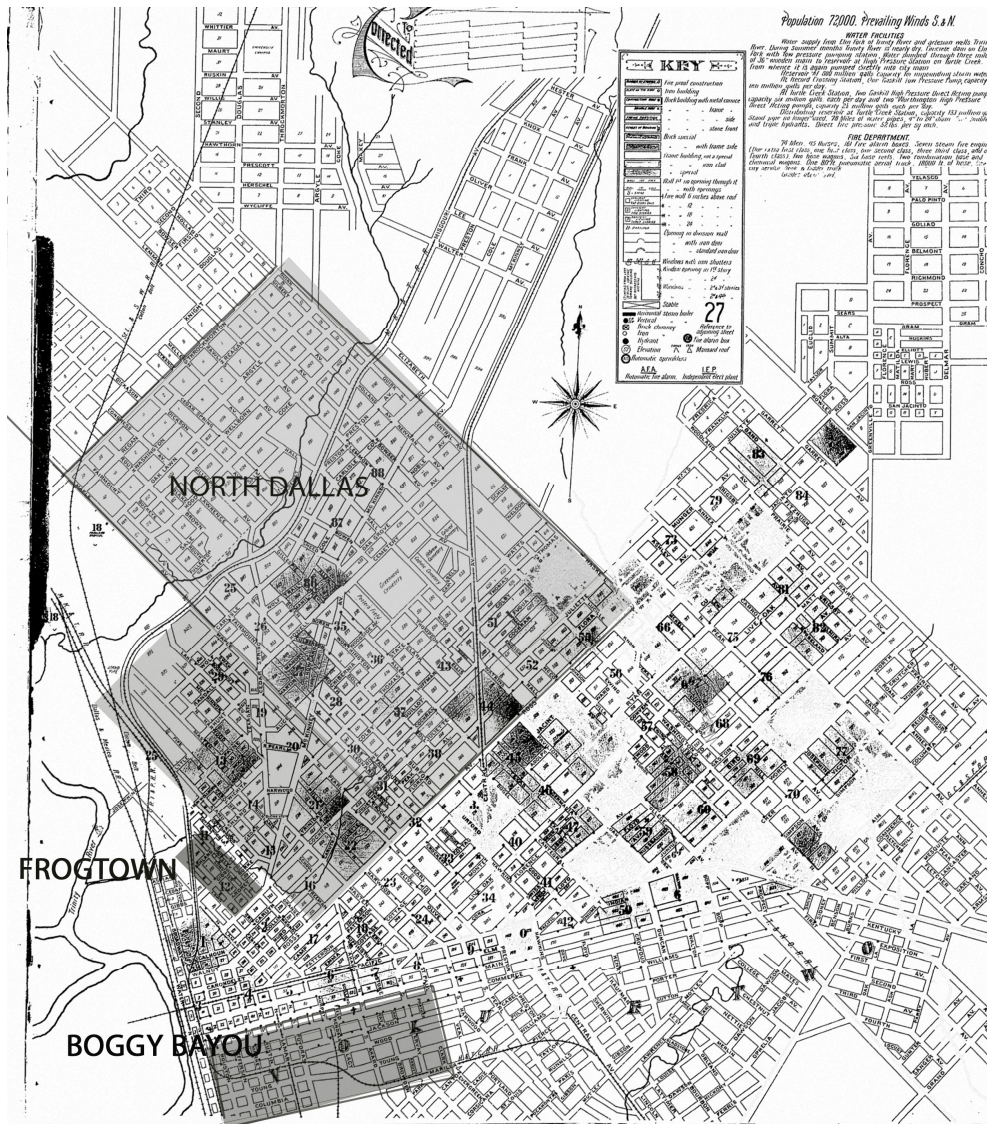


Figure 13 Map of Dallas including Frogtown and Boggy Bayou Reservations and North Dallas Wards. Illustrates close proximity of the Frogtown Reservation to North Dallas and the significant spatial difference between the two red-light districts. *Sanborn Historical Map,*

It is clear from Figure 13 that many of the residents in the wards lived far enough from the proposed Reservation that they could afford to ignore the problem. However, at least two committee members lived on Caroline Street, a mere three blocks from the Dallas Branch, the eastern border of the proposed Reservation. For them, the

shrill laughter, blood-curdling screams, and the jangle of pianos that filled the Frogtown area were close enough to hear on a nightly basis.

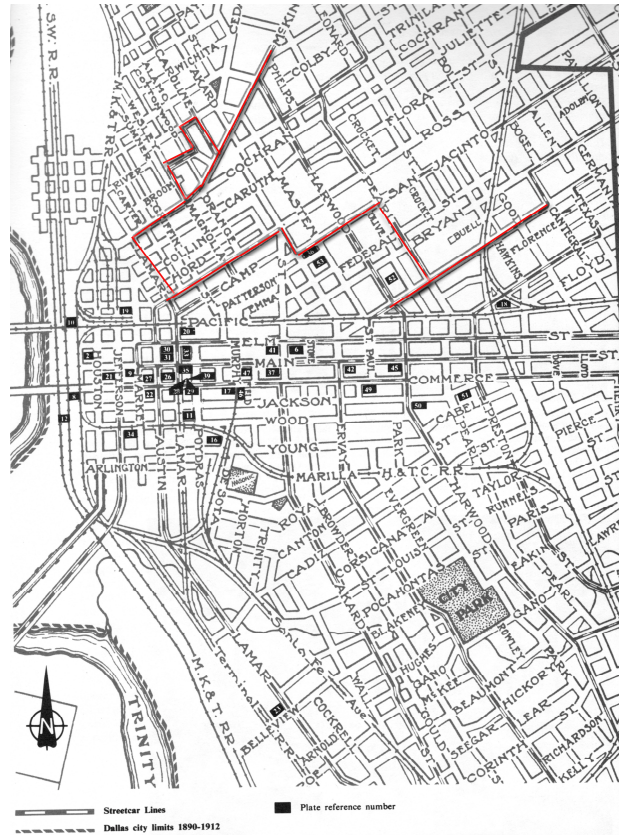


Figure 14. Street Car Route Map. Shows route from North Dallas Residential Area which Looped through Frogtown Reservation.

For the other, more distant residents, the changing urban geography and the advent of mass transportation made their “backyard” much larger than it ever had been. A streetcar line ran down McKinney (which turned into Cochran) traveling past at least four blocks of bordellos and seedy cribs. (Figure 14) As law-abiding men and women used the streetcar, they passed the scantily-clad prostitutes soliciting business on the porches of their “cribs.” Historically, prostitutes could carry on their profession with a minimum of harassment as long as they did not call undue attention to themselves or

offend the citizens. The streetcar route undoubtedly intensified the League's determination to prevent the city from declaring the Frogtown area a sanctioned, segregated Reservation. They promised a "most persistent and vigorous" fight was to achieve their goal.¹⁸

When leaders of the North Dallas group first announced in 1906 their readiness to fight, they made it clear who their adversary was. William Moroney, both an attorney and a member of the Committee of Fifty of the North Dallas League, expressed his belief that it was wrong to prosecute prostitutes. The morality or immorality of women was not an issue. Even the "fallen woman" must make a living. The enemies, Moroney claimed, were the property owners who made huge profits off the degradation of women and did it in the wrong part of town. He suggested enjoining property owners, agents, and proprietors in a legal action and strongly advised using injunction and abatement suits against them. The following week, Nat G. Turney, former Alderman for the First Ward and attorney-at-law, explained the injunction and abatement procedure, and outlined how the League could use it in a court of law. He denied the right of the city or its officers to establish a sanctioned red-light district, stating that the Texas Legislature did not have the power to delegate such a privilege to any city. The city's proposal not only exceeded their authority, it violated the laws of the State of Texas.¹⁹

¹⁸ "Action of Citizens: North Dallas Residents Protest Against Proposed Location of Reservation," *Dallas Morning News*, August 15, 1906.

¹⁹ "Action of Citizens: North Dallas Residents Protest Against Proposed Location of Reservation," *Dallas Morning News*, August 15, 1906.

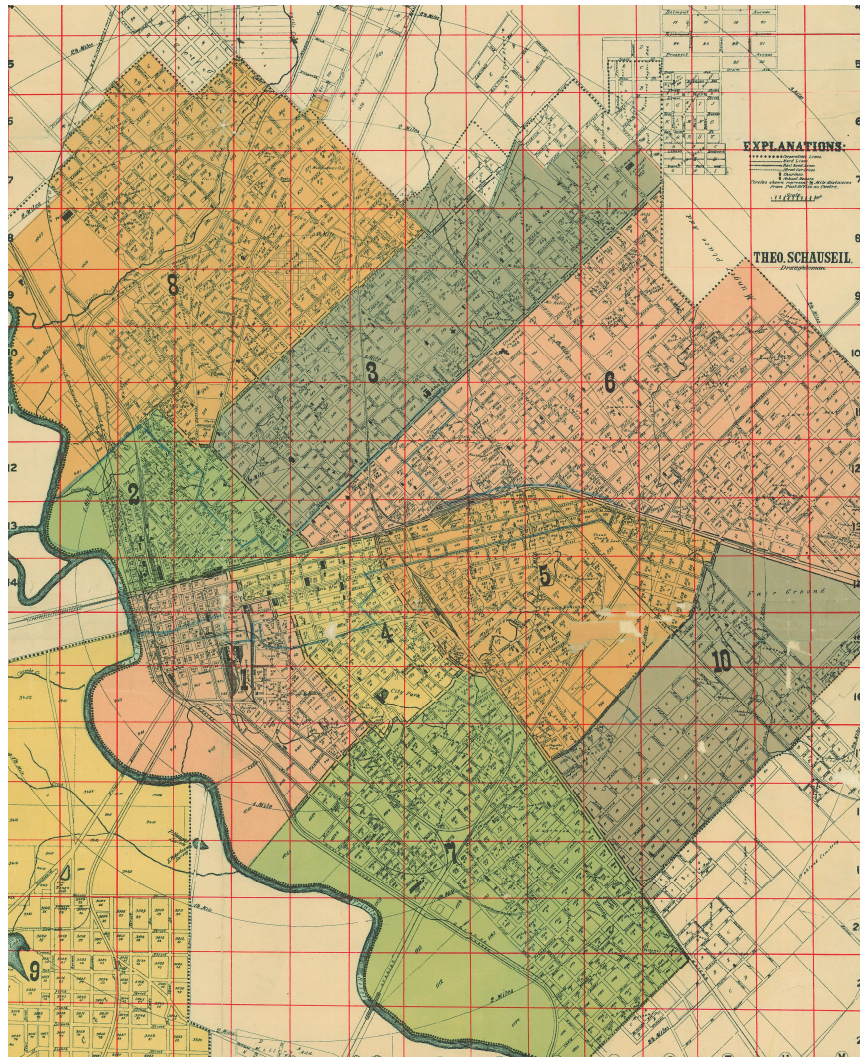


Figure 15. Map of Dallas Political Wards. Includes the Second, Third, and Eighth Wards represented by the North Dallas Citizen's Alliance. Frogtown was part of the Second Ward and the North Dallas protest group included Frogtown residents. (circa 1905)

Judge Tuney, a member of the League, did admit that his own personal preference was to confine the social evil to a specified district where it would be under the strict eye of the law. But like the League, he declared that if there was need for a sanctioned district, it should not be near the North Dallas Wards. He also agreed it would be best to enjoin the owners of the property and the persons managing them. A

week later League members agreed to cooperate with city authorities if possible, but also decided to take independent action if necessary. They proposed to conduct a door-to-door survey of the buildings in the Second, Third, and Eighth Wards. Frogtown is in the Second Ward, while the Third and Eighth Wards were part of the North Dallas residential area. The purpose of the survey was to determine how congested the neighborhoods were with prostitutes in order to debate the city's claims that the sex trade was already a big part of the geographical landscape.²⁰

Even as the North Dallas group moved forward, conflicts with the city suggested the assault on Frogtown was multi-pronged. At a meeting in September, the City Attorney advised the commissioners that according to State law they had no legal right to designate a certain territory for vice within the corporate limits of the city. Advice from the City's legal department that the proposed ordinance was in direct conflict with state law had little effect either. In 1906, the Dallas City Council remained determined to create a sanctioned and segregated area aside for prostitutes, and it seemed Frogtown was the best option. Representatives from the Ninth Ward (which included part of Boggy Bayou) had little sympathy for the North Dallas League. They argued that it was unfair for one part of the city (referring to Frogtown) to refuse what another part of the city had already suffered with for years. The residents and businesses in the Ninth Ward had been plagued for over twenty years with the Boggy Bayou red-light district. They were tired of passing through neighborhoods unfit for families. If the city insisted on keeping a segregated red-light district, it was time to let another part of town put up

²⁰ "Discuss 'Reservation' Matter." *Dallas Morning News*. August 25, 1906.

with it. Relocating the Reservation to Frogtown would isolate the “vicious trade” from streetcar lines, promenade streets, and “respectable” families, at least to the southwest side of town. Of course, North Dallas residents argued that moving the Reservation to the northwest side of town would ultimately place the “vicious trade” along side their streetcar line, promenade streets, and “respectable” families.²¹ The same argument was heard over and over again. Those who were convinced a segregated Reservation was the *only* solution to keeping the “social evil” from infesting the decent neighborhoods of the city drew the line if it meant the disreputable riff-raff would be close to their own homes (except, of course, those that stood to profit from vice centers).

In September of 1906, the Trinity Methodist Church social hall was reportedly “filled to capacity” as the North Dallas League met to protest the city council’s decision to segregate vice in the Frogtown area. Private investigators identified fifty bawdy houses and “lewd characters” already residing in the Frogtown area.²² Segregation would only add to that number.²³ The North Dallas group believed the city would respect the arguments of some of the most influential men in Dallas, and find another location for a new Reservation. Their efforts to lobby the city council began in earnest.

However, before their efforts came to fruition, long-standing charges of inefficiency in government led to several years where the focus shifted not to precise policies the city should pursue, but rather the entire organization of government.

Between 1906 and 1907, Dallas underwent a significant reform of government. The

²¹ "Sets Aside Money," *Dallas Morning News*, September 12, 1906.

²² "Many Sign Protest," *Dallas Morning News*, September 15, 1906.

²³ "Prepared to Fight," *Dallas Morning News*, August 18, 1906.

local form of government changed in 1907 from a council/mayor government to a commission government. One of the positive features of the new government was it was designed to do away with the self-seeking alderman who only cared for the needs of their wards. The new government consisted of a mayor and four commissioners, all with both executive and legislative powers. This government was designed along “business principles” with clear lines of accountability.²⁴

The issue of segregating the Frogtown red-light district received little public attention for three years by either the North Dallas group or the new city government. If the opponents to a segregated red-light district harbored hopes that the new city government would ignore the plans for a Reservation in Frogtown, they were to be disappointed. The new Commissioners shared the same notion as most of the aldermen that segregation was the only solution to controlling prostitution. One plan they did implement during the lull was work with the state legislature to make amendments to the City Charter, including adding a clause allowing the creation of a sanctioned and segregated Reservation.²⁵ During this same period, the state legislature passed a law giving citizens such as the North Dallas group ammunition that had the potential to close down all bawdy houses in the city.

In July 1910, a *Dallas Morning News* article reported that a Chicago grand jury indicted an owner for leasing a building for immoral uses. The newspaper reporter characterized the indictment as “unique” and stated that if it stood, the effect would be

²⁴ Robert Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press: 1998), 22-23.

²⁵ The literature does not explain the reasons it took three years to officially sanction and segregate the Frogtown Reservation.

revolutionary.²⁶ The reporter proved correct. Although holding owners responsible for the immorality of tenants certainly could not completely shut down the business of commercialized prostitution, it was effective in closing down houses of ill repute and forcing lewd women find other housing. Few owners could afford to pay fines of \$100 to \$200 *per day* their property continued to be used for immoral activity. Indictments such as those handed down in Chicago had already closed down bawdy houses at an amazing rate in vice districts across the country. The Texas State Legislature had already considered such a strategy back in 1907 and passed Article 4689. Under *Texas Revised Civil Statutes*, Articles 4689 and 4690, “any private citizen of Texas is entitled at his suit to have a bawdy house abated by means of injunction without the necessity of showing personal injury.”²⁷ This state law permitted a citizen to file an injunction against owners, agents, or occupants of bawdy houses. The injunction and abatement laws had the authority to accomplish what years of arrests and fines against prostitutes could not do, hit the owners in their pocketbooks and actually close down houses of ill repute. The same article, however, included a proviso giving municipalities acting under special charters the right to pass ordinances permitting the operation of bawdy houses if restricted to a designated district. The new abatement law and the special charter set the stage for battle between the city and North Dallas League.

According to the *Dallas Morning News*, the judge of the 14th District Court granted writs on October 14, 1910, restraining alleged proprietors of bawdy houses

²⁶ “Contemporary Thoughts—Landlords and Immoral Tenants,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 11, 1910.

²⁷ Nicole Stelle Garnett, “Relocating Disorder,” *Virginia Law Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5, September 2005, Notre Dame Legal Studies Paper No. 05-04.

from operating within the Dallas city limits. The article asserted that the County Attorney and attorneys for the North Dallas residents appeared before the court to obtain two injunctions in their campaign against segregation on Griffin Street.²⁸ Actually, many writs were served on owners and keepers of bawdy houses in October of 1910, and they were not limited to Griffin Street houses. Vice Court Records included approximately eighty Writs of Injunction identifying not only houses of ill repute, but more important, the owners of said property. Although the Vice Court Records probably contain only a fraction of writs filed against owners, keepers, or agents of bawdy houses, they positively identify a number of locations. Of the collection, twenty-nine houses on Griffin Street, and forty-seven addresses outside Frogtown are cited. A number of writs and petitions served on Elm Street addresses were hotels or other businesses.²⁹ The Writs of Injunction commanded the defendants to “[D]esist and refrain from the actual or threatened use of the premises ... as a bawdy house, and from permitting or allowing prostitutes to resort to or reside in said premises for the purpose of plying their vocation as prostitutes, and from aiding and abetting in

²⁸ “New Step is Taken - North Dallasites Invoke Injunction Writs Against Bawdy House,” *Dallas Times Herald*, October 16, 1910.

²⁹ The Dallas Public Library Archives secured two manuscript boxes containing what it labeled “Vice Court Records.” (Apparently, old misdemeanor court files are destroyed after a certain period of time.) An alert archivist saved what offers invaluable information relating to the alleged red-light district’s geographical locations and the owners of properties. Most of the documents are original copies of Writs of Injunctions issued between October 7 and 15, 1910. Some of the files also include the Plaintiffs’ Original Petition, Citations, Sheriff’s Certificate of Service, Defendant’s Answer and Affidavits. None of the files are complete and the decisions of the court are missing. While this collection is at best a small sampling of the cases filed during this period, it does offer important information relating to personalities involved in commercialized prostitution and identify spatial concentrations of houses of ill repute throughout the downtown area.

the use of such premises or any other premises within the corporate limits of the City of Dallas, Tex for the purposes aforesaid.³⁰ The penalty for keeping a bawdy house was a fine up to \$200 and confinement in the county jail for *each day* the residence was used for immoral purposes and would remain in full effect should the proprietor move to another location and continue immoral behavior within the city limits.

It was not unusual for a writ of injunction to charge more than one defendant for “keeping a bawdy house” at more than one address. The defendants were typically the property owner, the “keeper” or madam, and sometimes the real estate agent. (The penal code allowed injunctions against real estate agents, proprietors, and inmates of bawdy houses.)

Figures 16 and 17 are Sanborn Fire Maps marked to identify a number of addresses named in the Writs of Injunction. The shaded structures illustrate not only the number of houses of prostitution, but also the dramatic difference between structures in the two Reservations. It is important to note that the map of Frogtown structures completely encompasses the entire Reservation, while the map of Boggy Bayou is merely a sampling of bawdy houses found within its large geographical boundaries. The pattern seems to reflect the influence of well-placed investors of houses of ill repute. For the first time, we can positively identify many of the owners and landlords of bawdy houses.

³⁰ Language contained in Writ of Injunction found in Vice Court Record collection.

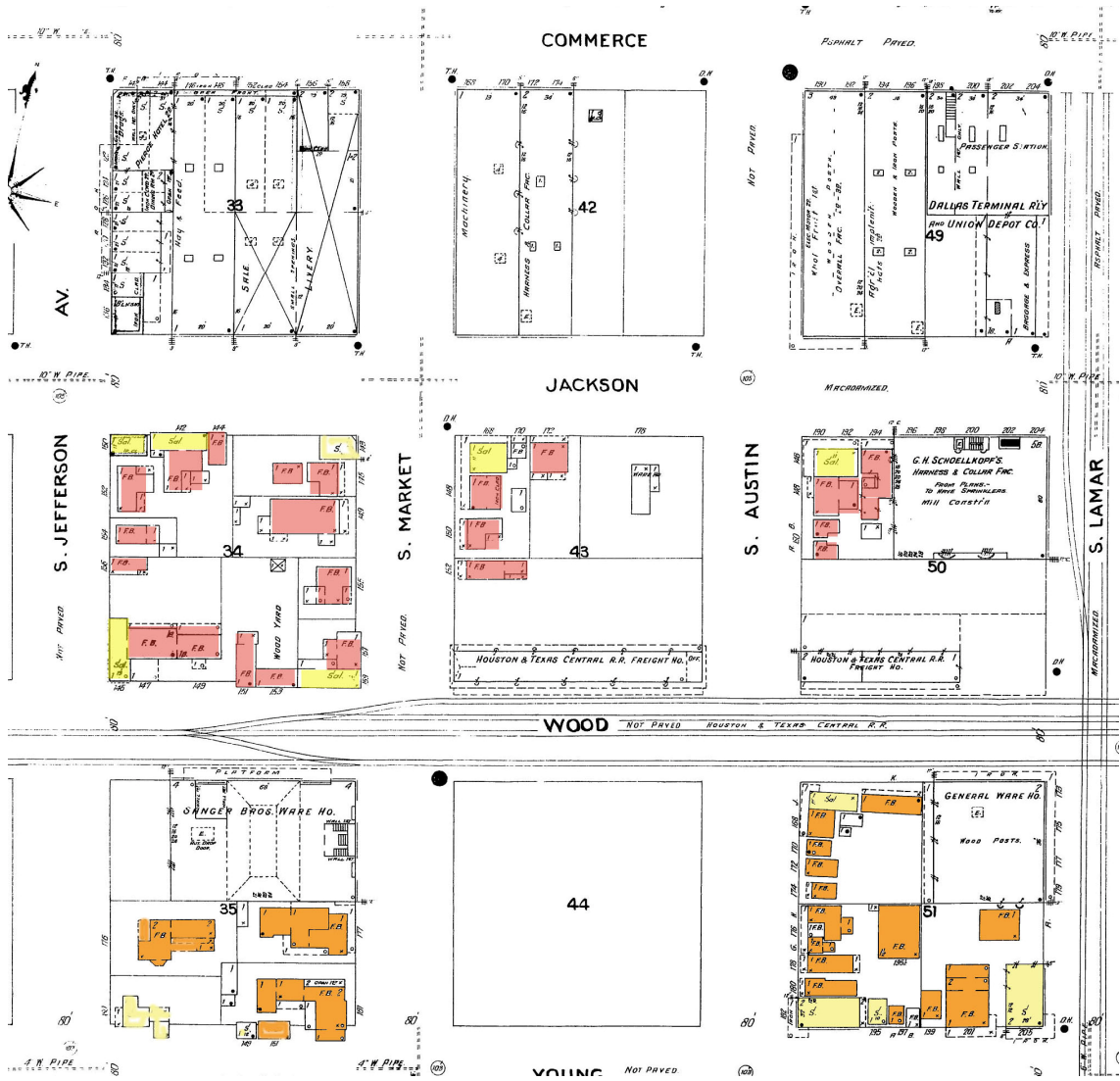


Figure 16 Bawdy Houses in Boggy Bayou cited with Writs of Injunction. Shaded structures are only a few of the bawdy houses in Boggy Bayou receiving Writs of Injunction in October 1910. Darker shaded structures are bordellos. Lighter shaded structures are saloons. *Sanborn Historical Map*



Figure 17. Map of entire Frogtown Reservation. Properties served with writs of injunction in October, 1910 according to Vice Court Records shaded. 1905 Sanborn Historical Map

Timothy Gilfoyle argued that owning a house of ill repute was an avenue of upward mobility for ambitious working or lower-middle class entrepreneurs.³¹ Several of the many owners in Dallas' houses of ill repute could be included in this class, The Vice Court Records of 1910 identified owners of bawdy houses. Twenty-three of the eighty defendants cited with Injunctions either owned or were proprietor of two or more properties. R.M. Chastain, clerk at Transfer Drug, owned a two-story house at 2227 Griffin Street. Chastain was co-owner of two bordellos located at 2116-2115 Griffin Street. His partner was the highly respected surgeon, Dr. W. W. Samuel. G.M. Ezell, a carpenter, owned a large rambling house at 1205 Broom Street.³² Clearly, the city's many years of tolerating prostitution had created an adverse and wealthy group of investors, including some who had used prostitution to fund other more respectable enterprises.

Charles Kaufman provides the best example of a small businessman who climbed up the economic ladder. He came from modest means and aggressively made what probably amounted to a fortune, and apparently was never burdened too heavily by the Victorian morals that governed many others of his day. Kaufman and his wife immigrated to the United States from Austria in 1885. It seems likely he arrived penniless as some Austrian Jews at that time. However, by 1900 the U.S. Census lists him as a saloonkeeper in New York City. The Kaufmans migrated to Texas around

³¹ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros—New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790—1920* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 45.

³² Payne, *Big D*, 51-2.

1903.³³ By October of 1910, he not only owned a grocery store in the Boggy Bayou area and at least one saloon, but at least thirteen bawdy houses. Most of Kaufman's bawdy houses or cribs were located on Griffin Street in the heart of the most contested area relating to the city ordinance. He owned what appeared to be an entire side of one block on Griffin Street (284, 286, 288, 290, 292, and 294). James L. Wilson and Birdie Pryor were co-defendants with Kaufman for these addresses. It is not clear what Wilson and Pryor's relationship might have been to Kaufman. Neither is listed as residents of any of the properties in the City Directory for years 1910 through 1913. In addition to the Griffin Street properties, Kaufman owned bawdy houses in the Boggy Bayou area located at 166 Poydras Street, 1007 Wood Street, and properties on Young Street (1029, 1100, 1102, 1103, 1104, and 1106). Once again, the writs included co-defendants with Kaufman. It is quite possible the women listed as his co-defendants were the keepers or madams of the house.³⁴

Not all of the owners were absentee landlords. As Lizzie Handley and Annie Wilson's stories illustrate, several madams owned their own establishments. Fannie Howard, who owned several bordellos in Boggy Bayou, was one of the owners cited in writs in 1910. Her story provides a telling contrast to those of Lizzie Handley and Annie Wilson, and highlights how the "Golden Age of the Bordello" was long gone. However, her story also shows that large profits were still possible, and undoubtedly played a part

³³ Manhattan Borough, New York Federal Census. 1900, Enumeration District 286, Line 14, Enumerated on 4 June 1900.

³⁴ In June 1913, Charles Kaufman was convicted for the 1908 murder of his former partner, Abe Moskowitz and sentenced to eight years in the penitentiary. "Charles Kaufman Found Guilty," *Dallas Morning News*, June 14, 1913.

in sustaining the fight for red-light districts even after powerful forces like the North Dallas Improvement League had lined up against it.

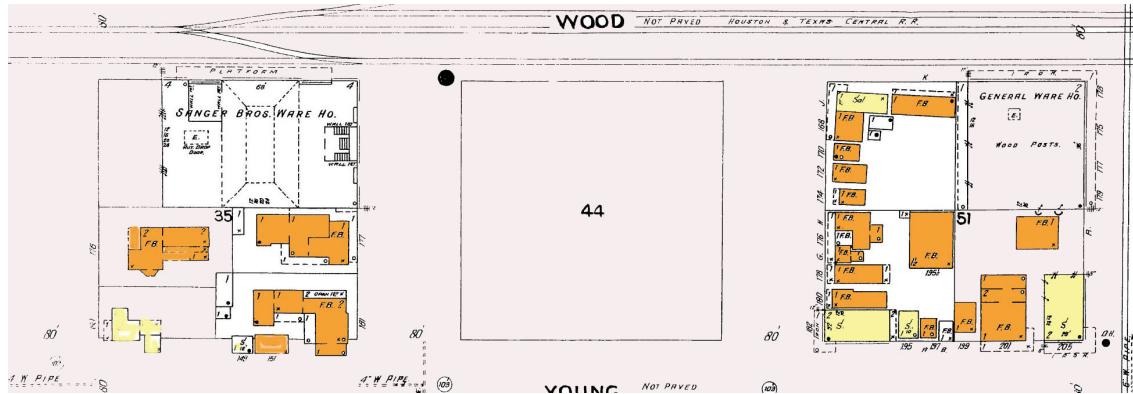


Figure 18. Bawdy Houses between Wood and Young. All structures, with the exception of Sanger Bros Warehouse and General Warehouse are bordellos identified in writs of injunction, and as the residence of known madams. The block on the bottom right of the map are bordellos of Fannie Howard and other African American madams and prostitutes. *Sanborn Map, 1910*

Between December 15, 1910 and January 1, 1911, Fannie Howard, along with Rosie Miller, Flossie Beard, and Gertrude Wilson, was served writs of injunction for keeping bawdy houses at 601, 609 and 611 S. Market Street. Fannie was one of a number of African American prostitutes and madams in Dallas (as reflected in city directories and census reports), and one of the most noteworthy. Fannie, born to a Cherokee father and African American mother, was described as one who inherited “all of the vices and none of the virtue of both races”³⁵ What little of Fannie’s background known is that her mother, Anna, and her father were from Alabama. In 1910, Fannie’s mother and daughter, Lena, resided in Fannie’s bordello.³⁶ Fannie was a successful and

³⁵ “Suicide or Murder?” *Dallas Times Herald*, 1893

³⁶ Dallas County, Texas Federal Census, 1910; Enumeration District 23, sheet #8A, lines 14-15; enumerated on April 23, 1910.

very wealthy mulatto who owned and managed a number of bordellos in Dallas—both in Boggy Bayou and Frogtown. In 1901, Fannie lived at 223 S. Austin Street, owned a saloon at 227 S. Austin Street and was madam of a parlor house at 228 S. Austin Street, which included “at least five dusky courtesans who received attention of dissolute white men.”³⁷ On January 11, 1912, Fannie invested \$8000.00 in a house at 2111 Griffin Street in the Frogtown Reservation. The city’s efforts to close down the Boggy Bayou Reservation did not put Fannie out of business. She simply moved to the new Reservation and continued business as usual. Fannie Howard was one of the more successful and persistent madams of the early twentieth century in Dallas. By the time her star was rising, Annie Wilson, Lizzie Handley, and Georgia DeBeck were either gone or dead. Despite her success, her timing was not as good as her predecessors. That Fannie was a madam *after* the golden years is clear in the fragmentary stories we can find about her life in Dallas. Unlike Lizzie Handley, she was not celebrated as “kind” but rather achieved something of a notorious reputation.

Although it is not clear when Fannie began her business, she was indicted as a madam as early as 1893 in Justice Court.³⁸ In that same year, Fannie was shot through both thighs and her white lover, Albert Grant, was shot just above the heart after he refused to return the change from the \$5.00 bill she had given him. A second high profile criminal case brought both Fannie and her neighboring madam additional

³⁷ Rose Farley, “Dig This,” *Dallas Observer*, January 30, 2003 (accessed October 5, 2008). <http://www.dallasobserver.com/2003-01-30/news/dig-this>. Quote from 1893 article in Dallas Times Herald relating to a shooting involved Fannie Howard and Albert W. Grant.

³⁸ “Justice Court,” *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, March 31 1893.

attention. Frank “Mud” McCue was tried for the murder of Earl Mabry in September 1907. Although Fannie Howard was not directly involved in the crime, testimony during trial did link Fannie and her neighbors’ association with the defendant, and the State used that association between him and the women of ill repute to establish his bad character in the attempt to convict him. McCue was arrested outside Fannie’s establishment on Market Street. During the trial, the arresting officer was asked, “Her place— what character of place is it?” and the witness answered, “A sporting house.” When questioned further about what kind of house of prostitution, the officer admitted that “Fannie Howard was a negro whore, and ran a negro saloon and whore house.” McCue’s partner in crime testified that they had met at Fannie Howard’s place and were frequent visitors. The defendant was at Rissa Beasley’s and Fannie Howard’s bagnios the night of the murder, with money to buy beer and smoke hop. McCue hired a horse and buggy and drove two negro prostitutes to Jew Jake’s Saloon where he bought drinks for them and the crowd at the saloon. Sis Hamp, one of Rissa’s girls, testified she saw him break his knife while cleaning a “hop bowl” at Fannie’s place the night before the murder. Another bawd, Gertrude Wilson, testified that although she did not see him at Rissa Beasley’s place between 10:00 and 11:00 o’clock the night of the homicide, she did hear him talking and recognized his voice—she had met him in the bagnio frequently and knew his voice. Two witnesses in the trial were Negro prostitutes, Sis Hamb and Gertrude Wilson, who testified that McCue was a frequent customer. Hamb admitted that McCue broke the tip of his pocket knife in Fannie Howard’s hop bowl the night before the murder. Neither Fannie nor the other African American prostitutes

were directly involved in the murder of Earl Mabry, yet the State placed their reputations, occupations, and race at the forefront of their case against McCue. While testimony that the defendant was a frequent customer at a bordello might lend some to question his character, testimony by two known African American prostitutes that they knew him well enough to recognize just his voice was especially damaging. Crossing the color line was especially heinous. McCue was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Defense filed an appeal to the life sentence based in part that the State had prejudiced the jury. The dissenting justice wrote, “This character of testimony, that the witness arrested appellant, believing he was guilty, he arrested him at a negro saloon and whore house, and that he habitually associated with negro whores, was thrown in the balance against him, when he had not placed his character or reputation before the jury. If there could be more damaging testimony than this, it would be difficult to conceive what it could be.”³⁹

The notoriety that helped to convict McCue may have kept Fannie Howard on the margins of Dallas life, but it did not hurt her bank account. According to her obituary, Fannie died on April 13, 1917, at the age of 61, a wealthy woman with an estate worth \$24,500 (equivalent to more than \$300,000 today). She left \$2,200 in diamonds and jewelry along with a Wurlitzer piano. She still owned the house on Griffin Street at the time of her death. Fannie went out “with a bang.” Five 6-passenger

³⁹ McCue vs. State, SW Rpt, (Ct of Crim App, December 3, 1913. 283, 295.

cars escorted Howard to her grave, which at the dawn of the automobile age was a significant event.⁴⁰

Fannie is an especially fascinating subject in that not only was she was a *single* female of property and means, but that she was a black woman of property and means. Perhaps it was the liminal nature of prostitution that created space for a black woman to succeed during this era. Her race meant she had little to lose in Jim Crow Dallas, so she embraced life on the margins and she did not give up because proper Dallasites and some city officials wanted her to. She was not alone in her quest to keep her profitable way of life. But the city was adamant that prostitution would not continue outside of its designated area.

Not all individuals served writs of injunction were located in either the Frogtown or the Boggy Bayou Reservations. A number of the houses of ill repute were located on Elm Street. Many addresses were hotels, millinery shops, clothing company, a fruit company, and a bar. The individuals named in the writs lived and/or worked above the business. Alice Gray was a named defendant relating to several addresses on Elm Street (1808 through 1814). The Sanborn Maps identify the addresses to include the Aetna Hotel, Hoyle & Barick Clothing Company, the DelRay, and Davis Millinery Company. However, Gray is never listed in any City Directory as being a resident at any of the locations. She is not the only defendant allegedly operating a bawdy house out of a hotel or business. Mrs. M. A. Jordan worked over the Stag Annex at 1700 Elm and Paris Hotel at 1702 Elm Street; Miss Hennie Week worked at the Travelers Hotel at

⁴⁰ Rose Farley, "Dig It," *Dallas Observer*, 30 Jan 2003
<http://www.dallasobserver.com/2003-01-30/news/dig-this/1>.

1806 Elm Street; Ella Klinson worked over the Independent Fruit Company at 1812 Elm Street. Georgia Fox and Mrs. J. Long worked from Larimore Hotel at 1908 Elm Street in 1910. Apparently, the Larimore Hotel changed hands and went through renovations because in 1911 the same location was identified as Cash Millinery Company and in 1912 as Nees Millinery Company.

Thus, the writs demonstrate that prostitution was widespread in the city, but also that the counter-side to “respectable” citizens who saw the presence of a vice district as a moral liability were the landlords of that district who saw a profit from such a designation. The *Dallas Dispatch* reported that a delegation of over thirty men and women owning property on Griffin Street appeared before city commissioners demanding the Court officially declare Griffin Street north of Cochran Street, the “Reservation.” The owners argued that the initial “invasion” of prostitutes forced both them and their “decent” neighbors to move to other locations.⁴¹ If the Court forced bawds to vacate the houses in question, their rental property would be vacant indefinitely. Respectable families would never rent in that neighborhood. The owners pleaded for relief from their unfortunate position after the “invasion” of the prostitutes.

What they failed to note was this invasion was precipitated by the flurry of real estate transactions buying up the property when the city first announced plans to turn the area into a Reservation, and that these same investors displaced poor but “respectable” families to make way for commercial sex. The owners counted on a

⁴¹ “Ask Board to Declare for Reservation,” *Dallas Dispatch*. October 17, 1910.

profitable return for their investment in the Reservation, and resented the efforts of North Dallasites to ruin their chances in real estate speculation.

The writs did have some impact, despite wealthy owners' efforts to hold on. On November 7, 1910, the *Daily Dispatch* reported the "Reservation" on Griffin Street and vicinity was "a thing of the past."⁴² According to a reporter, women given the choice of fighting injunctions or leaving town had fled, many accompanied by deputies to outgoing trains. Twenty more injunctions were on file and eleven warrants were to be served on owners of other addresses in the area. According to newspaper reports, the "Reservation" was empty of all prostitutes by the end of the November 11, 1910. While newspaper reports failed to clearly identify exactly *which* Reservation was emptied out on November 11, examining city directories for subsequent years does reveal that most of the Boggy Bayou Reservation closed on that date. But Frogtown definitely did not.

Thirty-three addresses named in the writs of injunction were located in the Boggy Bayou including property located on Young, South Market, Jackson, and Wood Streets. These were the upscale bordellos and parlor houses. A number of saloons were also located in this area of town. Almost half of the properties in the Vice Court Records located in Boggy Bayou were "vacant" or the entire address was missing in the City Directory of 1911. Only two Griffin Street addresses were vacant in the same directory. While the Frogtown Reservation *could* perhaps have emptied by November 7, as the newspaper reported, they were filled by the next year's count for the City Directory, making that outcome unlikely. It appears that reporters used the term the

⁴² "Injunction Suit Scatters Social Evil," *Dallas Dispatch*, November 7, 1910.

“Reservation” at times to mean the entire downtown red-light district, and other times to identify only the sanctioned “Reservation” in Frogtown. One article demonstrates the use of the term when reporting that Clara Barklow (a long-time Dallas madam and recipient of a writ of injunction) was arrested after a deputy found her in bed in her bawdy house in the “Reservation.” The newspaper stated law officers believed she had fled to San Antonio.⁴³ In truth, Barklow neither owned property nor resided in the Frogtown Reservation. She owned an upscale parlor house at 306 and 308 Jackson Street in Boggy Bayou. Not only had Clara not left the Boggy Bayou Reservation in November, she continued to live and work at her bawdy house until sometime prior to 1912.⁴⁴ But Clara does not represent the prevailing trend.

There were other telling changes to the demographics in the Boggy Bayou area between 1911 and 1913. By 1912 and 1913, the City Directory listed many residents as males, rather than single women. Other addresses changed from a residence to a business. By 1912, the bordello located at 1800 Wood Street had become the Coca Cola Bottling Manufacturing Company. The writ and abatement actions successfully dismantled much of the commercialized prostitution in Boggy Bayou, at least those operating out of bordellos or parlor houses. The writs served on areas outside of the Frogtown Reservation were legal notices to vacate in anticipation of the new ordinance to be enforced thirty-days later. In spite of the confusing references to the “Reservation”

⁴³ “Papers Are Served by Deputy Brown - Finds Woman in Bed Whom He Had Been Told Had Gone to San Antonio.” *Dallas Times Herald*, November 12, 1910.

⁴⁴ Worley City Directory, 1912.

in newspaper articles, the Dallas City Ordinance of November 1910 did specify the sanctioned Reservation in the Frogtown area of town.

Having cleared out prostitution in other areas of town (or tried to), the City Commission felt justified in moving forward on a truly segregated district. The Dallas Commissioners finally passed its long-contested ordinance on November 15, 1910. Title XXI, Article 583 designated a sanctioned “Reservation” for prostitution, in accordance with Article 362a of the Texas Penal Code. The boundaries of the Reservation (with the exception of Blocks 379 and 380) were:

Beginning at a point in the center of the Dallas Branch, said point being 150 feet from a point on the northwest line of McKinney Avenue, said point on the northwest line of McKinney Avenue being the point at the intersection of the northwest line of McKinney Avenue and the said Dallas Branch; thence in a southwesterly direction, parallel to and 150 feet distance from the northwest line of McKinney Avenue (excepting Blocks 379 and 380, said line shall be 100 feet distance from the northwest line of McKinney Avenue and parallel with same, then said line shall drop down 150 feet from McKinney Avenue) 1500 feet, more or less, to the center of the main line track of the M.K. & T. Railroad; thence in a northwesterly direction along the center line of the main track of the M.K. & T. Railroad 1919 feet, more or less, to a point in said main line track and in the center of Dallas Branch; thence following the meanders of the Dallas Branch to the place of beginning.

Article 584 of the Ordinance prohibited serving or selling “spirituous, vinous or malt liquors” in any bawdy house within the sanctioned district or “on the premises connected with any such house.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Payne, *Big D*, 41-43.

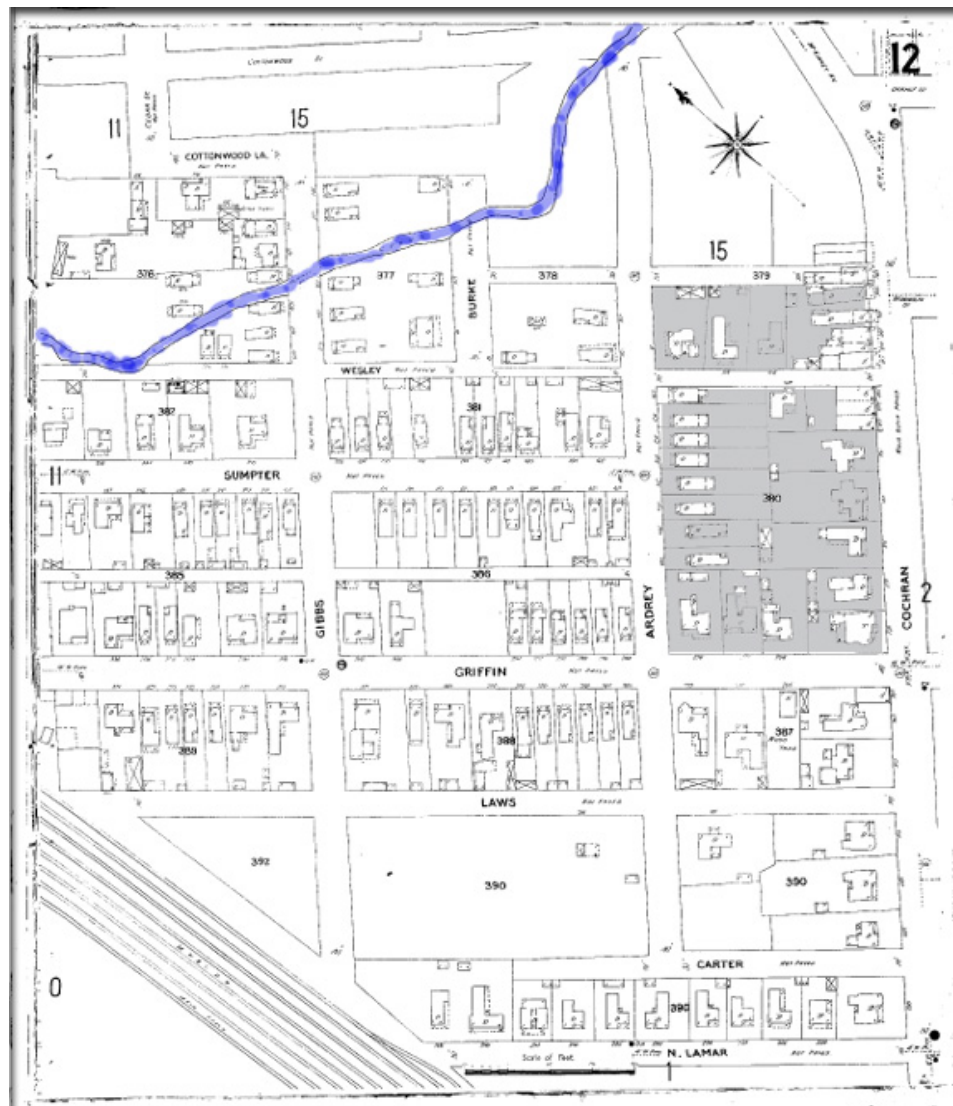


Figure 19 Frogtown Sanctioned Reservation. Shaded area specifically exempt from sanction. *Sanborn Digital Map 1905*

Figure 19 is a map of the segregated and sanctioned red-light district of 1910. The entire Reservation is contained in the one map, and illustrates the type of structures the bawds of the Frogtown Reservation both lived and worked in. There is no question that the class distinctions found within the Boggy Bayou Reservation is missing in Frogtown. Not only are palatial mansions like Lizzie Handley or Annie Wilson missing,

few, if any, were of the same quality Georgia Carlin's bordello. While Boggy Bayou did have a number of low-class bawds and "cribbies", the upper-class bordellos were plentiful and made a definite impression on the urban landscape. The ordinance of 1910 reduced the "visible" commercialized sex trade to the dregs of society, and placed it, not out of sight but in the midst of a struggling neighborhood along the only direct route of mass transportation, and on the edge of the Central Business District. The only concession the City Commissioners made was to exempt a few houses on Griffin Street from sanction.

Dallas was not the only city in the nation to legally sanction and segregate prostitution. However, by 1910, anti-prostitution reformers had gained momentum and steps to close down the districts began at the same time Dallas was opening the Frogtown Reservation. During the six years Dallas debated the issue of controlling the "vicious trade," the anti-prostitution movement gained national support, resulting in vigorous suppression of brothels in many American cities. Progressive reformers were successfully closing down red-light districts in other cities.⁴⁶ The decision of Dallas leaders to open a district when major cities were closing theirs brought national attention to the city.

In 1911, Dallas was one of ten cities studied by Henry Bruère, Director of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research for his survey of commission governed cities.

⁴⁶ Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era*; Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982)

One of the topics he was interested in studying was how each city responded to commercialized sex. Bruère found that cities in Kansas adopted policies of (attempted) complete suppression of prostitution. The mayor of Topeka claimed he was not aware that any existed in the city. “As soon as one appears, it is driven out. If professional prostitution is practiced, they have to be mighty sly about it.” Bruère found that Texas cities followed a course of “easy tolerance” in vice regulation and liquor control by segregating a geographical location “whereby prostitution can be practiced with impunity.” He was especially brutal in describing Frogtown Reservation as “a most grotesque commentary on the civilization of this ‘best governed city in the world.’” He claimed that “practically unclothed women” eagerly solicited trade from their front windows or stoops both day and night. He could find no justification for segregating the prostitutes of this class and claimed the higher-class bordellos and prostitutes could be found in other parts of the city—all tolerated by the police. Not only did higher-class bawds not want to work in the Frogtown Reservation, their clientele would not care to be seen entering one of the shacks or cribs in Frogtown. Bruere did verify examples of potential earnings for owners, landlords, or madams in Dallas. One Negro property owner (probably Fannie Howard) told him she earned \$50,000 from several “cribs,” which cost less than \$10,000, including land. Cribs typically rented for twelve and fifteen dollars a week and consisted of one room and a stoop with a door and window facing the street. Bruere noted that shacks dominated the Reservation. In spite of the pitiful condition of the shacks and much of the property inside the Reservation, renting

to its inhabitants was a lucrative business.⁴⁷ Bruere's findings were quite an indictment against the "belt buckle" of the Bible belt!

Bruere's findings emerged from a new social science trend, but the older school of moral reformers had come to similar conclusions. J.T. Upchurch, incensed by the new ordinance, accused the city of creating a place "for the despoiling of virtue, defaming of character, debauching of womanhood, and the prostitution of girlhood." He claimed passengers riding electric streetcars down Cochran Street careened their heads to see women of the shacks "without clothes enough on to flag a bread wagon." Upchurch wrote in *The Purity Journal* that hundreds of the bawds were kept as white slaves, "slaves to lust, licentiousness, and debauchery. Thousands of men and boys visit these White Slaves weekly and carry from that infamous Vice District moral pollution and physical disease to scatter it all over the land." Upchurch and his wife continued to conduct street services in the Reservation in their quest to rescue the victims of sin. On one occasion, a skeptical police officer questioned why he would allow his wife in an area as disreputable as the Reservation. Upchurch responded by asking, "what right did Dallas have to tolerate any street within the city limits his wife could not go with perfect safety?"⁴⁸

Upchurch argued that if Dallas' "high-flown rationalizations" for sanctioning the Reservation were correct, the fallen women were martyrs—not immoral tramps. They were instead "giving their lives to be burned in hell-on-earth to protect the city's

⁴⁷ Henry Bruere, *The New City Government* (New York and London: D Appleton and Company, 1912), 283-4.

⁴⁸ Payne, Big D, 50-51.

pure women.” They should have a monument built in their memory when they die. He further proclaimed, “Every man in the land knows that the women are not there to protect women, but there are there to gratify the unbridled passion of men and to produce a few grimy, bloody dollars for the local underworld.”⁴⁹

In October 1912, Upchurch published photographs of some of the bordellos, together with the names of the absentee owners (including Dr. W.W. Samuels) in his monthly publication, *The Purity Journal*. Upchurch and Bruere were not the only ones upset with the ordinance. However, social science, purity, and holiness reformers had come to a similar conclusion and the citizenship group was not far behind.

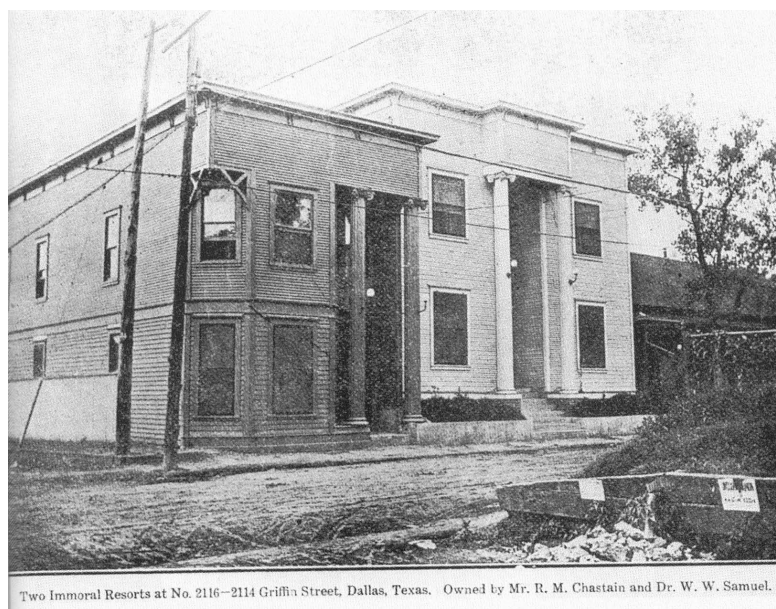


Figure 20 Two bordellos owned by Dr. W.W. Samuel and R.W. Chastain.

⁴⁹ J.T. Upchurch, “The Tribute Dallas, Texas, Pays to Vice,” *Purity Journal*, 21

Throughout its four-year battle to prevent the City of Dallas from designating their “backyard” as a sanctioned Reservation, the North Dallas Improvement League vowed it would use legal means to achieve its goals if necessary. After the ordinance passed, the league prepared to carry out its threat, and filed suit against the City of Dallas, the mayor, S. J. Hay, and its commissioners, Harry L. Seay, D. F. Sullivan, William Doran, and C. B. Gillespie. Lead plaintiff, Henry Hatcher, and other plaintiffs (including the Brown Cracker and Candy Company), alleged they owned property contiguous to the Reservation that would depreciate in value by the proximity of resorts used by immoral persons and criminal characters. The plaintiffs claimed damage inasmuch as they would be unable to rent or sell their property at reasonable prices. Brown Cracker and Candy Company claimed it could not hire suitable and proper female employees needed to carry on its business in close proximity to Reservation. The building, located at Market Street and Carruth, encompassed three acres. The attorney for Brown Cracker and Candy Company also asserted that the City Charter contained language to the effect that “no ordinance shall be enacted inconsistent either with the laws of the State of Texas, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act.” The ordinance of November 15, 1910, was plainly in conflict with Penal Code Ann. art. 361 (as amended in 1907), which “denounces the penalty of extermination against all such places and houses and practices, and, upon conviction, inflicts a penalty of \$ 200 and 20 days' imprisonment upon all persons for each day they may be concerned in operating them.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Brown Cracker & Candy Company v. City of Dallas, 104 Tex. 290; 137 S.W. 342;

The city attorney contended that a special act to the Dallas City Charter of 1907 gave it the right to pass the amendment. Article 359 of the Penal code, Subdivision 29 of article 14, did state: “The provisions of this Act in so far as they may conflict with any State law shall be held to supersede the said law to that extent, and it shall not be held invalid on account of such conflict. . .The powers conferred upon the City of Dallas by its special charter, having been passed pursuant to a special provision of the Constitution, supersede the provisions of the State law, and the exercise of such powers are not considered as suspending a State law.” The district trial court agreed, and in November of 1910 dismissed the North Dallas Improvement League’s petition.⁵¹

Brown Cracker and Candy Company was the only plaintiff that appealed the District Court’s decision to the Court of Appeals. In March of 1911, the Texas Supreme Court granted the writ of error. Judge W. H. Clark, attorney for the plaintiff, explained that the writ of error was granted on the grounds that “the ordinance repeals the [state] law prohibiting bawdy houses and only the Legislature can repeal a law”.⁵² Although the Dallas Charter authorized the Reservation, only the Texas Legislature had the authority to repeal state laws and could not delegate that power to municipalities. The city attorney maintained that the action of the Supreme Court did not annul the Reservation ordinance. He claimed the court had merely passed upon a writ of error petition. The case would need to be argued before the Texas Supreme Court, and he did not believe the court would find the city was wrong in its actions.

1911 Tex. LEXIS 161

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

He was wrong. The Texas Supreme Court ruled the Dallas Charter provision unconstitutional and void.⁵³ On May 17, 1911, the Texas Supreme court held the Dallas City Ordinance designating a bawdy house Reservation invalid. The jurists ruled that the ordinance directly conflicted with Article 361 of the Penal Code, which forbade disorderly houses. The Court wrote, “The antagonism between the ordinance and the law is as emphatic as that between life and death.”⁵⁴

The North Dallas Improvement League held a meeting June 29, 1911, to discuss what action the League should take against the city’s continuing to sanction the Reservation, which was in contempt of the Supreme Court ruling.⁵⁵ At a meeting the next day, T. Ford House, president of the North Dallas Improvement League, reported the legal success and proposed appointing a committee to urge Dallas Commissioners to remove the houses of ill fame from the Reservation. The “Not in my Backyard” argument (NIMBY) had successfully stymied the City of Dallas’ efforts to legally sanction and segregate prostitution. The League would discover that the city was not ready to concede defeat, and more troubling, there was dissention in their own midst.⁵⁶

After a long and difficult battle, the North Dallas group had achieved success in having the ordinance ruled unconstitutional. For four years, news articles of this group’s efforts had filled Dallas newspapers. When they met June 28, T. Ford House, the President of the North Dallas Improvement League, announced they were ready to take legal action against the owners to empty out the Reservation. Several members of the

⁵³ “Holds Act Unconstitutional,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 1911.

⁵⁴ “Reservation Case Reversed,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 18, 1911.

⁵⁵ “Improvement League to Meet,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 28, 1911.

⁵⁶ “Would Clean out Reservation,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 30, 1911.

League made an amazing declaration. They were now in favor of the Frogtown Reservation! House was so disgusted with the announcement, he immediately adjourned the meeting.⁵⁷

The Dallas City Commissioners held an emergency meeting in July and passed a new ordinance segregating prostitution within the same geographical boundaries of Frogtown area named in the November 15 ordinance. Their solution was to clarify that they were not “legalizing” prostitution, merely providing that prostitution inside of the Reservation would be protected from arrest. The new ordinance stated, “it should never be construed by any officer of the City of Dallas or any person to legally authorize the existence of any bawdy house or bawd within the territory or in any other territory of the City of Dallas and should not be construed to be in conflict with the penal statutes of Texas.” The crippling blow to anyone wishing to close down the offensive Reservation was the clause in the new ordinance protecting owners, agents, and proprietors from injunctive and abatement actions. The commissioners declared that public necessity demanded this emergency passage to prevent “great harassment suffered by property owners in consequences of such suits.”⁵⁸

This was an amazing move that directly flew in the face of Art. 4689 of 1907 granting citizens the right of injunctive and abatement relief. In spite of the fact that owners of the property were guilty of criminal charges carrying a fine of \$200 and twenty days of jail for each day of the property’s continued use by prostitutes, the

⁵⁷ The North Dallas Improvement League was silent about the Frogtown Reservation from this point on.

⁵⁸ Dallas City Ordinance, July 1911.

emergency ordinance afforded them legal protection. The paradox was that the ordinance was supposedly created to better enforce the law against keeping bawdy houses, yet it claims that a “public necessity exists to prevent these keepers from being interfered with in one of the most effective methods.” The city commissioners were well aware that allowing citizens (especially those from North Dallas) to invoke their right of injunctive relief against the owners of bawdy houses inside the Frogtown Reservation would legally trump their ordinance in a court of law, and especially at the appellate or supreme court level. The “public necessity” was in fact, the commissioners’ own “necessity” to prevent a second lawsuit against their newest ordinance. This ordinance created conflict between state penal codes and state action versus the city’s determination to do what it wanted. The Frogtown Reservation remained the city’s only sanctioned red-light district until November 1913. What created the seventeen-month delay in carrying out what was clearly the law? What would it take to close down the Reservation?

The cause of the delay can be seen in the words and actions of police officers and the courts in the months after the standoff between the city on one side and the North Dallas Improvement League and state Supreme Court on the other. Not only were police officers lax in enforcing the law inside the Reservation, but grand juries continued to protect those connected to bawdy houses in the Reservation. Proper enforcement of laws required not only that the police or deputies place offenders under arrest, but also an indictment by the grand jury was necessary to take the case to court for conviction or acquittal. Arrests are useless if the courts refuse to indict. It is clear

that Dallas grand juries were sympathetic toward the prostitutes and believed segregation, although illegal, was best for the city. On March 31, 1912, the grand jury for Judge Barry Miller's Criminal District Court No. 2 submitted its final report on vice conditions.⁵⁹ The members actively investigated "so-called" rooming houses, hotels, and flats for illegal activity, serving notice to owners and keepers. However, these were outside the Reservation. In their report on "social evil," they admitted, "beyond instructing our special squad to visit the Reservation, take a list of houses therein and the names of property owners and looking also into the matter of rents charged women in that district, we took no action. This question was too important and too big for us to have taken up as this time we were specially charged by you along other lines." They did recommend that prostitutes be prohibited from "patrolling the streets" and that the law prohibiting liquor in the houses be rigidly enforced. They declared that "the best way to handle the problem is first to segregate and then abolish the social evil." No action was taken against owners or inmates. Understanding their actions or lack of action toward the Reservation and the social evil requires reviewing the judge's charge to the new panel of Grand Jurists a couple of days later.⁶⁰

Judge Miller advised the new jurists that he personally believed segregation was the best solution to handling social evil:

⁵⁹ Barry Miller served four terms in the Texas Senate (starting in 1899) and was president pro tem in the Twenty-seventh Legislature. In 1911, he was appointed judge of the Criminal District Court of Dallas County and was reelected to the post for four years. From 1916 to 1922 he was a member of the Texas House of Representatives.

⁶⁰ "Grand Jury Reports on Vice Conditions," *Dallas Morning News*, March 31, 1912.

First, because practical experience has demonstrated to me that that is the only way you can successfully prosecute them is that it is necessary to convict to make them stop. The prior year's grand jury believed promiscuous prosecution might stop the evil and returned hundreds of indictments against women and men. At that time, there was no pretended Reservation in Dallas, and that is all we have got now. There was no pretended Reservation, even, in Dallas and the only effect of those prosecutions under those indictments brought in by the Grand Jury was put some \$10,000 into the pockets of the lawyers of Dallas. There were no convictions.⁶¹

He further advised the men of the jury that "these folks are here, they can't go up in the air or down under the ground." He claimed they had always been in the city (as they had been in every other city). He further stated, "You can take the money out of their pockets, and you can scatter them out into the residence part of town, but until you give them some place to go you ought not to convict them because the State of Texas and Dallas County don't want any unholy money in their treasury. And they turn them loose, like they have always."⁶²

Segregation created an anomaly for prosecution of prostitution. The prostitute was not prosecuted for being a prostitute, but for plying her trade on business streets or in residential parts of the city outside the Reservation. The judge exhibited little respect for the Supreme Court's claim that Dallas could not pass regulations contrary to state law. "I don't care how often the Supreme Court enjoins you from putting them in the shape of ordinances, all you have got to do is to put them in the shape of instructions to

⁶¹ "Urges Grand Jury to Continue Work," *Dallas Morning News*, April 2, 1912.

⁶² "Urges Grand Jury to Continue Work," *Dallas Morning News*, April 2, 1912.

the police and they can be enforced by an efficient, honest and fearless police department.”⁶³

Miller’s address generated a great deal of anger and negative responses, including the religious leaders of Dallas. J. T. Upchurch disagreed with the Judge about segregation. As Upchurch characterized the segregated district, it was:

A place the poor, betrayed girls of the land may have a place to go where they may be robbed and spoiled and damned under the protecting eye of an officer. . .we plead for a segregated district because the poor outcast girls have no place to go—why in the name of high heaven don’t we fix a place for them to go? Fix a place where they can be redeemed, and if they positively refuse to live right then deal with them as we do with any other criminal. The brothel is an open running sore, an eating cancer, an insult to common decency and a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God. It should be abolished.”⁶⁴

He was not alone among religious leaders in responding to Miller’s address about how to address the social evil. Rev. Glenn Sneed addressed the First Methodist Church under the auspices of the Men’s Committee of One Hundred on Co-operation of the Evangelical Churches of Dallas. Sneed presented the problem of social evil as a “great civic crisis.” His solution was education of the youth at home and rigid enforcement of the law. Judge Miller and many members of Miller’s Grand Jury heard Rev. Sneed’s address.⁶⁵ Local ministers and numerous religious associations and councils rallied to join the social purity campaign.

Not only were Dallas’ ministers and laymen concerned with the city’s role in protecting prostitution inside the Frogtown Reservation, but the national movement was

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ “Says ‘Vice District’ Useless,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 6, 1912.

⁶⁵ “Address on Social Evil,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 6, 1912.

also paying attention. The Christian Conservation Congress was held in New York and attended by Rev. G. W. Benn and M.H. Wolfe. Mr. Benn reported that the vice situation in Dallas created wide interest throughout the United States. "I was asked about it repeatedly while in New York. The report of the Grand Jury in Dallas has been read with interest by the national social workers. They are not so much interested in the discoveries, for the same thing exists in other cities, but they are all watching Dallas to see if she will prove big enough to solve the problem." Experts for the Chicago Vice Commission and one of the committee of fourteen in New York spoke with Benn about the Dallas situation.⁶⁶ After Bruere's report about the Reservation appeared in a prominent book on municipal government, the American Medical Association condemned Dallas, claiming the "Dallas Plan places prostitutes in the heart of the city and invites the world to come in and contract horrible diseases."⁶⁷ In spite of the scarcity of local history acknowledging Dallas' "raunchy past," it did exist and was closely watched by Progressives across the nation.

Lewis Hines, noted Progressive photographer, included Dallas in a series of photographs relating to child labor. He observed a messenger boy in the heart of the Frogtown Reservation in October 1913. "Prostitutes run back and forth. Business beginning at mid-day. I saw messenger boys and delivery boys for drug stores from 15 years upward. Some still younger told me that they go there. This was in spite of a strong agitation being waged to close up the resorts." (Figure 21)

⁶⁶ "Dallas Lands Two More Conventions," *Dallas Morning News*, May 1, 1912.

⁶⁷ Payne, Big D, 52-3.



Figure 21 Delivery Boy in Frogtown Reservation (circa 1913). *Lewis Wickes Hine*.⁶⁸

Judge Miller's earlier comments explain much of why the Reservation continued operation in spite of the Supreme Court ruling. C. L. Dealey, a member of Miller's Grand Jury spoke of his work at a meeting of the Ervay Street Methodist Church. Although he did not accuse city officials of "willful neglect of duty," he believed that every effort had been made to "stop the evil," because he saw the Reservation as the lesser of the two evils. Dealey charged the church with preventing misery and crime by "fostering wholesome amusements and maintaining the proper kind of social life for young people."⁶⁹ But this perspective could not withstand the outcry from reformers inside and outside the city who saw such protection as either immoral or bad business.

In March of 1912, the World Purity Federation was asked to meet in Dallas by the mayor, Chamber of Commerce, and a general pastors' council. The work of the

⁶⁸ Photo and caption by Lewis Wickes Hine. <http://www.shorpy.com/node/4571> (accessed October 2009).

⁶⁹ "Grand Juror Delivers Address," *Dallas Morning News*, April 15, 1912.

federation was to educate, inform, and arouse people against white slave traffic, and for social purity and rescue of fallen women.⁷⁰ The social purity campaign and religious leaders gained momentum in Dallas. The Committee of One Hundred announced its intentions to host a yearly campaign of education relating to social purity.⁷¹ A campaign of education in social purity was scheduled for January, 1913.⁷²

For years, the religious reformers of the social purity movement had fought to eradicate the “social evil” in Dallas and achieved little success. There was a decided difference by 1912. Previous efforts in religious reform involved fractured groups working independently toward the same goal. Generally, the method was to “save” the individual prostitute through intervention, and lead her into a clean and “pure” life. Different denominations had their own rules and agenda. The evangelistic fervor of the Holiness reformers was not acceptable to some other reformers. However, by 1912, those differences seemed less important. Sparked by national purity reformers, the religious people finally joined together to present a united front. The Dallas Council of Churches rallied in mass meetings and announced the rationalizations for the Reservation would not longer be accepted, that the commercialized vice den was “the greatest menace now confronting the people of this city.”⁷³ The religious leaders and associations throughout Dallas formed committees and commissions to wage war on the social evil. They pledged to educate and advise the Dallas grand juries through special

⁷⁰ “Dallas Invites Big Convention,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 24, 1912.

⁷¹ “Will Have Annual Campaign,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 19, 1912.

⁷² “Laymen’s Missionary Convention Planned,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 1912.

⁷³ Darwin Payne, *Big D*, 53.

surveys. During the purity campaign convention held in June, Dr. Winfield S. Hall, a “purity” expert, met with the two district judges and two grand juries of Dallas, along with the executive committee of the Men’s Committee of One Hundred of Dallas.⁷⁴

The Rev. George W. Truett addressed a packed crowd of men at the first mass meeting, choosing as his topic, “The Social Evil and Fallen Men.” He was particularly harsh with men “unwilling themselves to operate houses of prostitution but were perfectly content to reap profits by permitting others to use their properties for such immoral purposes.” (Dr. Samuel, who owned two bordellos in Frogtown, was a prominent member of Truett’s congregation.) Truett called church members renting property for the social evil “moral cowards.” The focus moved from lewd women to men and property owners.⁷⁵

On July 16, 1913, the Dallas Council of Churches held a meeting that saw real debate between both sides. Judge J.E. Cockrell spoke at the mass meeting, informing the ministers that the Dallas Reservation was completely illegal.⁷⁶ Officers would enforce the law – if the people made it plain they wanted it enforced, their jobs depended on it. Police and Fire Commissioner Blaylock countered that it would be a mistake to break up the Reservation and only result in scattering the women over the

⁷⁴ “Morals Commission Urged by Pastors,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 7, 1912.

⁷⁵ Darwin Payne, *Big D*, 53-4

⁷⁶ Joseph E. Cockrell came to Dallas in 1895. He was an “uncompromising progressive Democrat” only took an active part in public affairs as a citizen. He was known a thoroughly conscientious, courteous in manner, affable, of undoubted integrity, and few enemies. Cockrell had an active law practice in Dallas. He served as a special District Judge at different times, but never held or sought public office. He was member of the board of directors of the Dallas Trust & Savings Bank, the First State Bank, and the Title & Insurance Company, and president of the National Temperance Life Insurance Company..

city or into other cities. Breaking up the Reservation “is like tearing off the scab instead of curing the disease that caused it.”⁷⁷ Ultimately, Cockrell’s side won and the Dallas Council of Churches adopted resolutions to abolish the Reservation and called for officers to enforce the law. The religious leaders’ campaign to change people’s perspective of the Reservation was beginning to see positive results. Had the new grand jury of July 1913 complied with the instructions of the judge, the Reservation might well have closed three months earlier.

Judge R. B. Seay, presiding judge of the 14th District Court charged the incoming grand jury of July 1913, to investigate *all* cases of “social evil and rid the city of questionable houses.”⁷⁸ He did not intend to protect the residents of the Reservation. However, in the grand jury’s final report, the members recommended that the “Reservation” be left alone, believing it to be in the best interest of the public not to disturb the vice center. They believed legal restrictions, police regulation, limitation of property commercialism and sanitary enforcements preferable to “scattering the evil throughout all districts of the city,” which is what breaking up the Reservation would mean as they saw it. They did express pity and sympathy toward “fallen women” and were reluctant to persecute, scorn, or drive them from their shelter or confiscate their property. Their loathing and contempt centered on “fallen men” who habitually used women. The members believed men deserved the “sting of society and the church”

⁷⁷ “Plan Campaign to Abolish Reservation,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 16, 1913.

⁷⁸ “Plan Campaign to Abolish Reservation,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 16, 1913.

along with persecution and fines. This would be the last grand jury to refuse to act against the Reservation.⁷⁹

The following October, Judge Seay made sure there was no misunderstanding of his expectations of how the new grand jury was to act regarding the Reservation. He charged the new grand jury for the October term to cooperate with the County Attorney and abolish the Reservation. Judge W. L. Crawford, Jr., of District Court No. 2 participated in the charge. Judge Seay advised the new jurists that the law of Texas was “unqualifiedly against the existence of any restricted district and that with the law behind them, all the peace officers need to do is to take a determined stand.” He did allow that the inmates of the Reservation must be given time to “fold their tents” and leave the city.⁸⁰

The same day, the County Attorney proceeded with injunctions through the Civil District Courts of Dallas County to restrain bawdy houses from further operation in the Reservation by filing suits against the owners, real estate agents, and managers.⁸¹ By the next day the new strategy was clarified. The Grand Jury set 6 o’clock p.m. on November 3, 1913, as the deadline for all inmates and residents of the Dallas Reservation to vacate the premises.⁸² Not everyone viewed the court’s move to close down the Reservation as a victory. Police Commissioner Louis Blaylock believed the move was a “sad” mistake. He commented: “There are not enough policemen in the State of Texas to handle the situation which will be precipitated in Dallas after the

⁷⁹ “To Meet with Grand Juries,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 9, 1912.

⁸⁰ “Grand Jury Directed to Act,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 7, 1913.

⁸¹ “Disorderly Houses Will Be Enjoined,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 7, 1913.

⁸² “War on Reservation Delayed to Nov. 3,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 8, 1913.

Reservation is abolished.”⁸³ In his address at an anti-Reservation mass meeting on October 8, 1913, Judge J. E. Cockrell pointed out provisions of law and court decisions relating to the Dallas Ordinance:

It being clear, therefore, that there is not and never has been such a thing in Dallas as a “Reservation” but merely that on the easterly side of McKinney Avenue the law has been in a measure enforced and on the westerly side it has been suspended through a misapprehension on the part of our law officers as to the status of the law, and we may justly assume that when they arrive at a just understanding of the law this condition will be no longer tolerated by them.⁸⁴

On November 4, 1913, the “red” lights of the red-light district were extinguished. The *Dallas Morning News* reported “a veritable parade of moving vans, trucks, drays and carts loaded with furniture, trunks and boxes of personal effects moved from the Reservation yesterday.” The houses and streets in the Reservation were dark, deserted, and devoid of dancing or music. Practically all of the women had scattered before injunctions could be served.⁸⁵

At last, Dallas had joined the national movement against red-light districts. The infamous Storyville in New Orleans was no more. San Antonio’s Law Enforcement League closed down its segregated vice district. An estimated 830 women and two hundred men were removed from San Antonio’s district. Many left the city and others moved to residential and business sections of the city to continue their line of work clandestinely. As in Dallas, the vice crusade was a joint movement by the San Antonio ministerial association and laymen, who enlisted the cooperation of civic, humane, and evangelical societies, women’s clubs and leagues and council of mothers’ clubs. Using

⁸³ “Segregated District is Without Tenants,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 3, 1913.

⁸⁴ “Grand Jury Reports on Vice Conditions,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 31, 1912.

⁸⁵ “Reservation Houses Closed in Darkness,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 4, 1913.

Texas' injunction and abatement law, the good citizens were finally able to close down entire districts of commercialized vice.⁸⁶

Although the "red lights" officially went out in Dallas, the controversy continued. The pressing question was where had the women gone. The Council of Churches, concerned with the social and economic needs of the prostitutes, had opened a home for "fallen women" called Hope Hall. Only five women accepted the offer to enter Hope Hall. Mrs. J. Farley, police matron, encountered many women who claimed their need for money prevented them giving up such a lucrative line of work. Many had mothers and children depending upon them for support and would be unable to earn as much any other line of work. Police officers canvassing the Reservation believed the prostitutes had left Dallas. The Chief guessed the Reservation women had joined the prostitutes already working outside the district. The Council of Churches reassured citizens the breakup of the Reservation was a success. Their representatives who went through each house characterized the Reservation as "pictures of sin and disease and hopelessness." They claimed one prostitute said, "We know this is no life for any woman, but we have sunk too low to turn back now."⁸⁷

Did this stop or even stem prostitution? Of course not. The debate over the merit of segregating commercialized sex continued. Those supporting the Reservation were convinced that prostitution had spread all over Dallas. Dallas Police Commissioner Blaylock reported a week after the closing that the bawds had created a situation that needed "stringent action." The Dallas County grand jury at the request of County

⁸⁶ "Vice District Closed," *Dallas Morning News*, June 26, 1915.

⁸⁷ Payne, *Big D*, 54-5.

Attorney Currie McCutcheon, had two bailiffs investigate the prostitutes' whereabouts. They found that "immorality now existed in almost every neighborhood of the city rather than safely within the confines of the Reservation."⁸⁸ The reality was there had never been enough room in the Frogtown Reservation for all the prostitutes in Dallas. An estimated three-fourths of the bawds had scattered throughout the city long before the Frogtown Reservation was segregated. The opponents of the Reservation believed they had won. At the end 1913, the grand jury reported that prostitution had not spread. *The Dallas Morning News* reported in its year-end summary that Dallas has achieved "the biggest clean-up of vice ever made in the United States outside the Barbary coast and Chicago."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Payne, *Bid D*, 54-6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The average citizen of Dallas is unaware that their fair city, the “Belt Buckle of the Bible Belt,” was once called a “fancy town” and had not one, but two thriving red-light districts. The few people who are aware of a “legalized” red-light district place it on the edge of present-day West End Historic District on the northwest corner of downtown in the early 1900s. While a vice center did in fact exist in that area from 1910 to 1913, the *first* red-light district was located on the opposite side of downtown from 1874 to 1910. The striking differences between the two districts were more than just their duration and their locations. Their differences included how society, city leaders, and the court system reacted and related to the “vicious trade” and, for the most part, followed national trends of reforms of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Where Dallas veered away from much of the rest of the national trends was beginning of the twentieth century. City leaders were adamantly convinced that solving the rising problem of the “social evil” required sanction and segregation. While they did not stand alone in creating a Reservation, their timing set them apart. Most of the major red-light districts in the nation were closing down at the same time Dallas was opening the Frogtown Reservation. The fatal flaw in the council’s decision was the geographical area named for segregated prostitution.

To the commissioners’ credit, they were desperate to keep prostitution outside respectable neighborhoods, and they were obligated to see after the entire city’s best interests. In considering where to designate immoral trade, it saw a poor neighborhood of

subordinated immigrants that would probably not oppose their plans. Prostitutes did already live and work in Frogtown, just not in the designated geographical area. Prostitutes also were scattered in many respectable neighborhoods. Had Dallas followed Houston's example and found an area away from the boundaries of respectable neighborhoods and the central business district, had they made the area large enough to contain most of the working prostitutes in Dallas, they would have avoided both the legal battles and conflicts resulting from their decision.

Before 1904, the Frogtown area did not contain a concentration of commercialized sex within its borders. The city's decision to locate the Reservation in an existing residential area was nothing short of class discrimination against an already subordinated and marginalized population of working poor and immigrants. This forced the decent folks of Frogtown and those who rode through it on the streetcar to endure the noise, screams, drunkenness, and depravity on a daily basis. More important, the geographical area of the Reservation was entirely too small to accommodate the large number of professional prostitutes in the city, forcing more than three-fourths of the bawds to scatter throughout the city.

Darwin Payne credits religious leaders and church councils with closing down the red-light district in 1913.¹ There is no doubt that the Council of Churches and local ministry groups played an important part in the final dissolution of the Frogtown Reservation. This was a significant achievement. The religious groups objected to commercialized sex during the era that prostitution was considered a "necessary evil."

¹ Darwin Payne. *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2000), 53-4.

Yet the many religious reformers during both the Gilded Age and the Progressive era were only part of the story. As Progressive era reform moved to social scientific methods and objected less on moral grounds, religious reformers' efforts were marginalized. Part of the problem with the religious groups was their lack of organization into a united front. When the religious leaders and Council of Churches in Dallas unified as one solid front, casting aside any denominational differences, they were a formidable foe that accomplished in a matter of weeks, what reformers had attempted for years—to close down the Reservation. Without taking any credit away from the Council of Churches, however, we would be remiss to ignore the contribution of the North Dallas Improvement League.

The League's use of NIMBY against segregation in the Frogtown area was certainly before its time. Had the city not filed the emergency ordinance protecting the owners, agents and manager from injunction and abatement suits after the Supreme Court ruled the Reservation illegal, the North Dallas League might have well been able to close down the Reservation through legal actions. We will never know.

Prostitution neither tottered nor fell under the weight of police raids, repression, or local and state laws. The bawds who did not leave town spread into neighborhoods throughout the city and state. How many did it affect? One official stated that three-fourths of the prostitutes of Dallas had never lived or worked within the Reservation, but had always been in other locales of the city. Closing the Reservation did not affect them.² What the closure did do was force prostitution underground. By the 1920s, cribs and bordellos were pretty much in the past. Prostitutes plied their trade from seedy hotels,

² "Segregated District Without Tenants," *Dallas Morning News*, November 3, 1913.

apartments, or by streetwalking. The telephone and automobile gave prostitutes new mobility not available in the past. The profession evolved from the female-driven operation of madams to a male-driven business ran by pimps and the underworld.³

Dallas City Commissioners and city and county officials continued to try to revive the segregated district method in an effort to control the rapid spread of venereal diseases. When the commissioners appointed a special committee to locate a Reservation in 1926, the North Dallas Improvement League collected 2,162 names to protest.⁴ In 1935, Dallas was gearing up for the Texas Centennial. One of the toughest problems faced by city officials was making “night life” safe for out-of-town visitors. The Dallas Police Vice Squad was concerned with how the city would cope with the prostitution problem when the Texas Centennial opened to America in 1936. After checking rooming houses and other establishments, the Vice Squad estimated that Dallas had one hundred eighty-five streetwalkers. The Vice Squad admitted their methods of controlling prostitution were unsatisfactory and once again the only hope to control the situation was to establish a district and segregate the women. Although not a cure-all, it would help control the situation and stop the spread of diseases.

Dallas was determined to present itself to Centennial visitors as an attractive, “upright city”. In March 1936, City officials and law enforcement began an aggressive anti-vice campaign (mainly focused on gambling) to give visitors the illusion that Dallas was not a wide-open gambling town. City Health Officer Dr. J. W. Bass said that the city was searching for a way to exert proper control of the prostitutes plying their trade on

³ Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood*, 170-2.

⁴ "Action of Aldermen," *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 1926.

Dallas streets. He admitted, “we were about to get something worked out that would have improved conditions, but the current drive against vice has blown that up. Now I doubt if you can get any city official to admit that there is such as things as one of these women in Dallas.” Prior to the vice drive, officials developed a plan to segregate the prostitutes into one section of town in an unofficial district, where they would be periodically inspected and treated for disease.⁵ By the next month, city officials were forced to admit the city had “those women.”

In April of 1936, prostitutes from cities all over the country flocked to Dallas to await the opening of the Centennial and then to ply their trade. Once again, Dr. Bass proposed a drive to examine all the women on the streets, to force treatments on those found diseased, and to intern those refusing treatment. He was successful this time. Dr. Bass did admit there was no way to drive the prostitutes out of Dallas. “We are trying to get the situation in as good shape as possible, and they seem to be co-operating splendidly so far.”⁶

By the late 1930s, venereal disease was on the rise. A great number of prostitutes suffered from venereal diseases in the infectious stage. The number of prostitutes in Dallas grew from three hundred sixty-four in 1902/1903 to one thousand in 1938.⁷ Those found with gonorrhoea were placed in jail and forced to take treatments. In 1944, Dallas “hit the big city leagues” when it was ranked sixth nationally for venereal diseases among

⁵ "Thorough Anti-Vice Campaign Halts all Gambling Operations in Dallas," *Dallas Morning News*, March 22, 1936.

⁶ "Controlling Vice Diseases Giving City Big Problems," *Dallas Morning News*, April 3, 1936.

⁷ "Many prostitutes examined found to be diseased," *Dallas Morning News*, March 3, 1933.

military personnel, despite the city's progressive control measures.. Undoubtedly, this was an embarrassing blow to the pride of Dallasites.⁸

What happened to the former red-light districts of Dallas? The Boggy Bayou area had already begun its transformation before the Frogtown Reservation closed down. Businesses and merchants moved into that part of downtown. Although the structures of the old bordellos and saloons on the southwest side of town may be missing, the area includes courthouses, Founders Square, the Old Federal Reserve Bank, Erik Johnson Central Library, and the Belo complex, among others. On the northwest side, most of the inhabitants of the Frogtown remained on the edge of society, never rising above their poor, working-class status. After the harlots and Jewish immigrants vacated the area in 1913, Mexican immigrants moved in and the area became known as "Little Mexico." Tenements replaced many of the old "cribs" and parlor houses on the Griffin Street in the 1920s. Eventually, the city razed most of Little Mexico to make way for urban improvements and Woodall Rogers Freeway.⁹ There remains little physical evidence that many of the streets of the hotly debated Frogtown Reservation ever existed. However, one structure still stands today.

The building that once housed the Brown Cracker and Candy Company at Market Street and Caruth still stands. It lasted through the ensuing decades, eventually becoming The Shops at West End Marketplace in 1986. Ironically, the company that was successful in having the legality of the sanctioned segregated district of vice is probably the only structure left standing over 100 years later. Moreover, the argument before the courts by

⁸ "Dallas rates sixth city in venereal ills," *Dallas Morning News*, August 29, 1944.

⁹ Payne, *Big D*, 55.

the Brown Cracker and Candy Company against the Reservation were based not on immorality, but an argument that would be used decades later—NIMBY. The Reservation was closed in Dallas because some saw it as disorderly, others saw it as immoral, and others just did not want it in their backyard. Other cities had dealt with the issue of segregated districts, giving them names such as Storyville and Hell’s Half Acre, and earned if not “bragging rights”—at least a colorful chapter in local history. Whether Dallas wants to admit it or not, it did have a colorful history in an era when music rang from saloons day and night, where the painted women who lived and worked in bordellos and parlor houses filled with the jangle of pianos and shrill laughter practiced the world’s oldest profession.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gwinnetta Malone Crowell took a circular route to academia, returning after raising two children alone as a divorced mother. She spent twenty-five years in the legal community, working first as a legal secretary, then paralegal, and going into other areas of support including database design and administration in the litigation support field. Her return to school was merely to earn the “piece of paper” necessary to advance her career. Much to her surprise, college would dramatically change her plans for life. Drawing on the traumatic life experience of her past as a reunited birthmother served as a springboard not only to writing two award-winning papers relating to unwed mothers, but an award-winning research presentation. A Freshman English personal essay, “Looking for Ann,” won the 2002 Richland College Literary Essay Competition and has been published in three different publications. Her history research paper, "Go and Sin No More: The Berachah Industrial Home for the Redemption and Protection of Erring Girls," won the Phi Alpha Theta E.C. Barksdale Historical Essay Award from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2005, and earned Crowell the distinction from O. K. Carter, columnist of the Fort Worth Star Telegram, as having written what is most likely the definitive study to-date on the home. After earning an Honors Bachelor of Arts Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, cum laude, from University of Texas Arlington in 2007, she decided to continue her pursuit of history at the graduate level and further develop her passion for historical research and writing.

Crowell lives in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metro area. She has accepted an offer from Richland College to teach history in January 2010. She plans to return to University of Texas Arlington in September 2010 to work toward an Archival Certificate.