

**WHITE NATION BUILDING AND SEX BETWEEN MEN IN THE BRITISH
COLUMBIA AND WASHINGTON PRESS, 1866 TO 1910**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Marissa, whose compassion will always be an inspiration to me.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the representations of sex between men in the British Columbia and Washington press from 1866 to 1910. During this period, B.C. and Washington newspapers covered both local and international sex scandals involving men engaging in sex with other men or boys. I explore the way this coverage illustrates that representations of sex between men were intertwined with issues of identity, as the press drew on various identity categories, such as race, reputation and social connections, and age, to position men accused of having sex with other men as either opposed to or in line with national and transnational goals. I argue that, in the press coverage of sex between men, the deviancy associated with men engaging in sex with other men was constantly being negotiated based on the identities of accused men.

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Introduction:

The first mention of sex between men in British Columbia and Washington newspapers is in an 1866 issue of *The British Colonist*. The article is titled “Offences on the High Seas” and describes the charging and subsequent trial of two Greek seamen, Mat Rosid and Andrew Patriico, for committing and attempting to commit sodomy aboard the Princess Royal.¹ Coverage is relatively brief, describing only the basic facts of the case, as well as its outcome (Rosid faced a lifetime of penal servitude, whereas Patriico was sentenced with two years hard labour), revealing little of the interplay between race, age, nationalism, colonialism, and sexuality that would come to dominate coverage of sex between men in the coming decades.² Throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, stories regarding sex between men appeared in the British Columbia and Washington popular press with growing frequency, particularly during and after the late 1880s.

This thesis analyzes the treatment of sex between men in the British Columbia and Washington popular press from 1866 to 1910. During these years of critical state, provincial, and national formation, coverage of sex between men and boys evolved in accordance with both local and national concerns which created two different representations of sex between men on either side of the border. Relatively few scholars have investigated the history of sex between men in the Pacific Northwest, and none have focused on the effects of different national contexts. My research seeks to contribute to the scholarship by exploring both the similarities and differences of press coverage across

¹ “Offences on the High Seas,” *The British Colonist*, (Victoria, British Columbia), February 28th, 1866, Washington Digital Newspapers, para. 1.

<https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18660228uvic/page/n3/mode/2up?view=theater>.

² Ibid, para. 1.

the border, ultimately revealing how the press coverage of sex between men served to reinforce both national and transnational goals. Within the British Columbia and Washington press, the proliferation of racist sexual stereotypes, the notion of the homosexual as threatening to youth and the family, and the use of international sex scandals was used to reinforce national and transnational identities.

This introduction will first analyze the history of British Columbia and Washington from 1790 to the late nineteenth century. This section will provide historical context for the nationalist and settler colonial rhetoric found in the B.C. and Washington newspaper coverage of sex between men. The next section will describe the primary source base for this thesis and will consider both the benefits and drawbacks of using newspapers as a primary source. I will then consider the terminology used in nineteenth and twentieth century newspapers to refer to sex between men and how this terminology served to both make sex between men acceptable for public consumption, while also dehumanizing men engaging in sex with other men. Finally, the introduction will end with an outline of subsequent chapters.

British Columbia and Washington During the Late Nineteenth Century

This thesis is narrowed by both time and location. In terms of location, Washington and British Columbia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were both regions with economies based on resource extraction and, as a result, predominantly masculine working-class populations. Comparing the popular press in these two regions allows for an analysis of how national context altered press reactions to sex between men, particularly in two regions wherein homosocial working-class culture was increasing coming into conflict with an emerging middle class. In terms of time, the

date range of this thesis is from 1866 to 1910. 1866 marks the first appearance of sex between men in the British Columbia and Washington popular press, and the upper date of 1910 allows for tracking the influence of the Oscar Wilde scandal in the British Columbia and Washington press well past when the scandal itself had ended. Observing how the popular press reflected changes in representations of sex between men as a result of both the Oscar Wilde scandal and other societal factors, namely reactions to increased immigration and changes in racial identity, in the early twentieth century is central to this thesis.

British claims in British Columbia solidified in 1790 with the creation of the British-Spanish Nootka Convention, which ended Spanish claims of exclusivity in the region. After 1790, the presence of both British and American traders increased in the region, until the United States and Britain deemed that the region would be jointly managed with the Anglo-American Convention of 1818.³ This joint management continued until the United States and Britain passed the Oregon Treaty of 1846, in which Britain ceded its claims to land south of the 49th parallel. As such, the Oregon Treaty of 1846 marked the official incorporation of British Columbia as British colony. Due to its early emphasis on resource extraction, British Columbia was defined by a masculine working-class culture until the emergence of a middle class during the late nineteenth century. Both the 1858 Fraser Canyon Gold Rush and the 1862 Cariboo Gold Rush encouraged an influx of miners into the region, resulting in the creation of numerous mining communities. In addition to mining, other resource extraction industries, namely lumber and fishing, developed within the colony.

³ Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canada Borderlands*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 9-10.

British colonial activity in British Columbia shifted in the nineteenth century, when the colony became less focused on resource extraction and transient labor and more focused on permanent settlement. This was largely due to an ideological shift surrounding British migration and the purpose of British colonialism. As opposed to mere economic gains from resource extraction, colonialism in British Columbia became focused on encouraging the migration and settlement of middle-class Britons and recreating British society in the colony.⁴ As a result, alongside the prominent working class, colonial officials, reformers, and wealthy townspeople began to form an emergent middle class that constructed itself in opposition to the rough working class.⁵ British Columbia joined confederation in 1871.⁶

British Columbia's popular press began in Victoria with the arrival of a printing press from San Francisco. The first paper printed in British Columbia was the *Victoria Gazette*, which ran from 1858 to 1860 and was widely circulated throughout not only British Columbia but also Oregon, Washington, and California. The *Victoria Gazette* focused on publishing information related to natural resources. *The British Colonist* began publication in 1858 and quickly became controversial after accusing Governor James Douglas of corruption and extravagant spending and accused the *Victoria Gazette* of favoring American interests. Ultimately, *The British Colonist's* approach proved more popular, as the paper remained in publication until 1980, whereas the *Victoria Gazette* was forced to close in 1860. In the following decades, the popular press in British

⁴ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783 to 1939*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 146.

⁵ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp. 15, 17, 160.

⁶ "Boundaries (Oregon Treaty)," opened for signature June 15th, 1846, *Treaty Series 120*, Library of Congress, accessed August 10th, 2020. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-gb-ust000012-0095.pdf>.

Columbia grew to include many newspapers that are central to this thesis. This includes *The Revelstoke Herald* (1897 to 1905), which included extensive coverage of the Oscar Wilde scandal; the *Nelson Daily News* (1902 to 1980), which included coverage of local sodomy trials; *The Miner* (1890 to 1898), another Nelson paper oriented more towards a working-class audience; and the *Daily British Columbian* (1882 to 1890), a New Westminster paper that frequently published local crime statistics.⁷

Like in British Columbia, American claims in the Pacific Northwest also began in the late eighteenth century and were solidified with the Anglo-American Convention of 1818. As a result of the Anglo-American Convention of 1818, Washington territory began to be jointly managed by Britain and America and officially entered American ownership when Britain ceded all land south of the 49th parallel with the Oregon Treaty of 1846. Therefore, the Oregon Treaty of 1846 defined Washington's northern border. The 1853 Monticello Convention marked the official creation of Washington territory, and its eastern border was defined with the creation of Idaho Territory in 1863.⁸ During this period, Washington was similar to British Columbia in that its local settler economy focused on resource extraction industries, including mining, fishing, and lumber, and, as a result, developed a masculine working class community that was similar to, but smaller and less powerful than, British Columbia's.⁹ Prostitution, gambling, and liquor consumption was common among this community, and particularly in Seattle, where vice

⁷ Hugh Doherty, "The First Newspapers on Canada's West Coast," The University of Victoria, accessed August 10th, 2020, para. 5, <http://web.uvic.ca/vv/articles/doherty/newspaper.html#:~:text=New%20Westminster%20Times%20and%20Vancouver,Victoria%20Daily%20Chronicle%201862%2D1866>.

⁸ Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory*, (Olympia: Washington State University, 2002), pp. 16-68.

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 97,98.

was encouraged by the city's founders.¹⁰ Due to the absence of major gold rushes, Washington had fewer mining communities than British Columbia, but the onset of the Klondike Gold Rush increased Seattle's prominence as a trade port to Alaska.¹¹

Like in British Columbia, American expansion into the West began to shift away from resource extraction and towards permanent settlement in the nineteenth century. Settlement in the American West became increasingly focused on the establishment of a permanent middle class that would seek to replicate the metropole. However, unlike in British Columbia, in the late nineteenth century American expansion in the West was also concerned with decoupling from Britain. During this period, American settlers sought to establish their cultural independence from Britain. This focus on establishing an American nationalism that was separate from and superior to British culture will become evident when analyzing Washington press coverage of British sex scandals.¹²

The first newspaper in Washington Territory was *The Columbian*, which began its run in 1853.¹³ *The Columbian* changed owners several times before closing in 1854.¹⁴ More notable was the creation of the *Seattle Gazette* in 1863. Later known as the *Weekly Intelligencer* from 1867 to 1881, the *Seattle Daily Post-Intelligencer* from 1881 to 1888, and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* from 1888 onwards, the *Seattle Gazette* was the city's

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 122.

¹¹ "Seattle Daily Post-Intelligencer," Washington Digital Newspapers Online, Washington State Library, accessed August 10th, 2020, para. 1. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SEATPINT&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->.

¹² James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783 to 1939*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 479-482.

¹³ Phil Dougherty, "The Columbian, Washington's First Newspaper, is Published in Olympia," History Link, published February 9th, 2017, para. 1, <https://www.historylink.org/File/20433>.

¹⁴ Ibid, para. 10.

pioneering newspaper.¹⁵ Going through seventeen owners, the *Seattle Gazette* never maintained a consistent ideological or political bent, but did consistently report on sex scandals involving sex between men, including the Oscar Wilde case.¹⁶ Washington territory had fewer newspapers than British Columbia directed at a specifically working class audience, but did have one aimed at a Black audience: *The Seattle Republican*, which ran from 1900 to 1915.¹⁷ Other newspapers that proved useful to this thesis include the *Anacortes American* (1890 to 1996), the *Washington Standard* (1860 to 1921), *The Yakima Herald* (1889 to 1912), *The Pullman Herald* (1888 to 1924), *The Islander* (founded in 1891, known after 1898 as *The San Juan Islander* and closed in 1914), and *Adams County News* (1898 to 1906), each of which was founded in and focused on providing news to a specific region.

Regulating Sex Between Men in Washington and British Columbia

Most articles pertaining to sex between men in British Columbia and Washington newspapers from 1866 to 1910 involved the legal regulation of sex between men, and jurisdiction over such cases differed on either side of the border. Laws related to sex between men fell under territorial and later state jurisdiction in Washington, whereas in British Columbia the regulation of sex between men was determined by British law and,

¹⁵ “Seattle Daily Post-Intelligencer,” Washington Digital Newspapers Online, Washington State Library, accessed August 10th, 2020, para. 1. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SEATPINT&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->.

¹⁶ “Seattle Daily Post-Intelligencer,” Washington Digital Newspapers Online, Washington State Library, accessed August 10th, 2020, para. 2. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SEATPINT&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->.

¹⁷ “The Seattle Republican,” Washington Digital Newspapers Online, Washington State Library, accessed August 10th, 2020, para. 1. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SEATREP&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->.

after the *Constitution Act* passed in 1867, the Canadian criminal code.¹⁸ This resulted in a tumultuous legal history in Washington, where state laws regulating sodomy were non-existent until 1893 and, as a result, regulators faced public outcry. Comparatively, British Columbia used a well-established system of regulating sex between men, resulting in few issues concerning regulatory enforcement and little to no public outcry.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the most direct means of regulating sex between men in Washington was sodomy laws in the state and territorial legal codes.¹⁹ Controversy regarding the regulation of sex between men surrounded an 1889 sodomy trial. The trial involved C.B. “Shorty” Collins who was charged with sodomy and brought to trial on February 16th, 1889 in Seattle. The presiding judge, Judge Burke, discovered that a punishment for sodomy had not been added to Washington territorial codes, nor was there an acceptable precedent under common law within the region. According to the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, there was little doubt of his guilt, but Collins’ defense argued that the charge was not indictable due to the lack of an established sentence within the territory.²⁰ Judge Burke informed the jury that “as the code provided no punishment for the crime alleged to have been committed [...] it would be useless to return a verdict finding the defendant guilty.” The jury was left with the decision to either find Collins not guilty or guilty of assault. They decided on the former, stating that “it would be a travesty upon justice to find a man who had committed so heinous a crime guilty of simple assault.” Collins ultimately escaped punishment due to

¹⁸ Government of Canada, “Constitution Act, 1867,” Justice Laws Website, accessed January 28th, 2021, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-1.html>.

¹⁹ William N. Eskridge Jr., *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003*, (London: Viking Penguin, 2008), pp. 40.

²⁰ “A Point of Law,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, (Seattle, WA), February 16th, 1889, para. 1. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18890216.1.3&srpos=4&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

the absence of legal regulation surrounding sex between men in Washington territory, but he did not escape the judgement of the community, as his attorney argued that there was a “strong feeling prevalent in the community against him [Collins].” As a result, Judge Burke allowed Collins to reside in the county jail for days after he was declared innocent to protect Collins from community violence.²¹

Despite the public outrage over the Collins case, lawmakers did not pass a bill clarifying the punishment for sodomy until four years after Collins was found innocent. House Bill No. 295 became a law on March 25th, 1893 and clarified that sodomy could be punishable in the State of Washington by a sentence of 10 to 14 years. The definition of sodomy in Washington state codes defined the crime as a penetrative sexual act with “mankind or with any beast.”²² This sentence remained in place until it was repealed in 1967.²³

The lack of a clear sentence for sodomy in Washington’s territorial codes prior to 1893 did not mean that there was no regulation of sex between men before that year. Instead, cases involving sex between men usually fell under the charge of assault. I have identified only one such recorded case: Charles Spero in Port Townsend in 1887. The *Washington Standard* stated that Spero had committed sodomy and Spero was listed as having committed sodomy in the Washington territorial crime statistics.²⁴ However,

²¹ “‘Shorty’ Collins Acquitted,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, (Seattle, WA), February 17th, 1889, para. 1. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18890217.1.5&srpos=5&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

²² Washington State, *Session Laws of the State of Washington*, (Olympia: Authority, 1893), pp. 471.

²³ “The Crime of Sodomy,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, (Seattle, WA), March 25th, 1893, para. 1. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18930325.1.3&srpos=1&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1893-->.

²⁴ “Territorial Statistics,” *Washington Standard*, (Olympia, WA), January 13th, 1888, row. 91. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WASHSTD18880113.1.1&srpos=1&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1888-->.

despite the focus on sex between men in the coverage of the case, the Territory of Washington charged Spero with assault. Spero was found guilty.²⁵

The British Crown passed laws regulating sex between men in British Columbia until British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871, after which the Canadian Federal Government managed laws related to sexual regulation.²⁶ In British Columbia a variety of laws were intended to regulate sex between men, including such offences as buggery, sodomy, attempted sodomy, gross indecency, and prostitution. Within British and Canadian law, sodomy and buggery were often used interchangeably, along with the term “the abominable crime.” Both sodomy and buggery were defined as penetrative sex with either another man or an animal. Capital offenses for buggery were repealed under the British Offenses Against the Person Act of 1861.²⁷ The punishment for buggery was set at life in penal servitude with a minimum sentence of ten years.²⁸ An attempt to commit buggery was punishable by up to ten years penal servitude, with a minimum sentence of three years.²⁹

As a result of the use of the far more expansive laws in British Columbia, the province never faced the same regulatory issues that Washington did with the 1889

²⁵ The Territory of Washington v. Charles Spero, JEF-1867, original 1002, (Jefferson County Court, 1887).

²⁶ Canada’s Criminal Law Consolidation and Amendment Acts of 1869 largely duplicated the charges and punishments listed in the Offenses Against the Person Act of 1861, with a few additions. Sentences for buggery and an attempt to commit buggery remained consistent. Notably, the legal definition of buggery within The Criminal Law Consolidation and Amendment Acts of 1869 allowed for one or both parties to be charged. Furthermore, in 1892 laws pertaining to gross indecency (a non-penetrative sexual act) with another man were added to the Canadian criminal code. Gross indecency was punishable by up to five years imprisonment and whipping. *The Criminal Law Consolidation and Amendment Acts of 1869*, (Montreal: Lovell, 1874), Canadiana Online, pp. 344, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.54554/1?r=0&s=1> and *County Constable's Manual, or, Handy book, Compiled from the Criminal Code, 1892-3*, (Toronto: Carswell, 1893), Canadiana Online, pp. 103. <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.10646/1?r=0&s=1>.

²⁷ *Offenses Against the Person Act of 1861*, 1861, Legislation.gov.uk., <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/24-25/100/section/61/enacted>, (accessed June 6th, 2020), para. 61.

²⁸ *Ibid*, para. 61.

²⁹ *Ibid*, para. 62.

Collins case. This resulted in a more stable system of regulating sex between men, with less public outrage and press coverage. However, the regulation of sex between men in British Columbia was harsher than its equivalent in Washington. In British Columbia, those charged faced life in penal servitude, as opposed to 10 to 14 years imprisonment, and were also subjected to gross indecency laws that outlawed non-penetrative sex between men.

Pacific Northwest Newspapers as Primary Sources

This thesis relies primarily on newspapers from Washington and British Columbia from 1866 to 1910, gathered from four databases: *British Columbia Historical Newspapers*, *The British Colonist*, *Washington Digital Newspapers*, and *Chronicling America*. These sources reveal much about the press's representations of sex between men among a variety of socio-economic, racial, and political groups in Washington and British Columbia. These newspapers tended to focus on cases in which men or, more frequently, boys were sexually assaulted by other men. Cases involving rape were far more likely to be reported to local authorities by either the victim of rape or a witness. The sexual assault of men or boys by other men also made for more sensational news stories than consensual sex and better fit with common representations of sex between men as deviant and criminal.

As primary sources newspapers reveal what information concerning sex between men press writers viewed as suitable for public consumption. Newspapers used vague terminology rather than plain language when they did write about such cases, and often portrayed men who had sex with other men as threats to other segments of society. The

popular press can also be useful in explaining how and why men accused of sex between men were portrayed as either deviant or sympathetic.³⁰

The terminology the press used to describe sex between men creates a methodological problem when searching for press coverage of cases involving sex between men. Given the reluctance of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century press to refer to sex between men in explicit terms, and given that the primary sources for this thesis were primarily gathered through newspaper databases that operate through keyword searches, it is difficult to determine the correct terms needed to identify all cases involving sex between men. To minimize this issue, I used numerous strategies to identify as many cases as possible. The first strategy was to identify the terminology associated with sex between men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and to use these terms to identify more cases through keyword searches. The next strategy was to identify the names of those involved in scandals and search the names independently, to identify any articles concerning the case that did not directly refer to sex between men. The last strategy was to skim newspaper issues with dates surrounding relevant cases, to identify articles that both did not include references to sex between men and did not include names. These strategies have hopefully minimized the number of cases missed within these databases. However, given that the newspapers were reluctant to discuss sex

³⁰ For instance, in "Same-Sex Intersections of the Prairie Settlement Era: The 1895 Case of Regina's Oscar Wilde," Lyle Dick uses newspaper coverage of the 1895 Frank Hoskins arrest for gross indecency to illustrate the way Hoskin's reputation and economic success was used to negate the deviancy associated with his sexuality. Similarly, Terry Chapman uses period newspapers in "An 'Oscar Wilde Type': The Abominable Crime of Buggery in Western Canada, 1880-1920" to illustrate that vitriolic representations of sex between men in the press did not always equate to harsh legal punishments. Lyle Dick, "Same-Sex Intersections of the Prairie Settlement Era: The 1895 Case of Regina's 'Oscar Wilde,'" *Histoire Sociale*, (May, 2009): 113-135, and Terry Chapman, "An 'Oscar Wilde Type': The Abominable Crime of Buggery in Western Canada, 1880-1920," *Criminal Justice History* 4 (1983): 112.

between men at all and often referred to sex between men with an indirect and ever-changing terminology, it is likely that these methods failed to identify all relevant cases within these databases.

The Terminology of Sex Between Men

From 1866 to 1910, Washington and British Columbia's newspapers would not print detailed accounts of sex acts and instead relied on terms that alluded to sex between men. These terms served to make the reporting of these sex acts in a way deemed appropriate for the public, while also portraying men engaging in sex with other men as especially violent or animalistic. Therefore, the press's use of indirect terms worked as a form of suppression and as a means of actively shaping representations of sex between men through dehumanizing language.

Sodomy was the most obvious term used to refer to sex between men in these newspapers. Sodomy was also less commonly used to refer to heterosexual rape. Sodomy was a legal term and most references to sodomy were in relation to an arrest. However, a reference to sodomy in the popular press did not necessarily indicate that a subject had been charged with sodomy, as the case of Charles Spero illustrates. "Sodomy" appeared frequently in the popular press. Notably, "buggery" and "the abominable crime," despite appearing in American, Canadian, and British legal documents, were not used to refer to sex between men in B.C. or Washington newspapers.

Instances of sex between men could also be referred to "an unnatural crime" or "unnatural acts." The term "an unnatural crime" was not used exclusively to refer to sex between men, but instead referred to any crime that the press viewed as somehow contrary to human nature. Within the British Columbia and Washington popular press this

included infanticide, matricide, patricide, and incest. Each of these crimes consisted of enacting harm against the family which is notable considering how sex between men was conceptualized during the late nineteenth century as threatening to family structures by corrupting youth. Through this connection, associating sex between men with “an unnatural crime” positioned sex between men alongside crimes that threatened the family, as well as opposed to basic human impulses.

Bestiality and sex between men occupied the same legal category in Canadian law and Washington’s state codes and sex between men could be described as bestial or likened to bestiality. Much like the use of “an unnatural crime,” the usage of bestial and bestiality served to dehumanize men engaging in with other men by framing their sex acts as animalistic.

“An unmentionable crime” was a racialized term, used most commonly to refer to the alleged rape of a White woman by a Black man. The phrase was sometimes used to indicate instances of sex between men, but the phrase was racialized in a way that others, such as sodomy and “an unnatural crime,” were not. Within the Washington press, “an unmentionable crime” was most commonly used when reporting on lynching, wherein Black men allegedly committing the “unmentionable crime” of rape against a White woman was used to justify racial violence. While this was the most common use “an unmentionable crime” in the press, the phrase could also be used interchangeably with sodomy and used in cases of sex between men with no apparent racial subtext.

Using vague terms to suggest sex between men allowed newspapers to discuss sex between men without offending readers. The press also used these indirect phrases to encourage racist stereotypes regarding men of colour’s sexuality and provide a wider commentary on sex between men’s effect on society and the family. Ultimately, most

phrases used to describe sex between men in the popular press also served to further the dehumanization of men who had sex with other men.

Thesis Outline

The first chapter focuses on the historiographical and theoretical foundations related to transnationalism, borderlands, the construction of sexuality, and perceptions of age. This context helps to explain the intersections between nationalistic ideology, transnational perceptions of race, perceptions of age, and representations of sex between men. These intersections are invaluable to understanding the press coverage of sex between men in British Columbia and Washington, particularly when that press coverage was used to further national and transnational goals.

The second chapter of this thesis analyzes the most influential sex scandal of the 1890s: the Oscar Wilde trial. During the mid to late 1890s, the Oscar Wilde trial dominated press coverage concerning sex between men in both British Columbia and Washington. Understanding how the trial influenced representations of sex between men in Washington and B.C. is essential to understanding how these locations perceived sex between men and local sex scandals. The chapter provides context for trial, as well as context for how Oscar Wilde was discussed prior to the 1895 scandal. The chapter then investigates how the trial was understood along national and class lines in Washington, and then compares this coverage to the relative lack of coverage in British Columbia. This comparison allows for an understanding of how the trial reflected national goals and cultural ties on either side of the border; the Washington press adhered to nationalistic ideology by attempting to assert American moralistic and cultural superiority over

Britain, while B.C. newspapers minimized the importance of the 1895 scandal to preserve cultural ties with Britain and reinforce local nationalism.

Chapter three focuses on the press coverage of local sex scandals. This chapter analyzes the press coverage of local scandals involving men engaging in sex with men or boys in B.C. and Washington. This chapter seeks to uncover how coverage of these scandals reflected and contributed to local anxieties regarding class, race, age, and sexuality, and how these anxieties were similar in Washington and British Columbia. My argument culminates in the chapter as it illustrates how the Washington and British Columbia press's anxieties surrounding sex between men were largely similar and were dependent on whether the accused men were positioned as in line with or opposed to national and transnational goals.

The conclusion of this thesis considers how the coverage discussed in chapters 2 and 3 relates to issues of national identity, transnational racial identity, and heteronormative conceptions of the family. It will also explore the way coverage functioned as an extension of nationalistic and White supremacist ideology, and how the treatment of individual accused men varied as a result.

Chapter One: Theoretical and Historiographical Foundations

The historiographical and theoretical works relevant to this thesis illuminate the connections between the construction of sexuality, the British Columbia-Washington borderlands, and the transnational history of the Pacific Northwest. This chapter will first analyze the historiography of the construction of sex between men in North America and Britain, as well as the theoretical basis for this thesis within queer theory. This section will illustrate how perceptions and the regulation of sex between men in the North American West were dependent upon class, race, and age. The next two sections, focusing on the historiography of borderlands and transnationalism in the Pacific Northwest, will demonstrate how the construction of sexuality intersected with the formation of national and transnational identity through perceptions of race and the border. Finally, this chapter will reflect on the connection between representations of sex between men and issues of transnational and national identity, and will therefore provide context for when similar themes appear in the British Columbia-Washington press coverage of sex between men and boys.

Historiographical and Theoretical Foundations

Both the historiography of the regulation of sex between men in the American and Canadian West and theoretical works concerning the construction of sexuality in the nineteenth century provide a framework through which to understand representations of men's sexuality during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This section will analyze relevant theoretical and historiographical works along thematic lines, observing

the intersections between race, social status, and age in the sexual regulation of sex between men. This will reveal the extent to which perceptions and the regulation of sex between men in the American and Canadian West were shaped by these various identity categories.

For instance, historian Michel Foucault's work addresses how perceptions of sex between men in the nineteenth century were influenced by medicalization and categorization. Foucault contends in *The History of Sexuality* (1976) that, "The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality."¹ According to Foucault, the shift in representations of sex between men during the late nineteenth century was a direct result of trends towards medicalization and the rise of psychology, which sought to categorize and regulate those engaging in same-gender sex, resulting in the creation of the homosexual as a psychological category.

However, medicalization was not the only factor affecting representations of sex between men in the American and Canadian West. In the B.C. and Washington press coverage, the racial identities of both the accused and the regulators affected how sex between men was represented. Most often, the press stereotyped men of colour as more inclined towards sex between men and deviant sexuality. This stereotyping resulted in the press portraying men of colour as sexually threatening towards the wider, imagined White community. Within this section, theoretical and historiographical works concerning the

¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), pp. 43.

relation between race and the construction of sexuality in the American and Canadian West will be analyzed.

In *The Erotic Life of Racism* (2012), queer theorist Sharon Holland centers race within the construction of sexuality in the Americas. Holland argues that racism has been and continues to be integral to the construction of sexuality, not only for people of colour, but for everyone. Any analysis of the construction of sexuality within the Americas is incomplete without an analysis of how race and racism effects the construction of sexuality.² Within this view, the formation of representations of sex between men and existence of racialized sexual stereotypes are intertwined, with the proliferation of racialized sexual stereotypes contributing to the formation of representations of sex between men.

Considering that this thesis also concerns the colonial relationship between British Columbia and Britain and how this relationship affected the press coverage of British sex scandals, discussions of the intersections between colonialism, race, and sexuality is relevant. Historian Ann Laura Stoler argues for the importance of colonial discourses surrounding race and sexuality, independent of their European counterparts. Stoler argues that colonial practices of racial exclusion, such as the use of sexual regulation to restrict interracial sexual relation, were informed by bourgeois European notions of blood purity. However, these colonial discourses predated and informed bourgeois European discourses surrounding scientific racism.³ In this way, colonial racial and sexual discourses were not merely reflective of bourgeois European concerns, but rather that the two were mutually

² Sharon Patricia Holland, "Desire: or 'a bit of the other,'" in *The Erotic Life of Racism*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 45-47.

³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, (London: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 103- 107.

informative.⁴ Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate scholar Kim Tallbear similarly argues that the construction of heterosexuality (and, as a result, the construction of homosexuality) were essential to the process of settler-colonial nation-building. Tallbear argues that heterosexuality was enforced by colonial institutions, such as the church and the state. These institutions used heterosexuality to repress Indigenous expressions of sexuality, assimilate Indigenous populations into colonial society, and pursue colonialist goals of racial expansion.⁵

Several historians have addressed the role of race in sexual regulation in the American West. For instance, Nan Boyd's *Wide Open Spaces: A History of Queer San Francisco* (2003) investigates the cultural history of the queer communities in San Francisco up to 1965. Boyd centers race in her analysis of queer culture in San Francisco and argues that race tourism, by turning interracial relationships and deviant sexuality into a tourist commodity, was essential to reinforcing cultural norms, but also allowed queer communities a degree of visibility that was uncommon in other urban centers. Like Holland, Boyd's centers race in the history of sexuality. Boyd's analysis of how nineteenth century notions of race and immigration patterns informed perceptions of queer sexuality and the formation of queer subculture also proves valuable to this thesis, which also seeks to address how race, and particularly how racism directed at non-White men, effected perceptions of sex between men.⁶ Similarly, in *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (2000), historian Susan Lee Johnson centers the role

⁴ Ibid, pp. 107.

⁵ Kim Tallbear, "Making Love and Relations Beyond Settler Sex and Family," in *Making Kin Not Populations*, ed. Adele E. Clarke and Donna Haraway, (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018), pp. 145-150.

⁶ Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

of Whiteness in the sexual regulation of California mining towns during the mid nineteenth century. Johnson argues that an increased population of upper class, White families in California led to the increased sexual regulation of working-class men as upper-class reformers attempted to reorient the region in line with White respectability, which included regulating sexuality. Among the emerging White middle class, notions of acceptable sexual relations included White, state-sanctioned, heterosexual relationships. As result, sexual regulation increased for relationships that were perceived as threatening the social order, which included both interracial relationships and sex between men. Through this, Johnson observes the emerging White middle class' growing association between non-White races and perceptions of deviant sexuality.⁷

On the Canadian side of the border, historian Adele Perry's *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (2001) addresses the role of Whiteness in the sexual regulation of sex between men in mid- to late-nineteenth century British Columbia. Perry positions White women as central within the discourse surrounding the sexual regulation of sex between men. Perry observes that sex between men was viewed by regulators as more deviant when a White woman was within view and potentially able to observe the act. Perry argues that the deviancy associated with sex between men greatly increased when there was a potential for this activity to be viewed by White women because viewing sex between men was perceived as potentially compromising White women's sexual morality. Therefore, like Johnson, Perry considers

⁷ Susan Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush*, (New York: Norton & Company, Inc., 2000).

the association between deviant sexuality and men of colour by considering the role of Whiteness in the sexual regulation of sex between men.⁸

Whereas Perry and Johnson focus on perceptions of Whiteness, historian Lyle Dick analyzes the disproportionate sexual regulation of men of colour in early twentieth century Western Canada in “The Queer Frontier: Male Same-Sex Experience in Western Canada’s Settlement Era” (2014). Dick observes the way in which East Asian cultural districts were marginalized and associated with vice, and therefore co-opted as “forbidden zones” wherein men seeking same-gender sex could create homoerotic spaces. Furthermore, these culturally distinct districts were disproportionately targeted for sexual regulation by Vancouver’s morality squad after 1912. Dick highlights opium dens, brothels, gambling dens, rooming houses, as well as public streets in Chinatown and Japantown as sites that were targeted for sexual regulation by the Vancouver municipal police. Dick’s understanding of racialized space as central to the regulation of sex between men in early twentieth century Vancouver builds upon Perry’s understanding of sex between men being constructed in opposition to Whiteness. Dick’s work is useful in understanding how regulators stereotyped East Asian men as more inclined towards deviant sexuality in British Columbia throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and how this stereotyping resulted in disproportionate sexual regulation.⁹

These historiographical and theoretical works illustrate that sexual regulation and representation of sex between men in the Canadian and American West were influenced by perceptions of men of colour as sexually deviant and as potentially compromising to

⁸ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, pp. 32-36.

⁹ Lyle Dick, “The Queer Frontier: Male Same-Sex Experience in Western Canada’s Settlement Era,” *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d’études canadiennes* 48, no. 1 (December, 2014): 33-42.

White sexual morality. This connection, between representations of sex between men and racist rhetoric, is reflected in the Washington and B.C. press coverage of men of colour accused of sex with men or boys, wherein racist sexual stereotypes were used to reinforce White supremacist ideology and exclude men of colour from an imagined White community.

Other scholars have focused on how social status and economic class shaped perceptions and regulation of sex between men in the Canadian and American West, illustrating how these factors affected both regulators' perceptions of men accused of sex with other men or boys, as well as the legal consequences. For instance, Perry argues that an accused man's poor economic standing and a criminal history could be leveraged to lessen legal consequences of sex between men. According to Perry, accused men could use their low social status to evoke pity from legal authorities.¹⁰ Similarly, Lyle Dick's "Same-Sex Intersections of the Prairie Settlement Era: The 1895 Case of Regina's 'Oscar Wilde'" (2009) investigates how a high social status could affect the outcome of cases involving sex between men. Dick argues that a high social status could mitigate the deviancy that was otherwise associated with sex between men, as the accused could be portrayed as otherwise productive citizens who only briefly lapsed into sexual immorality.¹¹ In *Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific North West*, Peter Boag argues that in early twentieth century Oregon, transient men associated with "hobo culture" were disproportionately affected by the sexual regulation of sex between men, despite a significant middle-class subculture of men

¹⁰ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, pp. 32-36.

¹¹ Lyle Dick, "Same-Sex Intersections of the Prairie Settlement Era: The 1895 Case of Regina's 'Oscar Wilde,'" *Histoire Sociale*, (May, 2009): 113-135.

engaging in sex with other men. Both Dick and Boag illustrate that class and social status could affect the sexual regulation and legal consequences men accused of sex with other men faced in the Canadian West and American Pacific Northwest.¹²

These scholars demonstrate that legal officials drew on several factors to determine if an accused man was in line with or opposed to the wider community. These works reveal that men who were economically successful and had higher social status usually received more sympathetic press coverage and fewer legal consequences. Men with negative reputations and a lack of prominent social connections were more likely to be punished more severely.

Much of the press coverage of sex between men and boys in British Columbia and Washington also focused on the ages of the men and boys involved, and several scholarly works provide useful context for this pattern. For example, historian Stephen Robertson explores the connection between perceptions of age and gender roles in American sodomy laws in “Shifting the Scene of the Crime: Sodomy and the American History of Sexual Violence” (2010). He argues that, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, crimes against children dominated the prosecution of sodomy in America. As such, sodomy was strongly associated with the rape of boys. Furthermore, judges expected boys to fight back against the men who were sexually assaulting them, as judges saw active resistance an expression of masculinity. Therefore, the prosecution of sodomy in America was connected to perceptions of masculinity and age.¹³ In “Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity, Psychosexual Development, and Sex Crime in the

¹² Peter Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹³ Stephen Robertson, “Shifting the Scene of the Crime: Sodomy and the American History of Sexual Violence,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 19, no. 2 (May, 2010): 223-242.

United States, 1930s-1960s,” (2001) Robertson identifies the construction of the “sexual psychopath” in the prosecution of sex crimes in early twentieth century America.

Perceived as primarily victimizing children, the sexual psychopath was also viewed as akin to a child due to perceived developmental issues that left them arrested in childhood and explained their attraction to children. Notably, the sexual psychopath was also characterized as White. Men of colour accused of similar crimes were perceived as sexually aggressive because of their racial identity, not their developmental history, and were subject to legal punishment as opposed to psychiatric treatment.¹⁴

In *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (2011), Nayan Shah further investigates how perceptions of age were disproportionately used to target men of colour in the regulation of sex between men. Shah centers perceptions of race and age in sexual regulation on the nineteenth and early twentieth century American West Coast by focusing on how South Asian men were framed as threatening to White, male youth. In particular, regulators focused on the necessity of sexual regulation as a means of protecting young, White boys from the sexual advances of South Asian men. Like Robertson, Shah relates age to the regulation of sex between men and observes that perceptions of youth led to the disproportionate sexual regulation of men of colour.¹⁵

Rachel Hope Cleves makes a similar argument about a British, rather than North American context, in *Unspeakable: A Life Beyond Sexual Morality* (2020). She notes that

¹⁴ Stephen Robertson, “Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity, Psychosexual Development, and Sex Crime in the United States, 1930s-1960s,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 56, no. 1, (January, 2001): 3-35.

¹⁵ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

perceptions of age and Whiteness affected discourses surrounding child sexual exploitation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Public attitudes towards child sexual exploitation by White men in Britain were ambiguous but that attitudes towards sex between men were often harsher. In this way, Cleves complements the work of Shah and Robertson by illustrating the effect Whiteness had on the sexual regulation of sex between men and boys.¹⁶

The historiography of age and the sexual regulation of sex between men reveals how intertwined race and gender were with age. Regulators and the press drew on perceptions of age to increase the deviancy associated with men engaging in sex with other men and men of colour by portraying them as threatening to White youth.

Transnational Historiography

Transnational historiography reveals how the B.C. and Washington press was influenced by identity formation beyond national borders. Transnational historiography concerns cultural, economic, and physical movement beyond borders, and illustrates how identity formation functioned beyond national borders and nationalist ideology.¹⁷ It is therefore useful to this thesis in that it reveals how Washington and B.C. newspaper's representations of sex between men were informed by cultural movements that transcended national borders. The transnational scholarship discussed in this section emphasizes racial identity, with a focus on how race effected transnational movement and

¹⁶ Rachel Hope Cleves, *Unspeakable: A Life Beyond Sexual Morality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

¹⁷ C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, Patricia Seed, "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 111, no. 5, (December 2006): 1441–1464.

identity formation. Of particular importance is Whiteness as a transnational racial identity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which appears in both transnational historiography and this thesis as a justification for racial exclusion and the proliferation of racist sexual stereotypes.

For instance, in *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (2008), Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds explore transnational racial identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Lake and Reynolds argue that a perception of Whiteness emerged in the nineteenth century, wherein Whiteness existed as “a transnational form of racial identification” in defensive opposition to the perceived prominence of people of colour. From this emerged the notion of “White Men's Countries,” wherein White men claimed a right to specific lands in response to a fear of the other. Lake and Reynolds' work is also useful in helping to elaborate on the relationship between race and transnational movement in the United States and Canada.¹⁸ Similarly, Andrea Geiger's *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Class, and Borders, 1885-1928* (2011) also explores the transnational dimensions of race with a focus on Japanese immigration and is notable in its explanation of how transnational relations effected the nature of White supremacy and Asian exclusion in America and Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁹

Analyzing the historiography of transnationalism reveals that transnational movements of White supremacy were central to late nineteenth and early twentieth century racial exclusion and cultural superiority. This scholarship relates to the

¹⁸ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁹ Andrea Geiger, *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Class, and Borders, 1885-1928*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

Washington and B.C. newspaper coverage of sex between men because it illustrates the existence of a transnational identity centered around White racial superiority in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Washington and B.C. press sought to exclude both men engaging in sex with other men and men of colour from this identity.

Scholarly works concerning the formation and subsequent regulation of the Pacific Northwest borderlands reveals how B.C. and Washington newspaper coverage of sex between men was affected by anxieties surrounding the border. Borderland's scholarship exists as a subset of transnational historiography, and seeks to specifically address issues related to borderlands, border formation, and border regulation. In this section, I will first consider works that address methodology in borderlands scholarship. This scholarship reveals the importance of observing both cultural impulses and transnational flow in borderlands, which is useful both to this thesis and to analyzing the historiography of the Pacific Northwest borderlands. This section will then analyze the historiography of the Pacific Northwest borderlands to reveal that White supremacy and anxiety surrounding movement across the border influenced both border formation and the B.C. and Washington press coverage of sex between men.

In "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," (1997) historians Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel center the activities of borderlands residents within the creation of national consciousness. Baud and Van Schendel argue that scholarly works concerning borderlands should explore how residents of borderlands interact with the state culturally, economically, and politically. They outline a comparative approach where scholars deemphasize analysis of the state and consider both sides of the border, thereby complicating the idea of national identity and challenging nationalist notions that borders represent a firm division between two nations. The method they outline for

borderlands history allows for more attention to be paid to social and cultural impulses that originated in the borderlands and corrects the state-centered distortions that have often existed in borderlands histories.²⁰

In “Transnationalizing Borderlands History,” (2010) historians Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Elliot Young also discuss the methodology of borderlands scholarship by analyzing the role of transnationalism in borderlands historiography. Gutiérrez and Young argue that the historiographical emphasis on stark borders and differences in national experiences often ignores the realities of transnational flow that exists between multiple nations. Therefore, Gutiérrez and Young argue for a borderlands historiography that acknowledges the transnational flow between multiple nations, and where the border is not only seen as a division of two separate nations, but also as a site wherein nationalities interact and change.²¹

The two works discussed so far have concerned borderlands methodology, but scholarly works concerning specifically North American borderlands illuminate the geographic, political, and cultural dimensions that influenced the B.C. and Washington press coverage of sex between men, with a particular emphasis on the importance of racial identity. As revealed by this historiography, White supremacist ideology, racial identity, and transnational movement were central to border formation, as the border was used to exclude and police people of colour and limit their movement between nations.

Historian Warren L. Cook’s *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest* (1973) focuses on border formation in the Pacific Northwest and argues that

²⁰ Micheil Baud and Willem Van Schendel, “Towards a Comparative Borderlands History,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 211-242.

²¹ Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Elliot Young, “Transnationalizing Borderlands History,” *Western Historical Quarterly* vol. 41, no. 1 (February 2010): 26-53.

imperial competition and Indigenous contact was central to the formation of the border itself.²² In “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the People in Between in North American History,” (1999) historians Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron also consider the role of imperial competition and intercultural relations in the history of North American borderlands. They note that, in North American history, when imperial competition was pronounced, intercultural relations flourished. However, cross-cultural relations became tense when imperial rivalries subsided, and European powers were no longer dependent on cross-cultural and Indigenous alliances. Adelman and Aron’s emphasis on imperial competition and cross-cultural relations is reminiscent of Cook and is also useful in analyzing the hostility directed towards men of colour in the British Columbia and Washington press coverage of sex between men and the cross-cultural anxiety implicit in such coverage.²³

Similarly, historian Kornel Chang’s *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (2012) takes a transnational approach to Asian exclusion in the Pacific Northwest borderlands. Chang focuses on the role of Asian immigration in shaping the U.S.-Canada, Pacific Northwest borderlands, revealing the role of transnational relations and immigration to formation of the Pacific Northwest borderlands. Therefore, Chang follows Gutiérrez and Young approach of acknowledging the transnational flow of multiple nations within borderlands.²⁴

²² Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

²³ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the People in Between in North American History,” *The American Historical Review* vol. 104, no. 3 (June 1999), pp. 814-841.

²⁴ Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Scholarly works concerning the theoretical foundations and the historiography of Pacific Northwest borderlands reveals that the formation and management of the Pacific Northwest borderlands were intertwined with movements of racial exclusion and White supremacy. This serves to inform this thesis by illustrating that the management of the B.C. and Washington borderlands, and the sexual regulation within, was tied to anxieties surrounding race and immigration.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses several separate but related historiographies to illustrate their connection to each other and the press coverage of men engaging in sex with other men and boys in British Columbia and Washington. The first section concerned an analysis of the historiography of the construction of sexuality and covered several topics, including the early history of sex between men, the history of sex between men in the North American West, and the history of sexuality and age. This historiography illustrates the extent to which representations of sex between men and boys in British Columbia-Washington borderlands were attached to issues of class discrimination, racial exclusion, and perceptions of age. Although this historiography does not reveal a consistent representation of or reaction to sex between men, it does reveal that the treatment of sex between men was dependent upon the goals and anxieties of local officials.

This leads to the historiography of borderlands and transnationalism in the Pacific Northwest. This historiography also addresses race and sexuality but does so by investigating how such representations were attached to issues of national and transnational identity, as well as the border. These factors mutually informed each other, with issues of national and transnational identity and perceptions of the border often

shaped by racist ideology and anxieties surrounding sexuality and, in turn, attitudes towards race and sexuality were affected by transnational mobility and border formation. This analysis will continue to be relevant in later chapters, where it will become clear that this relationship, between the construction of sexuality, racial exclusion, and national identity, was embedded in the press coverage of local and international sex scandals involving sex between men and boys.

Chapter Two: The Oscar Wilde Scandal in the B.C. and Washington Popular Press

By far the most reported-on sex scandal involving sex between men in Pacific Northwest newspapers in this time period was the 1895 Oscar Wilde scandal. The scandal was international news and Wilde, who was already a prominent figure in Pacific Northwest press coverage due to his literary work and 1882 American lecture tour, became a near-constant fixture in the British Columbia and Washington press from 1895 until his death in 1900. References to Wilde continued to appear, albeit less frequently, after his death. This coverage recounted the major points of both Wilde's 1895 libel suit against the Marquess of Queensberry, a Scottish nobleman and the father of Alfred Douglas, the young aristocrat that Wilde began a sexual relationship with in 1892, and the ensuing trial. More importantly, coverage of the scandal allowed the local press to opine on Wilde's sexuality, exploring the morality of sex between men as it pertained to a prominent literary figure while also analyzing the wider societal implications of a major sex scandal involving sex between men in Britain.

Central to this coverage is the relation between national identity and sex between men. Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* (1983) that nations are "imagined communities," wherein strangers spread across a large geographic space feel connected because they believe that they share values, history, and culture. Anderson centers cultural imagination in this process, illustrating the importance of novels and the press in the creation of a national consciousness. These written works help create national

narratives that create a sense of shared experience among members of a nation.¹ This chapter analyzes the press coverage of the 1895 Wilde scandal and emphasizes how nationalist discourses on both sides of the border shaped that coverage. I will demonstrate how, despite existing in a similar geographic space, the British Columbia and Washington press covered the Wilde scandal in different ways due to nationalist ideology. Newspapers on both sides of the border used the scandal to reinforce nationalistic sentiments, with the Washington press arguing that Wilde's sexuality indicated the sexual immorality of the British upper class and, by comparison, the sexual morality of Americans, and the B.C. press minimizing Wilde's sexuality to portray a flattering image of British culture, which was intertwined with British Columbian national pride.

This chapter begins by analyzing Wilde's representations in the British Columbia and Washington press before the scandal. The earlier coverage, particularly of his 1882 North American lecture tour, foreshadowed the nature of the 1895 reports, revealing that the Washington press' positioning of Wilde as contrary to American nationalism had emerged well before 1895 emerged when he made anti-American comments in 1883. Similarly, the B.C. press wrote about his Wilde's literary work and public persona favorably before 1895, foreshadowing their later difficulty in reconciling Wilde's scandalous sexuality with his earlier popularity.

The chapter will then discuss how local newspapers wrote about the 1895 scandal. In the Washington press Wilde's sexuality was portrayed as indicative of the sexual deviancy of the British upper class, but a similar process did not occur in British Columbia where the 1895 scandal was greeted with ambivalence and the meanings

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 1-9.

attached to his sexuality were not extended to all of Britain. Analysis of the press coverage of the 1895 scandal reveals how nationalistic discourses shaped representations of sex between men in British Columbia and Washington, ultimately creating two vastly different understandings of the same sex scandal in this borderland region.

Press Coverage of Oscar Wilde Before the Scandal

Before 1895 newspaper coverage of Oscar Wilde in the Pacific Northwest was both frequent and mixed. Wilde's 1882 lecture tour did not even make it to the area; he began and ended the tour in New York City, and the closest he came to Washington was some stops in California in March and April that year.² Washington's newspapers frequently criticised Wilde's manners and appearance during the tour and in the wake of anti-American comments he made in 1883. While negative, this coverage was not nearly as pointed nor as frequent as it would become in 1895. The 1882 tour did not come to Western Canada at all, but B.C. papers still gave it more positive attention, emphasizing Wilde's popularity and role in high society. These differences foreshadowed the coverage that would become commonplace after the 1895 scandal.

During and immediately after the tour, several Washington papers expressed annoyance at Wilde's growing popularity in America. Complaints about his popularity were commonplace and appeared more frequently than positive coverage in Washington. Midway through Wilde's 1882 tour, an article in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* stated, "the people are sick of Oscar Wilde, operas, tough beefsteak, high-priced chromos, and

² "Oscar Wilde's Lecture Tour of North America, 1882," Oscar Wilde in America, The Oscar Wilde Society, accessed Aug. 31, 2020, fig. 1. <https://www.oscarwildeinamerica.org/lectures-1882/lecture-intro.html>.

the smallpox, and now let us have a change.”³ Even more pointed was a comment in *The Vancouver Independent* (WA):

Dr. Mosso of Turin has invented a machine for measuring thought, which he calls the “Plethymograph.” One of these contrivances was recently left in a room for several hours with a dozen converts to the Oscar Wilde craze, and after their departure it was examined and found to not have been effected in the slightest degree, the indicator pointing at zero. The Plethymograph, therefore, may be pronounced a great success.⁴

These criticisms differed from coverage after Wilde’s anti-American comments in 1883, and from coverage of the 1895 scandal. Unlike later coverage, these criticisms of Wilde’s were focused on the perceived over popularity of Wilde’s work, as opposed to the content of his literary work or his perceived morality. This press coverage also had no clear intersection with nationalistic discourse.

Local newspapers began to criticize his personality, appearance, and manners more frequently after his tour, largely because of perceptions of Wilde as anti-American. *The Northwest Empire* claimed that Wilde stated that the average American is “narrow-minded and ignorant.” As a rebuttal, a March 10th, 1883 item in the *Northwest Empire* described Wilde as a “magnificent liar, resembling an Englishman in all of his bad points and none of his good ones--having no respect and utterly wanting in veneration.”⁵ *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* described Wilde as looking “positively horrid,”⁶ and

³ *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), July 25th, 1882, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SEATPINT&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1888-->.

⁴ *The Vancouver Independent* (Vancouver, WA), Jan. 11th, 1883, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=VANCIND&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1888-->.

⁵ *Northwest Enterprise* (Anacortes, WA), March 10th, 1883, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=NORWENT&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1888-->.

⁶ “Letter from America’s Metropolis,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), Oct. 21st, 1883, Washington Digital Newspapers.

complained that “He had an idea that he was the greatest man that America had ever seen, and he put on more airs than if he had been the czar of Russia, prince of Spain, and the emperor of Germany all in one.”⁷ This criticism positioned Wilde as opposed to American nationalism, and insulted his appearance, personality, and manners to portray his anti-Americanism as arrogant, elitist, and revolting. This treatment foreshadowed the later similarly nationalistic criticisms of Wilde but is milder and not used to criticize a larger group of Britons.

Between 1885 and 1894, coverage of Wilde in the Washington popular press became less impassioned and sparser. While the Washington press did occasionally mock Wilde for his appearance, this mocking was less common than neutral and even the occasional complimentary article about Wilde. Immediately prior to the scandal *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* was primarily concerned with the 1894 touring production of Wilde’s play *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, but the production was received positively by the press.⁸

Wilde’s 1882 tour was also covered in British Columbia, where the reports were less frequent but more positive than in Washington. For instance, in 1882 *The British Colonist* commented on the large turnout for one of Wilde’s lectures in Boston and the

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATDPI18831021.1.1&srpos=37&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1883-->.

⁷ “Individuality in a Parlour Car,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), March 15th, 1883, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATDPI18830315.1.1&srpos=11&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-188-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1883-->.

⁸ “Lady Windermere’s Fan,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), July 6th, 1894, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18940714.1.8&srpos=12&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1894-->. . “Society of the Week,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), July 22nd, 1894, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18940722.1.9&srpos=17&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1894-->.

British Columbian made a similar comment about one of Wilde's lecturers in Omaha.⁹

B.C. newspapers noted that many Americans held negative opinions about Wilde, but did not reinforce these negative opinions. For example, in 1882, *The British Colonist* reported on the hanging of a Wilde effigy in New Jersey after Wilde was late to an appearance but did not comment positively or negatively about the event.¹⁰ In 1884, *The Port Moody Gazette* reprinted anti-American comments he made during a lecture in Sydenham, Ontario, without criticism or reinforcement.¹¹ Given that Wilde's insults did not apply to British Columbia, B.C. newspapers never insulted Wilde in turn. This resulted in Wilde occupying a neutral to positive position in the B.C. press, wherein he was rarely criticized and instead appeared frequently in the form of literary or society news. This news, which consisted of accounts of Wilde at dinner parties, plays, and London clubs, as well as news concerning his books and plays, characterized coverage of Wilde in British Columbia between 1882 and 1895.

Even before the 1895 scandal, newspapers on either side of the 49th parallel wrote about Wilde in different ways. B.C. newspapers focused on the positive aspects of Wilde's persona, preserving Wilde's reputation and, by extension, reinforcing a positive image of British culture. In contrast, the Washington press was harsh, positioning Wilde as contrary to American nationalism and deriding him to reinforce the superiority of

⁹ "Guying Oscar," *The British Colonist* (Victoria, BC), Feb. 8th, 1882, The British Colonist Online, and *British Columbian* (New Westminster, BC), Mar. 29, 1882, British Columbia Newspapers Online.

¹⁰ "Oscar Wilde Hanged in Effigy," *The British Colonist* (Victoria, BC), Sep. 9th, 1882, The British Colonist Online. <https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18820208uvic/page/n3/mode/2up?view=theater>.

¹¹ *The Port Moody Gazette* (Port Moody, BC), Apr. 12th, 1884, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/pmgazette/items/1.0311760#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

American culture. This difference in coverage would only become more dramatic with the 1895 scandal.

1895

Wilde's affairs with other men were common gossip among London socialites, but there were no legal problems until 1895. That year he was amid a successful literary career and was a prominent force within Victorian social circles. Three years earlier Wilde had begun a relatively public relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, a young aristocrat and the son of the Marquess of Queensberry. The Marquess detested Wilde and his relationship with Douglas, and engaged in a campaign of stalking and harassing Wilde in an attempt to end the relationship. This culminated in February 1895, when Wilde received a card at his club in London from the Marquess. The card was addressed "To Oscar Wilde, posing as sodomite."¹²

Encouraged by Douglas, who hated his father, Wilde sued the Marquess for libel. The trial began on April 3rd, 1895 but quickly focused on Wilde's sexuality instead of the libel suit. Sir Edward Carson, conducting the Marquess' defense, quoted passages from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and letters between Wilde and Douglas as evidence of Wilde's sexual relationships with other men. Wilde denied these accusations, arguing that his writing was an artistic expression and that his relationships with young men were not sexual. Carson continued to question Wilde about his sex life with increasing intensity

¹² Greg Robinson, "Whispers of the Unspeakable: New York and Montreal Newspaper Coverage of the Oscar Wilde Trials in 1895," *The Journal of Transnational American Studies*, vol. 6 (March, 2015): 4.

and, when Carson announced he would offer testimony from Wilde's sexual partners, Wilde dropped the case.¹³

A few hours after the trial was dropped, Wilde was arrested for gross indecency and conspiracy (the latter charge was later dropped) in London. Wilde was brought to trial with Alfred Taylor, who allegedly procured sexual partners for Wilde, on April 26th, 1895. Wilde was defended by Sir Edward Clarke, who introduced evidence showing that two men who claimed to have had sex with Wilde were a professional blackmailer and perjurer, respectively. This, combined with Wilde's own defense, which elicited applause from onlookers, resulted in a jury unable to agree on a verdict. As such, Wilde was brought to trial a second time on May 22nd, 1895 and was found guilty on May 28th. Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labour. When he was released in 1897, he was in poor health and his reputation in London was destroyed. Wilde self-exiled to Paris, France and died in 1900.¹⁴

Coverage of the Oscar Wilde Scandal in Washington

Washington newspapers began reporting on the scandal in April 1895 when Wilde filed his libel suit against the Marquess of Queensberry; his name appeared regularly in the Washington press even after his death in 1900 and became a kind of shorthand for men engaging in sex between men. Newspaper coverage from 1895-1900 linked his sexual behavior to his moral and physical condition, as well as to upper class corruption and societal degeneration. The press represented his activities as proof of sexual immorality in the British upper class. In the Washington press, this observation served

¹³ Robinson, "Whispers of the Unspeakable," pp. 5.

¹⁴ Robinson, "Whispers of the Unspeakable," pp. 6-7.

nationalistic purposes by attributing the perceived sexual deviancy of the British upper class to societal degeneration and portraying the United States as a progressive and moral alternative.

The anti-British sentiment in the Washington press reflected the relationship between the United States and Britain during the late nineteenth century. Anti-British sentiments in the U.S pre-dated 1776 American Revolution, but the U.S. remained economically dependent on Britain until the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ By the late nineteenth century the United States had become an imperial power in its own right, and rarely missed an opportunity to portray itself as the up-and-coming, progressive power in the world. The Wilde scandal was a chance to show America as separate and superior to a fading, degenerate Britain.

Most press in Washington contained some coverage of the Oscar Wilde scandal, however none had as much as *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), the region's first newspaper and the most prominent in Seattle during the late nineteenth century.¹⁶ The paper wrote that he engaged in "unnatural practices," "horrible sexual vices," and "acts of gross indecency."¹⁷ The only term the paper refused to publish in its coverage was "sodomite." Other Washington newspapers, such as the *Anacortes American*

¹⁵ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783 to 1939*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 479-482.

¹⁶ "Seattle Daily Post-Intelligencer," Washington Digital Newspapers Online, Washington State Library, accessed August 10th, 2020.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SEATPINT&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1894-->.

¹⁷ "Oscar Wilde's Vices," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), March 10, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online,
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950310.1.2&srpos=12&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895--> and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), April 7th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950407.1.2&srpos=26&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

(Anacortes, WA), *Washington Standard* (Olympia, WA), *The Yakima Herald* (Yakima, WA), *The Pullman Herald* (Pullman, WA), *The Islander* (known after 1898 as *The San Juan Islander*) (San Juan, WA), and *Adams County News* (Adams County, WA), covered the 1895 scandal with varying degrees of openness; the *Adams County News* and *The Pullman Herald* covered Wilde's legal troubles but did not mention sex between men, whereas the *Washington Standard*, *Anacortes American*, and *The Islander* used vague euphemisms to refer Wilde's sexuality.

Much of the Washington press coverage focused on descriptions of Wilde's appearance and health. Although rarely drawing an overt link between Wilde's sexuality and his physical state, descriptions of him in the Washington popular press did frequently pair descriptions of his supposed femininity and physical deterioration with accounts of his sexuality and legal troubles. These descriptions aimed to evoke disgust, thereby associating feminine men, physical deterioration, mental illness, and sex between men with the same sense of revulsion. A March 17th *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reprint from the *New York Sun* described Wilde as "a repulsive object. [...] Along with his unyielding bulk and general ungainliness of movement there was a matter of assumed femininity that aroused ridicule if not disgust." The article went on to describe Wilde's voice as "pitched like a woman."¹⁸ Similarly, when describing Wilde during his first trial for gross indecency, *Anacortes American* described him as "haggard and pale," and stated that his "swagger is gone."¹⁹ The emphasis on his perceived ugliness illustrates a connection

¹⁸ "Oscar Wilde a Repulsive Object," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), March 17th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950317.1.2&srpos=15&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

¹⁹ "Oscar Wilde Put on Trial," *Anacortes American* (Anacortes, WA), May 2nd, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers.

between the coverage before and after the 1895 scandal, however the emphasis on his apparent femininity is unique to coverage after the 1895 scandal. Deriding his appearance remained a sufficient way for the Washington press to express distaste for his actions, but the open acknowledgement of Wilde's sexuality shaped these descriptions, with criticisms of his perceived femininity becoming more common.

After his conviction in May 1895, news spread across Washington of Wilde's poor health, including numerous articles claiming he had gone insane. On June 5th, 1895, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported that he was confined to a padded room, stating that "He seems to have been the victim of a morbid animalism which it is a credit to human nature to ascribe to mental infirmity."²⁰ The story was corrected on June 6th, wherein it was clarified that Wilde was not insane and was not confined to a padded room, but he continued to suffer from melancholia.²¹ The *Washington Standard* reported on similar circumstances, stating that Wilde spent his prison life "in a dazed, trance like condition, from which he is seldom roused."²² Although the article maintained that Wilde was still sane, it emphasized his poor health and suggested that he would go mad within a few months.²³ An 1896 item in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* made a direct link between

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950502.1.3&srpos=60&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--41-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

²⁰ "Oscar Wilde Insane and Confined to a Padded Room," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), June 5th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950605.1.8&srpos=86&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

²¹ "Oscar Wilde Not Insane," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), June 6th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950606.1.2&srpos=87&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

²² "Alone With a Bible: How Oscar Wilde Spends His Prison Life," *Washington Standard* (Olympia, WA), July 12th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspaper.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WASHSTD18950712.1.1&srpos=98&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

²³ *Ibid.*

Wilde's sexuality and his alleged physical and mental deterioration. According to *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "It is said that Oscar Wilde is a complete physical and mental wreck. He was a moral wreck and the rest was only a matter of time."²⁴ Moreover, the paper approved of this alleged physical and mental deterioration, stating that "The world would be better off if Nemesis always caught up with ill-doing so promptly."²⁵

In drawing a connection between Wilde's alleged physical and mental ailments and his sexuality, the Washington press' coverage is reminiscent of but does not fully reflect the contemporary medicalization of sex between men. The medicalization was evident in the work of contemporary sexologists, with the work of Richard Freiherr Kraft Von Ebbing being most relevant to the 1895 scandal.²⁶ His primary work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, was released in 1886, a mere nine years prior to the scandal.²⁷ Ebbing argued that sex between men was the result of a physical and/or mental disease, and particularly the result of a physical deformity that began in the central nervous system.²⁸ The other major sexologist of the period was Karl Heinrich Ulrich, who began writing about "the third sex" in the 1860s. He argued that men who had sex with other men possessed a feminine soul, and that belief clearly shaped much of the 1895 coverage of Wilde's sexual behavior and appearance.²⁹ Ultimately, neither of these theories are fully reflected in the Washington press' physical descriptions. Wilde's sexuality is not attributed to a

²⁴ *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), July 15th, 1896, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950715.1.5&srpos=99&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Terry Chapman, "An 'Oscar Wilde Type:' The Abominable Crime of Buggery in Western Canada, 1890-1920," *Criminal Justice History*, vol. 4 (1983): 102-103.

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 102-103.

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 102-103.

²⁹ Hubert Kennedy, "The 'Third Sex' Theory of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs," *The Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 6 (January, 1981): 106.

mental or physical disease, and while his perceived femininity is associated with his sexuality, these descriptions do not claim that he has a “feminine soul” or use his femininity as an explanation for his sexuality. However, the connection between descriptions of Wilde in the Washington press that emphasized his alleged physical and mental illness and the emerging medicalization of sex between men is notable if only to observe how medicalized discourses around sexuality were interpreted outside European sexology and levied for specific, nationalistic purposes.

Beyond associating Wilde with femininity, the Washington press’s coverage also adhered to contemporary representations of sex between men in that it emphasized the perceived youth of his sexual partners. During the late nineteenth century, sodomy was associated with the sexual assault of boys, and men who engaged in sex with other men were increasingly portrayed as threatening to youth to enhance the perceived deviancy of their sexual acts.³⁰ For example, on April 18th, 1895, *The Anacortes American* published an article titled “Boy on the Witness Stand,” which described the testimonies of Charles Parker, 19 years-old, and Fred Atkins, 20 years-old, both of whom testified that they had sex with Wilde.³¹ An April 7th, 1895 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* titled “Oscar Wilde in Jail” similarly emphasized the perceived youth of Wilde’s sexual partners, referring to them as “boys” and stated that Wilde was arrested on the “charge of inciting boys to terrible crimes.”³² By describing Wilde’s sexual partners as “boys” and portraying them

³⁰ Stephen Robertson, “Shifting the Scene of the Crime: Sodomy and the American History of Sexual Violence,” pp. 223-242, and Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American*, pp. 129-152.

³¹ “Boys on the Witness Stand,” *Anacortes American*, April 18th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=ANACAMER18950418.2.82&srpos=37&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

³² “Oscar Wilde in Jail,” *The Seattle Post Intelligencer*, April 17th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950417.1.2&srpos=35&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

as passive victims, the Washington press framed Wilde as sexually threatening to youth and reinforced the association between sex between men and the sexual exploitation of boys.

Much of the coverage of the Wilde scandal in Washington took on a nationalistic bent when newspapers used it as proof of the sexual immorality and corruption of the English nobility and the moral superiority of American society. For instance, an 1897 article in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* titled “A Yankee in the Land of Prince Charlie” drew an explicit link between the upper classes of British society and sex between men. The article functions partially as a travelogue, detailing the author’s travels through various British cities, and partially as a treatise on British society, wherein the author describes the corruption and moral degeneration of the British upper classes to illustrate the comparative progressiveness of American society. For instance, the article defines an Englishman as “An antediluvian relic, composed two-thirds of self-conceited selfishness and the remainder of equal parts bombast, appetite, and ignorance, with an incredible dogmatic contempt for any public or private rights except for his own personal interests, and a sulky, jealous antipathy to everything except money -outside of England- and especially to American freedom and progress.” However, the article qualifies this statement, making it clear that criticisms of the English occurred specifically along class lines: “I am, however, very glad to qualify my remarks by stating that they do not apply to the middle class, or the better portion of what is called in Britain the lower or labouring class. [...] To them Britain owes all of her present posterity.”³³

³³ “A Yankee in the Land of Prince Charlie,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), June 6th, 1897, Washington Digital Newspapers Online. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950606.1.4&srpos=88&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

While the article mentions the British elite's political corruption and economic greed as evidence of their immorality, an association with sex between men is apparent when the article lists the "corruptionists" Sir Charles Dilke and Oscar Wilde as examples.³⁴ Both the 1895 scandal and the Crawford scandal (wherein Dilke lost much of his reputation due to multiple heterosexual extramarital affairs becoming public, which resulted in a public divorce) had a sexual aspect. This illustrates that the perceived moral failings of the British upper class were not merely political or economic, but rather that perceived sexual deviancy coexisted with and resulted from wider societal corruption.³⁵ This association of the British upper classes with moral corruption and sexual deviancy was reinforced by representing America as progressive and pure. According to *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*: "Here in England and the adjacent territories the purifying breezes of American progress are beginning to scatter the noxious gases of European decay."³⁶ While British society represented as declining and immoral, America was constructed as morally superior and on the rise, capable of replacing Britain in terms of cultural dominance.

The Washington press mentioned Wilde even when covering stories involving British heterosexual sex scandals, using him as proof of widespread British sexual immorality. For instance, in 1895, the *Washington Standard* covered the marriage of Consuelo Vanderbilt, an American socialite, to Charles Spencer-Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. The *Washington Standard* titled the article "Another Lamb Led to the Sacrifice" and argued that the marriage was "because some millionaire is so lost to

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "A Yankee in the Land of Prince Charlie."

³⁶ Ibid.

patriotic impulse as to sacrifice a loved one for the empty honours of an effete title.”³⁷

The *Washington Standard* sought to frame the marriage as Consuelo Vanderbilt’s father, William Kissam Vanderbilt, sacrificing his daughter to the sexual immorality of the British aristocracy in order to gain a British noble title in the family. The article ends with a comparison of British and American society, condemning the former and portraying the latter as progressive and pure: “A little more of the experience of poor Nellie Grant may open the eyes of those who prefer the tainted aristocracy of the Old World to the pure and vigorous blood of the New.”³⁸ This newspaper argued that Wilde’s sexuality was indicative of the widespread immorality of the British upper class, and this sexual immorality could, but did not necessarily, involve sex between men. Any reader who understood the references to Vanderbilt and Grant would also get the message about American moral superiority.

Although the level of detail and vitriol in “A Yankee in the land of Prince Charlie” and the *Washington Standard* articles was uncommon, briefer but still plainly nationalistic interpretations of the Oscar Wilde scandal were common in the Washington press. Like the previous articles, these interpretations focused on portraying Wilde and his sexuality as an intrinsic feature of the British upper class, rather than an exception. For instance, a March 1895 issue of *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* marks the first mention of the Oscar Wilde scandal in the Washington press. The article claimed that sex between

³⁷ “Another Lamb Led to the Sacrifice,” *Washington Standard* (Olympia, WA), Nov. 8, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WASHSTD18951108.1.2&srpos=114&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--101-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

³⁸ Ibid. Nellie Grant, the daughter of former president Ulysses S. Grant, married Algernon Charles Fredrick Sartoris, an Englishman known for being the son of a member of parliament, in 1874. Grant left Sartoris in 1889 due to Sartoris’ alcoholism. Both the marriage and divorce garnered public attention, making Grant a convenient warning for American women who sought to marry Englishmen.

men was common among the British upper class, stating that the Marquis of Queensberry accused Wilde “of teaching the Marquis’ son and practicing with him the horrible sexual vices common to the British nobility.”³⁹ Similarly, according to an April 1895 issue of the *Washington Standard*, “Wilde shows that the uppercrust of society is permeated with the most nauseous corruption.”⁴⁰ *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* argued that Wilde’s literary work could have been written “nowhere but the fetid atmosphere of Rotten Row and London clubs, nor will they ever be appreciated anywhere else.”⁴¹ And, after Wilde’s conviction in May 1895, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* commented that “persons accused of the offense for which he was convicted come frequently before the magistrates” and “the judge remarked that no country could remain great while such persons were allowed to live free in it.”⁴² These articles reinforced the belief that Wilde was a product of the British upper class and that his arrest only revealed a small amount of the deviant sexuality that was common among them.

The attempt to portray sex between men as common among the British nobility also appeared in conspiracies that the British upper class attempted to protect itself by

³⁹ “Oscar Wilde’s Vices,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), Mar. 10th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950310.1.2&srpos=12&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

⁴⁰ *Washington Standard* (Olympia, WA), Apr. 26th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WASHSTD18950426.1.2&srpos=51&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--41-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

⁴¹ Rotten Row was a broad track running along the south side of Hyde Park in London that was primarily used for horse riding. During the eighteenth century, Rotten Row became popular as a meeting place for upper-class Londoners. “Oscar Wilde’s Fetid Books,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), Apr. 21st, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950421.1.10&srpos=41&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--41-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

⁴² “Oscar Wilde to Tred [sic] the Wheel,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), May. 29th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers Online.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950529.1.2&srpos=78&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--61-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

concealing his sexuality. In June 1895, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* circulated the conspiracy theory that London police warned off “Oscarians,” roughly 400 English elite men who sought to protect Wilde. According to the newspaper, these London elites needed to protect Wilde to continue their own sexual immorality without police intervention. London police had allegedly warned these elites that they had to cease all offenses at once or else leave the country.⁴³ Here again, Wilde’s sexuality is portrayed as a reflection of the British upper class and, in this case, included the implication that the upper class was willing to manipulate the British justice system to protect their own.

Even when the Washington press directed pity at Wilde, that pity was conditional upon the supposedly widespread practice of sex between men within Britain. For instance, in a June 1895 issue of *Anacortes American*, the paper remarked on a popular feeling of pity for Wilde after his imprisonment, and justified it by stating, “It is generally admitted that he has been made a scapegoat, and that the crime he has been incarcerated is so far from rare that a wholesale application of the drastic methods applied in this case would involve many who affect the most profound contempt for the dethroned litterateur.”⁴⁴ Wilde was pitiable not because of the nature of his sexuality or the extent of his punishment- the *Anacortes American* describes Wilde’s sexuality as “heinous” within the same article- but because Wilde’s trial and punishment was perceived as a performative attempt at sexual morality from a society that was perceived as a permeated

⁴³ “Police Warn the Oscarians,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), June 25th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950625.1.4&srpos=94&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

⁴⁴ “The Prison Life of Oscar Wilde,” *Anacortes American* (Anacortes, WA), June 27th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=ANACAMER18950627.2.29&srpos=95&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

with sexual immorality. Evidently, even when the *Anacortes American* was willing to express sympathy for Wilde, it was only willing to do so to bolster nationalistic sentiment by portraying British upper-class men as sexually corrupt in comparison to their American counterparts.⁴⁵

Degeneration theory is never explicitly mentioned in the Washington press coverage of the 1895 scandal, although aspects of the coverage do conform to the basic tenets of the theory. For instance, the Washington press saw Wilde's sexuality as having been acquired through and reflecting the wider sexual immorality in the British upper class, and the Washington press saw this sexual immorality as a sign of the decline of British society. However, the press coverage in Washington departed from degeneration theory in several ways. Firstly, the perceived decline of British society did not extend to all Western civilization. In fact, it was rarely seen as extending to the entirety of European civilization. American culture was viewed as the antithesis of British culture, progressing while the latter declined. Moreover, although some articles saw Wilde's sexuality as a result of the larger category of European decadence, most viewed it as more narrowly the product British decadence. For instance, an April 19th, 1895 article in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* commented "There is a great hope for the future of France when one Frenchman will challenge another to mortal combat for comparing him to the notorious Oscar Wilde."⁴⁶ Secondly, within the Washington press, the decline of British society did not even necessarily apply to all British society, but rather specifically the upper class. Therefore, while the Wilde coverage conformed to degeneration theory in

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), Apr. 19th, 1895, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18950419.1.4&srpos=39&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-%22wilde%22----1895-->.

attributing his sexuality to societal decline, it was more specific in terms of which class and nationality was declining. Therefore, the Washington press coverage did not argue that Wilde signaled the decline of Western civilization, but merely the prominence of British society, and, in doing so, portrayed America as the natural successor to British superiority.

Press Coverage of the Oscar Wilde Scandal in British Columbia

The coverage of the 1895 scandal in British Columbia was both less frequent and less sensational than in Washington. B.C. newspapers were unwilling to disparage Wilde in the same manner as the Washington press, and instead attempted to minimize Wilde's sexuality and its impact on the British culture. The B.C. press minimized Wilde's sexuality to preserve the relationship between British culture and British Columbian national identity. As Carl Berger argues in *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (1970), "Canadian imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism- a type of awareness of nationality that rested upon a certain understanding of history, of the national character, and the national mission." The connection between British culture and British Columbian national identity is also explored in James Belich's *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World, 1783-1939* (2009). Belich analyzes the settlement of British North America with a focus on the ideology behind patterns of immigration and migration. He notes that British settlement propaganda in the late nineteenth century shifted from encouraging the lower classes to go work in the colonies' extractive industries towards encouraging middle- and upper-class emigrants to create a permanent settler presence. British migrants would reproduce the best of British society in the colonies, and imperial culture would continue to be a key

marker of national identity. This continued importance of the link with England is evident in the way B.C. newspapers wrote about Wilde and did not frame it as a national or imperial issue.⁴⁷

Numerous British Columbia newspapers printed reports about the scandal, from widely read newspapers such as *The British Colonist* (Victoria, BC) to small town papers like *The Revelstoke Herald* (Revelstoke, BC), and special interest papers like *The Miner* (Nelson, BC). They kept the language vague, however; *The Miner* referred to “a charge that is unmentionable,” *The Weekly News* (Comox, BC) mentioned “terrible charges,” and *The British Colonist* called them “serious misdemeanors.”⁴⁸ Even *The Revelstoke Herald*, which printed consistent and detailed coverage of the scandal, never referred to sex between men explicitly, instead saying that Wilde practiced “the lowest vice.”⁴⁹

The vague language to describe the charges was matched by comparatively sympathetic or ambivalent characterizations of Wilde. For example, in May 1895, *The British Colonist* described Wilde as “haggard, but smart.”⁵⁰ A June 1895 article in *The Golden Era* (Golden, B.C.) disputed rumours that Wilde was in poor health and described

⁴⁷ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-17.

⁴⁸ *The Miner* (Nelson, BC), April 13th, 1895, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/xminer/items/1.0182915#p0z-8r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>, “Ten Years for Wilde,” *The Weekly News* (Comox, BC), June 4th, 1895, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/cwn/items/1.0068106#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>, and “News From London,” *The British Colonist* (Victoria, BC), April 21st, 1895, The British Colonist Online, <https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18950421uvic/page/n7/mode/2up?view=theater>.

⁴⁹ “Wilde Dead,” *The Revelstoke Herald* (Revelstoke, BC), Dec. 11th, 1900, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/xrevherald/items/1.0187560#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁵⁰ “Cable News,” *The British Colonist* (Victoria, BC), May 21st, 1895, The British Colonist Online, <https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18950521uvic/page/n7/mode/2up?view=theater>.

him as “jaunty and defiant.”⁵¹ In August 1895, *The Golden Era* again claimed that Wilde was “in good spirits” while imprisoned.⁵² Both the *Revelstoke Herald* and *The Weekly News* claimed that Wilde was in good health after his 1897 release from prison, and later, even when the press did acknowledge his poor health, they did not attempt to link it with his sexuality.⁵³

This is not to say that the B.C. press was more sympathetic towards sex between men. On the contrary, despite describing Wilde in relatively positive terms, B.C. newspapers repeatedly condemned his sexual behavior. This was evident in the terminology used to describe Wilde’s charges. Using phrases like “terrible charges” and “a charge that is unmentionable” to describe Wilde’s charges communicated disapproval and disgust without needing to provide any other details. Moreover, despite occasionally expressing pity for Wilde’s situation, the British Columbia press never attempted to defend him, nor did they argue that sex between men was unworthy of legal prosecution. He was an object of pity, but as a victim of his own sexual impulses rather than as a victim of the British justice system.

The B.C. papers also made no attempts to link Wilde’s sexuality to a broader critique of Britain. On the contrary, some papers, such as the *Cranbrook Herald*

⁵¹ “Oscar Wilde,” *The Golden Era* (Golden, BC), June 22nd, 1895, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/goldenera/items/1.0227279#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁵² “In Wormwood Scrubbs,” *The Golden Era* (Golden, BC), Aug 3rd, 1895, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/goldenera/items/1.0227303#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁵³ “The Times,” *The Revelstoke Herald* (Revelstoke Herald), May 8th, 1897, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/xrevherald/items/1.0186763#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>, and “Value of Notoriety,” *The Weekly News* (Comox, BC), May 25th, 1897, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/xcumberland/items/1.0176635#p0z-5r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

(Cranbrook, B.C.), lauded the British response to the 1895 scandal. In an 1898 article, the *Cranbrook Herald* took Wilde's trial as evidence of the "inflexible nature of British justice," wherein the upper class was subject to the same legal consequences as the lower and middle classes.⁵⁴ However, the B.C. newspapers did occasionally interpret the scandal along class and political lines. A June 1st, 1895 article in *The Miner* argued that Wilde's aristocratic background would make his prison sentence potentially deadly.⁵⁵ *The Miner* stated, "To a man of Wilde's education and habits the sentence is the most severe that could be inflicted. Accustomed to a life of luxury and ease and relaxation, the rigid routine and unceasing toil means hell."⁵⁶ While *The Miner's* article does emphasize Wilde's class, it does not view it as a source of derision or accuse all elite British men of similar sexual behavior.

After Wilde's death in December 1900, his name continued to appear in the B.C. press in the form of anecdotes, mentions of his literary works, and witticisms. Some of these included references to Wilde's sexuality, such as a 1908 article in the *Cranbrook Herald* that dismissed the production of *Salome* touring the Pacific Northwest as "degenerate" because of both the play's sexual content and its author's reputation.⁵⁷ *The Silvertonian* (Silverton, BC) published one of Wilde's witticisms in 1898 with the

⁵⁴ "Timely Topics," *Cranbrook Herald* (Cranbrook, BC), May 17th, 1898, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/cranherald/items/1.0068681#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁵⁵ "Notes and Comments," *The Miner* (Nelson, BC), June 1st, 1895, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/xminer/items/1.0182936#p0z-8r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "Harold Nelson Coming," *Cranbrook Herald* (Cranbrook, BC), Oct. 15th, 1908, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/cranherald/items/1.0069108#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

precursor that Wilde was “undeniably a wit, although he may be wicked.”⁵⁸ More often, his sexuality was not mentioned or even hinted at in articles pertaining to his literary work. For instance, despite its frequent coverage of the scandal, from 1904 to 1907 four different newspapers, the *Revelstoke Herald*, *The Week*, *The British Colonist*, and the *Evening Standard*, published his witticisms and reviews of his work without commentary.⁵⁹ These papers were able to separate his legacy as a literary figure from his criminal record as a convicted sexual deviant.

However, this favourable treatment of Wilde was controversial for some readers of *The British Colonist*. An August 2nd, 1905, article in *The British Colonist* stated that a reader had criticized the paper for still printing any of Wilde’s writing after his sexual behavior was discovered. In response, the article condemned Wilde while also attempting to defend publishing favourable articles about Wilde. The article claimed that his sexuality was evidence of moral decadence, but also expressed appreciation for Wilde’s work, writing that “England during the last century produced few more brilliant intellects than that of the gifted but misguided man in question.”⁶⁰ The article decried Wilde’s sexual behaviour but reinforced his cultural importance, which served to reinforce the

⁵⁸ *The Silvertonian* (Silvertown, BC), May 7th, 1898, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/silsil/items/1.0312964#p0z-8r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁵⁹ *Revelstoke Herald* (Revelstoke, BC), Feb. 8th, 1904, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/xrevherald/items/1.0187366#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>, and *The Week* (Victoria, BC), May 11th, 1907, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/pwv/items/1.0344080#p0z-7r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>, and “Short Stories,” *The Evening Sun* (Grand Forks, BC), Sep. 2nd, 1907, British Columbia Newspapers Online, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/nelsondaily/items/1.0382551#p0z-6r0f:%22oscar%20wilde%22%20>.

⁶⁰ *The British Colonist* (Victoria, BC), Aug. 2nd, 1905, The British Colonist Online. <https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist19050802uvic/page/n7/mode/2up?view=theater>.

deviancy of sex between men while still preserving the cultural importance of British literature.

Without the impulse to portray Wilde's sexuality as an indication of widespread British aristocratic immorality to illustrate national superiority, coverage of the Wilde scandal in British Columbia was ambivalent. This allowed British Columbian newspapers to preserve local nationalism, which was still dependent on culture in the British metropole to justify White settlement. The B.C. press did not express sympathetic attitudes towards sex between men and, like Washington, coverage was directed at reinforcing nationalistic ideology. However, because of the ongoing imperial and cultural relationship between British Columbia and Britain, B.C.'s papers continued to defend British culture and temper their criticism of Wilde. As a result, Wilde's place in British literary culture was preserved, and his sexuality could coexist with a flattering literary legacy, albeit uncomfortably.

Conclusion

There are some similarities in the ways British Columbia and Washington newspapers talked about Wilde after his death in December 1900. In both places, Wilde's name became a popular shorthand for sex between men. Prominent men who were caught up in scandals involving sex between men were called "the next Oscar Wilde." Men who were arrested for having sex with other men were called "an Oscar Wilde" or "an Oscar Wilde type," and men whose behavior was perceived by the press as even more deviant were described as "worse than Oscar Wilde." The continued use of Wilde's name in this way reveals the extent to which his legacy was intertwined with broader, shared

discourses of sex between men, but the border shaped how those discourses were in turn shaped by nationalism.

Washington newspapers portrayed Wilde's sexuality as evidence of widespread sexual immorality among elite British men, and contrasted Britain's decline with America's rise as a progressive and moral nation. The 1895 scandal was greeted with far more ambivalence in British Columbia. The B.C. press did express disgust towards Wilde's sexuality, but that disgust did not extend to all of Britain. Instead, the British Columbia press appeared uncertain of how to reconcile Wilde's former popularity and literary legacy with his sexuality, resulting in the awkward position of continuing to print Wilde quotes and anecdotes while deriding his sexuality as deviant. This was due to British Columbia's relationship with Britain, and the extent to which the identity of White, settler British Columbians was intertwined with British culture. To preserve the relationship between nationalism in British Columbia and Britain, B.C. newspapers sought to minimize the impact of the 1895 scandal. This difference in coverage on either side of the border allows for an observation on how representations of sex between men evolved differently as a result of nationalistic discourse and a difference in international relationships. Furthermore, this difference will stand in contrast to the many similarities found in the coverage of local sex scandals, which will be explored in chapter three, and is a reminder of how representations were informed by national and local context.

Chapter Three: The Coverage of Local Sex Scandals in the British Columbia and Washington Press

The press coverage of local scandals in B.C. and Washington newspapers emphasized the identities of men accused of sex with men or boys and positioned these men as either in line with or opposed to national and transnational goals. While sex between men was never accepted by the B.C. or Washington press, the deviancy associated with sex between men could be minimized or enhanced depending on whether the men involved were perceived as adhering to or opposing nationalistic and White supremacist ideology. As such, this chapter will analyze how B.C. and Washington newspapers portrayed accused men who were racialized, had low social status, or were perceived as threatening to boys, as more deviant and dangerous to the imagined White, heterosexual community than accused men who had higher social status, were White, and were perceived as young or not threatening to youth.

Washington and B.C. press coverage of local scandals tended to be brief, lacking any meaningful detail or editorialization. The most common form of coverage was a small item in a local paper that gave the name, charge, and, if available, sentence of the accused. Because most coverage provides little material for analysis, this chapter focuses on the few cases that did receive substantial press coverage, including five cases in Washington and two in British Columbia, dated between 1891 and 1910. These cases took place in a variety of locations, including Snohomish, Uniontown, Walla Walla, and Yakima in Washington, and New Westminster and Nelson in British Columbia. In all these locations, the rhetoric used by the press was focused on the identity of the accused men and their relation to the wider community.

Social status was key to both if and how a case was covered by the press. Almost every case that appeared in newspapers concerned either men with prominent social connections in their communities, such as businessmen and religious officials, or men with reputations as local criminals. Prominent men within the community often received milder treatment from the press, although not always. They could receive more condemnation if they were seen by the press as abusing their position for sexual gratification. Men with criminal backgrounds were almost always treated harshly by the press, with the only exception being if they had gained social connections in prison that reduced the deviancy associated with their conviction.

On both sides of the border, race was a central factor in determining the level and tone of coverage a case received. Newspaper coverage of cases involving racialized men focused on racist sexual stereotypes about the greater danger such men posed to the community. This chapter explores the treatment of a Black man, William Ford, accused of the sexual assault of a boy in Washington, and a Chinese man, Ah Lee, accused of the same in British Columbia. The precise way in which men of colour were portrayed as sexually dangerous was often dependent on already-established racist stereotypes, such as perceptions of Black men as sexually aggressive or Chinese men as effeminate and uninterested in heterosexual sex. The focus on sex between men and boys added a new dimension to these stereotypes that reflected changing perceptions of both race and sexuality. In this way, existing stereotypes were manipulated to portray racialized men as more inclined towards sex between men and boys or more inclined towards sexual violence. By comparison, the B.C. and Washington press never subjected White men to racist stereotypes portraying them as especially sexually dangerous. This resulted in more lenient treatment towards White men, both in the press, wherein White men did not

experience overt racism, and legally, with White men often facing reduced legal consequences when compared to men of colour.

In *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds discuss Whiteness as a transnational form of racial identity, and this can help explain much of the Pacific Northwest newspapers' treatment of men of colour. Lake and Reynolds discuss how, in response to colonial uprisings, Whiteness was increasingly recognized as a transnational form of racial identification. The concept of "White men's countries" emerged to protect a defensive and defiant Whiteness from the perceived increasing number and dominance of countries governed by people of colour. This notion of a stable and transnational Whiteness created a perceived unity between many settler colonial countries such as Canada, the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia, and encouraged hostility and racism towards both non-White countries and non-White residents in "White men's countries." Understanding the shift in transnational racial identity is necessary to contextualize the hostility towards men of colour in the British Columbia and Washington press.¹

The increased transnational popularity of White supremacy was reflected in the sexual regulation of men of colour in both British Columbia and Washington. In *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (2002), Peter Ward argues that persistent stereotypes surrounding Chinese immigrants- including stereotypes of Chinese men as effeminate and sexually threatening- created an "ill feeling" in British Canadians and sustained White supremacist

¹ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 2, 3.

ideology and racial exclusion throughout the early twentieth century. Although Ward's work is dated, his observations concerning the popularity of White supremacy in British Columbia and the resulting movements towards racial exclusion remains useful to this thesis.² In "The Queer Frontier: Male Same-Sex Experience in Western Canada's Settlement Era," Lyle Dick notes that racialized spaces in Chinatown and Japantown were increasingly associated with White supremacist stereotypes of sexual vice and sex between men, which, in turn, encouraged the typification of Chinese immigrants as more likely to commit sodomy.³ Similarly, in "Deporting 'Ah Sin' to Save the White Race: Moral Panic, Racialization, and the Extension of Canadian Drug Laws in the 1920s," Catherine Carstairs argues that White supremacist stereotypes in the early twentieth century increasingly portrayed Chinese men as threatening to White youth due to opium and sexual exploitation. As a result, Chinese men faced increasingly harsh drug criminalization, immigrations restrictions, and increased sexual regulation.⁴ Taken together, Ward, Carstairs, and Dick reveal that much of sexual regulation of Chinese men, and particularly Chinese men engaging in sex with other men, in late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia was an extension of White supremacist ideology and the result of racist stereotypes.

Scholarly works have also investigated racially based sexual regulation in Washington State. Quintard Taylor investigates the racial restrictions and sexual regulation Black men faced in the Pacific Northwest in "African American Men in the

² Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002): 12.

³ Lyle Dick, "The Queer Frontier: Male Same-sex Experience in Western Canada's Settlement Era," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 48, no. 1 (December 2014): 15-52.

⁴ Catherine Carstairs, "Deporting 'Ah Sin' to Save the White Race: Moral Panic, Racialization, and the Extension of Canadian Drug Laws in the 1920s," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, vol. 16 (Spring 2016): 67.

American West, 1528-1990” (2000). Taylor argues that, as Black men migrated to the West to escape racial restrictions in the South, White state and territorial governments in the Pacific Northwest quickly adopted their own White supremacist rhetoric and policies. Unlike with Chinese men in British Columbia, Black men in Washington were not portrayed as more inclined towards sex between men. Instead, the Washington press and White regulators in the Pacific Northwest mirrored the racist rhetoric of the East, constructing Black men as sexually aggressive and threatening to White women and outlawing interracial marriage as a result.⁵ Furthermore, the racist stereotype of Black men as sexually aggressive also appears in Washington press coverage of William Ford, a Black man, accused of sexually assaulting a White boy in 1907. This illustrates that the press’s portrayal of Black men as sexually dangerous was not exclusive to heterosexual relations, but also included cases wherein Black men were accused of engaging in sex with men or boys.

The B.C. and Washington press also focused on perceptions of age, both when cases involved the assault of a minor and when they did not. For reference, in British Columbia the age of consent went from 12 to 14 in 1890 and stayed consistent for the next few decades.⁶ However, the age of consent of anal sex was fixed at 21 in the 1892 Criminal Code and remained at 21 until 2019.⁷ In Washington, the age of consent

⁵ Quintard Taylor, “African American Men in the American West, 1528 to 1990,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 569, (May, 2000): 105.

⁶ The Parliament of Canada, “Canada’s Legal Age of Consent to Sexual Activity,” Library of Parliament, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/prb993-e.htm>.

⁷ Kalev Hunt, “Saving the children: (Queer) youth sexuality and the age of consent in Canada,” *Sex Res Soc Policy* 6, 15 (September 2009): 19.

fluctuated throughout the 1880s and 1890s. It went from 12 to 15 in 1893, and then finally to 18 in 1897.⁸ This age of consent applied to both boys and girls.

Much like with race, the press used perceptions of age to enhance or minimize the deviancy associated with accused men's sexual acts. Age was most often used to position these men as either threatening to children and youth and, by extension, the heteronormative family. However, the press less commonly used perceptions of age to portray accused men as young and, as a result, non-threatening. Nicolas L. Syrett explores perceptions of age in American sexual regulation in the chapter "Age" in *The Routledge History of Sexuality in America*. Syrett argues that, in late nineteenth century America, perceptions of age were central to both sodomy and sexual assault trials. Perpetrators whose victims were perceived as young and inexperienced in sex were more likely to be found guilty, regardless of the victim's actual age.⁹ This focus on perceptions of age in American sexual regulation is similarly found in Shah's *Stranger Intimacy*, where he writes about conceptions of the family in the context of attempts to regulate sex between men in early nineteenth century Pacific Northwest. Local officials increasingly focused on perceptions of adult men of colour as threatening to White boys. Therefore, Shah argues that perceptions of age were used to position men of colour as opposed to White

⁸ "From Olympia," *The Spokane Falls Review*, February 9th, 1888, Washington Digital Newspapers, <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SFREVIEW18880209.1.5&srpos=3&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->, and "The Legislature," *Washington Standard*, February 5th, 1897, Washington Digital Newspapers, <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WASHSTD18970205.1.1&srpos=39&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->, and "Senate Proceedings," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 11th, 1893, Washington Digital Newspapers, <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18930211.1.1&srpos=13&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->, and "The Local Option Law," *Weekly Puget Sound Argus*, March 4th, 1886, Washington Digital Newspapers, <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WPSA18860304.1.2&srpos=2&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22age+of+consent%22----->.

⁹ Nicolas L. Syrett, "Age," in *The Routledge History of Sexuality in America*, ed. Kevin P. Murphy, Jason Ruiz, and David Serlin, (New York City: Routledge, 2020), pp. 23.

supremacist ideology and the White, heteronormative family, which therefore reinforced both the perceived deviancy of sex between men and men of colour.¹⁰

While less racially specific, the British Columbia and Washington press showed a similar trend. Stories emphasized the perceived youth of victims to position accused men as in opposition to an imagined transnational community centered on Whiteness and heteronormativity. Therefore, the press most often relied on perceptions of age to support the exclusion of men engaging in sex between men from a wider White, heterosexual community. However, if accused men were perceived as in line with this community in other ways, such as having a high social status, being White, or being perceived as non-violent, the press could also emphasize the accused's perceived youth to minimize the deviancy of their sexual acts.

In this chapter, I will analyze the coverage of local scandals using the three identity categories (racial identity, social status, and age) that the newspapers used to frame their stories. The B.C. and Washington press relied on these categories to negotiate the deviancy associated with individual cases of sex between men. The press was more likely to portray accused men as deviant if they were racialized, had a low social status, or if they were seen as a danger to young people; by extension such men were also a threat to transnational and national goals, such as increasing dominance of White supremacy and the heteronormative family. When accused men had higher social status, were White, and were not perceived as threatening to youth, the press worked to position the accused men as still in-line with national and transnational goals by minimizing their sexual acts and arguing for lessened punishment.

¹⁰ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 129-152.

Race

A fixation on the racial identities of men of colour was a major aspect of the B.C. and Washington press coverage of cases involving men engaging in sex with men or boys. Relatively few cases both involved men of colour and received substantial press attention in British Columbia or Washington newspapers, but the coverage that does exist is both rich and consistent in its rhetoric and purpose. The press frequently relied on racist stereotypes to portray men of colour as sexually threatening, and particularly sexually threatening to White youth. This served to position both men of colour and men engaging in sex between men as opposed to heteronormative conceptions of the family that centered children and served to reinforce White supremacist ideology by portraying men of colour as dangerous.

The Washington press's fixation on race in scandals involving sex between men and boys was evident in the case of William Ford, a Black man and long-time resident of Walla Walla. The case was primarily reported on by *The Evening Statesmen*. The case began in January of 1907, in Walla Walla, WA, at the Delmonico Lodging House.¹¹ According to the testimony of 16-year-old George Arvogast, as it was reprinted in *The Evening Statesman*, Ford entered a room in the Delmonico Lodging House at 4 am on January 30th, 1907, where Arvogast was sleeping.¹² Ford demanded that Arvogast allow him into his bed, but Arvogast refused. Ford then drank a bottle of whiskey and left the

¹¹ "Dirty, Drunken Negro Chases Boy Out of Bed with an Ugly Razor," *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), January 30th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19070130.1.1&srpos=83&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

¹² Ibid.

room to get a razor. He held the razor to Arvogast's throat and threatened to cut him if he cried out. Ford then attempted to sexually assault him but Arvogast escaped and found Officer Jack Lambert in the street. They returned to the room, but Ford had fled. Nonetheless, Ford was quickly apprehended in a nearby saloon, committed to Walla Walla's local jail, charged with sodomy, and was bound over to the superior court for the sum of \$1000.¹³

The case of the State of Washington vs. Ford began on Saturday, April 6th, 1907.¹⁴ Ford's defense was successful in getting the charge of sodomy dismissed, largely due to a technicality. In *The Evening Statesman* article "Negro Ford Now a Burglar," it is explained that Attorney E.F. Barker motioned to dismiss the charge of sodomy on the grounds that Ford did not actually assault Arvogast, who fled the room before any assault could take place. The Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, John H. McDonald, argued against the motion, stating Ford's advancement on Arvogast with a razor implied an assault, but the court upheld the motion, and the judge instructed the jury to find Ford not guilty of sodomy. However, this dismissal did not indicate that the court felt sympathy for Ford. Instead, the presiding judge stated that "he regretted the law compelled him to allow the motion as the evidence shows detestable conduct on the part of the defendant." With the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Woman Defies Judge Brent Claiming Religious Exemption as Witness," *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), April 6th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19070406.1.1&srpos=87&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->. The day of the week is only notable due to a key witness for the defense of Ford, Mrs. E. N. Thompson, a chambermaid at the Delmonico Lodging House and staunch Seventh Day Adventist, who refused to testify due to her religious beliefs. Thompson was arrested at her home, brought to court against her will and, at her continued refusal to testify, was sentenced to twenty days in prison. Thompson's refusal was greeted with much attention from *The Evening Statesmen*, who featured the story on the front page and described the instance as "almost unparalleled in the history of American jurisprudence and is in some respects the most sensational happening which ever took place in this city."

charge of sodomy dropped, the court instructed the prosecution to gather evidence intended to show that Ford was guilty of burglary and a new trial was set for April 8th, 1907.¹⁵

Even the charge of burglary was only admissible on a technicality. Burglary was generally considered to involve breaking into a residence for the purpose of theft, but neither Arvogast or Lambert accused Ford of stealing, nor did Ford admit to theft. However, because Ford was accused of attempting to commit sodomy against Arvogast, he could technically be charged with burglary because he had broken into a residence for the purpose of committing a felony. Nonetheless, Ford pleaded not guilty to the charge, with the defense arguing that another unidentified Black man had committed the crime. The defense also argued that Ford should be acquitted as he could not be placed in jeopardy twice for the same crime. The court overruled this on the grounds that Washington state law allowed for changing a charge when the wrong one had been filed.¹⁶

Ultimately, the jury found Ford guilty after less than an hour deliberation, although they did recommend that the court be lenient in its sentencing.¹⁷ Ford was

¹⁵ “Negro Ford Now a Burglar,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), April 6th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19070406.1.2&srpos=88&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

¹⁶ “Negro Goes on Trial Again,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), April 10th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19070410.1.1&srpos=89&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910--en-20--81-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

¹⁷ “William Ford Found Guilty of Burglary,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), May 11th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19070511.1.1&srpos=11&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22william+ford%22+----1907-->.

sentenced to three years in the state penitentiary on May 17th, 1907.¹⁸ He maintained his innocence, and blamed Lambert for his imprisonment, despite Arvogast being the complaining witness. He stated, “There is the man who is responsible for my being sent to prison. That man is Jack Lambert.”¹⁹ The presiding judge, Judge Brents, chastised Ford for this statement, stating that “he should have sentenced Ford to 10 years but for the fact the jury asked that mercy might be shown him.”²⁰

The Evening Statesman fixated on Ford’s race in coverage of the 1907 case, often mentioning his race in their headlines as well as in the articles and consistently linking his race with notions of brutality and aggression. The initial, January 30th, article in *The Evening Statesman* described Ford as drunken and dirty in the headline.²¹ The January 31st issue of *The Evening Statesman* was particularly vitriolic, stating that “It is fortunate for William Ford, the bestial negro, that he is in sober Walla Walla, instead of South of the Mason and Dixon line,”²² and “William Ford, the negro bound over by Judge Huffman yesterday on a charge of attempting a frightful crime, is a fit subject for the first

¹⁸ “Negro Sentenced for Burglary Denounces Officer Jack Lambert,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), May 17th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENTSTAT19070517.1.1&srpos=14&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22william+ford%22+----1907-->.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid. Ford may have appeared in the Washington press again. The September 23rd, 1909, issue of *The Evening Statesman* reports on a William Ford who was arrested in Walla Walla by a Patrolman Tom Doyle on the charge of disorderly conduct. This Ford was charged with a fine of \$15 and taken to the city jail. It is unclear if this is the same William Ford of the 1907 sodomy/burglary case. “Fined \$15,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), September 23rd, 1909, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENTSTAT19090923.1.5&srpos=2&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22william+ford%22+----1909-->.

²¹ “Dirty, Drunken Negro Chases Boy Out of Bed With an Ugly Razor,” *The Evening Statesman*.

²² “Union Label,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), January 31st, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENTSTAT19070130.1.1&srpos=2&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22+----1907-->.

experiment under the proposed Delaware law.”²³ The two quotes provide a notable contrast, despite appearing in the same issue and column. In the former, *The Evening Statesman* distanced itself and the residents of Walla Walla from instances of racial violence, most notably lynching, in the American South, whereas the latter argued violence against Ford was appropriate, albeit state sanctioned violence. This distinction allowed *The Evening Statesman* to portray the White population in Walla Walla as tolerant and civilized, while still arguing for racially based violence against Ford.

This response aligns with Washington State’s larger attitude towards its Black minority. Black settlement in Washington began in 1840 and had climbed to 400 by 1900, with most of the population in Seattle. The relatively small Black population allowed White residents to indulge in a myth of tolerance, and Washington state never implemented the type of segregationist policies that were increasingly popular in the rest of the country. However, Black residents faced limited job opportunities due to widespread employment discrimination; although the White elite in Washington had strong ties to the abolitionist movement and the Republican party, Black Washington residents were not granted the economic opportunities that would have allowed them to meaningfully challenge racist restrictions. *The Evening Statesman*’s coverage of Ford’s trials distanced the local White community from the racial violence of the American South while simultaneously engaging in racist rhetoric and advocating for state-sanctioned racial violence.²⁴

²³ “Union Label,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA). It is unclear which proposed Delaware law was being referenced in this excerpt. It is unclear if *The Evening Statesman* referred to the incorrect state or if they were referring to a separate, unidentified law.

²⁴ Quintard Taylor and Norm Rice, *The Forging of a Black Community in Seattle’s Central District From 1870 Through the Civil Rights Era*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 13-14.

Furthermore, as noted in the introduction of this thesis, Black men in the Washington press were frequently associated with “the unmentionable crime,” which usually referred to the alleged rape of White women by a Black man and was connected to lynching in the American South. Therefore, the association between Black men’s sexuality and sexual danger already existed in the Washington press, as did the connection between sexual violence allegedly perpetrated by Black men resulting in racial violence. The only aspect that is therefore unique to the Ford case is that Ford was accused of sexual violence against a White man, as opposed to a White woman. Evidently, the sexual stereotypes surrounding Black men’s sexuality in Washington were not exclusive to heterosexuality and were instead easily applied to cases involving sex between men and boys.

Ford’s case resulted in the most sustained and impassioned coverage of a scandal involving sex between men and boys since Guay in 1891. This coverage frequently described Ford in derogatory terms, associating him, and by extension other Black men, with brutality and sexual violence. This portrayal contributed to the stereotype of Black men as sexually dangerous and an association of Black men with sexual violence. However, it is worth noting that despite the harsh and racist terms used to describe Ford in the Washington press, and despite the stated intent of the presiding judge, Ford was given a relatively light sentence considering the accusation and the sensationalism associated with the case. This light sentence was at the request of the jury and illustrates that vitriolic rhetoric from the press did not necessarily translate to legal treatment.

The B.C. press also fixated on the racial identity of men of colour accused of engaging in sex with men or boys. The press coverage of a 1906 case in British Columbia fixated on the racial identity of a Chinese man accused of engaging in sex with boys to

portray Chinese men as sexually dangerous. Ah Lee was arrested on April 9th, 1906 in New Westminster, BC, for an attempted assault against an unnamed 15-year-old boy. The case quickly caught the attention of New Westminster's *The Daily News*, which reported on Lee's arrest under the headline "Charge Against Chinaman." The paper claimed "the accused made no effort at defense, and the testimony of the prosecution was very damaging."²⁵ Despite Lee's apparent guilt, the case was complicated when, on April 10th, 1906, the 15-year-old who accused Lee of assault was arrested.²⁶ According to *The Daily News*, "it is said that the boy knows more of the case than he has cared to give out, and as a result he is being held."²⁷ This statement was never clarified by *The Daily News*, as the next article concerning Lee appeared on May 1st, 1906, when Lee went to trial in Judge Irving's court.²⁸ The trial did not last long. Lee was found guilty of sodomy after only ten minutes of deliberation from the jury and sentence by Judge Irving to four years' imprisonment.²⁹

Just like Ford's case in Walla Walla, *The Daily News* mentioned Lee's race in every article it published about the case and emphasized local disgust about the crime.³⁰

²⁵ "Charge Against Chinaman," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), April 9th, 1906, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/nwdn/items/1.0316253#p0z-7r0f:%22ah%20lee%22>.

²⁶ "Chief Witness Detained," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), April 10th, 1906, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/nwdn/items/1.0316185#p0z-7r0f:%22ah%20lee%22>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Grand Jury Finds True Bills on All Criminal Charges," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), May 1st, 1906, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/nwdn/items/1.0316328#p0z-10000r0f:%22ah%20lee%22>.

²⁹ "Judge Imposes Light Sentences on Lawbreakers," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), May 2nd, 1906, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/nwdn/items/1.0316482#p0z-7r0f:%22ah%20lee%22>.

³⁰ "Charge Against Chinaman," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), para. 1, and "Chief Witness Detained," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), and "Grand Jury Finds True Bills on All Criminal Charges," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC), and "Judge Imposes Light Sentences on Lawbreakers," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC).

The Daily News described it as the “most unpleasant case.”³¹ By far the most notable comment regarding Lee's racial identity came from a quote published in *The Daily News* on May 2nd, 1906. According to *The Daily News*, when sentencing Lee, Judge Irving stated that “he was making the punishment somewhat severe as a warning to others of his countrymen who were inclined to practice the same crime,” thereby drawing an explicit link between Chinese men and sex between men and boys.³² Notions of Chinese men as sexually deviant were not unusual in British Columbia, which, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth, experienced increased anti-Chinese racism. Perceptions of Chinese men as sexually deviant tended to focus on heterosexual deviancy and “White slavery,” a racist myth that focused on Chinese men corrupting White women through prostitution and drug use.³³ However, the association of Chinese men with sex between men and boys was not entirely unexpected. Chinese men were excluded from many manual labour fields under the argument that manual work in British Columbia should be reserved for White men, which meant that Chinese men were increasingly forced into feminized occupations such as domestic, retail, and culinary work.³⁴ This association of Chinese men with femininity meant that they were not hypersexualized but were more interested in profiting from the sex trade than sexual desire towards White women.³⁵ It is therefore not surprising that this stereotyping of Chinese men as effeminate and uninterested in heterosexual sex extended into portraying them as more inclined towards sex between

³¹ “Grand Jury Finds True Bills on All Criminal Charges,” *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC).

³² “Judge Imposes Light Sentences on Lawbreakers,” *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC).

³³ Constance Backhouse, “The White Woman’s Labour Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada,” *Law and History Review*, vol. 14 (Fall 1996): 315.

³⁴ Patricia Roy, *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man’s Province, 1914-41*, pp. 3, 6.

³⁵ Constance Backhouse, “The White Woman’s Labour Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada,” pp. 316.

men and boys. In fact, this connection had been made in Canadian legal documents decades earlier. The 1885 *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration: Report and Evidence* claimed that “sometimes thirty or forty boys departing from Hong Kong apparently in good health, before arriving here with venereal diseases, and, on questioning Chinese doctors to disclose what it is, they admitted that it [sodomy] was a common practice among them,” which illustrates that White Canadians did already, to some extent, associate Chinese men’s sexuality with sex between men and boys.³⁶ B.C. newspapers’ stereotyping of Chinese men as more inclined towards homosexual behavior was a natural extension of the province’s rampant anti-Chinese sentiment.

Coverage of cases involving men of colour accused of sex with men or boys is similar in the B.C. and Washington press, despite concerning different racial groups. Coverage on either side of the border relied on racist rhetoric and sought to associate men of colour with sexual danger. The precise way men of colour were associated with sexual danger varied, as sexual stereotypes in the Washington and B.C. press were based on pre-established racist stereotypes. However, the purpose of coverage, to portray men of colour as threatening and sexually deviant, remained consistent. This served the purpose of positioning men of colour as opposed to and threatening a perceived White majority, thereby reinforcing White supremacist ideology and supporting the exclusion of men of colour.

Social status

³⁶ Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration: Report and Evidence*, (Ottawa: Printed by Order of the Commission, 1885), Early Canadiana Online, Early Official Publications, pp. 194. <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.14563/3?r=0&s=1>.

Washington and B.C. newspapers paid a lot of attention to the social status of men accused of engaging in sex with men or boys, focusing on their career or criminal histories, for example, or the nature of their local social connections. The role that social status played in press coverage varied, as it was at least somewhat dependent on what sexual behaviour they had been accused of, but there were some consistent trends. For instance, the press consistently minimized the deviancy of accused men if they with prominent social connections, a successful career, or exhibited good behaviour during a prior prison sentence. Such men did not get the same demonization from the press, and often faced lessened legal consequences, than men with lower social status. There were exceptions, however, as well-known men who were perceived as committing particularly heinous crimes could face increased media attention and demonization because of their social status. Accused men with low social status, including a criminal history, previous sex crimes, poor behaviour in prison, and few or no local social connections, consistently received harsher coverage from the Washington and B.C. press. These men were routinely portrayed as more deviant than men with higher status, and more threatening to both the local community and the imagined White, heterosexual community.

The *Daily British Columbian*'s response to an 1899 case illustrates the press response to an accused man with a criminal history. On May 13th, 1899, the *Daily British Columbian* (New Westminster, BC) reported on a man referred to only as "Maclugo" who had been arrested for sexually assaulting Leonard Henley.³⁷ Most of the paper's coverage concerning Maclugo was brief but a May 15th, 1899 article was not. The article is titled

³⁷ "Monday Evening, May 13th, 1889," *Daily British Columbian* (New Westminster, BC), May 13th, 1889, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/dbc/items/1.0346916#p0z-7r0f:maclugo>.

“A Villainous Character” and described Maclugo as “one of the worst villains unhung.”³⁸ The paper mentioned a previous sentence he had served in prison for the sexual assault of a woman near Brownsville, B.C., and several others he served for various petty crimes. The paper stated that “he is even too base and degraded to be allowed to associate with ordinary criminals.”³⁹ The *Daily British Columbian* cited Maclugo’s reputation and particularly his prior association with criminal activity to explain his deviance and justify their vitriol. The *Daily British Columbian* portrayed Maclugo as threatening, arguing that his current behaviour and prior criminal history made him dangerous, even more so than the average criminal. Because of his association with criminality, the press justified portraying Maclugo as especially sexually threatening to the wider, presumed heterosexual community.

An 1891 case involving a Catholic priest in Snohomish illustrates how men in prominent social positions could be treated when accused of engaging in sex with men or boys.⁴⁰ Father Guay was a Catholic priest in Snohomish, Washington when he was accused of sexually assaulting eight victims. Guay’s case is notable as one of the only local scandals in Washington that was reported on both sides of the border. *The Kootenay Star* (Kootenay, BC) reported on “the bestial acts of Father Guay” on August 15th, 1891. The article in *The Kootenay Star* was a reprint of an article that appeared in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on August 7th, 1891, and therefore contains no editorialization that is

³⁸ “A Villainous Character,” *Daily British Columbian* (New Westminster, BC) May 15th, 1889, British Columbia Newspapers Online.

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/dbc/items/1.0347008#p3z-4r0f:leonard%20henley>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “Terrible Charges,” *The Kootenay Star* (Kootenay, BC), August 15th, 1891, British Columbia Newspapers Online. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers/kootstar/items/1.0310146#p0z-7r0f:sodomy>.

unique to the British Columbia press. Nonetheless, that Guay's case was scandalous enough to appear in the press in both Washington and British Columbia is notable and differentiates the case from most scandals involving sex between men and boys that appeared the British Columbia and Washington press.

Guay's case is also notable because of his prominent role in the community and the reaction the accusations evoked from other residents of Snohomish. As a result of Guay's position, neither local nor state law enforcement was involved in the case, evidently viewing the crimes of a priest as outside of their jurisdiction. However, religious authorities were also hesitant to intervene. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* stated that "one of the victims claims to have personally notified the bishop several weeks ago, [...] he has taken no action in the matter, although it is stated that he will be here on Thursday to investigate."⁴¹

Whatever actions the bishop intended to take did not happen quickly enough for the residents of Snohomish. On Wednesday, August 6th, 1891, before the bishop arrived, a large crowd gathered across from the Penobscot Hotel and went to the Catholic Church. They gathered around Guay's residence and attempted to lure him outside. When he refused to leave his house, the crowd kicked down his door. He attempted to flee through the rear door but was hit in the back of the head and neck. The crowd struck him several more times, stripped him out of his clothes, and covered him in tar and feathers. When he

⁴¹ "Priest at Snohomish Charged with Hideous Crimes," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), August 4th, 1891, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18910804.1.1&srpos=2&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22guay%22+----1891-->.

was completely covered, the crowd informed him that he would be assaulted again the next night if he did not leave town.⁴²

Rather than immediately leave town, the next day Guay attempted to secure protection from the local police. The local marshal told him he could have protection but warned him that the few policemen that could be assigned to him would likely be ineffective against the crowd. In response, he left for Seattle on a 6:20pm train from Snohomish. Upon reaching Seattle, he checked into the Providence Hospital and refused to speak to reporters. The next day, Bishop Junger arrived in Seattle and went immediately to the Providence Hospital, allegedly to seek treatment for a case of eczema. Junger also refused to speak to reporters.⁴³ A day later, Guay left for Portland. He again declined to be interviewed but did say he was traveling to report to a bishop in Vancouver. Guay said that his statement would be released to the press in a couple of days, but no statement appeared in the Washington or British Columbia press.⁴⁴

Despite holding a prominent religious position in Snohomish, both the press and the residents of Snohomish perceived Guay as threatening the community. This was partially due to the way Guay's religious office allowed him to initially escape state punishment. Left without the usual government or church officials to regulate Guay's sexual behavior, the community chose to punish him themselves. Guay's tarring and feathering was not only applauded by some citizens of Snohomish, but by the press. *The*

⁴² "A Priest Tarred and Feathered," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), August 7th, 1891, Washington Digital Newspapers.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18910807.1.5&srpos=3&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22guay%22+----1891-->.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Father Guay in Portland," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), August 8th, 1891, Washington Digital Newspapers.
<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=SEATPINT18910822.1.4&srpos=4&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-189-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22guay%22+----1891-->,

Seattle Post-Intelligencer viewed the vigilante action positively, and made a point to note that “This was not a mob of roughs, but was composed of many good citizens and business men, who were determined to rid this city of such a character as Guay had proved himself to be.”⁴⁵ Evidently, Guay’s position in Snohomish did not negate the deviancy associated with his sexual acts. Instead, his reputation made him more notorious, as *The Seattle Post Intelligencer* viewed him as exploiting his position in order to escape justice. The paper portrayed his sexual acts as a perversion of his role in the community and emphasized that other prominent men in Snohomish led the community action against him. Therefore, Guay’s case is an exception in that his prominent role in the community did not lead to positive treatment from the press. Instead, *The Seattle Post Intelligencer* positioned him as outside of and opposed to the larger community because he used to his position to engage in deviant sexuality and escape state sexual regulation.

A 1903 case in Uniontown, WA involved accused men with criminal histories and illustrates the way low social status could be used to enhance the deviancy associated with sex between men. In October of 1903, *The Colfax Gazette* (Colfax, WA) and *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA) provided lengthy coverage of an attempted sexual assault. *The Evening Statesman*’s initial story was published on October 6th, 1903 and appeared under the headline “Stripped the Victim,” whereas *The Colfax Gazette* published an almost identical story three days later, titled “Three Men Commit Four Crimes.”⁴⁶ According to the press, three men, James Bell, George Smith, and James

⁴⁵ “A Priest Tarred and Feathered,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), August 7th, 1891.

⁴⁶ “Stripped the Victim,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), October 6th, 1903, Washington Digital Newspapers, <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENTSTAT19031006.1.2&srpos=1&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22willie+roberts%22+----1903-->, and “Three Men Commit Four Crimes,” *The Colfax Gazette* (Colfax, WA), October 9th, 1903, Washington Digital Newspapers.

Collins, attempted to rob and assault a 14-year-old Willie Roberts in a boxcar in Uniontown. Roberts managed to escape the boxcar when the men left to go into town and buy liquor. He then located law enforcement and the three men were arrested and charged with arson, highway robbery, burglary, and sodomy.⁴⁷

Bell, Smith, and Collins were transported from Uniontown to the local prison in Colfax, where they were tried and found guilty of burglary. They were sentenced to three years in the state penitentiary. The three men attracted additional media attention due to an attempt at sawing their way out of their prison cell in Colfax. Smith gained even more infamy when, after his sentencing, he threatened to return to Colfax after his sentence and kill Deputy Sheriff Nessly and Sheriff Canut.⁴⁸ Despite already being found guilty of burglary, charges were also filed in Colfax to charge the men with sodomy and robbery. However, the results of these trials were not recorded in the Washington press.

Coverage of the 1903 Bell, Smith, and Collins case frequently emphasized the low social status of the accused. For instance, newspapers emphasized that the three men were well-known criminals in the region: in *The Colfax Gazette*, they were described as “cheap jewelry peddlers,” and when they were arrested “a number of fountain pens, scarfpins and rings were found in their possession.” They were also accused of robbing the Northern Pacific Depot in Uniontown earlier in the same evening and *The Colfax Gazette* described

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=COLFGAZ19031009.1.2&srpos=11&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22+----1903-->.

⁴⁷ “Three Men Commit Four Crimes,” *The Colfax Gazette* (Colfax, WA), October 9th, 1903, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=COLFGAZ19031009.1.2&srpos=11&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22+----1903-->.

⁴⁸ “Will Go Back to Kill,” *The Evening Statesmen* (Walla Walla, WA), November 27th, 1903, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19031127.1.8&srpos=49&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--41-byDA-txt-txIN-%22bell%22+and+%22smith%22+and+%22collins%22+----1903-->.

the men as “criminals of the hobo class,” and stated that “The men have every characteristic of hardened criminals.”⁴⁹ Their criminal backgrounds were used to enhance the deviancy associated with their assault of Roberts. Operating in conjunction with their criminal reputation was their economic class, which was described by the Washington press as “the hobo class.”

A positive local reputation and numerous social connections could be equally influential, such as in the case of the 1905 suicide of George Gray, whose relative prominence, job as a local newspaper reporter, and social connections shaped the coverage of his death. On June 14th of 1905, *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA) reported on Gray’s suicide.⁵⁰ He was described as “a man about 40 years of age and was perhaps one of the best short-hand reporters of the West. He had been employed on some of the largest newspapers in the country and in that capacity, he interviewed many of the leading men in the nation, among them James G. Blaine, ex-president Grant, and others.”⁵¹ Gray’s career had ended when he was arrested on the charge of sodomy at least six months prior to his suicide. However, while awaiting trial he was reportedly a model prisoner and handled much of the prison’s correspondence. Therefore, when it came time for his trial, the prison warden John B. Catron and street commissioner H. H. Crampton recommended that Gray be pardoned from serving a term. Although the sentence for sodomy was 10 to 14 years in Washington state, Gray was pardoned by Governor McBride and served no additional time in prison. Catron and Crampton even provided a

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “SELF MURDER,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), June 14th, 1905, Washington Newspapers Online. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19050614.1.1&srpos=1&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1905-->.

⁵¹ Ibid.

recommendation for Gray that allowed him to secure employment at *The Morning Union* (Walla Walla, WA).⁵² He worked at *The Morning Union* for six months and it was reported that “Gray’s conduct since his release from the penitentiary has been good.”⁵³ On June 13th, 1905, Gray left work in “the best of spirits,” having recently been offered a position at the *National Good Roads Special* (Seattle, WA).⁵⁴ According to *The Evening Statesman*, he then wandered the streets, drinking, until roughly eight in the morning, when he persuaded a couple of newsboys to enter his room. When Gray attempted to initiate sex with the newsboys, one of them fled the room and located an Officer Casey on the street. When Casey knocked on the door of his room, Gray took a revolver from under his pillow and shot himself. He died as a result of his injuries at 2:00 pm at St. Mary’s Hospital. *The Evening Sun* stated that “Fear of a life sentence for another conviction was probably the motive that prompted the man to take his own life.”⁵⁵

Unlike Bell, Smith, and Collins, who were considered notable by the press because of their history as career criminals, Gray’s reputation as a well-known reporter and connections within the community earned him milder press coverage. *The Evening Statesman* acknowledged the sexual acts but devoted more of the article to Gray’s career accomplishments and connections within prison. Even his prior arrest was minimized and his reputation as a model prisoner and subsequent career success was emphasized instead of any substantial description of his prior conviction. *The Evening Statesman* viewed Gray’s career success and social connections as an important aspect of his identity, arguably more important than his sexuality. As such, *The Evening Statesman* leveraged

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ “SELF MURDER,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

the positive reputation and social connections he gained both in and outside of prison in order to negate his sexual activity and position Gray as still in line with community standards.

Similarly, a 1906 article in *The Evening Statesman* further illustrates that men implicated in scandals involving sex between men and boys were not always treated harshly by the press. On March 21st, 1906, *The Evening Statesman* reported on an emerging community movement to secure Daniel Moran's release from prison. In 1900, Moran had been accused of sexually assaulting a 13-year-old boy while working at Norris and Rowe Circus in Walla Walla. He pled guilty and was sentenced to 10 years by Judge Brents for sodomy. However, after his conviction, Moran claimed that the defense had manipulated him into pleading guilty without him understanding the severity of the sentence he was facing.⁵⁶

There were numerous factors that helped Moran's argument for his release, including the fact that several prominent Walla Walla residents took up his cause. Both Judge Brents, the judge that originally sentenced Moran, and Prosecuting Attorney Oscar Cain, who argued against Moran in the original trial, argued for his release. Also helping his case was his reputation inside the penitentiary, as Moran was described as "a model prisoner and he has earned much good time by exemplary conduct."⁵⁷ A friend of Moran had also promised to employ him if he was released. Although Moran had a criminal past and was working class, his reputation within prison and social connections in Walla

⁵⁶ "Want Daniel Moran Released From Prison," *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), March 21st, 1906, Washington Digital Newspapers. <https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19060321.1.1&srpos=1&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----1906-->.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Walla allowed him to make a strong case for his own release. Although *The Evening Statesman* did not cover whether Moran was released, they did express sympathy for his cause, stating that “the young man seems sincere in his desire to lead a better life.”⁵⁸ Therefore, regardless of whether or not Moran was eventually released, his social status was enough to garner positive coverage from the Washington press. As such, this case occupies a space like Gray’s, where even a man accused of having sex with children could be permitted to re-enter the community based on his behavior in prison and his connections to the community.

Furthermore, when considering the effects of social status on coverage of accused men, the 1906 William Ford case is again relevant due to the press’ interest in his criminal history. *The Evening Statesman* often reminded readers that Ford had been in prison before. In December of 1906, Ford was working at Keeler’s Barber Shop and was accused of stealing an overcoat from his employer.⁵⁹ Ford fled but was located and arrested several days later, when he attempted to sell the overcoat at a second hand store.⁶⁰ He was fined \$75 for the theft of the coat and, being unable to pay, was forced to serve his fine in the county jail.⁶¹ He had only just been released when he allegedly

⁵⁸ “Want Daniel Moran Released From Prison,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), March 21, 1906, Washington Digital Newspapers.

⁵⁹ “City News in Brief,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), December 24th, 1906, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19061224.1.5&srpos=2&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22william+ford%22----1906-->.

⁶⁰ “City News in Brief,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA).

⁶¹ “Goes to Jail for Robbing Employer,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), December 27th, 1906, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=EVENSTAT19061227.1.8&srpos=3&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-190-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22william+ford%22----1906-->.

entered the room of Arvogast.⁶² *The Evening Statesman* frequently mentioned Ford's prior conviction in their coverage of the 1907 case.

In the B.C. and Washington press, men engaging in sex with other men or boys were positioned as either opposed to or in line with community standards and national goals, and often this positioning was in accordance with the accused's social status. Most often, when accused men had prominent positions in the community or social connections, the deviancy associated with their sexual behaviour was minimized and they were portrayed as still having a positive role in the community. A higher social status could also translate into a shorter prison sentence. The Washington and B.C. press emphasized the higher social status of certain accused men to illustrate that they were still in-line with community standards and national goals, despite their sexual behaviour.

Press coverage focused on accused men with low social status was more common, and served to associate sex between men with criminal behaviour and portray accused men as threatening to the local community. The press emphasized the prior criminal histories of Bell, Smith, and Collins, as well as Maclugo and Ford, and this emphasis on their prior criminality was used to both increase the deviancy associated with their current sexual acts and argue for increased legal punishment and exclusion from the larger community. This served to further position men engaging in sex between men as opposed to an imagined transnational White, heterosexual community by portraying them as threatening and associating them with other criminal acts.

Age

⁶² "Dirty, Drunken Negro Chases Boy Out of Bed with an Ugly Razor," *The Evening Statesman*.

When covering cases of men engaging in sex between men or boys, British Columbia and Washington newspapers tended to emphasize the age of one or both parties involved in the sexual act. This was evident in both the choices of cases to cover, which tended to include the sexual assault of a teenager or child by an adult man, and the language used, which used perceptions of age to minimize or enhance the deviancy associated with a given case of men engaging in sex with men or boys. This resulted in the Washington and B.C. press using age to portray sex between men as threatening to conceptions of the White, heteronormative family, or, less commonly, to minimize the sexual deviancy of accused men by emphasizing their youth. Like the coverage of men of colour and the association of sex between men with criminality, the press's focus on age served to exclude men engaging in sex between men from an imagined White, heterosexual community by portraying them as threatening to White children and youth.

Some mentions of age in the B.C. and Washington press were brief, but still reveal that the press' perceptions of age were used to portray men engaging in sex between men as threatening to children and youth. When covering the 1889 Maclugo case, the *Daily British Columbian* did not specify the exact age of Maclugo's victim but did emphasize his youth. A May 13th, 1899, article identified the victim as Leonard Henley and the *Daily British Columbian* described him as a "little boy."⁶³ In the 1903 case of Bell, Smith, and Collins, *The Evening Statesman* described the victim as "Willie Roberts, who is only 14 years old." Similarly, *The Evening Statesman* described Roberts as a "boy."⁶⁴ When covering the 1907 Ford case, *The Evening Statesman* described the

⁶³ "Monday Evening, May 13th, 1889," *Daily British Columbian* (New Westminster, BC), May 13th, 1889, British Columbia Newspapers Online.

⁶⁴ "Stripped the Victim," *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), October 6th, 1903, Washington Digital Newspapers.

victim, 16-year-old George Arvogast, as a “boy” and “young.”⁶⁵ When covering stories about men sexually assaulting White teenagers, both the *Daily British Columbian* and *The Evening Statesman* emphasized the perceived youth of the victims. Both by choosing to disproportionately cover stories involving children and teenagers and by emphasizing the perceived youth of the victims, B.C. and Washington newspapers portray men engaging in sex with other men as threatening to White youth and, by extension, the imaged White, heteronormative community.

For example, the 1891 Guay case frequently emphasized the perceived youth of his victims, although often in vague terms. The precise and identity of Guay’s victims is difficult to determine because coverage of the case did not name victims and only alluded to the accusations themselves. An August 4th article in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* claimed that one of Guay’s victims had notified Bishop Junger of Guay’s sexual acts weeks prior, suggesting that the unnamed victim was capable of either local travel or writing a letter.⁶⁶ The article did not mention the gender or the age of Guay’s victims. On August 7th, 1891, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* described his victims as “little children,” although again no age or gender was given.⁶⁷ Notably, the language used to describe the accusations is consistent with the language used in cases involving men engaging in sex with other men or boys. Guay is accused of committing “sodomy,” a term the press used to almost exclusively refer to men engaging in sex with other men or boys, and a “crime against nature,” a term commonly used to describe men engaging in sex with men or

⁶⁵ “Dirty, Drunken Negro Chases Boy Out of Bed with an Ugly Razor,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), January 30th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.

⁶⁶ “A Priest Tarred and Feathered,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), August 7th, 1891, Washington Digital Newspapers.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

boys.⁶⁸ However, with no legal records of the case, whether this case did involve sex between men and boys is difficult to verify. Regardless of the victim's precise ages, the coverage of the 1891 case consistently emphasized the perceived youth of the victims.

Notably, the press' perceptions of age could also be used to minimize the deviancy associated with men engaging in sex with men or boys. When covering the 1906 Moran case, *The Evening Statesman* emphasized the perceived naivety of Moran, as well as perceptions of him as young at the time of his arrest. Moran was 18 years old in 1900 when he was accused of sodomy by a 13-year-old boy. *The Evening Statesman* argued that Moran was unaware of the severity of the crime when he pled guilty, stating "he was induced to plead guilty without knowing what the minimum sentence was and when the court pronounced a ten-year term the boy nearly fainted." Most notable is *The Evening Sun*'s use of the word "boy" to describe Moran, despite Moran being both legally an adult and functioning as adult, in that he was both employed and travelling with the Norris and Rowe Circus. Referring to Moran in 1906, *The Evening Sun* also described him as a "young man." *The Evening Sun* emphasized Moran's as young, despite him being legally an adult at the time of his arrest and him being accused by a 13-year-old. This illustrates that the press could use perceptions of age to portray men with higher social status as non-threatening because of their age and perceived naivety.⁶⁹

A 1910 case similarly illustrates how perceptions of age could also result in accused men receiving sympathetic press coverage. The 1910 case of James S. Ryan and Frank Nichol is notable not only because it garnered substantial coverage from *The Yakima Herald* (Yakima, WA) but also because it is one of the only scandals involving

⁶⁸ "Priest at Snohomish Charged with Hideous Crimes," August 7th, 1891.

⁶⁹ "Want Daniel Moran Released From Prison," *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA).

sex between men that concerned consensual sex. Coverage of the case began on October 26th, 1910, when *The Yakima Herald* published a story titled “Lads to ‘Pen’” which stated that “James Ryan and Frank Nichol, two lads convicted of sodomy, were sentenced to from two to five years in the state penitentiary.”⁷⁰ Neither this article, nor any other article pertaining to the 1910 case, specified the exact ages of Ryan and Nichols. The case again attracted press attention when Ryan successfully escaped from the Yakima county jail.⁷¹ Ryan had escaped in the evening of November 1st, 1910, by successfully slipping past County Jailer Armsworthy while Armsworthy was feeding prisoners. Ryan successfully evaded the local police and a day later Nichols was transported without Ryan to the state penitentiary.⁷² News of Nichols’ transport to the state penitentiary marks the last mention of the 1910 case in the Washington press, meaning that there is no indication in the press of whether Ryan was recaptured.

Most important to note about the 1910 case is the relatively mild treatment Ryan and Nichols received from the Washington press. Accused men were frequently described in negative terms, and their race, class, and social status were used to increase the deviancy associated with their crimes. Conversely, Ryan and Nichols were only described in neutral or positive terms. The most common term to describe them was “lads,” a descriptor that emphasized youth. Even after Ryan escaped prison, “lad” was the only

⁷⁰ “Lads to the ‘Pen,’” *The Yakima Herald* (North Yakima, WA), October 26th, 1910, Washington Digital Newspapers.

⁷¹ “Lad Convict Escapes Jail,” *The Yakima Herald* (North Yakima, WA), November 2nd, 1910, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=YAKIHER19101102.1.6&srpos=7&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-191-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

⁷² “Escaped Prisoner’s Pard Leaves for ‘Pen,’” *The Yakima Herald* (North Yakima, WA), November 2nd, 1910, Washington Digital Newspapers.

<https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=YAKIHER19101102.1.6&srpos=7&e=01-1-1880-31-12-1910-191-en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22sodomy%22----->.

term used to describe him. This stands in sharp contrast to the descriptions of men who were in some way racialized, associated with criminality, or associated with sexual violence. Ryan and Nichols were young, White men with neutral reputations in a consensual relationship, which resulted in more favorable press coverage.

Much like with race and social status, the Washington and B.C. press used perceptions of age to enhance or minimize the deviancy associated with sex between men. With cases involving higher status men, the press used perceptions of age to emphasize the accused's youth. This emphasis allowed for the press to argue that their sexual acts were less deviant and that these accused men did not constitute a threat to youth and the wider community. When covering cases that involved men already considered deviant, either because of their racial identity, criminal history, or reputation, the press used perceptions of age to emphasize the youth of their victims. Through this, the press both increased the deviancy associated with the accused men's sexual acts and portrayed men engaging in sex between men as threatening to White youth and the wider, imagined transnational White heterosexual community.

Conclusion

The factors that determined a case's notability in the British Columbia and Washington press consistently centered around the accused's identity, with aspects such as race, social status, and age affecting the coverage. Racist rhetoric directed at accused men of colour proved to be the most consistent aspect of British Columbia and Washington press coverage, despite the coverage on either side of the border targeting different racial groups. All prominent cases involving non-White men included racist

rhetoric to some extent. This was most evident in the cases of William Ford in Washington and Ah Lee in British Columbia, but racist rhetoric in the press did not always equate to harsher legal treatment. While Lee's legal sentence was intentionally made more severe because he was Chinese, the jury in Ford's trial requested mercy for the accused, despite the vitriolic racism that appeared in the press. However, the rhetoric surrounding men of colour accused of engaging in sex with men did serve a consistent purpose of portraying men of colour as sexually dangerous. The precise way men of colour were portrayed as sexually dangerous varied based on local circumstance and the pre-existing racist ideology that was common among White Canadians and Americans. For instance, in the case of Ford, a Black man, a perceived inclination towards sexual violence was emphasized, reflecting pre-existing stereotypes of Black men as sexually violent. In the case of Lee, a perceived inclination towards sex between men and boys was apparent in the British Columbia press, reflecting the stereotype of Chinese men as effeminate and uninterested in sex with White women. Although the precise racist stereotypes differed, the British Columbia and Washington press consistently sought to portray men of colour as sexually dangerous.

The effect of social status was largely consistent in its effect on British Columbia and Washington press coverage. Those with low status, and particularly those with reputations as career criminals, found it difficult to escape the judgement of the press. This appeared as a major factor in both British Columbia and Washington and affected the coverage of cases such as Maclugo in 1889, British Columbia and cases of Bell, Smith and Collins in 1903 and the case of Ford in 1907, Washington. Reputation within prison also appeared as a prominent factor in the Washington press. With the cases of both Moran and Gray, the deviancy associated with a prior prison sentence was

minimized by reputations and social connections gained within prison. Also assisting Gray and Moran was their social connections within the local community, and multiple prominent locals were willing to vouch for them. Perhaps the most unusual case in terms of reputation was that of Father Guay in 1881, as he did hold a prominent position in the community and had many prominent social connections, but this only served to incense the community when his position appeared to shield him from repercussions. Therefore, although there was no single way social status operated in the British Columbia and Washington press, a few consistent themes emerged.

Furthermore, with the exception of the Guay case, there was little interaction between the British Columbia and Washington press and little evidence of any American-Canadian competition, like the American-British competition that dominated coverage of the 1895 Oscar Wilde scandal. On the rare occurrence when a case was discussed on both sides of the border- such as the Guay case- it was covered with nearly identical or, in case of reprints, identical rhetoric. If the British Columbia and Washington press sought to bolster nationalistic sentiment by portraying another nation as more inclined towards deviant sexuality, they did not turn to the other side of the border to do it.

However, while they did not express hostility towards each other, both the B.C. and Washington press did express hostility towards people of colour. This was due to a transnational perception of Whiteness that became increasingly popular in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Central to this transnational understanding of Whiteness was increased fear and hostility towards racialized nations and people. It was because of this emerging transnational perception of Whiteness, in the coverage of local scandals involving sex between men and boys, emphasizing differences across the border was less important than emphasizing differences based on race. This illustrates a de-

emphasis of the importance of nationality in the British Columbia and Washington press coverage of cases involving sex between men and boys, as the precise nation an individual belonged to became less important than their inclusion as part of an imagined transnational community that was characterized by Whiteness. This coverage differed from coverage of the Oscar Wilde scandal, which emphasized the national differences between majority White, Anglophone nations, and instead conformed to contemporary anxieties about non-White immigration and non-White citizens and centered sexual danger as a justification for racial exclusion.⁷³

The role of social status within the press differed slightly. As previously discussed, reputation and social connections could be used to either negate or enhance the deviancy associated with a given crime, and although it could be associated with race, it was not always. Rather, reputation most often served to associate men engaging in sex with other men with criminality and danger. This was reflected in both the choice of cases the press chose to cover, which gave preference to cases which involved excess violence, and the way accused men and their criminal histories were described. The association of men engaging in sex with other men or boys and criminality is not particularly surprising, given that these sexual acts were understood both legally and culturally as criminal act, but it is nonetheless important to acknowledge as it contributed to the British Columbia and Washington press's representations of men who engaged in sex with other men.

Not only were these representations centered on criminality and violence, but also the sexual assault of minors. Due to both the choice of cases to cover and the way they were covered, men engaging in sex with other men were understood as dangerous and

⁷³ Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 2-3.

threatening to both the general community and specifically to youth. When accused men were racialized, this sense of danger extended to other members of their racial group. The association with criminality is explained by considering the nature of the imagined community men engaging in sex with other men were being excluded from. This community was not only imagined as White because of changes in transnational racial identity, but, due to the influence of the Oscar Wilde scandal and the concurrent medicalization of sex between men and boys, it was increasingly as heterosexual. The focus on children and youth is particularly notable, considering the notion of heteronormative family was becoming increasingly relevant in the early nineteenth century and that notion centered children.⁷⁴ Much like the press drew on criminality to justify the exclusion of men engaging in sex with other men, the Washington and B.C. press relied on perceptions of age to portray men engaging in sex with other men as threatening to White children and youth.

Therefore, the focus on race, criminality, and age both worked towards the same effect: the mutual exclusion of both racialized men and men who engaged in sex with other men from an imagined White, heterosexual community. And although the deviancy associated with sex between men and boys could be negotiated and lessened to the point that accused men could advocate for their own release from prison, the British Columbia and Washington press still trafficked in stories that portrayed men engaging in sex with other men as especially sexually violent when compared to the general population. It is apparent that this process worked in tandem with other trends of exclusion, primarily the exclusion of non-White men, and it serves as evidence of the relationship between race

⁷⁴ Shah, *Stranger Intimacy*, pp. 129-152.

and sexuality in the British Columbia and Washington press, wherein both men of colour and men engaging in sex with other men were perceived as sexually deviant, often because of their perceived relationship to each other.

Conclusion

I have argued in this thesis that Washington and B.C. newspapers used coverage of men engaging in sex with other men to reinforce national identity, transnational perceptions of race, and heteronormative conceptions of the family. Because of this, coverage of sex between men varied based on the nature of each individual case and was dependent on several factors, including social status, race, age, and nationality. The press used these factors to negotiate the deviancy of men engaging in sex between men or boys and position the accused men as either opposed to or in-line with nationalistic and White supremacist ideology.

For instance, coverage of the 1895 Oscar Wilde scandal differed in British Columbia and Washington due to a difference in international relationships and national identity. The Washington press sought to universalize Wilde's sexuality across the entirety of the British upper class to portray them as sexually deviant. The Washington press portrayed the British upper classes' sexual morals as inferior to their American counterparts, allowing the press to claim American moral superiority over Britain and therefore positioning America as dominant in the international sphere. In British Columbia, where national identity was still intertwined with British culture as a result of British Columbia's history as a British colony, the press did not extend Wilde's sexuality to a larger group of upper-class Britons, as national goals were better served by preserving a flattering image of Britain's sexual morals. While this did result in more sympathetic coverage of Wilde in British Columbia, it is worth noting that neither British Columbia nor Washington portrayed Wilde's sexuality as anything but deviant. National

goals did shape the nature and intensity of coverage, but sex between men was still consistently portrayed as deviant.

In a thesis that concerns either side of the British Columbia-Washington border, it is important to note that although the Washington press used the coverage of the Oscar Wilde scandal to engage in competition with Britain, it did not use coverage of either Wilde or local sex scandals to engage in similar competition with British Columbia. In fact, scandals from the other side of the border were rarely covered by either the British Columbia or Washington press and, when they were, there was no attempt to portray the other side as more inclined towards deviant sexuality. Therefore, although the Washington press did seek to bolster nationalist sentiment by disparaging the British upper class, Washington newspapers did not seek to disparage the British Columbian upper-class in a similar manner.

The role of press coverage in the reinforcement of White supremacy and heteronormativity is particularly apparent in the coverage of local cases. The British Columbia and Washington press' choice of local cases to cover was similar, as was the press' emphasis on the perceived deviancy of sex between men. Both Washington and B.C. newspapers favored covering stories of sex between men and boys that involved sexual assault, and particularly the sexual assault of boys. Therefore, this coverage serves to illustrate the fixation on age and violence that existed in representations of sex between men. Sexual encounters between men were represented as more inclined towards sexual violence than heterosexual sex, and men engaging in sex with other men were routinely portrayed as threatening to youth.¹ In this way, the coverage of sex between men and

¹ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 129-152.

boys reinforced heteronormativity and heteronormative conceptions of the family by portraying alternatives as inherently dangerous.

B.C. and Washington newspapers drew on transnational, White supremacist ideology when covering cases that involved men of colour. On either side of the border, coverage focused on racial identity when men of colour were involved in sex scandals. The press frequently engaged in racist rhetoric and often attributed sex between racialized men and boys to the men's racial identity. This was evident in the Washington press with the 1907 Ford case, wherein the press drew on racist stereotypes of Black men as sexually violent to portray Ford's alleged sexual assault as a product of his racial identity.² Similarly, the British Columbia press drew on racist stereotypes of Chinese men as effeminate and sexually dangerous to argue that the 1903 Lee case was indicative of Chinese men's inclination towards sex between men and boys.³ Although the precise race that was subject to racist coverage differed in the British Columbia and Washington, the purpose of coverage remained consistent. These newspapers in the Pacific Northwest drew on a shared, transnational notion of Whiteness, where nationality mattered less than preserving the perceived Whiteness of Western, Anglo nations.⁴ Portraying men of colour as more inclined towards sexual deviancy and sex between men allowed the British Columbia and Washington press to argue that men of colour were sexually dangerous, thereby justifying White supremacy and racial exclusion.

² "Dirty, Drunken Negro Chases Boy Out of Bed With an Ugly Razor," *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), January 30th, 1907, Washington Digital Newspapers.

³ "Judge Imposes Light Sentences on Lawbreakers," *The Daily News* (New Westminster, BC).

⁴ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 1-12.

Notably, although the B.C. and Washington press never accepted sex between men as moral, both the press's and legal officials' attitudes towards men accused of sex with other men or boys could be surprising lenient if those men were viewed as otherwise in line with national goals, White supremacy, and the local community. Often, an accused man having prominent social ties within the community, having a previously good reputation, or being a White man would temper the treatment the accused received from the press. Newspapers would minimize or dismiss their sexual activity and often be supportive of a lessened punishment. Because of this, both the press's representation of sex between men and the legal sexual regulation of sex between men in the Washington and B.C. borderland was often surprisingly forgiving and lenient, as the focus was on reincorporating men seen as otherwise productive citizens back into the wider community.

However, the reverse was also true. If an accused man was perceived as threatening national goals, on account of his race, criminal history, or lack of connections, newspapers were more likely to report on his case in negative and threatening ways. Evidently, representations of sex between men changed based on the press' perceptions of individual men engaging in sex with other men. Therefore, there was also no uniform response to sex between men from the press, and the perception of sex between men could change from a singular instance that could be forgiven with a positive reputation and social connections, to an immutable aspect of racial identity that could be used to justify racial exclusion.

This thesis addresses the press' role in forming representations of sex between men in late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia and Washington. It also illuminates many areas that would benefit from further analysis. Did aspects of the

press' coverage of men engaging in sex with men or boys affect the sexual practice of men engaging in sex with other men? To what extent did a queer men's subculture exist in British Columbia and Washington during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and to what extent did it reflect the press' representations of sex between men? Such studies are often difficult to complete due to the lack of primary sources written by men engaging in sex with other men regarding their own sexual practice.⁵ But, when possible, these studies provide invaluable information about the relationship between the representations and practices of sex between men.

This thesis has illustrated that the coverage of both international and local sex scandals worked to create a representation of sex between men in the press that, in turn, reinforced national and transnational goals. In the case of the Oscar Wilde scandal of 1895, newspapers in Washington reinforced the superiority of American sexual morals over Britain and, in British Columbia, they preserved the relationship between Canadian national identity and British culture. In coverage of local scandals, both the British Columbia and Washington press reinforced a transnational perception of Whiteness and heteronormative conceptions of the family and youth. Therefore, although coverage on either side of the border could be either drastically different or similar, the relationship between sex between men and wider issues of national and racial identity were consistent. On both sides of the border, the treatment of sex between men was intertwined with wider issues of identity, and sex between men acted both as a reason to disparage other nations and as a justification for a nation's international prominence. Representations of sexuality

⁵ Examples of studies that have analyzed the practice of sex between men in the Pacific Northwest includes Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), and Peter Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

were and are essential to the formation and maintenance of national and transnational identity. This is clear in the British Columbia and Washington press' treatment of sex between men, which continually directed coverage towards elevating a White, heteronormative national and transnational identity at the expense of men engaging in sex with other men.

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