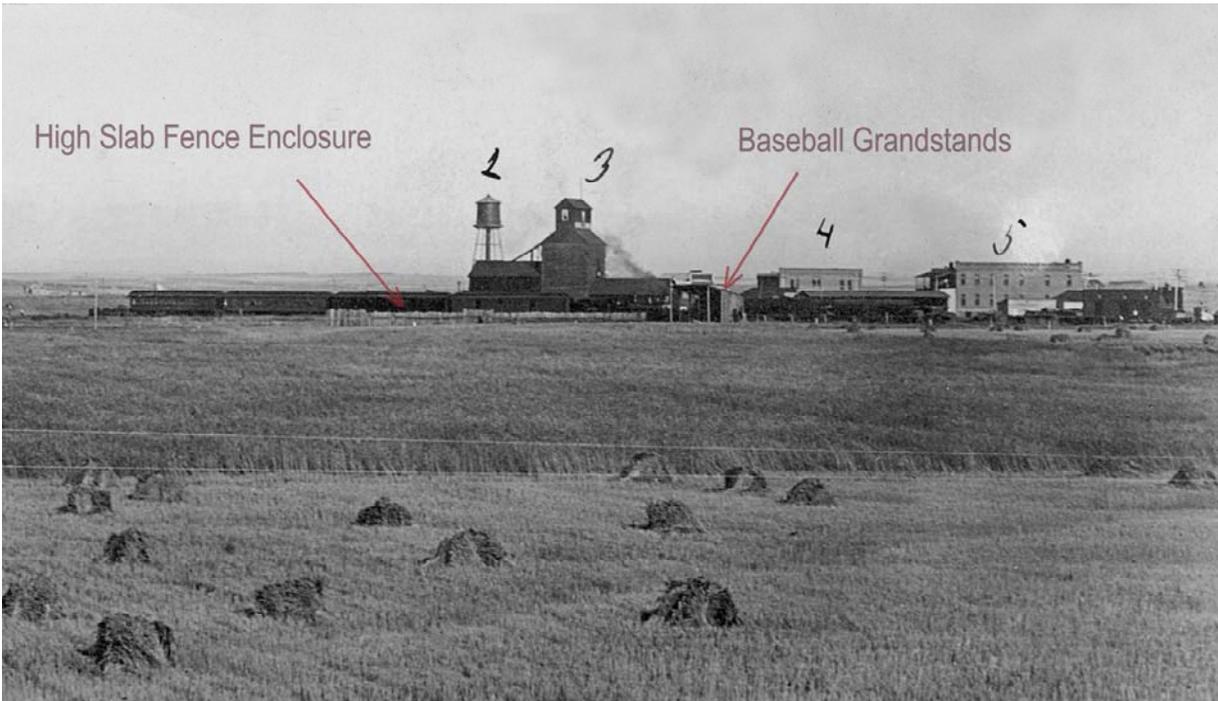


Exactly who is Madam Lake and exactly where was Madam Lake's Pleasure Emporium Located?

When you look at the below photos, the high slab fence that encloses Madam Lake's Pleasure Emporium appears to be very near the railroad tracks. However, this photo was taken from a distance and with a powerful lens and all of the objects in the field of view are compressed. As it turns out, the enclosure is on the west side of the baseball field. It is closer to the camera than is the grandstands.



In 1910, the baseball fields were where they are today. We know that Madam Lake's enclosure was nearby from what Elliot Paul wrote in his book entitled 'Desperate Scenery' where he claims that the Madam and her girls would come just outside of the enclosure to watch the big games, "from deep center field." Paul also describes the route to Madam Lake's as, "across the tracks, along the baseball field and through the gates of the high slab fence."

Paul rode the train from Pocatello in early July of 1910 with six prostitutes coming from Pocatello to Ashton. The news was out that Jackson Lake Dam had collapsed and that the rebuild would be conducted from the new railhead at Ashton. Construction workers, merchants, businessmen, teamsters, profiteers, and our six prostitutes descended upon new town of Ashton like flies on road kill. Madam Lake was already established in Ashton in 1910 and had at least two prostitutes in her employ as we shall see later. In fact, Paul writes that the Madam knew that they were coming and was waiting at the station when he and the prostitutes arrived in Ashton and that she was accompanied by the "Ashton Marshal" and by "Doc Pucket" all whom inspected these women before they were allowed to disembark the train. The Ashton Marshal was probably "Bronc" Sparkman and the man with the pseudonym of "Doc Pucket" can only be the real person of Doc Hargis, the only doctor that Ashton had for the first 20 years of its history. As a point of interest, Paul also writes that Doc Hargis placed certificates of health in each of the prostitutes' rooms as a medical service to the community.

Ashton Archivist, Jane Daniels (we should thank her) became interested in the exact whereabouts of Madam Lake's Pleasure Emporium and found that in 1910 some mechanics and materialman liens were placed on a property belonging to a one Josie Lake. A lien of this type can be placed on a property when a company or persons work on a property but are not paid by the owner. The unpaid materialman or contractor can place a lien to claim partial ownership of the property. The claimants Josie Lake's property were Ashton Lumber Co. and Train Lumber and Coal. This is interesting because Paul also writes that Madam Lake's Pleasure Emporium partially burned in 1910 and was rebuilt and greatly expanded for the new Jackson Lake Dam business. So we know that much work was done on Madam Lake's property in 1910. Her complex supposedly included a bar, restaurant, dance hall and several cabins for the prostitutes.

The properties described in the liens were Block-7, Lots 5 and 6 with a second lien placed on Lot 5. So Lot 5 had two liens. This same Lot 5 was then sold by a Jessie Waldron to an Oliver Sparkman. This was probably a scheme between friends to complicate the lines. Oliver Sparkman is almost certainly the Ashton Marshal "Bronc" Sparkman and could Jessie Waldron be our friend Josie Lake?

I checked on familysearch.com for a Jessie Waldron and she shows up in the 1910 census in Ashton as follows:

Jessie Waldron

Birthplace: Virginia

Relationship to Head of Household: Self

Residence: Ashton, Fremont, Idaho

Marital Status: Widowed

Race : White

Gender: Female

Immigration Year:

Father's Birthplace: Virginia

Mother's Birthplace: Virginia

Family Number: 115

Page Number: 5

<i>Household</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>
Jessie Waldron	<i>F</i>	<i>43y</i>
Belle Howard	<i>F</i>	<i>20y</i>
Bessie Douglas	<i>F</i>	<i>23y</i>

So Jessie is head of household with two other females living with her. Both of these young women were also single:

*Name: **Belle Howard***

Birthplace: Illinois

Relationship to Head of Household:

Residence: Ashton, Fremont, Idaho

Marital Status: Single

Race : White

Gender: Female

Immigration Year:

Father's Birthplace: Poland

Mother's Birthplace: Poland

*Name: **Bessie Douglas***

Birthplace: Maryland

Relationship to Head of Household:

Residence: Ashton, Fremont, Idaho

Marital Status: Divorced

Race : White

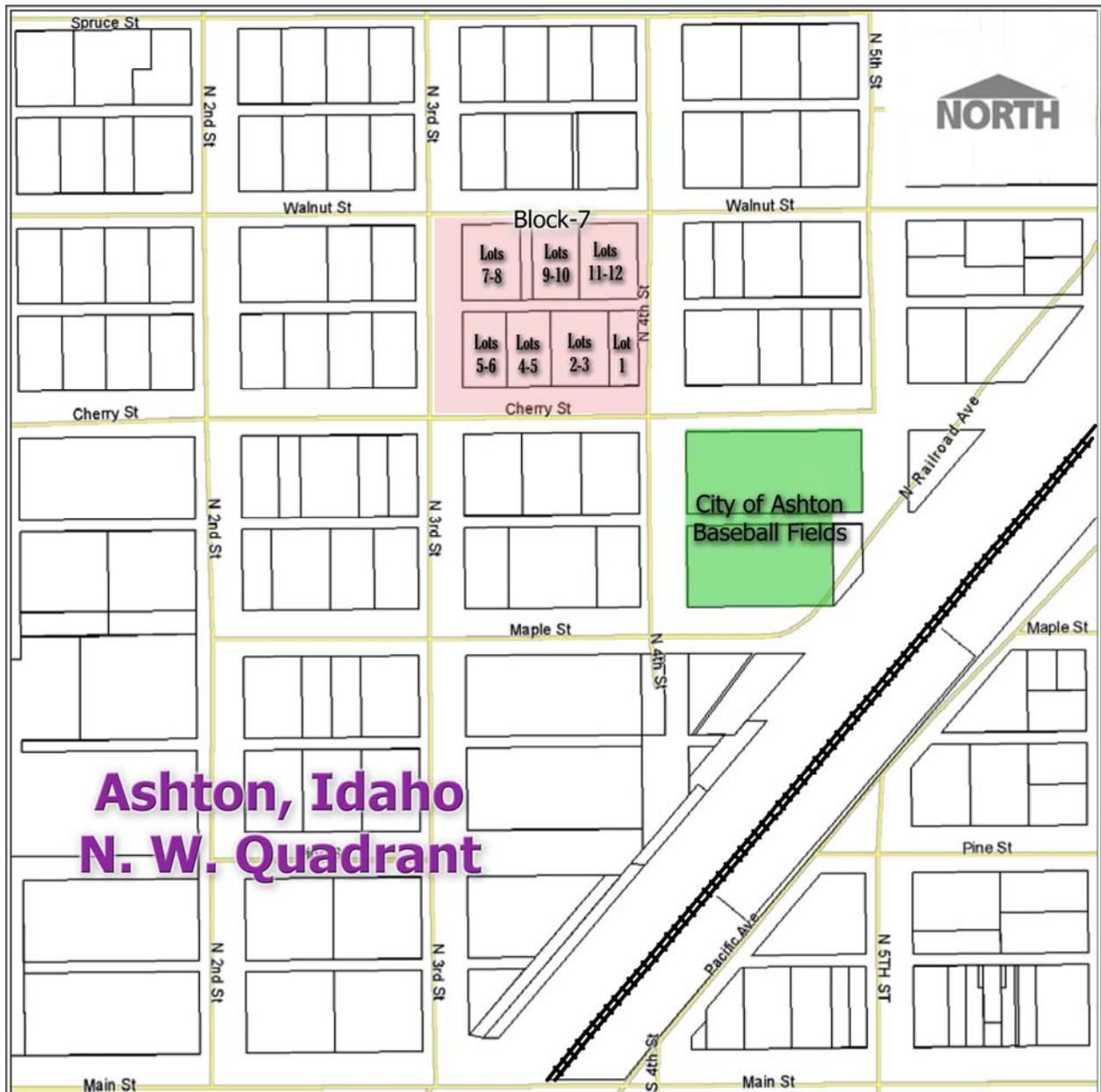
Gender: Female

Immigration Year:

Father's Birthplace: England
Mother's Birthplace: France

Bingo! Jessie Waldron was 43, single, and was living in the same house with two single women in their early 20's that were in no way related to her. Jessie Waldon is obviously Josie Lake or Madam Lake living with at least two prostitutes in 1910. There may have been others that ditched the census takers.

The location of Block-7 Lot 5 is easy to find on Fremont Counties GIS map server. See map below:



Lots 4-5 today are owned by the Mayor of Ashton, Ted Stronks and Lots 5-6 belong to Rulon Grube. Why there are two partial owners of Lot 5 is a mystery but may date back to the liens placed on the properties in 1910. Notice on the map the proximity of Jessie Waldron's properties to the baseball field and how well the position on this map agrees with the photos at top.

I think the evidence is irrefutable now. There was a Madam Lake that owned a brothel complex near the baseball fields near 3rd and Cherry streets exactly like Elliot Paul describes. She used the name Josie Lake but her legal name was Jessie Waldron. She had at least two prostitutes in her employ in 1910 and added six more for a total of at least eight for the Jackson Lake Dam boom beginning in 1910. She was friends with Marshal Bronc Sparkman and with Doc Hargis along with many other prominent Ashton men exactly as Elliot Paul describes.

If anyone can do some genealogy on Jessi Waldron, Oliver Sparkman, or on the prostitutes, or if they can provide any other information or photo, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

Neal Wickham
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