Freedmantown,the first place in Houston where emancipated slaves purchased property in the **1860s.**

Due to Union measures such as the Confiscation Acts and Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the war effectively ended slavery, even before ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in December **1865** formally ended the legal institution throughout the United States.

As documented by Louise Passey, by **1880** the majority of the Hardcastle Addition was black-owned. The land was also not the most desirable within the city limits.

The **1900** census shows that while some parts of the Hardcastle Addition were fairly undeveloped many streets were well-populated. The census also lists the occupation of about 12% of those in this area as "At School."

Reservation - the city's legally designated red-light district on **March 31, 1908**

The **1908** Houston City Directory shows a significant demographic shift from 1900. It is likely that this year's directory was compiled shortly after the ordinance passed, as several "fallen women" have already moved into the area – including Thelma Denton and Aurelia Delgado.

While black residents are still the majority, the **1908 directory lists significantly more residents unmarked with regard to race**. Notably, households unmarked by race are distributed across the reservation. To the south, San Felipe has developed into a mixed race commercial district of black owned businesses (gray)

In **1911** – in response to property owners petitioning the city to do so – the city passed another ordinance expanding the reservation slightly to the south, encompassing three additional portions of the Hardcastle Addition.

By **1917,** the last year of the reservation, the City Directory shows a remarkable consolidation of residents marked as "colored" and those left unmarked.

I have a hypothesis that the authorities were concerned by the increasing levels of prosperity and independence that the black residents were achieving. Is it a coincidence that reservation was located in that area and initiated just as a large number of black businesses were being established on San Felipe? With an increase in commercial activity, property values will have likely increased also. Some members of society may have been perturbed that the black folk were on the cusp of encroaching mainstream society and did not want them to have a stranglehold on the area and then expand further. The objective was likely to cause disruption, destabilize and to introduce prostitution related crime into the area and increasing the chances of criminal charges against the black people. I will now look into the database for key variables that suggest whether the region was on the cusp of prosperity or decline just as the reservation was established.

Children and Crime. Pre and Post establishment of the Reservation.

We can hypothesize about the impact this reservation had on the general growth and prosperity of the black population in Houston post 1917. I'm sure some census numbers exist that could demonstrate a trend of an immediate decline or steady growth. And we can **compare with the black population/prosperity trends of other Houston neighbourhoods** that did not have red light district imposed upon them.

Alternative Hypotheses

Was the Reservation situated there due to a lack of representation (no voice) for the black community to resist the proposal?

Look at how many council members were black.

Was the Reservation situated there due to major development plans in the region?

Look at the timeline for development around that region.

Did the reservation result in a decline for local businesses due to its reputation and unsavoury neighborhood?

Count the number of businesses before and after the Reservation.

Churches were pivotal for the stability of the community. How many churches in 1908 and how many in 1917?

But as the city geared for war and as attention turned elsewhere, the city's vice district would come to a close in about 10 years. By that time, according to the Handbook of Texas, 60 percent of the women who led households of prostitutes in the vice reservation were Anglo, 35 percent black, and 5 percent Hispanic.

On March, 30, 1908, Houston City Council passed an ordinance establishing a segregated vice district.

The Houston Post reported the move was in response to the petitions of several residents throughout the city that action needed to be done to "relieve their surroundings of the immoral element that has overflowed from the places formally understood to be set apart for them."

The City Council resolution states that "such houses are scattered throughout the city and in many cases in residence sections and in the neighborhood of public schools." It went on to conclude that prostitution was creating a "menace to public order and decency, to the sanctity of the home and to the moral welfare of the young."

<https://houstorian.wordpress.com/2008/01/23/houstons-red-light-district/>

Once enacted, the ordinance made it illegal for anyone to rent, lease or hire any house, building or room to any female "notoriously abandoned to lewdness, or for immoral purposes" outside the district.

<http://bayoucityhistory.blogspot.com/2007/04/different-kind-of-red-light-issue-2-of.html>

But in advocating the creation of the segregated vice district, the committee concluded that:  
  
"The successful and permanent exclusion of prostitution from the limits of a city the size of Houston is impossible. It is a fact of general knowledge that the successful permanent exclusion of prostitution from any city of large size has never occurred in the history of the world...."  
  
Kicking prostitutes out of the city limits would "form clusters on the outskirts of the city, most probably on the principal avenues and street car lines leading out of the city. Electric transit has carried a large portion of the residences of the people to the outskirts of the city. These citizens would have these offensive establishments brought in close contact to their homes and would have the lines of street car communication to their homes ruined by the presence of immoral men and women."  
  
And what about those Fourth Ward residents living near the vice district?  
  
"The district selected is considered from all points of view the best selection that could have been made. The property is of very little value and will be increased rather than diminished in value by the ordinance. No public school is situated in or near it, nor is there any occasion for school children to pass through it in going to school. It is not situated on any public thoroughfare in general use and largely the land is vacant and unoccupied by residents and is of little value, situated in the bends of the bayou and cut up by gullies."But as the city geared for war and as attention turned elsewhere, the city's vice district would come to a close in about 10 years. By that time, according to the Handbook of Texas, 60 percent of the women who led households of prostitutes in the vice reservation were Anglo, 35 percent black, and 5 percent Hispanic.