

GENDER, RACE, AND THE MAKING OF COLONIAL SOCIETY:
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1858-1871

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Abstract

This dissertation interrogates the role of gender and race in the making of colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. Inspired by the rich international secondary literature on gender and colonialism and mining a wide range of manuscript, government, and published sources, it demonstrates the centrality of both race and gender to British Columbia's colonial project.

Colonial British Columbia developed, I argue, a distinctive gender and racial organization, represented most potently by the rough homosocial culture of white men and the prevalence of mixed-race heterosexual relationships. In response to these perceived violations of respectable Victorian culture, reformers mounted a disjointed regulatory programme that aimed to create an orderly, white settler-colony anchored in respectable gender norms and racial identities. These efforts culminated in the assisted immigration of white women, who were constructed as an imperial panacea able to compel white men to abandon mixed-race unions and rough homosocial culture, and instead become permanent, respectable settlers.

The chequered history of regulatory efforts and the experience of white women immigrants both demonstrate the hollowness of imperial discourse and suggest the fragility of British Columbia's colonial project. In exploring the importance of gender and race to both the making and attempted re-making of one colonial society, this dissertation makes a contribution to the existing historical literatures on gender and colonialism, Canadian gender history, and British Columbian social history.

Acknowledgements

I have been writing this part in my head for a long time. It goes something like this: My father, Clay Perry, taught me the connections between social justice and social history. My mother, Penny Perry, showed me that there was much to value and evaluate in British Columbia. Both supported me and this project above and beyond the obligations of parental duty.

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especially lucky to have known Peter Ives, who has been unlucky in having to learn as much about colonial British Columbia as he has had to over these years.

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Chapter One:
Gender, Race, and the Making of Colonial Society: An Introduction

I: Introduction

In 1994, as I began researching gender in colonial British Columbia, Jane Campion's beautiful and troubling film, The Piano, was released to attention and acclaim. The Piano portrays a mute bourgeois Scottish woman, Ada, who is shipped off to the backwoods of another outpost of nineteenth-century empire -- New Zealand. While this forced migration initially seems a sharp symbol of her oppression, it ultimately and somewhat ironically becomes a vehicle for her liberation. In New Zealand, Ada, rejecting her intended husband, begins an intense affair with a Pakeha man. It is through this sexual relationship with the illiterate backwoodsman George Bains that Ada gains a newfound subjectivity, potentially represented by her speaking.

The Piano is profoundly a story about gender, race, and the making of colonial society. It suggests that by becoming a colonizer, the speechless woman literally finds her long-lost voice: by participating in the nineteenth-century colonial venture, Ada, the para-dynamic bound, oppressed Victorian woman, becomes a full, speaking subject. Thus, in The Piano, the colonial enterprise becomes an avenue for white women's liberation.

But Ada is not the only character in The Piano who is transformed. Just as New Zealand makes Ada a person, she -- the white woman -- makes Bains a white man, rescuing him from the racially-liminal space he shares with many other working-

class white men in colonial contexts. At the beginning of the film, Bains lives at the literal and symbolic margins between white and Maori culture, inhabiting a run-down cabin and serving as translator and interloper between the local people and colonizing whites. His liminality is marked on his body, carved with Maori tatoos. That it is also marked on his social relationships is made clear when a Maori woman teases him about his wifeless state, suggesting, presumably, that he marry a local woman. Bains is thus a man in deep danger of deracination, of going native, of losing his place amongst the white race.

In his union with Ada, however, Bains becomes white. At the end of the film, he is clad in a western suit, standing in front of a white, western house in the bastion of local colonial authority, Nelson. Ada, now his partner, is gradually gaining her speech, learning to live with her newfound subjectivity. As much as this scene shows us that Ada has gained her voice, it shows us that she has made Bains white, rescued him from the hybrid space of the backwoods. Thus the racial transformation in The Piano is twofold, double, and inter-related: in one sexual relationship, a white woman defies European gender oppression to become a full, speaking subject and simultaneously ensures a working-class man's membership in the colonizing race.¹

The issues of race, gender, and colonial society raised in The Piano and my

¹ My analysis here differs from but is informed by bell hooks' argument that The Piano normalizes misogyny by cloaking it in a veil of feminism while critics wail about the alleged sexism of gangsta rap. See her "Sexism and Misogyny: Who Takes the Rap? Misogyny, gangsta rap, and *The Piano*," Z Magazine 7:2 (February 1994) p26-29.

reading of it are those explored throughout this dissertation. Here, I analyze British Columbia, a colony located on the northern Pacific coast of North America and simultaneously similar to other colonial contexts and possessing its own distinctive history. Between the years of 1858 and 1871, I argue, British Columbia developed a gender and racial organization that defied normative standards of nineteenth-century, Anglo-American social life. Rather than living in life-long, same-race monogamous unions, white men in British Columbia frequently took part in a homosocial culture or participated in relationships with First Nations women. In response to the supposed problem of British Columbia gender organization, reformers mounted a significant if disjointed regulatory programme that aimed to create an orderly, white settler-colony anchored in respectable gender norms and racial identities. While a small spate of regulatory schemes were launched, journalists, reformers, politicians and missionaries inevitably returned to that well-worn imperial panacea, white women. Only with a sizable migration of white women, they thought, could British Columbia finally fulfil its destiny as a stable, prosperous white society.

Yet these colonial visions were ultimately pipe dreams. Despite the grandiose ambitions of colonial reformers, British Columbia continued to be a racially plural, sparsely populated resource colony throughout the 1858 to 1871 period. Indeed, it did not support a white population equal in size to its Aboriginal one until the close of the nineteenth-century. British Columbia's colonial project was a fragile one which was constantly challenged both by First Nations resistance and by white unwillingness to

conform to prevailing constructions of appropriate behaviour and identity. In its failure to live up to expectations, British Columbia revealed much about the politics of gender, race, and the making of colonial society.

These events, discourses, and experiences were shaped by metropolitan concerns and mirrored trends in other outposts of empire. But they were also very much rooted in the particularities of mid-nineteenth century British Columbia. In an effort to balance the analytic pulls of the local and the imperial, I find the notion of a "colonial project" a useful navigation tool. Nicholas Thomas defines a colonial project as "a socially transformative endeavour that is localized, politicized, and partial, yet also engendered by larger historical developments and ways of narrating them."² In thirteen eventful years, British Columbia was a gold-rush society grafted on a fur-trade colony with an emergent settler society. It was also defined by plurality and instability, and above all, by the deeply fragile character of its settler society. In order to capture this fragility and promise, this study begins with the establishment of the mainland colony in 1858 and ends with the entry of the colony into Canadian confederation in 1871.

II: British Columbia's Colonial Project, 1858-1871

People have lived and developed complex cultures on northern North America's Pacific coast at least since 12,000 B.C. But British Columbia was born in the first

²Nicholas Thomas, Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994) p104.

half of the nineteenth-century, an awkward and disappointing child of the fur trade and British imperial expansion.³ Explorers pushing the limits of European geographical reach visited the Pacific coast from 1778 onwards, travelling a path that would be followed by British, American, and Russian traders.⁴ Their maritime approach was matched by the arrival of the land-based fur trade in the first decades of the nineteenth-century. Before 1849 no European power asserted a conclusive territorial claim, but Cole Harris is correct to argue that the fur-trade successfully established a "protocolonial" presence in an effort to secure profit.⁵

Based on the politics of fear and, after 1821, the strength of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) monopoly, this protocolonial presence was established in a territory that was both densely populated and culturally complex. While earlier estimates put the First Nations population at contact at roughly 100,000, scholars now estimate the population as hovering between 300,000 and 400, 000.⁶ Speaking over thirty-four distinct languages and possessing distinctive political and economic structures,

³For clarity's sake, I use the term "British Columbia" to refer to *both* Vancouver Island and the mainland.

⁴ See Robin Fisher, "Contact and Trade, 1774-1849," in Hugh J.M Johnson, ed., The Pacific Province (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1996)

⁵ Cole Harris, "Towards a Geography of White Power in the Cordeilleran Fur Trade," Canadian Geographer 39:2 (1995) p132.

⁶ Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1990) p3. For a discussion of the earlier estimate, see Wilson Duff, The Indian History of British Columbia, Volume I: The Impact of the White Man (Victoria, Province of British Columbia, 1969) p38.

Aboriginal society in British Columbia defies broad generalizations.⁷ The most salient division was probably between the large, highly structured, hierarchical, and rank-oriented cultures of the coast, and the smaller, egalitarian societies of the interior. Yet even this rudimentary distinction masks salient cultural, economic, and historical differences.⁸ While historians debate the impact of early contact and trade on First Nations, it is safe to state that all were profoundly effected by European intrusion. The fur trade reorganized First Nations trade patterns, cultural practices, political alignments and brought new diseases and intensified existing ones.

Formal colonial authority established on Vancouver Island in 1849 transformed a protocolonial presence to an overtly colonial one. But British Columbia's colonial project was marked by instability from the outset. As Jack Little notes, Britain colonized Vancouver Island because, in spite of declining interest in North America, it wanted a political foothold on the west coast. Britain's desire for political presence was reconciled with its fear of financial commitment when the old colonial system of

⁷ Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991) p38.

⁸ Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, p6-9; Fisher, "Contact and Trade," p48-9. Steven Acheson gives a more nuanced distinction between three major cultural groups: the "Northwest Coast Peoples" (Haida, Tsimshian, Wakasham and Salishan), the "Northern Athapaskan Peoples" (Babine-Witsu Wit'en, Chilcotin, Carrier, Kaska, Seakani, Slavey, Tahltan, Tsetsaut, Inland Tlingit, and Tagish) and "Interior Plateau Peoples" (Salishan and Ktunaxa). See Steven Acheson, "Culture Contact, Demography, and Health Among the Aboriginal Peoples of British Columbia," in Peter H. Stephenson et al, eds., A Persistent Spirit: Towards Understanding Aboriginal Health in British Columbia (Victoria, University of Victoria, 1995) p6-9.

the Caribbean was evoked and the HBC were granted proprietary rights to the Island. Between 1849 and 1863, the colony slowly acquired all the constitutional trappings of settler colonies, namely a governor and bicameral legislature.⁹ While comprehensive settlement of the Island remained a vague goal, what Richard Mackie dubs "a viable colony" did develop along local lines.¹⁰

The discovery of gold on the mainland's Fraser River profoundly shifted the trajectory of British Columbia's colonial project and ushered in a new era. Thousands of miners, chiefly American, arrived in the sparsely colonized and loosely organized colony in the spring of 1858. "Never perhaps was there so large an immigration in so short a space of time into so small a place,"¹¹ wrote one journalist. A transient, shifting gold rush economy was thus awkwardly affixed to the existing fur-trade society. Politically, this simultaneously raised the possibility that British Columbia might be home to a white society and suggested that it might be neither British nor law-abiding. In response, the Colonial Office established a separate colony on the mainland and declared Vancouver Island Governor, James Douglas, governor of the new colony. It was not until 1863 that British Columbia would be granted a

⁹ Jack Little, "The Foundations of Government," in Johnson, ed., Pacific Province, p68; James E. Hendrickson, "The Constitutional Development of Colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia," in W. Peter Ward and Robert A.J. McDoanld, British Columbia: Historical Readings (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1981) p246.

¹⁰ Richard Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858," BC Studies 96 (Winter 1992-3) p40.

¹¹ Alfred Waddington, The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or, the History of Four Months (Victoria, De Cosmos, 1858) p16.

Legislative Council with a limited "popular" element and a separate governor. In 1866, Vancouver Island was effectively absorbed by the mainland. The united colony retaining the name British Columbia but the Island capital of Victoria. In July 1871, the colony joined Canada as a province and brought the colonial period to a close.¹²

These perambulations of the colonial state were motivated by the hope that an agricultural, white settler society akin to the Canadas would emerge in British Columbia. In thirteen short years, British Columbia moved from a fur-trade colony to a gold-rush society with an emergent settler colony. This chequered social and political history suggests the extent to which British Columbia's colonial career was marked by instability. Established during a low point of imperial expansion, the colony received limited support from Britain and while it acquired the administrative trappings of a settler colony, constructing a white society on the Pacific proved a slow and profoundly difficult process.

The continued demographic dominance of First Nations people stands as the sharpest symbol of the local colonial project's fragility. The numbers of non-Aboriginal people in British Columbia peaked during the Fraser River gold rush and again during the Cariboo gold rush of 1862-4. (See Table 1.1) Non-Aboriginal population was concentrated in a handful of colonial enclaves, most notably Victoria, New Westminster, Nanaimo, and in shifting interior towns on the Fraser River, throughout the Cariboo and along old fur-trade routes.

¹² Little, "The Foundations of Government," p73-4.

Table 1.1 White British Columbia by Gender, 1861-1870

Year	White Males	% of White Population Male	White Females	% of White Population Female	Total White Population
1861	1456	88.3	192	11.7	1648
1862	1991	86	326	13.9	2317
1863	6978	95.1	360	4.9	7338
1864	1419	80	354	20	1773
1865	5708	91.3	547	8.7	6255
1866	2629	85.6	443	14.4	3072
1867	5410	77.5	1569	22.5	6979
1868	4806	74.8	1618	25.2	6424
1869	5811	70.3	2456	29.7	8267
1870	5782	67.4	2794	32.6	8576

Source: Great Britain, Colonial Office, "Blue Books of Statistics, British Columbia, 1861-1870," British Columbia Archives and Records Service [hereafter BCARS], CO 64/1, Mfilm 626A.

Most significantly, the white population continued to be dwarfed by the First Nations one. As late as 1871, observers estimated that the Aboriginal population on the mainland alone was roughly 45,000 while the "settled" population of *both* the mainland and Island was only 19,225.¹³ Shifts in white-First Nations population ratios was caused not as much by natural growth or white immigration as they were by

¹³ The "settled" population also included urban Aboriginal people. See Edward Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third [Fourth] Issues, and British Columbia Guide (Victoria, Mallandaine, 1871) p94-5.

Aboriginal deaths. Disease, especially during the massive small-pox epidemic of 1862, took its toll: there were twice as many Aboriginal people on the eve of the Fraser River gold rush as there were in 1870.¹⁴ Even aided by such dreadful population declines, the colonization of British Columbia occurred slowly. As Jean Barman argues, it was only in the *fin de siècle* that the "fragile settler society on the frontier of the western world became a self-confident political and social entity."¹⁵

In the years between 1858 and 1871, British Columbia's colonial project was plagued by its inability to attract a white population and by the diverse and unstable character of its small settler society. Most colonists came from the United States and Britain, and smaller proportions hailed from Canada, Australia, and continental Europe. Colonization was not an entirely white endeavour: Kanakas (Hawaiians), African Americans, and Chinese people also migrated to the colony. The Chinese were probably the largest settler minority, especially in interior mining towns. In 1865, one observer put Quesnel's population at one hundred white men and one hundred Chinese.¹⁶ Yet, as Sharon Meen points out, after the gold rushes, the ethnic and racial diversity of the colony dwindled markedly, "leaving a largely white residue

¹⁴Sharon Meen, "Colonial Society and Economy," in Johnson, ed., The Pacific Province, p113. Also see Duff, The Indian History, p42.

¹⁵Barman, The West Beyond the West, p129. Also see Robert Galois and Cole Harris, "Recalibrating Society: The Population Geography of British Columbia in 1881," Canadian Geographer 38: 1 (1994) p37-53.

¹⁶"Letter From the Mouth of the Quesnelle," British Colonist, 09 11 1865.

to built the new extractive economy."¹⁷

Whatever their background, settlers worked in an unstable, resource-oriented economy centred around, but not entirely dominated by, the gold economy. The fur-trade continued, and underground coal mining was initiated at Nanaimo and Fort Rupert. Commercial agriculture, attempted since early days of the HBC's Pacific trade, was stimulated by the demands of the gold economy. Lumbering and fisheries employed a small work force, but large-scale exploitation would not occur until the advent of new technology.¹⁸ As the boom of the gold rushes faded, the economy diversified. In 1865, 72 percent of the paid labour force was concentrated in the mining industry, while by 1870, 61 percent of the waged labour force was in other occupations, about half of them in agriculture.¹⁹

British Columbia's emergent class structure reflected the importance of imperial ties, the development of new resource industries, and the continued influence of the fur-trade. Three groups competed for the role of colonial elite. A tightly-interwoven fur-trade elite, with deep and often familial ties to Aboriginal society, maintained their significant political power throughout the colonial period. Led by men like Douglas, Roderick Finlayson, W.H. Tolmie, and John Work, this faction of the bourgeoisie were

¹⁷Meen, "Colonial Society and Economy," p113.

¹⁸For an analysis of the colonial economy, see Paul A. Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy of British Columbia," in W. George Shelton, ed., British Columbia and Confederation (Victoria, University of Victoria, 1967) especially p57.

¹⁹ Meen, "Colonial Society and Economy," p111.

also major landowners, especially around Victoria.²⁰ Their right to rule was constantly contested by a self-styled "reform" group energetically if informally represented by journalist-politician Amor de Cosmos and his Victoria newspaper, the British Colonist. Frequently with Canadian, maritime or American roots, this aspiring elite had ties to the gold and merchant economy and a firm belief in the colony's potential as a agricultural, white settler society.²¹ Anglican Bishop George Hills led a third elite. Connected to British missionary agencies, they sometimes sided with the fur-trade or reform party, and sometimes used their considerable ideological muscle to challenge the legitimacy of both.

As traders, reformers, and clerics struggled for the upper echelon of colonial society, ordinary white men and women created the rudimentary outlines of a working and middle-class. As sailors, loggers, labourers, tradespeople and especially gold miners combined independent commodity production with wage labour, a nascent, highly mobile, male working-class culture was created. In interior towns and, especially in the off-season, urban enclaves, young, white working men were a loud and sometimes disturbing presence. Their rough culture provided a convenient "other" for the emergent middle-class to construct itself in opposition to. Made up

²⁰See Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island;" Sylvia Van Kirk, "Founding Families: Tracing the Fortunes of Five HBC/Native Families in Early Victoria," forthcoming in BC Studies.

²¹On an earlier critique of the HBC "family compact," see Tina Loo, Making Law, Order and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto, University of Toronto, Press 1994) Chapter 2.

largely of shop-keepers, petty government officials, merchants, school-teachers and other "middling" folk, this small middle-class was centred in Victoria and, to a lesser extent, New Westminster. Through church and reform work, they were beginning to constitute themselves as a separate and identifiable class, although one that regularly spilled over into both working-class and elite society.

Between 1858 and 1871 British Columbia developed a particular gender organization as well as a racial and class one. Most notably, its settler society was overwhelmingly and persistently male. As Ann Stoler points out, blaming the peculiarities of colonial society on skewed gender ratios puts the analytic horse before the cart. "Sex ratios themselves" she argues, "derived from the particular way in which administrative strategies of social engineering collided with and constrained people's personal choices and private lives."²² British Columbia's origin as a fur trade colony did little to foster the migration of white women, and the subsequent development of other resource industries did not alter this pattern. The Colonial Office was not sufficiently committed to developing a white settler society in British Columbia to intervene seriously in its gendered demography by facilitating white female immigration.

Contemporary observers remarked regularly on the paucity of white women on

²²Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in Micaela di Leonardo, ed., Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991) p64.

both the mainland and the Island, an impression that is reaffirmed by the available statistics. Women hovered at somewhere between 5 and 15 percent of the white population on the mainland between 1861 and 1865. No comparable figures exist for Vancouver Island. Following the decline of the gold economy after the Cariboo rush and the incorporation of Vancouver Island into British Columbia, the percentage of women in the white population eventually rose, but only to around 30 percent. (See Table 1.1)

Generalizations about the gendered demography of the colony mask important regional variations. Most of the white female population was concentrated in the cities of Victoria and, to a lesser extent, New Westminster. An 1870 census, for instance, recorded 1645 white males and 1197 white females in Victoria or roughly three women for every four men. In New Westminster, there were 891 white males to 401 white females, or four women for every nine men.²³ In the colony's backwoods, white women were truly a tiny minority. In the Cariboo in 1864, one observer estimated the white population at five hundred men and thirty-four women, or one woman to fifteen men.²⁴ Colonial estimates confirm that white women were few

²³See "British Columbia - Blue Books of Statistics &c 1870," 135-6. See Edward Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third [Fourth] Issue, and British Columbia Guide (Victoria, Mallandaine, 1871) p95 for what seems to be a breakdown of these figures. Another document bucks this trend: an 1868 census of Victoria recorded a population of 1494 adult white men and 679 grown white women, though this figure seems to exclude children. See "Census," British Colonist, 06 10 1868.

²⁴ "Later from Cariboo," British Columbian, 06 01 1864.

indeed in Lytton and the Cariboo throughout the period. (See Table 1.2) It was not only interior mining and transportation towns that had such unequal white gender ratios. Things were not substantially different in agricultural Vancouver Island. A December 1864 census that found only 8 white women alongside 49 white men in the Comox Valley.²⁵

Table 1.2: White Males and Females in Lytton and Cariboo
Selected Years, 1861-1869

	1861		1863		1865		1867		1869	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Lytton	27	4	175	26	550	7	350	99	460	89
Cariboo	na	na	5500	25	126	18	141	14	919	69

Note: Districts vary slightly year to year.

Source: Great Britain Colonial Office, "British Columbia - Blue Books of Statistics, 1861-1870," BCARS, CO 64/1, Mflm 626A.

British promoters of female emigration recognized that sex imbalance was generally a backwoods phenomenon. "The deficiency" of white women in colonial contexts, wrote an Australian contributor to The English Woman's Journal, "must lie in the smaller towns, and in the country districts."²⁶ This gendered geography of white

²⁵Jas Robb to Colonial Secretary, 02 03 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Reel B-1361, File 1514.

²⁶C.E.C., "XIV-Middle-Class Female Emigration Impartially Considered: The Emigration of Educated A Women Examined from a Colonial Point of View. By a Lady Who Has Resided Eleven Years in One of the Australian Colonies," The English Woman's Journal, 10:68 (01 10 1862) p77.

British Columbia had significant social implications. A poet envisioned all men living in mining districts, leaving their female counterparts ironically to dominate town society:

'We're all off in the Spring to Cariboo,'
 Celestial and Siwash, Gentile and Jew;
 Of the pants-wearing sex in Col' and Van'.
 There'll stay but one representative man;
 Representing us men, and our Lady the Queen,
 In his delegate charge of our dear Crinoline.

Whilst fathers and sons are up in the mines,
 'Raising the wind' in church up to their chins,
 The female folk 'as one man' will rise
 To assume our late responsibilities;
 Mammies and 'the girls' pack the little papooses,
 And work our home claims, whilst we're working our
 sluices.

A Harbour-mistress will collect the dues;
 A Post-mistress our letters send, and news.
 A Cosmic love shall teach Victoria's types
 To lash the world with Editorial stripes.
 And members – petticoated – merely add bohea
 To the' usual business of the House of M.P.P....

Convicts by female jailors will be made
 To work in Crochet, Berlin-wools and Braid;
 Found skilled already in the plainer parts
 Of 'whipping,' 'felling,' 'running,' and like arts.
 Unwhiskered 'Tigers,' smelling fire will prick their ears,
 And girls' schools, rank and file, turn out as Volunteers...²⁷

This bit of hyperbole captures the sense of topsy-turvy Anglo-Americans often felt when faced with a society constituted overwhelmingly by men. This conviction that

²⁷ Lux, "'We're all off in the Spring to Cariboo,'" British Columbian, 14 11 1861.

British Columbia's colonial society was small and deeply flawed reflects and suggests how gender and race were deeply inscribed in its colonial project.

Such was the social, economic, and political context that gave birth to the particular history of gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. While this dissertation is very much rooted in the specificities of this local colonial project, its intellectual inspiration and intended scholarly audience is wider. Specific historiographical debates and pertinent contextual information will be dealt with as they arise, but first I will introduce the dissertation's broad theoretical, historiographical, and methodological framework.

III: Theory, Historiography, and Sources

This study draws on the insights of four theoretical schools: feminism, Marxism, colonial/post-colonial theory and post-structuralism. Firstly, it responds to a large body of feminist theory that argues for the relevance of gender as a category of analysis and the pervasiveness of gendered power differentials.²⁸ Secondly, it borrows from Marxist theory the contention that historical change is material in character and that class relations are central to social relations in the capitalist era in general and to imperial relations in particular. Thirdly, while leery of the notion that we are now "post" colonialism, I borrow from post-colonial literature the insight that imperialism and race are crucial to social experience and thought on both "sides" of the imperial

²⁸ See Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988)

divide.²⁹ Fourthly, this dissertation utilizes post-structuralist insights around the necessarily discursive character of all sources, and, more importantly, the contention that social relations are neither normative nor inevitable, but are rather historically constructed. Following this, I assume that both race and gender are not fixed categories, but are variable social and historical ones that are not created through biology as much as they are instead normalized through biological discourses.³⁰

These rarefied considerations have practical ramifications for how this study of gender, race, and the making of colonial society is conceived and executed. Following a social constructionist perspective, for instance, I try to respect the flexibility and historicity of racial categories and territories. Throughout the dissertation, I refer to “white” peoples, a usage that reflects contemporary concerns for critically analyzing whiteness and the prevailing racial categorization of nineteenth-century British Columbia. As Paul Tennant argues, “Until recent decades British Columbians openly

²⁹ See, for the classic work of post-colonial analysis, Edward Said, Orientalism (New York, Vintage, 1975). On gendered applications, see Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest (New York, Routledge, 1995) Chapter 1.

³⁰ See Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction, Robert Hurley, trans. (New York, Vintage, 1979); Denise Riely, “Am I That Name?”: Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory (London, Basil Blackwell, 1987); Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York, Routledge, 1990); David Theo Goldberg, “The Social Formation of Racist Discourse”, in David Theo Goldberg, ed., The Anatomy of Racism (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1990)

identified themselves as 'whites' or 'white people'³¹ – not as Scots, English or Irish, nor even as Europeans. In order to simplify the shifts of the colonial state on North America's north Pacific coast, I usually refer to "British Columbia." If a distinction is relevant, I follow local practice by referring to "Vancouver Island" or "the Island" and to "British Columbia" or "the mainland." The dissertation also uses the term "colonial British Columbia" as a shorthand for the years between the establishment of a mainland colony in 1858 and the colony's entry into Confederation in 1871. This term does not imply that the relationship of colonialism existed only within the tidy parameters of these dates, but simply indicate a specific moment in state formation.

Given imperialism's long and heavy history of inappropriately categorizing indigenous peoples, it is much harder to develop a satisfactory way of describing British Columbia's First Nations. Despite contemporary longings for the days when nomenclature was self-evident, nineteenth-century whites could not agree on how to describe indigenous people. They called them various things, including Siwash, native, Indian, and savage, not to mention a vast range of specific national names. People of mixed heritage were dubbed half-castes, half-breeds, half-bloods, or bloods. In this dissertation, I use specific national names wherever possible, augmented by their contemporary identification when appropriate. When such specificity is neither possible nor intended, I utilize the two terms – First Nations and Aboriginal – generally adopted by late twentieth-century indigenous people, and assume that these

³¹Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, pxi.

terms apply to both full and mixed-blooded people unless otherwise indicated. While I share Ruth Frankenberg's ambivalence about the term "mixed-race,"³² I also share her inability to develop an alternative, and use the terms "mixed-race" and "mixed-blood" refer to both individuals of part-Aboriginal and part-European descent and to relationships between white and First Nations.

Professional historians have not dealt much with the issues raised in this thesis. Outside of a small periodical literature debating the impact of colonialism on First Nations women, the history of gender and race in nineteenth-century British Columbia has not inspired a great deal of direct scholarly interest.³³ Yet gender, race, and the making of colonial society has been repeatedly represented in popular mediums, most notably in novels like Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic, which tells the story of a white woman in nineteenth-century Burrard Inlet, and Kate Pullinger's The Last Time I Saw Jane, which reconstructs the internal politics of mixed-race, bourgeois marriages in

³²Frankenberg writes: "I am uncomfortable with the term 'mixed' in relation to race, because it seems to found notions of racial identity on terms that are not only biological rather than social, political, or historical, but also *simplistically* biological. However, I am at a loss to think of an adequate alternative." Ruth Frankenberg, White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p126.

³³Carol Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," Journal of Canadian Studies 27:4 (Winter 1992-3) p44-75; Jo-Anne Fiske, "Colonization and the Decline of Women's Status: The Tsimshian Case," Feminist Studies 17:3 (Fall 1991) p509-36; Margaret Whitehead, "'A Useful Christian Woman': First Nations Women and Protestant Missionary Work in British Columbia," Atlantis 18:1-2 (1994) p142-166.

British Columbia.³⁴

Three largely distinct historiographies inform this study of gender, race, and the making of colonial society. This thesis is simultaneously inspired by and aims to contribute to the history of gender and colonialism, Canadian gender history, and the social history of British Columbia. In the past fifteen years, a challenging literature on the international history of gender and imperialism has developed. At its most basic level, this literature insists that processes of colonization cannot be understood without attention to gender, and that gender, similarly, cannot be adequately comprehended outside of the politics of race and colonization. Historians such as Antoinette Burton, Nupur Chaudhuri, Catherine Hall, Claudia Knapman, Anne McClintock, Mrinalini Sinha, Ann Stoler and Margaret Strobel argue that historians need to examine how gender and race worked together to define both the colonized and the colonizers.³⁵

³⁴Daphne Marlatt, Ana Historic (Toronto, Coach House, 1988); Kate Pullinger, The Last Time I Saw Jane (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1996). I thank David Layton for this reference.

³⁵ See, for example, Claudia Knapman, White Women in Fiji, 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire? (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986); Margaret Strobel, European Women and the Second British Empire (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991); Catherine Hall, White, Male, and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History (London, Routledge, 1991); Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992); Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things (Durham, University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Antoinette Burton, Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth-Century (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995); McClintock, Imperial Leather.

British Columbia's fragile and insecure colonial project provides a particularly fruitful context for examining the issues raised in this literature. By examining a colony where race, gender, and settlement became closely wedded, this study brings a fresh perspective to the historiography of gender and colonialism.

This thesis will also make a contribution to the existing literature on gender history in Canada. Certainly gender history has emerged as the most compelling and lively area of historical inquiry in Canada in the past decade.³⁶ Despite the anxious claims made in a peculiar and inappropriately polarized debate around the merits of *gender* versus *women's* history,³⁷ all of this work shares, at root, a common *feminist* commitment to critically analyzing gender inequity and difference. Like much recent work, this thesis refutes the assumption that gender is a fancy word for women, and instead conceives of it as a dynamic structure that gives shape to the identities and experiences of both men and women. Thus masculinity, like femininity, is a historical phenomenon deserving analysis.

Rather than examine gender in relative isolation, this study aims to investigate how gendered experiences, identities, and structures are produced and reproduced in

³⁶See Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," Canadian Historical Review 76:3 (September 1995) p354-376; Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Postmodern Patchwork: Some Recent Trend in the Writing of Women's History in Canada", Canadian Historical Review 72:4 (December 1991) 441-470.

³⁷See Joan Sangster, "Beyond Dichotomies: Re-Assessing Gender History and Women's History in Canada," in Left History 3:1 (Spring/Summer 1995) p109-121 and responses by Karen Dubinsky and Lynne Marks, Franca Iacovetta and Linda Kealey, Steven Penfold and Sangster again in Left History 3:2 & 4:1 (Fall 1995-Spring 1996)

intimate partnership with other social divisions. While paying heed to the importance of class and sexuality, I especially emphasize the importance of race to the social experience of gender in nineteenth-century British Columbia. In doing so, I am responding to anti-racist critiques made most powerfully by women of colour who have demanded, in Hazel V. Carby's words, that "white feminist researchers should try to uncover the gender-specific mechanisms of racism among white women."³⁸ I hope that this effort will particularly contribute to Canadian historiography, which, while offering insightful analyses on the relationship between gender and class,³⁹ has provided only snippets on gender and race.⁴⁰ By treating race as what Joan Scott would call "a useful category of analysis" for white as well as non-white peoples, moreover, I try to demonstrate the intellectual utility of race not simply for studies of

³⁸Hazel V. Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, ed., The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain (London, Hutchinson, 1983) p232. Also see Himani Bannerji, "But Who Speaks For Us? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms," in Thinking Through: Essays on Feminist, Marxism, and Anti-Racism (Toronto, The Women's Press, 1995); Chandra Mohantray, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," Feminist Review 30 (Autumn 1988) p61-88.

³⁹See Bettina Bradbury, "Women's History and Working-Class History," Labour/Le Travail 19 (Spring 1987) p23-43; Bettina Bradbury, "Women and the History of Their Work in Canada: Some Recent Books," Journal of Canadian Studies 28:3 (Fall 1993) p159-178; Craig Heron, "Towards Synthesis in Canadian Working-Class History: Reflections on Bryan Palmer's Rethinking," Left History 1:1 (Spring 1993) p109-121.

⁴⁰On this, see Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," in Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall, eds., Writing Women's History: International Perspectives (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991); Ruth Roach Pierson, "Colonization and Canadian Women's History," Journal of Women's History 4:2 (Fall 1992) p134-156.

people of colour, but for Canadian history as a whole.⁴¹

Less ambitiously, this thesis aims to make some modest additions to the existing history of gender in Canada. In particular, it attempts to fill a gap by analyzing British Columbia and, to a lesser extent, English Canada before confederation. Outside of a smattering of hagiographic works celebrating white women's roles as pioneers⁴² and an increasingly useful periodical literature,⁴³ not much is known about gender in the west coast, especially in the nineteenth-century. This study, moreover, joins other recent work aiming to correct the tendency of gender historians to neglect English Canada in the years preceding confederation.⁴⁴

⁴¹On whiteness, see David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class (London, Verso, 1991); Vron Ware, Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History (London, Verso, 1992); Frankenberg, White Women, Race Matters.

⁴²See Nellie de Bertrand Lugin, The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island (Victoria, Canadian Women's Press Club of Victoria, 1924); Elizabeth Forbes, Wild Roses at Their Feet: Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island (Vancouver, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, 1971); Marnie Anderson, Women of the West Coast: Then and Now (Sidney B.C., Sand Dollar Press, 1993)

⁴³See, for the nineteenth-century, Jackie Lay, "To Columbia on the Tynemouth: The Emigration of Single Women and Girls in 1862," in Barbara Latham and Cathy Kess, eds., In Her Own Right: Selected Essays on Women's History in B.C. (Vancouver, Camosun College, 1980); Jacqueline Gresko, "'Roughing it in the Bush' in British Columbia: Mary Moody's Pioneer Life in New Westminster 1859-1863," in Barbara Latham and Roberta Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on The History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria, Camosun College, 1984); Sylvia Van Kirk, "A Vital Presence: Women in the Cariboo Gold Rush, 1862-1875," in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women (Vancouver, Press Gang, 1992) Also see special issue of BC Studies, 105/106 (Spring-Summer 1995)

⁴⁴ See Cuthbert Brandt, "Postmodern Patchwork," p469.

This study of gender, race, and the making of colonial society also tries to address a series of interrelated problems in the social history of British Columbia. As much as it tries to bring British Columbia to Canadian gender history, this study also attempts to bring gender to the west coast. Like Tina Loo's recent analysis of law and authority, my dissertation also aims to bring a new critical analysis to the study of colonial British Columbia.⁴⁵ In common with earlier works by authors Robin Fisher and Paul Tennant, it examines the difficult and important relationship between First Nations and white in nineteenth-century British Columbia,⁴⁶ and, like studies of turn-of-the-century anti-Asian thought and activity, it tries to grapple with the history of racism on the west coast.⁴⁷

Rather than treat British Columbia as a wholly unique entity, this dissertation emphasizes how it fits within a wider context of nineteenth-century colonialism both in North America and elsewhere. As Barry Gough pointed out two decades ago, imperialism "shaped the character of the political society emerging in this most distant west."⁴⁸ Crucial decisions about British Columbia were made in London. The

⁴⁵Loo, Making Law, Order and Authority.

⁴⁶Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, Second Edition (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992); Tennant, Indian Peoples and Politics.

⁴⁷See, for instance, Patricia E. Roy, A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1989)

⁴⁸ Barry M. Gough, "The Character of the British Columbia Frontier," in Ward and McDonald, eds., British Columbia, p242. Where to locate British Columbia historiographically is, as Allan Smith points out, an old problem. See his "The

significance of imperial politics, economies, and visions also meant that British Columbia developed a demography, chronology, and economy akin to settler colonies in British North America and Australasia. British Columbia's fluid, overwhelmingly male settler society shared common ground with other gold-rush societies such as New Zealand and California. Some of the colony's central problems – such as a large, white, plebian male population and mixed-race relationships – were ones experienced throughout the empire as officials confronted the uncomfortable fact that the foot-soldiers of empire were rarely paragons of Britannic civilization.

Recognizing the ties shared between British Columbia and other colonial societies means reckoning with the fact that Canadian history is also colonial history. Historians of the 1930s like George Stanley did analyze colonization, albeit in whiggish and altogether laudatory terms – the unrelenting march of western civilization, Stanley assures his readers, necessarily vanquished the “primitive” Métis rebellions of 1869 and 1885.⁴⁹ Possibly in reaction to such celebratory accounts and certainly in response to a general discomfort with colonialism, historians have largely abandoned discussions of imperialism in favour of analyses of settlement. Inasmuch as this term suggests that nobody was there, it subtly de-politicizes the process whereby white people came to dominate First Nations territory. As Harris suggests,

Writing of British Columbia History,” in Ward and McDonald, eds., British Columbia, p8-10.

⁴⁹ George F.G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1960 [1936])

this implicit denial is part of a broader unwillingness to recognize colonialism on "our own" soil. Lacking an immediate relationship to the past, immigrants, he argues, "assume that British Columbia was wilderness and that they are the bearers of civilization...they associate colonialism with other places and other lives."⁵⁰ This dissertation works against this erasure to reinsert a critical analysis of colonialism into British Columbian and Canadian history.

This study draws on a wide range of published and unpublished sources culled from archives in Britain, Ottawa, and British Columbia. When quoting, it tries to respect the integrity of source material by avoiding the use of "[sic]" unless existing syntax or meaning is highly unclear. Translations from the Chinook Jargon follow the original text in square brackets and are, unless otherwise indicated, my own.⁵¹

Perhaps most heavily, this study mines the vast and eclectic information published in daily and weekly newspapers. I consulted all available, known newspapers produced in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. These newspapers bring previously unacknowledged events and perspectives to light when consulted in their entirety. They also allow for the construction of a relatively complete picture of the routines of daily life in major white settlements. Perhaps most importantly, these

⁵⁰Cole Harris, "Introduction," The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1997) pxi.

⁵¹Translations were done with the assistance of Edward Harper Thomas, Chinook: A History and Dictionary of the Northwest Trade Jargon. 2nd ed. (Portland, Binfolds & Mort, 1970)

newspapers were the main medium through which British Columbia's reform discourse was both constructed and disputed.

Papers produced by the various levels of the state, including correspondence with the Colonial Office, communication between colonial officials and settlers, and papers of the colonial legislatures and legal documents are another key source. These documents are profoundly shaped by particularities of the colonial production of knowledge. Reports by local colonial officials to often uninterested or confused bureaucrats in London, for instance, are as much about defending local administration or explaining British Columbia in readily understood terms as they are about the material reported. Depositions and other sources generated by the criminal justice system are intimately determined by the power relations that governed their production. Such "biases," however, are more revealing than deceiving. Colonial correspondence, for instance, allows for a direct analysis of imperial decision-making and the often-differing perspectives of local and metropolitan administrators. Internal correspondence created by the weak and disorganized governments of Vancouver Island and British Columbia include a truly eclectic collection of documents and discussions. Court documents offer a hazy glimpse into the "private" lives of the ordinary people so regularly invisible in the traditional historical record.

The private and public records of Protestant missionaries are another important, if problematic, source. The significant Roman Catholic presence in British Columbia is only touched on. This study particularly relies on the letters, reports, memoirs, and

sermons of missionaries associated with the Anglican Columbia Mission. These documents contain some key demographic data but, more importantly, offer unique descriptions of British Columbia social life. At worst, these are overtly racist, lurid diatribes that cheaply pander to British fascination with and fear of its "others." They are always self-serving, arrogant, and deeply shaped by their particular Protestant predilections. Yet the significance of missionaries to British Columbia social life between 1858 and 1871 also ensures that their papers record significant events and perspectives. More importantly, missionaries' privileged social position empowered them to detail aspects of people's lives, most notably their sexual and marital lives, that few others felt justified to discuss. That these descriptions are almost inevitably condemnatory illuminates the construction of race and gender in missionary discourse more than it invalidates them as a viable source for social history.

The papers of British emigration societies and local reform organizations provide a contrasting institutional view of British Columbia. Sources generated by the London-based Female Middle Class Emigration Society and affiliated groups provide a metropolitan feminist perspective on gender and race in colonial contexts. They also suggest how the assisted immigration movement emerged from a combination of colonial and metropolitan interests and activities. The few available papers of local reform and charity groups offer a concrete example of how nineteenth-century reform discourse played itself out in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. Both kinds of organizational records are an invaluable, if narrow, source for this study.

Published travel and emigration literature constitutes another significant primary source for this dissertation. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, British Columbia generated a substantial amount of attention from metropolitan pamphleteers and journalists, travellers and residents all recorded their experience in the colony throughout the colonial period. These sources are of highly varied character. Some are nothing more than peculiar amalgams of previously published material and half-truths while others are richly detailed descriptions and pronouncements. Like newspapers, a substantial portion of these sources have unacknowledged or unclear authorship, which accounts for some of the anonymity of social discourse in colonial British Columbia. Whatever their quality, these sources were crucial in disseminating information about the colony, and provide important examples of how white people experienced, understood, and promoted British Columbia.

I also make use of personal documents like diaries, letters, oral histories, and memoirs. These sources are particularly rich in two separate contexts reflecting the politics of both their production and preservation. Elite British Columbians, both male and female, left a cache of personal documents detailing both "private" and "public" events. A similarly abundant archive was created by white men participating in the Fraser and Cariboo gold rushes. Aware that they were participants in a "historic" event, miners left journals and letters and penned memoirs in their dotage. That the social position and perspectives of their creators is deeply inscribed on all of these sources means that they offer uniquely personal perspectives on colonial history.

None of these sources allow the historian to overcome one central problem. A methodology so heavily based on written documents necessarily and irrevocably privileges white perspectives. All of British Columbia's First Nations had oral cultures in the nineteenth-century. Outside of a smattering of sources written by acculturated mixed-blood peoples (who rarely identified with their Aboriginal heritage) and a few oral testimonies overtly shaped by white researchers, none of the sources utilized here record First Nations perspectives. The cultural bias of these sources is not corrected, and indeed is intensified, when the historical practitioner is herself white, as I am. Thus, while this thesis deals extensively with what might be called the interface between white and Aboriginal in British Columbia, it makes no serious claim to adequately analyze First Nations' experience. Rather, it is an analysis of white colonialism that places Aboriginal presence at the heart of the colonial project.

These sources also favour certain white peoples above others. With the exception of court documents and the handful of oral histories, all the sources utilized reflect the perspectives of the literate. Most record the views and experiences of men, or, at best, male perspectives on women. Given the colonial production of knowledge, the vantage point of the metropole is more accessible than that of the backwoods. Particularly on matters of sexuality and conjugality, frequently the only voice available is self-satisfied do-gooders passing judgement upon what they see as their moral inferiors. While I analyze these documents "against the grain" in an effort to subvert the power relations that cloaked their production, I remain unconvinced

about any methodology's ability to overcome these problems. In this dissertation, then, I can only acknowledge and interrogate, rather than surmount, the dilemmas of interpretation that flow from its source base.

IV: Conclusion

This dissertation explores the fraught relationship between gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871 in six substantive chapters. The first two analyze how British Columbia developed a particular gender and racial organization and probe the two most significant examples of it. Chapter Two grapples with white male homosocial culture, and Chapter Three analyses white-Aboriginal heterosexual unions. Having sketched out the basic parameters of gender and race in colonial British Columbia, the thesis moves on to analyzing three ways reformers saw this society and worked to change it. Chapter Four analyses various attempts to re-create homosocial culture and Chapter Five examines how missionaries and others worked to reorganize and eradicate mixed-race relationships. In Chapter Six, I show how politicians and others first looked to land and immigration policy to encourage white population growth, nuclear families, and agricultural settlement. Chapters Seven and Eight analyze the role of white women in British Columbia's colonial project. Chapter Seven shows how commentators and critics turned to white women, constructing them as effective imperial subjects able to transform British Columbia's society. Chapter Eight reckons with the implications of these efforts, showing how the actual behaviour of white women in colonial contexts

differed sharply from imperial expectations. It is with the rough culture of backwoods men that this study begins.

Chapter Two:
'Poor creatures are we without our wives':
White Men and Homosocial Culture

I: Introduction

On 17 May 1862, a young Englishman named Charles Hayward sat in the Victoria home he shared with two male companions. "We manage very well in our little Cabin," he wrote. One man lit fires and prepared meals. The other two spent their days labouring in a building shop. Yet Hayward, who would later become mayor of Victoria, was uncomfortable doing his own marketing on Saturday nights, and more troubled still to be without his beloved female partner, Sally. "Poor creatures are we without our wives" he told his diary.¹ The combination of loneliness, competence, and mutuality that characterizes Hayward's experience tells us much about white men's relationship to race, gender and the making of colonial society in British Columbia. In white British Columbia, as we saw in Chapter One, customary gender relations were disrupted by the overwhelming demographic dominance of men in the years between 1858 and 1871. This chapter will argue that one result of this disruption is that white men developed a rough homosocial culture that existed side-by-side and occasionally overlapped with the mixed-race community.

This chapter grapples with five aspects of British Columbia's homosocial culture. First, it explains how this analysis is informed by, and in turn attempts to contribute to, both the historiography of British Columbia and of masculinity. Secondly, I briefly explain some of the demographic, social and cultural conditions

¹ Charles Hayward, "Diary 1862," British Columbia Archives and Record Service [hereafter BCARS], Mfilm A-741.

that provided the basis for this homosocial culture. Thirdly, I discuss how white men recreated domestic space in the absence of white women. Fourthly, I explore how white men in this homosocial culture turned to each other for social, emotional and sometimes sexual connections. Lastly, I discuss the importance of drinking, gambling, violence, and white identity in British Columbia's homosocial milieu. Throughout, I draw out how British Columbia gave birth to a particular vision of what it meant to be white and male. It did not challenge customary white male power, but it did provide an alternative practice of racial and gendered identity and an important episode in the history of gender, race, and the making of colonial society.

II: The Historiographic Context

This analysis of white male homosocial culture reaffirms some tenants of the existing historiographies of British Columbia and masculinity and challenges others. Ironically, it supports older arguments about the centrality of masculinity to nineteenth-century British Columbia. S.D. Clark, for instance, suggests that the masculine nature of mining society was simultaneously constituent and symptomatic of British Columbia's deeper pathology, namely its lack of cultural cohesion, economic diversity, and social stability.² Others credit British Columbia's alleged masculinity with a more creative force, heralding it, for instance, as the genitor of a radical labour

² S.D. Clark, "Mining Society in British Columbia and the Yukon," in Robert A.J. McDonald and W. Peter Ward, eds., British Columbia: Historical Readings (Vancouver, Douglas and MacIntyre, 1981) especially p216-7, p220-221, p225.

movement.³ In either case, the apparently masculine character of British Columbia and more particularly the absence of "traditional" family formation is seen as an integral part of its social being, as it was in other British settler colonies such as Australia and New Zealand.

In the past ten years, historians have challenged these cherished notions of the "womanless frontier" that implicitly or explicitly informed much of British Columbian historiography. Feminists have argued that this framework erases First Nations' women, minimizes the significant presence of white women even in archetypally male events like the Cariboo gold rush, and fails to account for the importance of more "traditional" gender behaviour and family formation in British Columbia.⁴ Such critiques reject the notion that gender in British Columbia was somehow atypical and pathological, and instead call attention to how it shared much with other Anglo-

³ See, for instance, David Jay Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier," and Stuart Jamieson, "Regional Factors in Industrial Conflict: The Case of British Columbia," both in Ward and McDonald, eds., British Columbia, p459; p506; Paul A. Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia Federation of Labour, 1967) p163.

⁴ See Adele Perry, "'Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men': Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality and Sociability in Nineteenth-century British Columbia," BC Studies 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995) p26-44; Sylvia Van Kirk, 'A Vital Presence: Women in the Cariboo Gold Rush, 1862-1875,' in Gillian Crease and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., British Columbia Reconsidered (Vancouver, Press Gang, 1992); John Belshaw, 'Cradle to Grave: An Examination of Demographic Behaviour on Two British Columbia Frontiers,' paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, Calgary 14 June 1994; R.W. Sandwell, 'Peasants on the Coast? A Problematique of Rural British Columbia,' in Donald H. Akenson, ed., Canadian Papers in Rural History X (Langdale, Gananoque, 1996)

American societies and in doing so, highlight the deeply masculinist character of much of the regional historiography. But the imperative to integrate women's experience into our analyses and make links with broader literatures should not lead us to minimize the specificity of British Columbian gender history.

As we have seen in Chapter One, British Columbia was marked by the overwhelming dominance of men in the white population. And, as the burgeoning literature on the history of masculinity attests, men, as well as women, have a history. Analyzing men as gendered subjects, as Joan Scott points out, challenges "the interpretative utility of the idea of separate spheres, maintaining that to study women in isolation perpetuates the fiction that one sphere, the experience of one sex, has little or nothing to do with the other."⁵ More fundamentally, perhaps, examining men as a gender gives the lie to the notion that women are the gendered "other" to the universal, ungendered, unproblematic and often unspoken norm of men. If women's history exposed the partial character of gender-blind historiography, the history of masculinity goes one step further. In analyzing men's history not as "history," but as a part of the gendered past, it brings the potential of feminist historiography full circle.

To date, however, the history of masculinity has only travelled part of that circle. With the exception of an important literature on same-sexual relationships between men (which is usually ignored in discussions of "the history of masculinity")

⁵Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988) p32.

the history of masculinity has kept a narrow focus. Analytically, as Joy Parr points out, it has been concerned with "the diversity among men rather than the privileges of dominance shared by men."⁶ Topically, the history of masculinity has been similarly narrow in focus, and overwhelmingly dominated by two approaches which have raised important questions but left other significant issues unanalysed.

The first approach is represented by scholars like Anthony Rotundo and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, who have analyzed the experience of nineteenth-century metropolitan, middle-class men in Britain and Northeastern America. They have plumbed the history of men's intimate connections to women, families, and male companions and demonstrated how middle-class masculinity in metropolitan centres was remade throughout the nineteenth century to embrace a new vision of the self-controlled, temperate, self-actualizing and responsible patriarch.⁷ The second approach has been to examine their working-class counterparts, building on a rich heritage bestowed by labour historians like Roy Rosenzweig, Peter DeLottinville, and Sean Wilentz, who, in the 1970s, turned to the streets, taverns, and meeting halls of working men in an attempt to locate and explore working-class

⁶ Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," Canadian Historical Review 76:3 (September 1995) p367.

⁷ See, for instance, E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood," Journal of Social History 16:4 (1983) p23-38; E. Anthony Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship: Male Intimacy and Middle-Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800-1900," Journal of Social History 23: 1 (Fall 1989) p1-26; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987)

culture.⁸ This legacy that has been well-tapped by Canadian historians like Parr, Mark Rosenfeld, and Steven Penfold, who show how waged work and family economy created a uniquely working-class experience of masculinity.⁹ In doing so, they press the point that masculinity was not universal, but a specific and contextual social category that has shifted substantially over time, place, and social location.

These two approaches have been crucial in demonstrating the practical results of the theoretical watersheds in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Yet these historians have also left much ground uncovered. First, few historians have delved into the history of masculinity in non-metropolitan settings, whether agricultural or resource-extractive. A few important unpublished studies do exist,¹⁰ complemented by an

⁸ Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1860-1889," in Laurel Sefton MacDowell and Ian Radforth, eds., Canadian Working-Class History: Selected Readings (Toronto, Canadian Scholars Press, 1992); Roy Rosenzweig, Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983); Seal Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984)

⁹ See Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Men, Women, and Change in two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990); Mark Steven Rosenfeld, "'She was a Hard Life': Work, Family, Community Politics, and Ideology in the Railway Ward of a Central Ontario Town, 1900-1960," PhD Dissertation, York University, 1990; Mark Rosenfeld, "Class and Gender in the Work and Family Rhythms of a Railway Town, 1920-1950," in Historical Papers, 1988, p237-239; Steven Penfold, "'Have You No Manhood in You?': Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926," Acadiensis XXIII:2 (Spring 1994) p21-44.

¹⁰ Nancy M. Forestell, "All that Glitters is not Gold: The Gendered Dimensions of Work, Family, and Community Life in the Northern Ontario Goldmining Town of Timmins, 1909-1950" (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto Press, 1993); Susan Lee Johnson, "'The gold she gathered': Difference, Domination, and California's Southern Mines, 1848-1853," PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1993.

important smattering of published studies.¹¹ In part, the lack of work on non-urban spaces is epiphenomenal to prevailing ethnocentrism, whereby, as R.W. Connell points out, "a discourse of 'masculinity' is constructed out of the lives of (at most) 5 percent of the world's population of men."¹² Connell's point suggests a second historiographical gap, namely historians' failure to fully explore masculinity as a racialized category. Some significant exceptions, both international¹³ and Canadian,¹⁴

¹¹Lynne Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996) especially Chapters 4 and 5; Ella Johansson, "Beautiful Men, Fine Women and Good Work People: Gender and Skill in Northern Sweden, 1850-1950," Gender and History 1:2 (Summer 1989) p200-212; Jock Phillips, A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male: A History (Auckland, Penguin, 1987); Thomas W. Dunk, It's A Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture (Montreal-Kingston, McGill-Queen's Press, 1991); Susan Lee Johnson, "Bulls, Bears, and Dancing Boys: Race, Gender, and Leisure in the California Gold Rush," Radical History Review 60 (Fall 1994) 4-37; Marilyn Lake, "The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context," Historical Studies 22: 86 (April 1986) p116-131.

¹²R.W. Connell, "The Big-Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History," Theory and Society 22 (1993) p600.

¹³ David R. Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working-Class (London, Verso, 1991) p178-9; Gail Bederman, Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917 (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995); Graham Dawson, Solider Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities (London, Routledge, 1994); Mrinalini Sinha, "Gender and Imperialism: Colonial Policy and the Ideology of Moral Imperialism in Late Nineteenth-Century Bengal," in Michael S. Kimmel, ed., Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity (New York, Sage, 1987); Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth-Century (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995); Catherine Hall, White, Male, and Middle Class (New York, Routledge, 1992) especially Chapter 10.

¹⁴ Madge Pon, "Like a Chinese Puzzle: The Construction of Chinese Masculinity in *Jack Canuck*" and Elizabeth Vibert, "Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race, and Class in British Fur Traders' Narratives," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld, eds.,

suggest the fruitful possibilities of analyzing race and masculinity as related and contingent categories.

This chapter attempts to address these gaps in the historiographies of British Columbia and masculinity in two particular ways. Firstly, it aims to provide an analysis of gender in British Columbia which is simultaneously sensitive to the local context and aware of how gender was imbedded in broader structures. Secondly, it tries to address two particular holes in the history of masculinity by considering masculinity outside the cities and in relation to race. In doing so, it draws on a wide range of sources, particularly probing the published and unpublished private documents of over fifty white men.¹⁵ These documents are of varying quality and interest and disproportionately reflect the experiences of middle-class men,¹⁶ and, like all sources, are mediated and must be read critically. Despite these drawbacks, this material offers a rare and intimate view into the lives of white men in this particular social context.

III: The Social Context

Broad shifts in white masculinity and local social conditions shaped British

Gender and History in Canada (Toronto, Copp Clark, 1996)

¹⁵I utilize diaries, letters, and memoirs from forty-six men, supplemented by signed submissions to newspapers from at least thirteen other men. Here, I distinguish between the unsigned articles which I presume to be written by staff journalists and those letters and special features that are accompanied by a by-line and presumably written by private contributors to local newspapers.

¹⁶Missionaries and future missionaries are especially over-represented, comprising eight of the sample of forty-six authors, as are government workers, politicians, soldiers and sailors, who created eleven of the forty-six sources.

Columbia's homosocial culture. Recent studies of Britain and America suggest that the mid-nineteenth-century was a particularly significant moment in the formulation of dominant ideologies and practices of masculinity in the English-speaking world. Historians have demonstrated how middle-class masculinity was remade in the nineteenth century to embrace a new vision of the self-controlled, temperate, disciplined and domestic patriarch.¹⁷ While this process was in many respects particular to the middle-class, its implications were substantially broader. For the working-classes, Wally Secombe has persuasively argued, this masculine ideal found expression in the male breadwinner norm, which mandated that men ought to earn sufficient wages to enable women and young children to live in uninterrupted domesticity.¹⁸ Such changes occurred alongside the hardening of notions of racial difference and the related construction of inter-racial sexual practice as inherently dangerous.¹⁹ The net result of these shifts was the creation of a dominant masculine ideal in which men, like women, were only complete when living in heterosexual, same-race, hierarchical unions.

¹⁷ See Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes; Rotundo, "Body and Soul."

¹⁸ See Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: the construction of the male breadwinner wage norm in nineteenth-century Britain,' Social History II:I (January 1986) 53-76. Also see Valerie Burton, "The Myth of Bachelor Jack: Masculinity, Patriarchy and Seafaring Labour," in Colin Howell and Richard J. Twomey, eds., Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour (Fredericton, Acadiensis Press, 1991)

¹⁹ See Robert J.C. Young, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race (London, Routledge, 1995)

As Mrinalini Sinha and Elizabeth Vibert show, this masculine ideal had significant implications not only for Britain, but also for the various territories that British men ruled, traversed, and worked in.²⁰ In colonial British Columbia, it came into conflict not only with First Nations society, but also with the social organization of the white settler community. As Chapter One argued, British Columbia was settled overwhelmingly by men. Gender-imbalance was most extreme outside of urban centres and reached its apogee in those communities created by the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 and the Cariboo gold rush of 1862-4. It was the gold rush population that provided the demographic and social basis for British Columbia's rich homosocial culture. Oddly, while the British Columbian coal miner is often studied,²¹ there is little work on gold rushes, gold miners, and gold mining despite their obvious importance to British Columbia. As Jeremy Mouat points out, gold mining "had a dramatic impact, hastening the incorporation of western North America into an industrializing economy that was dominated by Europeans."²² The gold rushes added a demographic weight to British Columbia's small colonial presence. Between 1860 and

²⁰Vibert has shown how middle-class images of masculinity were crucial not only for fur-traders' self-conception, but also for their interpretations of First Nations masculinity. See Vibert, "'Real Men Hunt Buffalo,'" p56-58; Sinha, Colonial Masculinity.

²¹ See John Douglas Belshaw, "The British Collier in British Columbia: Another Archetype Reconsidered," Labour/Le Travail 34 (Fall 1994) p11-36.

²² Jeremy Mouat, Roaring Days: Rossland's Mines and the History of British Columbia (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1995) p5.

1864, there was an average of around 4,300 miners in mainland British Columbia²³ in a non-Aboriginal population of only about 5061 in 1862.²⁴

The gold rushes drew a particular population. It was, obviously, almost entirely male. Gold rushes also tended to attract young men, and youth set the tone of mining culture. Thirty-nine year old Canadian Jessie Wright was exceptionally old for a gold miner. He advised his fifty-one year old brother, Amos, that he was too old for the Cariboo and its life of "the pick and shovel, with hard fare and harder knocks." "I am known here by the cognoun of Old Man," he wrote, "what would be your position[?]"²⁵ The gold-rush population was also mobile, a characteristic which allowed a white homosocial culture to exist on the north-western fringe of North America. Jean Barman writes that "gold rush followed gold rush: California in 1849, Australia in 1851, the Pacific northwest in 1858, and then the Transvaal in 1886 and the Klondike in 1898."²⁶ Some miners followed the excitement from rush to rush: James Thomas, a baker from Canada West, mined in both California and the

²³ Paul Phillips, "The Underground Economy: The Mining Frontier to 1920," in Jean Barman and Robert A.J. McDonald, eds., Readings in the History of British Columbia (Richmond, Open Learning Agency, 1989)

²⁴ Great Britain, Colonial Office, Blue Books of Statistics, "British Columbia, 1860," BCARS, CO 64/1, Mflm 626A, p226-7.

²⁵ J.R. Wright to Amos Wright, 23 09 1866, "Correspondence of Jessie Hassard Wright," BCARS, Add Mss 1976.

²⁶ Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991) p62.

Cariboo,²⁷ and John G. Williams, another Canadian, mined in California and Australia before turning to the Fraser and Thompson Rivers.²⁸

As in Australia, youth and mobility were key themes in the dominant images of white male workers in colonial British Columbia.²⁹ "There is something peculiar in the calling of gold digging...which seduces all who follow it into restless wandering habits," wrote one journalist.³⁰ James Hill, who spent his adult life mining in British Columbia, described his as a "roving disposition."³¹ Naval officer Edmund Hope Verney wrote that mobility defined the entire colony:

Shiploads of oranges, diggers, and coca-nuts arrive from New Zealand, and depart with timber and diggers from Cariboo: the Cariboo diggers are rushing down to Salmon river: the Stickeen diggers are tearing away to Cariboo, and the Salmon-river diggers are mad to get up to the Stickeen: numbers of the diggers are coming down the country and settling to work at Victoria, and numbers of Victoria workmen are going up the country to turn diggers: so we are all like the boiling water in a kettle, and no end of bubbles.³²

The mobility that led young men to migrate to British Columbia thus continued to act

²⁷Richard Arthur Preston, ed. For Friends at Home: A Scottish Emigrant's Letters from Canada, California, and the Cariboo 1844-1864 (Montreal-Kingston, Mc-Gill-Queens, 1979)

²⁸John G. Williams, The Adventures of A Seventeen-Year-Old Lad and the Fortunes He Might Have Won (Boston, Collins Press, 1894)

²⁹ Lake, "The Politics of Respectability," p11.

³⁰ "Gold Seekers," Vancouver Times, 12 09 1864.

³¹ James Moore, "The Discovery of Hill's Bar in 1858," British Columbia Historical Quarterly [hereafter BCHQ] IV (July 1939) p220.

³²Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 16 01 1862, in Allan Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-1865 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1996) p70.

as both symbol and substance of the culture they developed there.

The gold rush population was also ethnically diverse. "It would have been difficult to find in one place a greater mixture of different nationalities," wrote German mathematician Carl Friesach after visiting Yale, a town created by the 1858 rush. Yet, he noted, "Americans were undoubtably in the majority - California, especially had sent a large contingent. Then followed Germans, French, and Chinese. Next came Italians, Spaniards, Poles, etc."³³ Friesach's analysis suggests both the contours of this diversity and its important limits. Except for East Asians and a smattering of African Americans, miners were largely white. While Europeans and Australasians were well represented, the mining population seems to have been dominated by Americans and, to a lesser extent, Canadians – a presence which grew in the Cariboo gold rush.³⁴ "The population was of varied and mixed character, consisting only of men, gathered from all parts of the world, but chiefly Americans and Canadians," concluded Anglican missionary A.C. Garret.³⁵

The gold rush population was also marked by a particular, if sometimes

³³Carl Friesach, "Extracts from *Ein Ausflug nach Britisch-Columbien im Jahre 1858*," in E.E. Delavault and Isabel McInnes, trans, "Two Narratives of the Fraser River Gold Rush," in *BCHQ*, Volume I (July 1941) p227.

³⁴See Sharon Meen, "Colonial Society and Economy," in Hugh J.M. Johnson, ed., *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia* (Vancouver, Douglas and MacIntyre, 1996) p115-120; Mouat, *Roaring Days*, p6.

³⁵A.C. Garret, "Reminiscences," [Transcript] Anglican Church of Canada, Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster/ Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, University of British Columbia [hereafter ADNW/EPBC], PSA 52, File 57, p28.

unclear, class character.³⁶ Like many other rural, nineteenth-century British North Americans, miners were independent commodity producers who drifted in and out of wage labour as need and opportunity dictated.³⁷ While this particular class location seems self-evident, to suggest miners were anything other than Adam Smith's archetypal "economic man" goes against much that is dear to white gold mining lore.³⁸ Indeed, nineteenth-century wisdom (not to mention its twentieth-century popular retelling) held that gold mining attracted rich and poor alike and effortlessly drew together men of disparate class backgrounds. "One meets here with every conceivable variety of character," Anglican missionary John Sheepshanks argued, "rich men now who hitherto have been poor; poor men now who in time past have been usually rich; employed who were once employers; employers who up to the present have been employed."³⁹ Such views assumed gold mining to be inherently egalitarian, an open

³⁶On this in the American west, see Carlos A. Schwantes, "The Concept of the Wageworkers' Frontier: A Framework for Future Research," Western Historical Quarterly XXXIII: 1 (January 1987) p39-55.

³⁷See Joy Parr, "Hired Men: Ontario Agricultural Wage Labour in Historical Perspective," Labour/Le Travail 15 (Spring 1985) p91-103; Rusty Bitterman, "Farm Households and Wage Labour in the Northeastern Maritimes in the Early 19th Century," Labour/Le Travail 31 (Spring 1993) p13-45; Ian Radforth, "The Shantyman," in Paul Craven, ed., Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1995); Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988) especially Chapter 2.

³⁸ On popular representations of gold rushes, see Johnson, Chapter 1; Julie Cruikshank, "Images of Society in Klondike Gold Rush Narratives: Skookum Jim and the Discovery of Gold," Ethnohistory 39:1 (Winter 1992) p20-41.

³⁹Rev. John Sheepshanks, A Bishop in the Rough, Rev. D. Wallace Duthie, ed, (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1909) p88.

grounds where luck was the only authority. "Socially we are a combination of all ranks from the proud aristocrat to the mean despicable city vagabond, " wrote Caribooite Tal. O Eifion. "The great barriers of rank which exist in most countries has entirely broken down among us."⁴⁰

The notion that gold-mining existed entirely outside of the bounds of an industrialized society, however, was ultimately more ideological than descriptive. It does reflect the presence of a few wealthy adventurers amongst the gold rush throngs. More importantly, it reflects the particularities of placer mining, the form of mining that was exclusively practised in mainland British Columbia until the opening of underground mines in the Kootenay's in the 1890s.⁴¹ Placer mining did not follow a classic pattern of progression from individualized, surface mining to underground, industrial mining.⁴² The labour process of placer mining was neither industrial nor rationalized; miners worked in small groups or alone, their scale of production was small, and their tools of production were minimal, inexpensive and easily-acquired.⁴³

Gold mining was nonetheless effected by an industrializing economy and

⁴⁰Tal. O Eifion, "Our Moral, Social, and Political Condition," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 02 1867.

⁴¹ See Mouat, Roaring Days, especially Chapter 2.

⁴² Johnson, "The gold she gathered," p60.

⁴³ Phillips, "The Underground Economy," p145-6; Paul Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy of British Columbia," in W. George Shelton, ed., British Columbia and Confederation (Victoria, University of Victoria, 1967). See Laurence A. Lazee, Gold: Elementary Placer Mining (Squamish, Antiquarian Native Publications, n.d) on mining equipment and techniques.

developing liberal state. Mining required at least some capital. Claims and mining licences had to be bought, however cheaply, and miners needed sufficient savings to support themselves for an initial period of prospecting. More significantly, wage labour was more important to the gold economy than promotional literature and romantic recollection suggested. Reporting on the progress of the Kootenay mines in 1864, colonial minion Arthur Birch found roughly fifty sluice companies "employing from 5 to 25 men."⁴⁴ Even men who prospected or worked their own claims turned to wage-work when it was needed and available. George Blair, a Canadian farm son who spent a few years in British Columbia, earned wages at the Never Sweet claim in addition to doing road work and chopping wood.⁴⁵ Williams, another son of Canadian farms, turned to mining only after a career as a sailor, and then combined his search for gold with cabin-building and packing for wages.⁴⁶ Most non-white miners were wage-labourers.⁴⁷

The prevalence of such work patterns led a few astute contemporary observers to question gold mining's image as an egalitarian game of chance and luck. "It is estimated that the number of miners who make over wages, is one in five hundred; and the number that do well in the mines is one in a thousand," wrote miner Charles

⁴⁴ Arthur N. Birch, Untitled, British Columbia Government Gazette, 05 11 1864, Public Archives of Canada [hereafter PAC], MG 11, CO 63/1, Mflm B-1488.

⁴⁵ George Blair, "Diary 17 February 1862-29 December 1863," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 186.

⁴⁶ Williams, The Adventures of A Seventeen-Year-Old Lad, Chapter 10.

⁴⁷ Phillips, "The Underground Economy," p149.

Major, who never earned more than his "grub."⁴⁸ George Grant, secretary of Sandford Fleming's surveying expedition, agreed. "A few made fortunes, in a week or a month, which as a rule they dissipated in less than a year; hundreds gathered moderately large sums, which they took away to spend elsewhere; thousands made 'wages,' and tens of thousands, nothing," he wrote.⁴⁹

Gold mining held an anomalous place in popular culture as in the economy. It was, obviously, explicitly physical labour in an era where the division between manual and non-manual labour increasingly signified class division.⁵⁰ Working individually or in small, sometimes collective, groups, miners disrupted normative patterns of authority and deference. The non-industrial, seasonal rhythms of placer mining also ran up against the patterns of steadiness, reliability, and discipline industrial employers were working to inculcate. Perhaps most fundamentally, gold mining suggested that wealth could be produced through luck, fortune or chance, an affront to a society that increasingly connected financial success with moral virtue and disciplined labour.

Such factors combined to give gold mining a reputation as a dis-respectable trade that infected all who came into contact with it. "There is something disreputable

⁴⁸"*Letter from Charles Major, dated Fort Hope, September 20, 1859,*" in Delavault and McInnes, trans., "Two Narratives," p231.

⁴⁹ George M. Grant, Ocean to Ocean: Sandford Fleming's Expedition Through Canada in 1872 (Toronto, James Cambell & Son, 1873)p303.

⁵⁰ Stewart Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989)

about gold hunting," thought Hayward.⁵¹ He was not alone in this observation. In 1858, Governor James Douglas privately shared his impression of 3000 or so gold miners with the Colonial Office. "The class of men who are mining in Fraser's River are composed of all nations, some of them no doubt, respectable, but when I landed at Fort Yale in my late journey to Fraser's River, it struck me that I had never before seen a crowd of more ruffianly looking men, than were assembled on that occasion."⁵² Nor was this an exclusively administrative perspective. Arthur Lemprice, a Royal Engineer cutting a road from Fort Hope to Boston Bar, had a similar response in 1859, writing to his uncle that "I daresay you would think the Miners as a general class are a horrid set of ruffians, particularly when you see them with their great beards, rough clothes, high boots over their trousers, and always carrying firearms."⁵³

Such images of dis-respectability, ironically, might draw white men disillusioned with industrial capitalism and the visions of masculinity it offered. Combined with gold mining's reputation for classlessness, it created a powerful lure for men in search of an alternative to the increasingly industrialized societies of Canada, America, and Europe. Embittered by the false promises of capitalism, they

⁵¹ Hayward, "Diary," np.

⁵²James Douglas to H. Merivale, 29 10 1858, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, British Columbia, 1858-1871, CO 60/1, [hereafter CO 60] PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-77.

⁵³Arthur B. Lemprice to Uncle, 12 01 1859, "Bishop George Hills, Correspondence Inwards 1859," Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Diocese of British Columbia Archives [hereafter ADBCA], Text 57, Box 2, File 6, p29.

sought an environment where hard work would secure them wealth and security.

Thomas, the Canadian baker, had trouble remembering why he abandoned his family for poverty in the Cariboo. He explained to his wife: "But then the thought comes up that we were poor, that you had to deny yourself many of the comforts of life that a little money would have secured, and then I think of my poor old Father toiling and labouring when he ought to be enjoying the evening of his days in ease and comfort."⁵⁴ Tellingly, Thomas left the Cariboo after seven months, certainly no richer, and quite possibly poorer, than when he arrived.

Other men sought independence rather than wealth in the mining frontiers of British Columbia. They saw mining as a vehicle for achieving a manly independence difficult to obtain in urban, industrializing locales where employer, priest, and landlord dominated. Grant described John Green, who prospected near the Thompson River, calling him "a specimen of Anglo-Saxon self-reliant individualism" and challenging the notion that miners were dis-respectable. "His self-reliance, surely, was sublime," he observed.⁵⁵ Green's sublime, manly, and Anglo-Saxon independence, then, stood as a symbol of a different model of white masculinity.

This search for a new model of manliness was about gender and race as well as class. As both Michael S. Kimmel and Gail Bederman argue, the latter half of the nineteenth-century witnessed increasing disillusionment with the visions of self-

⁵⁴ Preston, ed., For Friends at Home, p302.

⁵⁵ Grant, Ocean to Ocean, p267.

controlled, temperate, disciplined and domestic masculinity that gained hegemony in the early part of the century.⁵⁶ In response, white men refashioned definitions of manliness and civilization and also, I would argue, sought environments where a reinvigorated vision of white manhood could flourish. If class and gender were the problem, race began the solution. Carol Smith-Rosenberg argues that an alternate, regionally-located vision of masculinity emerged in popular mid-nineteenth-century American literature. The "autonomous young man of the frontier" who rebelled against patriarchal authority, social expectations, and self-control, she writes, "was the mirror image of the fragile and dependent son of the Eastern reformers."⁵⁷ This literary image found a practical counterpart in nineteenth-century gold rushes, which, much hyped and oft-promoted, promised white men a new vision of manhood unencumbered by the burdens of industrializing society.

Were these visions of a renewed, independent white masculinity put into practice in colonial British Columbia? This chapter argues that a particular vision of white masculinity did develop in colonial British Columbia. While it did not fulfil the fantasies of the disillusioned and dispossessed worker or challenge white male power, it did provide an alternative practice of manliness.

⁵⁶Bederman, Chapter 1.; Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective," in Harry Brod, ed., The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies (Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1987)

⁵⁷Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Davy Crockett as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality, and Symbolic Inversion in Victorian America," in Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York, Oxford, 1985) p92-93.

IV: White Men and Domestic Space

This homosocial culture was not built from a consciously articulated ideological platform, but was rather an amalgam of everyday social practices, particularly in the male households that sprang up in tents, cabins, huts and houses across British Columbia. To create homes without white women was to challenge increasingly hegemonic concepts of gender and domesticity that crossed significant class boundaries and geographic divides. In what Mary Poovey has called the "binary logic" of nineteenth-century gender systems, women were assigned the domestic and moral while men weathered the capitalist economy and liberal polity.⁵⁸ This division was explicitly racialized: the "home" and the public-private split upon which it was premised were constructed as both symbolic and constituent of Anglo-Saxon culture.⁵⁹

If, as Poovey argues, women's need for waged work exposed the fallacies of this binary logic, so too did the domestic spaces men created in white women's absence. But the tenets of dominant metropolitan discourse aside, male households were widely discussed as an appropriate response to the social and economic

⁵⁸ Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988). Also see Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, especially Chapter 3; Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Onedia County, New York, 1790-1865 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981); Denise Riley, 'Am I that Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988)

⁵⁹ See Sara Mills, "Gender and Colonial Space," Gender, Place and Culture 3:2 (1996) p125-147; John and Jean Comaroff, "Homemade Hegemony," in Ethnography in the Historical Imagination (Boulder, Westview Press, 1992)

conditions presented by colonial British Columbia. Emigration literature often advised men to join together for collective travel, labour, and living. John Emmerson, a middle-aged British miner, suggested that groups of six, including one experienced miner, were ideal for Cariboo-bound immigrants. Others advised farmers to do the same.⁶⁰ Authors made clear that the goals of group emigration were not simply economic. Groups of gold miners could ensure that the sick would be "carefully tended," argued traveller-writer C.E. Barrett-Lennard.⁶¹ Parker Snow, another prominent author of emigration literature, wrote that white men should model themselves after women in the matter of cooking, arguing that "how much can be better managed (and this all good house-wives know) where there are several clubbing together."⁶²

Whatever the advice, white men joined together in British Columbia's backwoods to create a variety of domestic forms. Such homes without women drew on a long tradition of group lodging for working men, locally represented by the

⁶⁰John Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, & Adventures by John Emmerson of Wolsingham (Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1865) p150; Anonymous, The Handbook of British Columbia and Emigrant's Guide to the Gold Fields (London, W. Oliver, nd [1862]) p70.

⁶¹ Capt. C.E. Barrett-Lennard, Travels in British Columbia: With the Narrative of a Yacht Voyage Round Vancouver's Island (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1862) p170.

⁶²W. Parker Snow, British Columbia, Emigration, and our Colonies considered Practically, Socially, and Politically (London, Piper, Stephenson, and Spence, 1858) p78.

Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) "bachelor halls" and military barracks.⁶³ But these residences were institutional in character, organized and maintained by the employing agency, subject to employer discipline, and reliant on paid staff for domestic services such as cooking and washing. The male homes of British Columbia's backwoods, on the other hand, were neither institutional nor employer-run. Rather, these homes were the collectively-managed product of men's friendships and peer networks.

Male homes were a significant feature of British Columbia's social landscape in and outside the cities. The only door-to-door census taken during the colonial period recorded the some of the contours of social life in Victoria in the spring of 1871.⁶⁴ This census found that even in Victoria, over one-third of homes contained no resident women whatsoever, even though Victoria's white female population was proportionately much larger than any other community. (See Table 2.1) While these households shared a single-gender profile, they also varied considerably. Most housed a solitary white man. An important minority were group households made up of two or more white men. Chinese and Black men displayed not entirely dissimilar residential patterns, while First Nations men were less likely to live alone. Men did not necessarily live in same-race groups: there were at least eleven mixed-race male

⁶³For a description of an HBC "bachelor's hall," see Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1975) p103.

⁶⁴ Vancouver Island, Police and Prisons Department, Esquimalt, "Charge Book 1862-1866," BCARS, GR 0428.

group households.

Table 2.1: Male Households, Victoria, 1871

	Number	Percentage of Male Households	Percentage of All Households
Total Households	1025	n/a	100
Total Male Households	377	100	36.8
White Single Male Households	186	49.3	18.1
White Male Group Households	76	20.2	7.4
Chinese Male Group Households	41	10.9	4
Chinese Single Male Households	39	10.3	3.8
Black Single Male Households	18	4.8	1.8
Mixed-Race Male Group Households	11	2.9	1.1
Black Male Group Households	6	1.6	.6

Source: Vancouver Island, "Charge Book," BCARS, GR 0428. Numbers are rounded off, and two Households could not be classified.

How did white men recreate domestic space in the absence of white women, its supposed ultimate custodians and necessary conduits? Some of their homes reflected transiency and the expense and scarcity of building supplies. Most miners' homes in

1858 Victoria were reported to be "simple tents,"⁶⁵ and canvas tents remained a significant housing form throughout the colonial period. In 1861, magistrate Phillip Nind found that at Antler Creek, two men had built a log cabin, but that "the rest of the miners were living in holes dug out of the snow."⁶⁶ Other male households more closely mirrored "conventional" Anglo-American arrangements. William King commented that his Quesnel home lacked the beauty of young ladies, yet this did not seem to trouble him deeply. In 1864 and 1865, in a house adjoining the shop where he worked, he created a "bachelor hall" with a close friend, whom he affectionately called "brother," and an elderly man, who he described as an "excellent cook."⁶⁷ Phillip Hankin spent a month with five men who lived "in a very comfortable log cabin" in 1860s Barkerville. "The house consisted of one fairly sized room, about 15 feet long, by 12 feet wide, with 5 bunks round like a large ships cabin, and opposite the entrance door was a fire place with large logs on the ground, which were burning brightly, and a kettle hanging from a hook over the fire," he wrote. In the room's centre was a large wooden table, where the men dined on tea, damper with butter, and Irish stew.⁶⁸

While some male households were fairly stable, the membership of many

⁶⁵ Beta Mikron, [William Coutts Keppel, Earl of Albermarle] "British Columbia and Vancouver's Island" *Fraser's Magazine*, LVIII [1858] p499.

⁶⁶ Phillip Nind to Colonial Secretary, in James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 02 05 1861, CO 60/10, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84.

⁶⁷ William C. King, "Trip to California," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 99, p16.

⁶⁸ Captain P. Hankin, "Memoirs," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss E/B/H19A, p51.

others was highly fluid. As Phillips notes for frontier New Zealand, "mateship was a relationship of circumstance."⁶⁹ Men who had shared long shipboard voyages, who owned mining claims or farms together, or who laboured together became mates, as did men with ties of kinship or personal history. The readiness of miners to share their homes with veritable strangers became proverbial. "The gold miner is rather an enigmatical character, pecuniarily speaking he is generous to a fault, his purse and cabin are alike open to friend and stranger, countryman and cosmopolite,"⁷⁰ wrote one commentator. After some older miners shared their Van Winkle log cabin with him and his four mates, former chemist and future missionary Henry Guillod decided that miners were generally "a pretty good sort of fellows, rough but hospitable withal."⁷¹

Other men, especially those separated by class or conviction from the bulk of the white population, set up solitary households. As critics of the homosocial culture surrounding them, missionaries were often forced to "batch it." In 1859 Fort Hope, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Ebenezer Robson was uneasy about his solitary, "strange home." Yet he soon learned to take pride in the labour required to keep it, equating bachelor domestic competence with attaining a university degree. "Bought some housekeeping articles and have made up my mind to keep bachelor's hall,"

⁶⁹ Phillips, A White Man's Country?, p27.

⁷⁰ "A Glimpse of Cariboo," British Colonist, 24 08 1866. Also see Charles Forbes, Prize Essay. Vancouver Island: Resources and Capabilities, as a Colony (Victoria, Colonial Government, 1862) p26.

⁷¹ Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., "Henry Guillod's Journal of a Trip to Cariboo, 1862", in BCHQ, XIX [July-October 1955] p216.

Robson told his diary. "So if they do not allow me to graduate at Victoria college and take the degree of B.A., I will have the honor of being B. something in British Columbia."⁷² Wealthy men like naturalist John Keast Lord not only lived alone, but wrote books advising others how to do so in painstaking detail.⁷³

Singly or collectively, living without women necessitated reconfiguring the process whereby domestic duties were assigned and performed. Forestell found that "bachelor families" took advantage of commercialized domestic services such as laundries and restaurants in early-twentieth century Timmins.⁷⁴ Ian Radforth describes how "shanties" in the Ontario bush often employed a cook.⁷⁵ Yet, in British Columbia, with the partial exception of way-side houses and saloons, commercial enterprises, do not fill a large space in men's personal recollections. Nor do domestic servants. Instead, white men took charge of their own domestic work and fashioned arrangements whereby housekeeping and cooking could be shared amongst men.

Household arrangements varied widely. Some male households, such as Hayward's, assigned responsibility for domestic work to the unemployed man amongst them. Other men cared only for themselves, and still others devised schemes whereby

⁷² Rev. Ebenezer Robson, "Notes from the Diary of Rev. Ebenezer Robson, D.D., Pioneer Wesleyan Missionary at Fort Hope, B.C., from March 12 to May 13 1860," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/D/R57/R57.2A, p2.

⁷³ John Keast Lord, At Home in the Wilderness: What to do there and how to do it (London, Robert Hardiwcke, 1876)

⁷⁴ Forestell, "All that Glitters," p117.

⁷⁵ Radforth, "The Shantyman," p227-230.

work could be allocated collectively. Whatever the particular arrangement, recreating the domestic required white men to come to grips with skills and labours that were often radically unfamiliar to them. Some, like Anglican missionary R.C. Lundin Brown, found housekeeping hard and demoralizing work. "It is needless to dilate upon the various domestic duties which on rising one must discharge, - duties of a nature not fitted particularly to brace the spirit for the work of the day, but still indispensable, e.g. such as the lighting of the fire, fetching water from the spring, preparing breakfast, not to speak of sweeping the floor with an improvised broom, and sundry other little jobs, or 'chaws' as they call them," he wrote about his daily life in Richfield.⁷⁶

Cooking was a particularly trying exercise, especially in the upper country, where provisions were scarce, limited and expensive. Besides hard physical labour with little returns, wrote disillusioned miner Major, "you go home to your shanty at night, tired and wet, and have to cook your beans before you can eat them."⁷⁷ Some men never adjusted to the need to feed themselves. Eric Duncan described his bachelor uncle William, a Comox farmer whose experience as a Shetland sailor had not honed his culinary skills: "So his meat, fish and potatoes were fried, or boiled to

⁷⁶R.C. Lundin Brown, Klatsassan, And Other Reminiscences of Missionary Life In British Columbia (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1873) p185. Also see R.C. Lundin Brown, British Columbia. The Indians and Settlers at Lillooet. Appeal for Missionaries (London: R. Clay, Sons, and Taylor, 1870) p5.

⁷⁷ Major, "Letter," p230.

rag, but his bread was the crowning atrocity. All he used was fine flour and aleratus, his loaves were the size and shape of half a brick, and pretty nearly as solid." His uncle, Duncan continued, "had chronic heartburn and pain in the stomach accompanied with belching."⁷⁸

Other men took pride in their culinary knowledge and accomplishments, treating small victories with a bravado that betrayed their inexperience. They boasted of their talents and shared their knowledge. "Last evening we had the pleasure of hearing some very intellectual discourses by some of the residents of this thinly populated district of Goldstream," wrote one in 1865, including "an animated discussion on bush cookery, and a number of valuable hints were thrown out."⁷⁹ On the road to Lilloet, Blair wrote that "Bill rooled up his sleeves and Went at Making bread and Kelsie Oregon Butter Which I Mean to teack the Canadian Ladies to make When I go hom as it tasted first rate."⁸⁰ Others, like Guillod, celebrated their skill but lamented the time cooking required. "I was cook," he wrote, "which I confess took up nearly the whole of my time." He had produced a competent but overly dry pudding from dried apples, but was particularly proud of his talent at "throwing a fritter or 'slap jack' in firstrate style." Like Blair, he promised to show his family how to cook

⁷⁸ Eric Duncan, From Shetland to Vancouver Island: Recollections of Seventy-Five Years (Edinborough, Oliver and Boyd, 1937) p138-9.

⁷⁹ Mirabile Dictu, "Bush Life," British Colonist, 27 03 1865.

⁸⁰ Blair, "Diary," p22.

pancakes on his return.⁸¹ Guillod was not alone in finding cooking a time consuming and demanding task. Missionary R.J. Dundas wrote that week-day services were impossible in Antler as "Directly the men were off work they had their suppers to prepare, and found themselves fit only to turn in and sleep after the meal was over."⁸²

Without white women to perform domestic labour and in a backwoods environment, men became inventive. The Norwegian who shared his Salt Spring Island home with George Blair and his brother Bill for the winter of 1863-4 "thought himself Very Clean but never used a Dish Scloth but his Briti flag."⁸³ Travelling from Douglas to Lilloet with nineteen others, Emmerson wrote that "When our shirts and stockings got dirty we washed them in the rivulets, and when no better opportunity was afforded us we hung them over our backs to dry as we trudged along."⁸⁴ Housekeeping supplies were valued articles, sometimes carried from place to place across the backwoods. When a road-making crew found Duncan Munro's starved body between Williams Creek and Antler, they found no provisions or papers, but they did notice that the "Deceased had plenty of thread, pins and needles."⁸⁵ Like cooking, other domestic work could be time consuming. "It takes up much of my

⁸¹Guillod, "Journal," p206.

⁸²R.J. Dundas, in J.J. Halcombe, The Emigrant and the Heathen, or, Sketches of Missionary Life (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, nd [1870?]) p215.

⁸³ Blair, "Diary," p126.

⁸⁴ Emmerson, "Voyages, Travels, and Adventures," p39.

⁸⁵ William G. Cox to Colonial Secretary, 09 04 1864, in Frederick Seymour to Duke of Newcastle 10 06 1864, PAC, MG 11, CO 60/18, Mflm B-911.

time to attend to household duties," wrote Hayward.⁸⁶

In mining towns, Sundays were often set aside for domestic chores. The Sabbath in Lytton, lamented Anglican minister William Crickmer, "is the grand account-settling, clothes-washing and mending, marketing and drinking day."⁸⁷ When the miner should have been in church, wrote another missionary, "He rests, washes his clothes, divides with his mates the yield of the week, does his marketing at the stores, and hangs about the gambling and liquor saloons."⁸⁸ Miners themselves inverted such critiques by utilizing the language of Christianity to describe the necessity of performing domestic tasks on Sunday. "The Fourth Commandment" of the widely reprinted "Miners' Ten Commandments" went "Six days thou mayest dig or pick all that the body can stand under; but the other day is Sunday, when thou shalt wash all thy dirty shirts, darn all thy stockings, tap all thy boots, mend all thy clothing, chop thy whole week's firewood, make and bake thy bread and boil thy pork and beans."⁸⁹

Despite such trials, white men often represented their collective domestic experiences positively or even romantically. "I should like to know who is able to boast a more perfect independence than is he who has learned the art, for *art* it most

⁸⁶ Hayward, "Diary," np.

⁸⁷ Rev. William Burton Crickmer to Anon., 01 07 1860, "Letters," [Transcript from original held at BCARS), ADNW/EPBC, PSA 50, File 3, p9.

⁸⁸ Dundas in Halcombe, The Emigrant and the Heathen, p211.

⁸⁹ 'The Miners Ten Commandments,' Cariboo Sentinel, 08 09 1866. This originated in California in 1853.

assuredly is, of being 'at home in the wilderness,'" wrote solitary housekeeper Lord.⁹⁰ Arthur Bushby admired the Yale household of Thomas Elwyn and his three co-workers. "[T]hey live together and cater and cook for themselves and are very jolly in a little wooden hut - romance itself," wrote the court clerk.⁹¹ R.H. Pidcock, a British minister's son who became a Comox farmer, fondly remembered living in a tent and sleeping on beds of branches with his mate in 1862. "I and Fred took to it at once and notwithstanding all we had been through never felt so happy and well as when we had nothing but our bed of branches and our blankets to lay on."⁹²

Yet for others, the experience of food preparation and domestic work convinced them that conventional gender organization was a better bargain than they had previously estimated. "Coming in from work, hungry and tired - firewood to provide and prepare - the fire to make on - supper to cook - the things to wash up - the floor to sweep - shirts, towels, stockings, &c., to wash and mend, and all the paraphernalia connected with housekeeping to attend to, there was not much comfort belonging to it," wrote Emerson about the Victoria house he shared with another man. "I had by this time made a grand discovery, " he declared. "It was simply this: 'I had found out the real value of a good wife and home comforts.'"⁹³ Hayward had a

⁹⁰ Lord, At Home in the Wilderness, p1.

⁹¹ Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' in BCHQ Volume XXI (1957-1958) p148.

⁹² R.H. Pidcock, "Adventures in Vancouver Island 1862," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 728, Vol 4a, p10.

⁹³ Emerson, Voyages, Travels, and Adventures, p80.

similar epiphany. "Have been reading to the boys an account of Belashazzors feast and it teaches The influence of women. We realize their value now."⁹⁴

Others lamented the loss of female company and the emotive bonds of kin. After all, white British Columbians were members of a larger dominant culture that increasingly celebrated companionate heterosexual relations and associated the emotive, the caring, and the social with the presence of white women and the domestic space of family. Thus while Emerson waxed romantic about his male comrades, he was frequently suicidal and haunted by dreams of his wife and seven children, whom he missed terribly.⁹⁵ Thompson wrote many sad letters to his wife Mary in Canada West, regretting his decision to ever leave her and their children for the dubious charms of Williams Creek. "I sometimes wonder how I ever came to leave a kind and affectionate wife and all that the heart of man could desire of a family to sojourn in this land," he wrote.⁹⁶ Hayward also deeply regretted his decision to leave his wife Sally in Britain and mourned her absence constantly, especially on Sundays. "I am sure now I did wrong in leaving her behind. We ought to be together to share each others joys and sorrows," he told his diary.⁹⁷ Like the California miners studied by Andrew J. Rotter, these men found their experience of the homosocial culture of

⁹⁴ Hayward, "Diary," np.

⁹⁵ See, for instance, Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, and Adventures, p64.

⁹⁶ Preston, ed., For Friends at Home, p302. Also see W., "Unhappy Reflections," Cariboo Sentinel, 17 10 1867.

⁹⁷ Hayward, "Diary," np.

British Columbia an empty and isolating one.⁹⁸ While some men found same-sex domestic space a place of succour and resort, they found that alternative domestic spaces merely affirmed their desire for conventional family relations.

IV: White Men, Homosocial Culture, and Same-Sex Ties

British Columbia's homosocial culture extended well beyond the doorways and tent-flaps of male households. Whether their social ties were buttressed by domestic ones or not, white men in the backwoods usually participated in a broader male culture that fostered same-sex social, emotional, and sometimes sexual bonds. Defining a culture – especially one forged by people with a limited commitment to literacy and permanent residence – is a notoriously difficult affair.⁹⁹ Here, I define a culture loosely as a shared way of life and set of symbols that includes and incorporates heterogeneous experiences and opinions. Diverse writers, from missionaries to miners, identified elements of a specific white homosocial culture in British Columbia.

"The claims of friendship operated within small groups, and a helping hand was readily given out to the needy 'pal,'" S.D. Clark wrote of miners.¹⁰⁰ Nicknames

⁹⁸On this in California, see Andrew J. Rotter, "'Matilda for Gods Sake Write': Women and Families on the Argonaut Mind," California History LVIII:2 (Summer 1979) p128-141. Separation is also dealt with in Eric Sager, "Memories of Work, Family, and Gender in the Canadian Merchant Marine, 1920-1950," in Parr and Rosenfeld, eds., Gender History.

⁹⁹ Raymond Williams notes that "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language." See his Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (London, Fontana, 1976) p87.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, "Mining Society," p218.

symbolized the ties of men to each other and their membership in a distinct social world. In his private journal, Anglican Bishop George Hills noted that "The appellation of all miners is 'boy.' Their chief is 'Cap.' All are called Dick, Tom or Harry. Men are not known by their real names."¹⁰¹ White men also referred to each other in affectionate or familial terms - such as brother, chum, mate, or friend. Such language denoted convenience, affinity, or occupational solidarity, but sometimes spoke of deeper ties. Illness and death made these bonds explicit. When a Canadian man died from smallpox after being carefully nursed by a hometown friend, the British Colonist noted that "his bereaved relatives cannot but derive much consolation from the fact that even in this far-off land devoted friendship is not wholly extinct."¹⁰² The sick and ailing of the Cariboo, thought the local press, were often "tended with all the care and kindness they would have received in the bosom of their own families."¹⁰³ A missionary wrote of the care one ailing miner received from his mates, describing the large attendance at his funeral as "a good instance of the great sympathy and cordiality that exists even among these rough men."¹⁰⁴ Frank Orr, mining partner of the legendary Billy Barker, reputedly committed suicide after the death of their other partner, Cy Roe. His suicide note, a local historian writes, said only "I can't live

¹⁰¹ George Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," [Transcript], ADNM/EPBC, MS 65a, PSA 57, p411.

¹⁰² "Death by Small-Pox," Victoria Press, 23 06 1862.

¹⁰³ "The Cariboo Hospital," Cariboo Sentinel, 21 05 1866.

¹⁰⁴ Dundas in Halcombe, The Emigrant and the Heathen, p205.

without Cy."¹⁰⁵

When male households broke up, members could suffer sharp torment. The parting scene was painful when Emmerson's party separated at Williams Lake. "We all felt it keenly," he wrote, "but the parting between William and his son was touching in the extreme. They were both broken hearted: tears rolled down their cheeks while they embraced each other."¹⁰⁶ Emmerson's mate William Mark recalled the parting differently, but his sorrow was similarly potent: "we had shared the troubles and dangers together, for ten thousand miles, and here we part, in a strange, wild country, perhaps never to see each other again!"¹⁰⁷ Robert Stevenson, a miner who spent his old age in Kamloops writing virulent defences of his companion, "Cariboo" Cameron, left a business diary containing affectionate, formulaic poetry and addresses of male companions. One read: "Forget me not I only ask/This simple boon of thee/And let it be a Simple task/To sometimes think of me."¹⁰⁸

White men could be many things to each other. Together, they constructed new versions of traditionally heterosocial activities. Some parties, like a Comox one, cancelled the dancing "owing to the absence of crinoline."¹⁰⁹ Others were more

¹⁰⁵ Louis LeBourdais, "Billy Barker of Barkerville," BCHQ 1:1 (1937) p167.

¹⁰⁶ Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, and Adventures, p56.

¹⁰⁷ Wm. Mark, Cariboo: A True and Correct Narrative to the Cariboo Gold Diggings, British Columbia (Stockton, W.M. Wright, 1863) p29.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Stevenson, "Diary," BCARS, Add Mss 315; Robert Stevenson, "Miscellaneous Materials relating to," BCARS, Add Mss 315.

¹⁰⁹ Nobody, "Letter from Comox -- Progress of the Settlement," British Colonist, 04 10 1867.

inventive in the face of conventional gender organization's disruption. A benefit for the Cariboo hospital attracted four First Nations women and between 160 and 200 men.¹¹⁰ In such situations, men danced with each other. At a dance in Yale in 1858, "The few ladies present had no lack of partners, while most of the men were forced to dance with each other."¹¹¹ Johnson records meeting an old miner, Jake, who told of the pleasures of winter on Williams Creek, including a ball. When Johnson asks "And what did you do for ladies, then?" Jake replies: "'Oh, why we didn't hev none, 'cept old nigger Mary' (a fat negress who did washing for the miners) 'an' the french madam, an' the blacksmith's wife. But we danced some, I tell yu! It were stag dancin' of course, fur a hundred an' fifty men was too many fur three females, but it all came off gay.'"¹¹²

Likewise, an exclusively male milieu was no barrier to the performance of Anglo-American theatre. White men regularly took the female parts in plays. Edgar Fawcett remembered being cajoled into female roles in Victoria's Amateur Dramatic Club, "As female talent was scarce."¹¹³ Sophia Craycroft, niece of Lady Jane Franklin, wrote after witnessing a play in 1861 New Westminster that "I fancy these

¹¹⁰ B.D., "Letter from Cariboo," British Colonist, 27 03 1868.

¹¹¹ D.W. Higgins, The Mystic Spring and Other Tales of Western Life (Toronto, William Briggs, 1904) p56.

¹¹² R. Byron Johnson, Very Far West Indeed: A Few Rough Experiences on the North-West Pacific Coast (np, 1985 [London, Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1872]) p14.

¹¹³ Edgar Fawcett, Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria (Toronto, William Biggs, 1912) p20-21.

two men do all the female parts having shaved their mustaches for the purpose!"¹¹⁴

This homosocial culture was not necessarily a poor imitation of "real" and legitimate gender organization. Commentators often remarked that white men had consciously chosen the homosocial milieu of British Columbia. One miner wrote that "generally gold diggers are not marrying men. They work, spend their money in drink, and work again."¹¹⁵ Naval officer Richard Charles Mayne wrote that gold miners' "hard, wild life" ultimately "unfit them for domestic existence."¹¹⁶ While white men's desire for white women was often assumed, the lives of many of backwoods British Columbian men – lived in lifelong bachelorhood, with no apparent quest for formal marriage – suggests that same-race, heterosexual desires were not universal.¹¹⁷

Historian of masculinity Rotundo agrees on the importance of same-sex bonds, but argues that "among males, romantic friendship was a product of one distinct phase in the life cycle - youth."¹¹⁸ This explanation seems insufficient for explaining male bonds in British Columbia in the 1858-1871 period. Indeed, as Steven Maynard has

¹¹⁴ Dorothy Blakey Smith ed., Lady Franklin Visits the Pacific Northwest: Being Extracts from the Letters of Miss Sophia Craycroft, Sir John Franklin's Niece, February to April 1861 and April to July 1870 (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia Memoir No. XI, 1979) p71.

¹¹⁵ A Returned Digger, The Newly Discovered Gold Fields of British Columbia, eighth edition (London, Darton and Hodge, 1862) p8.

¹¹⁶ Richard Charles Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (Toronto, S.R. Publishers, 1969 [London, John Murray, 1862]) p350.

¹¹⁷ See, for instance, Richard Somerset Mackie, The Wilderness Profound: Victorian Life on the Gulf of Georgia (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1995) Chapter 5.

¹¹⁸ Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship," p1.

suggested, the backwoods provided an environment where men could have their primary social and emotional bonds with other men.¹¹⁹ In much the same way that historians have persuasively argued that settlement houses, female colleges, and related institutions offered a social space where early-twentieth century women could live a female-centred life,¹²⁰ so the backwoods of British Columbia allowed men to create and maintain a social life revolving around same-sex ties and practices.

Many members of this homosocial culture seem simply disinterested in conventional gender and familial organization, while others were actively fleeing from it. Mid-nineteenth-century British Columbia provided a useful haven for men on the lam from the unwanted encumbrances of wives and families. One local politician argued that "Miners don't write much; three letters go up to Cariboo for every one that comes down."¹²¹ Some of those unanswered letters were pleading ones in search of errant kin, or at least financial support from them. If they did not receive satisfaction in their inquiries, women would sometimes write to colonial officials. Ann Scott, dependent on the charity of the Alms House of Blackwell's Island, New York, wrote to clergyman Edward Cridge about her husband, reputedly living in Victoria. "In your

¹¹⁹Steven Maynard, "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History," *Labour/Le Travail* 23 (Spring 1989) 159-169; Also see Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930," in Parr and Rosenfeld, eds, *Gender History*.

¹²⁰See, for instance, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman as Androgyne: Social Disorder and Gender Crisis, 1870-1939," in *Disorderly Conduct*.

¹²¹ "Legislative Council Proceedings," *British Colonist*, 20 03 1867.

Christian sympathy," she plead, "you will pity my lonely condition, and do all in your power to help me, in my desire to know the worst or obtain any intelligence of his business, or mode of living." She particularly wanted to know if he had another family, and told the cleric that "You will understand my feelings, and agree with me, that it is best for me to know the truth, one way or other."¹²² Other women made similar inquiries only to discover that the spouse they assumed dead was alive and mining in the Cariboo.¹²³

Inquiries from abandoned wives and families overseas were frequent enough to pose an administrative problem for colonial officials. In 1865, Hannah Jarman wrote to the Colonial Office inquiring about her son Charles Jarman, from whom she had not heard for two years when he worked at Victoria's Spirit Bar. In response, Edward Cardwell directed his staff to instruct the Governors of Vancouver Island and British Columbia "to state to whom private persons in this Country may be told to write for information about their friends in the Colonies."¹²⁴ They replied that the Colonial Secretary would assume responsibility for such inquiries,¹²⁵ and from that point on,

¹²² Ann B Scott to Edward Cridge, 01 06 1871, "Edward Cridge, Correspondence Inward," BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box 1, File 4.

¹²³ R Collins to Edward Cridge, 08 04 1870, "Edward Cridge, Correspondence Outward," BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box 1, File 5.

¹²⁴ Hannah Jarman to Edward Cardwell, 28 07 1865, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867," CO 305/27, [hereafter CO 305] PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-249.

¹²⁵ Frederick Seymour to Earl of Carnarvon, 21 12 1866, CO 60/25, BCARS, GR 1486, Mfilm B-1438.

this office provided British kin with reports on errant British Columbians.¹²⁶

As Ann Scott feared, some men did flee their families only to form a new relationship. In 1870, a Victoria policeman married a Saanich farmer's daughter, only for it to be revealed that he "had a wife and three children residing in Canada, who, since union had become the order of the day, were preparing to brave the terrors of the Rocky Mountains and reunite themselves with the husband and father."¹²⁷ New York divorce lawyers advertised their services in the Cariboo press.¹²⁸ Bigamy was a significant enough problem to garner requests for government attention and rash demagoguery. An act requiring the registration of births, marriages, and deaths was called for on the grounds that it would assist in the prosecution of bigamy cases.¹²⁹

Other members of this homosocial culture, however, showed no interest in recreating conventional family relationships in a new environment. In poem and prose, these white men celebrated their distance from the world of white women, and the nineteenth-century discursive corollaries of religion and "the social." They represented their world as rough and inherently masculine, and made clear that these were admirable attributes. "The man in the mines and the same man at home, with the influence of a loving mother, a wife, or virtuous sisters around him – bear no

¹²⁶ See, for instance, Memo from A.F. Pemberton, in Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 18 09 1867, CO 60/29, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1440.

¹²⁷ "Alleged Bigamy," British Colonist, 19 03 1870. Also see "Disagreeable Intrusion" Victoria Press, 29 05 1861; "Scoundralism Rampant...", British Colonist, 07 12 1870.

¹²⁸ "Divorces," Cariboo Sentinel, 25 02 1871.

¹²⁹ "Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages," British Colonist, 01 16 1863.

analogy to each other," wrote one miner.¹³⁰ Often, the line between celebrating the maleness of the backwoods and misogyny blurred. The women at home, one wrote, would hardly recognize them at the mines:

How astonished the ladies would be could they be suddenly transported to this place. They would have some difficulty in recognizing that rough broken down looking individual in his shirt-sleeves, with a hole in his hat, a pair of coarse trousers well patched with flour bags, and the toes out of his boots, working away like a 'good man and true,' as 'the dear fellows' who with 'such a fine figure' and 'so handsome' made their hearts flutter in some drawing room *tete a-tete* or the giddy whirl of a waltz or *galope*...There is no denying it, gold is all powerful and is the true mistress of destiny.¹³¹

James Anderson, the much lauded "poet-laureate of Cariboo"¹³² earned his title similarly. He penned and regularly publicly performed ribald poetry that celebrated drinking, gambling, amorality, and irreligiousness at the mines and warned the reader to hide the poems from his wife.¹³³ "There's neither kirk nor Sunday here/Altho' there's mony a' sinner," is a typical opening to an Anderson poem.¹³⁴

But did this environment, so homosocial in domestic, social, and emotional organization, foster or discourage homoerotic or homosexual behaviours? Historians of sexuality argue that before the widespread dissemination of a homosexual *identity* in the late nineteenth-century, homoerotic behaviour and desire was usually conceived

¹³⁰C. Sharp, "A Glimpse of Cariboo," British Colonist, 24 08 1866.

¹³¹ "Letter from Williams Creek," British Colonist, 25 06 1863.

¹³²"Cariboo Literature," Cariboo Sentinel, 04 17 1869.

¹³³ See James Anderson, Sawney's Letters and Cariboo Rhymes (Toronto, Biographic Society of Canada, 1950 [Barkerville: Cariboo Sentinel, 1868])

¹³⁴ "Extracts From Sawney's Third Letter," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 07 1868.

as an "act" rather than a persona, and subject to various levels of social regulation and identification.¹³⁵ One letter-writer announced that "murderers, sodomites, and burglars have few sympathizers in Victoria,"¹³⁶ but the social history of the regulation of male homoerotic behaviour tells a more complex story. Surviving records indicate that between 1858 and 1871, at least four men were charged with sodomy or buggery in three separate trials. One act was alleged to have taken place in Victoria, two aboard a ship travelling from London to Victoria, and a third in Esquimalt.¹³⁷ Read "against the grain" for broadly social rather than narrowly legal evidence,¹³⁸ these records show both the relative importance of white male homosexual behaviour and demonstrate how its regulation was shaped by the context of colonial British Columbia.

The cases of John Butts and John Kingswell provide two very different examples of men whose same-sex behaviour was singled out for the haphazard attentions of the colonial state. Butts was a curious figure, simultaneously central and marginal to Victoria society in the 1850s and 1860s, a famous outcast who functioned

¹³⁵ See, for a summary, Jeffrey Weeks, "Discourse, Desire and Sexual Deviance: Some Problems in a History of Homosexuality," in Against Nature: Essays on History, Sexuality and Identity (London, Rivers Oram, 1991)

¹³⁶ Watchman, "Twaddling Sensations of Anonymous Writers," British Colonist, 02 03 1866.

¹³⁷ This does not represent the sum total of all men arrested; for instance, A.F. Pemberton reported that two persons were convicted for buggery in 1860, while the Attorney General files contain only one unsuccessful prosecution for that year. See A.F. Pemberton to Acting Colonial Secretary, 25 02 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mfilm B-1394, File 1393.

¹³⁸ See Steven Maynard, "Sex, Court Records, and Labour History," Labour Le Travail 33 (Spring 1994) p187-93.

as something of a buffoon in local society. By "marginal," I mean that Butts was persistently persecuted, regulated, and mocked by his fellow citizens. While this earned him an enduring fame and regular presence in the local press, it also, perhaps, drew attention to his homosexual activity.

Of English extraction and Australian birth, Butts moved to Victoria in 1858 after a sojourn in San Francisco.¹³⁹ He was initially employed as the town-crier and bell-ringer. But, when the magistrate was out of earshot, Butts would change his proclamation to "'God Save (a pause of a few seconds) John Butt.'" For this act of disloyalty he was deposed as town-crier, and resorted to garbage collection until officially barred from the trade for charging customers for hauling the same rubbish back and forth across town.¹⁴⁰ Butts then became Victoria's most celebrated habitué of Victoria's Police Court, chain gang, and gaol. In the early 1860s, he was arrested for stealing photographic equipment, a keg of porter, turkeys, selling a stolen goose, for "rowdyish and disorderly conduct"¹⁴¹ and a multitude of other small offenses.

¹³⁹ The town directory of 1860 described him as "bell-ringer and town-crier to H.B.M." See Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory... (Victoria, Edw. Mallandaine & Co., 1860) p26. He may have arrived in 1859. See "Distinguished Arrival," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 01 06 1859; Charles Bayley, "Early life on Vancouver Island" [1878?] [Transcript], BCARS, E/B/B34.2, p18.

¹⁴⁰ D.W. Higgins, The Passing of a Race and More Tales of Western Life (Toronto, William Briggs, 1905) p116.

¹⁴¹ "John Butts Again," Vancouver Times, 30 03 1861; "Police Court," Vancouver Times, 17 01 1865; "Lodgings for the Remainder of the Season," Vancouver Times, 04 02 1865; "Turkey Stealing," Victoria Press, 05 07 1861; "Butts Again in Trouble" Victoria Press, 09 04 1861; Higgins, The Passing of a Race, p120.

Supplementing these income-generating activities, he continued to work as something of a free-lance town-crier and a street cleaner, occasionally hiring a First Nations assistant.¹⁴² Yet it was Butts' petty crime that earned him significant gaol time and titles like "the hero of a hundred committals," and, more commonly, "the notorious John Butts."¹⁴³

Butts received censure not only from Victoria's police court, but also from the townfolk of Victoria at large. He was routinely ridiculed in public, as when he was used as an exhibit by a travelling phrenology lecturer,¹⁴⁴ caricatured in the local press,¹⁴⁵ or shouted down when he asked to be appointed town-crier.¹⁴⁶ That Butts was considered an appropriate object not only of legal regulation and derision, but also of violence, was confirmed when he attempted to charge a respectable war hero named J.M Simpson for beating him. Simpson's lawyer argued that "It was shameful that a man of Butts' character should be allowed to slander gentlemen in this town." Despite testimony that Simpson gratuitously beat Butts, the court commented that, given his

¹⁴²"Street Cleaning," Victoria Press, 09 10 1861; "Improving," Victoria Press, 19 10 1861; "Necessity the Mother of Invention" Victoria Press, 03 06 1862; "John Butts," Victoria Press, 22 08 1862.

¹⁴³ "Turkey Stealing," Victoria Press, 05 07 1861; Bayley, "Early life on Vancouver Island," p18.

¹⁴⁴ "Lecture," The Daily Press, 02 04 1862.

¹⁴⁵ See John Butts, "Mr. Butts at the Temperance Meeting," Victoria Press, 01 10 1862. Sometimes people complained about the poor treatment Butts got in the press. See John Butts, "Our Municipal Council," Victoria Press, 14 09 1862.

¹⁴⁶"The Municipal Elections - Nomination Day," Vancouver Times, 09 11 1864.

poor character, Butts "richly deserved the dressing he got."¹⁴⁷

This daily routine of derision, provocation, and violence ultimately served as a backdrop for the prosecution of Butts' same-sex activity. In the midst of his famed career of poverty, petty crime, and penal residence, Butts was charged in January 1860, for "the commission of an abominable offence on the person of a little English boy, employed at the Union Hotel."¹⁴⁸ The state marshalled an impressive amount of evidence about Butts' sexual relationships with the illiterate William Williams, described in the local press as "a rather good looking youth of about sixteen years of age."¹⁴⁹ Williams testified that he met Butts at a hotel, and that the older man offered him work and a place to stay. "I went there, and went to bed with him, he had connection with me, and ever since I have been in great pain," said Williams.¹⁵⁰

Williams' story was confirmed by the other residents of Butts' household, whose testimony inadvertently revealed an intimate, crowded, and exclusively homo-social world where men shared houses, beds, and lives. Thomas Cooper swore that Butts "brought the boy Williams up to the house and told me he was going to keep

¹⁴⁷ "Assault Case," The Daily Press, 14 04 1862. Also see "Not Incurable," Victoria Press, 23 07 1862; "Police Court," Victoria Press, 19 08 1862; "John Butts," Victoria Press, 22 08 1862, for a later charge that Butts had "insulted a gentleman."

¹⁴⁸ "Sodomy," British Colonist, 31 01 1860; "Police Court," British Colonist, 02 02 1860.

¹⁴⁹ "Trial of John Butts," British Colonist, 18 02 1860.

¹⁵⁰ Deposition of William Williams, 30 01 1860, "Minutes of Evidence, Police Court," R. vs John Butts, 31 01 1860, in British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents 1857-1966," [Hereafter "Attorney General Documents"] BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23.

him there to cook and to work round the house until he could get a situation," and that Butts shared his bed with the lad, who had no blankets. Cooper, sleeping in the next room, testified that he heard whispering and heavy breathing and saw moving bedclothes, but could not identify what, precisely, was occurring beneath them.¹⁵¹ Another house-mate and occasional bedmate, Andrew Coyle, became the boy's champion, accompanying Williams' after he said he was ashamed to seek medical attention. "The boy told me," testified Coyle, "that John Butts hurt him - that he buggered him."¹⁵² Robert Oram, Williams' co-worker at the hotel and another occasional bed-mate, also affirmed this story. Like Coyle, he spoke of an ashamed and injured boy, and told the court that "He said he woke up and found John Butts on top of him - and he told him to knock off but Butts would not knock off at the time but kept on until the boy knocked him off."¹⁵³ Medical evidence generally confirmed the reportage of these working men.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹Evidence of Thomas Cooper, 01 02 1860, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23. Cooper's ambiguity led the local press to claim that his evidence contradicted Williams'. See "Trial of John Butts," British Colonist, 18 02 1860.

¹⁵² Evidence of Andrew Coyle, 02 02 1860, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23.

¹⁵³ Deposition of Robert Oram, 31 01 1860, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23.

¹⁵⁴ Doctors Helmcken and Trimble confirmed that the boy's anus was inflamed and showed some sign of venereal disease, and that Butts carried both gonorrhea and syphilis. See Evidence of Dr. Helmcken, 01 02 1860; Evidence of John Sebastian Helmcken and James Trimble, 09 02 1860, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23.

Other witnesses testified that Butts frequently propositioned young working-class boys who depended on older men for employment, housing, and, as in the case of Williams, bedding. Butcher William Dunrun recalled overhearing Butts make advances to a lad known as Ginger.¹⁵⁵ Ginger, or Francis Jackson, testified that Butts had approached him on three separate occasions, offering the homeless boy a job and a bed in exchange for sex. "He told me he wished he had me in bed with him, and he put his hands on his privates and said if he had me in bed with him he would give me that," Jackson testified. He was not tempted, and spurned Butts by likening homoerotic and inter-racial heterosexual practice. "I told him if he wanted to fuck anything to get a squaw and he could do as much as he wanted."¹⁵⁶ For Jackson, the "squaw" or dangerous Aboriginal woman was presumed to be sexually available to all white men and, moreover, an illicit enough object of desire to serve as an workable analogy to homosexual sex. These fraught connections between sexual identity, respectability, and race were also raised when Dunrun, the butcher, chastised Butts not for suggesting sex to another man, but for doing so within earshot of what he called "a lady"¹⁵⁷ – undoubtably a white woman. For Dunrun, Butts' language or behaviour

¹⁵⁵ Deposition of William M Dunham, 31 01 1860, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23.

¹⁵⁶ Deposition of Francis Jackson, 31 01 1860, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23. Later, Butts was charged for assault (seemingly non-sexual) against a First Nations boy, See "Incorrigible," Victoria Press, 04 06 1862; "Police Court," Victoria Press, 05 06 1862.

¹⁵⁷ Dunham, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23.

were not inherently indecent, but merely not suitable for white women's ears.

It is not surprising that Butts' trial was a controversial one. The state mounted a serious case against which Butts, in his poverty and ostracism, was unable to defend himself effectively. When tried by the Attorney General in February 1860, Butts faced the court alone, without legal representation or even witnesses. In his address to the court, Butts not only asked for mercy, but added that "the men I expected as witnesses have gone up the river and I am left without any."¹⁵⁸ Despite, or perhaps because of Butts' pitiful self-presentation, the jury was deeply confused by the case. The British Colonist commented that Williams was a convincing witness, but that some of the testimony contradicted his tale. At nine o'clock in the evening after the trial, the jury reported to the Judge that they could not agree on a verdict; in response, they were "locked up" until the following morning. Apparently, this did not help, and the jury was soon requesting "instructions." By three o'clock, they told the judge that it was "impossible for them to agree," a claim which reflected that seven of them supported conviction while five favoured acquittal. In response to this, the Judge dismissed them and impanelled a new jury.¹⁵⁹

The new jury, if nothing else, was efficient. They met for a mere five minutes

¹⁵⁸"Trial of John Butts," British Colonist, 18 02 1860. This refers to the endless seasonal migration of gold miners, and is an odd claim given that February was an unusually early time for miners to go "up river."

¹⁵⁹ "Trial of John Butts," British Colonist, 18 02 1860.

before acquitting for unknown reasons.¹⁶⁰ Butts, for one, had always maintained his innocence, testifying that "All I have got to say is that this case is got up to extort money from me"¹⁶¹ – an unlikely explanation given his obvious and indeed infamous poverty. Butts' dealings with the local police, however, were far from over. He apparently was kept in jail for a spell after his acquittal.¹⁶² His petty theft continued apace, to which were added charges for assaulting a First Nations boy,¹⁶³ "insulting a gentleman" and attacking an Aboriginal couple.¹⁶⁴ In August 1866, however, the courts put an end to Butts' long career by charging him "with being a rogue and a vagabond, and the associate of thieves."¹⁶⁵ In a peculiar local variation on transportation, he was ordered to leave the colony, and, when he failed to do so, jailed for three months. He was released two months later when he signed articles to sail for either China or Australia. The Cariboo Sentinel celebrated his final outlawry: "Adieu! poor houseless, homeless vagrant. Your offenses against society have been many, and

¹⁶⁰ Untitled, British Colonist, 18 02 1860.

¹⁶¹ Testimony of John Butts, 09 02 1860, BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/23. The British Colonist recorded that Butts said "The whole charge is a conspiracy to get my house and lot from me." See "Trial of John Butts," British Colonist, 18 02 1860.

¹⁶² "Laying Low," British Colonist, 18 02 1860.

¹⁶³ "Incorrigible," Victoria Press, 04 06 1862; "Police Court," Victoria Press, 05 06 1862.

¹⁶⁴ "Not Incorrigible," Victoria Press, 23 07 1862; "Police Court," Victoria Press, 19 08 1862; "In Again," Victoria Press, 28 10 1861.

¹⁶⁵ Untitled, Vancouver Times, 30 07 1865; "Rogue and Vagabond," Vancouver Times, 31 07 1865; "John Butts," Vancouver Times, 16 08 1865; Untitled, British Colonist, 01 08 1865; "John Butts," British Colonist, 14 09 1866.

your punishment often severe."¹⁶⁶

The Butts case reveals much about white men, homosocial culture, and homosexual activity in colonial British Columbia. The court documents divulge, firstly, a tightly-woven homosocial milieu anchored in young white men's shared domestic ties. In the world of Butts' crowded house, white women only existed as vague and infrequently invoked symbols of propriety. Significantly, the court documents also suggest that homosexual behaviour was a relatively regular part of this homosocial milieu. Witness testimony indicates that Butts regularly propositioned other men. This behaviour, moreover, does not seem to have been considered inherently problematic, but rather inappropriate in certain circumstances – such as when white women were within earshot. Testimony provided by young men like Williams and Jackson, moreover, reveal that they were easily fluent with language specifically describing homosexual sex.

That sex between white men had a significant place within British Columbia's homosocial culture is reaffirmed by another, very different court case. In 1870,¹⁶⁷ an unusually zealous and determined police constable named Jeremiah McCarthy charged a popular sailor, John Kingswell, with buggery upon another sailor, George Russel. McCarthy's inexplicable fervour resulted not only in a successful prosecution, but a

¹⁶⁶"Gone from Our Gaze," Cariboo Sentinel, 10 04 1866.

¹⁶⁷ This case is included in the "1870" file and case name, but some of the court documents included in this file are dated 1873. Thus the crime may have occurred and been prosecuted in either 1870 or 1873.

thick packet of court documents detailing the activities of the drinking crowd at the Ship's Sun, an Esquimalt pub. It was there, in the back room, where the illicit sex under discussion took place. W. Cylex, under cross-examination, testified that he entered the billiard room of the Ship's Sun, "When I saw the Prisoner on the top of Russell he was working away as a man would with a woman." Another man then "pulled Kingswell off and said to him out of this you dirty devil."¹⁶⁸

While a series of white men all recounted watching Kingswell and Russel have sex, the case files of R. V. Kingswell are filled with the reticence of both the court and the local community to prosecute a respectable British sailor for a homosexual act. The sex in question was public, and no witnesses disputed its occurrence. Yet only McCarthy seemed to want the case prosecuted and both the drinking crowd at the Ship's Sun and the presiding judge actively tried to protect Kingswell. In part, this reflects sailors' longstanding connection with same-sex practice.¹⁶⁹ Certainly the Matti Rasid case of 1866, which saw a Greek sailor belonging to the HBC's *Princess Royal* found guilty of sodomy, revealed a working-class shipboard culture where sex between men was not uncommon. This case initially indicted Rasid and another sailor, Andrew

¹⁶⁸ Deposition of W. Cylex, 04 08 1873, Deposition of Emmanuel Tucker, 05 08 1873; Deposition of William John Payne, 05 08 1873, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 9, File 1870/24.

¹⁶⁹See, for instance, Arthur N. Gilbert, "Buggery and the British Navy, 1700-1861," *Journal of Social History* 10:1 (Fall 1976) p45-71; George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History* 19 (Winter 1985) p189-211.

Patrick, for a series of sexual acts committed with four boys over at least a three-week period.¹⁷⁰

Support for Kingswell went well beyond sailor circles. In cross-examination, Police Magistrate Augustus Pemberton forced Tucker to admit that "I see the Prisoner has two good conduct badges also a second class rate and is a seaman premiere and I know he must be a man of good character to have earned these distinctions."¹⁷¹ The sailor's "good character" apparently nullified whatever sexual deviance he might display. The ever-vigilant constable was disappointed with this reticence, and expressed his deep distrust of the witnesses' testimony in a signed note submitted with the court documents. One witness "seemed to give his evidence with some reluctance" and another "saw more than he has stated in his evidence before Mr Pemberton."¹⁷² The defendant had correctly bargained that public sentiment would be with him, telling his captors that "he hoped he might be tried by a jury."¹⁷³ In the end, popular

¹⁷⁰See Joseph Needham to Colonial Secretary, 01 03 1866, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mfilm B-1350, File 1231; R. vs. Matthew Rasid, "Attorney General Documents," Box 5, File 1866/11; "Assizes," British Colonist, 22 03 1865. Also see James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, Volume I: "Journals of the Council, Executive Council, and Legislative Council of Vancouver Island, 1851-1866" (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p211.

¹⁷¹Deposition of Emmanuel Tucker, 05 08 1873 "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 9, File 1870/24.

¹⁷² Undated note from Jeremiah McCarthy, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 9, File 1870/24.

¹⁷³ Deposition of Jeremiah W McCarthy, 04 03 1873, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 9, File 1870/24.

support and juridical reticence did not save Kingswell from the regulatory prowess of law, and he was found guilty of the lesser charge of attempted sodomy.

Kingswell and Butts were very different men with very different relationships to the colonial community of Victoria. Butts was a member of what Judith Fingard calls the "underclass" of the Victorian city.¹⁷⁴ Not only was he the regular object of public derision and casual violence, but he was the persistent object of the enthusiastic attentions of the lower levels of the colonial state. When prosecuted for his same-sex behaviour, Butts was entirely unsupported, and faced the court literally alone, without witness or lawyer. Ultimately, only the jury's confusion and the judge's impatience saved the bereft Butts. Kingswell, on the other hand, was a respectable man with a secure place in an entrenched component of colonial society – the navy.¹⁷⁵ When prosecuted for homosexual acts, he received good legal representation from a prominent local lawyer and was explicitly supported by his gang of friends and implicitly by the presiding Judge.

While they involved very different men, these two cases suggest similar conclusions about the place of same-sex practice in the white male homosocial culture in British Columbia. Read for nuance, the Kingswell and Butts cases' indicate that

¹⁷⁴Judith Fingard, The Dark Side of Life in Victoria Halifax (Halifax, Pottersfield Press, 1988)

¹⁷⁵ On the Royal Navy in this period, see Barry M. Gough, Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-90 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1984)

homosexual behaviour was an aspect of white, male culture in the colonial British Columbia. The Butts case shows that he regularly and publicly propositioned boys, and the boys' testimony speaks to their familiarity with the suggestion of homosexual sex, if not sex itself. The Kingswell case, in its awkwardness, points to the relative tolerance accorded to certain homosexual behaviours amongst Esquimalt's sailor culture and to the broader colonial community. In all, these cases confirm what historians of nineteenth-century sexuality have found elsewhere: that male same-sex activity often occurred between men of different ages, that sailors had a significant homoerotic subculture, and that working-class men were familiar with language referring to homosexual behaviour.

This contention is reinforced by the fact that some white men represented their experience of British Columbia's backwoods in explicitly homoerotic or gender-liminal terms. A certain amount of gender ambiguity was tolerated with humour. In 1862, a Van Winkle correspondent wrote that his town "boasts of three ladies," in addition to "good old 'Mother Lawless,' and an hybrid claiming to be a woman, but draped like a man."¹⁷⁶ Sometimes, active and public same-sex behaviour was also ironically noted. In 1869, the British Colonist commented that a Mr. Blackquier was "charged with prowling about the Government Buildings and pursuing boys." Yet he was soon released, as there was "no evidence against him, and he showing a good balance on

¹⁷⁶ "From our Special Correspondent," British Columbian, 30 08 1862.

the right side of his Bank Account."¹⁷⁷ D.W. Higgins's stories of colonial British Columbia regularly include cross-dressing men and women, and also the author's own wrestling with same-sex desire.¹⁷⁸ Higgins described his ambivalence about his attraction to a young man, Henry Collins, he met at the mines. Looking at Henry in the moonlight, Higgins was perplexed. "[A]s I gazed," he wrote, "I felt strongly and unaccountably drawn towards him. A strange emotion stirred my heart and a wave of tenderness such as I had never before experienced swept through every fibre of my being." He was deeply confused:

I could not understand my feelings. Why should I be attracted towards him more than to any other young man? Why was I always happy when he was near and depressed when he was absent?...Why did the sound of his voice or his footsteps send the hot young blood bounding through my veins? What was he to me that every sense should thrill, and my heart beat wildly at his approach? Were the mysterious forces of Nature making themselves heard and felt?¹⁷⁹

Higgins -- a journalist and future speaker of the British Columbia Provincial Legislature -- resolves the potential subversion of homosexuality by having Collins turn out to be a passing woman. But in raising the spectre of love between men, his text does not reaffirm heterosexuality, but rather presses the point that this homosocial

¹⁷⁷ "Police Court," British Colonist, 31 11 1869.

¹⁷⁸ D.W. Higgins, The Passing of a Race and More Tales of Western Life (Toronto, William Briggs, 1905), especially "The Pork Pie Hat." On passing women, see the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project, "'She Even Chewed Tobacco': A Pictorial Narrative of Passing Women in America," in Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey Jr., eds., Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past (New York, NAL Books, 1989)

¹⁷⁹ Higgins, The Mystic Spring, p35-36.

world was certainly a homoerotic one for some.

This suggests that even where the legal record is explicitly silent on male same-sex practice, we should not assume that homosexual practices were unknown or unimportant. The legal record, most obviously, offers no information regarding rural British Columbia, including the almost all-male mining towns, where the rough, homosocial culture went largely uncontested. That no men in these communities were charged with sleeping with each other reflects, in large part, the limited reaches of the colonial state in British Columbia. As Tina Loo has shown, establishing legal authority over the backwoods was a trying affair and absolute authority remained an elusive goal.¹⁸⁰ Yet it also may reflect a relative tolerance of white male same-sex activity, a tolerance fostered by the particular way that British Columbia organized sexual and social life.

The peculiar pattern of silence and description, prosecution and acceptance in British Columbia from 1858 to 1871 ultimately reflects a particular pattern of sexual regulation that developed in colonial contexts where inter-racial heterosexual sex was both prevalent and feared and where the colonial community was overwhelmingly male. Traditionally, historians have explained male same-sexual practice in colonial settings as situational, an un-intended result of anomalous social organization. Ronald Hyam, for instance, writes that sexual contact between men was "almost entirely

¹⁸⁰Tina Loo, Making Law, Order and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993) especially Chapter 3 and 6.

opportunistic or the product of circumstance, and without prejudice to relationships with women."¹⁸¹ Recently, however, scholars have begun to re-conceptualize the particular role of same-sex practice in colonial contexts. In Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, Robert Young argues that fears of miscegenation eclipsed fears of homosexuality: "In this situation, same-sex sex...posed no threat because it produced no children; its advantage was that it remained silent, covert, and unmarked."¹⁸² Thus colonial contexts could foster an environment of passive tolerance towards same-sex erotic practice because it, however threatening, did not create the boundless brown bodies whose very existence challenged racialized boundaries of rule.

What was the place of homosexual behaviour within British Columbia's white, male, homosocial culture? Certainly this colonial context, like others, provided an environment where sexuality was organized in new and sometimes challenging ways. As a colonial society populated overwhelmingly by men, British Columbia offered white men the possibility of living lives almost entirely without white women. In tents, cabins, and bar-rooms across the colony, they created a homosocial culture anchored in shared domestic and social and emotional ties. The stories occasionally told in the Victoria police court, supplemented by erstwhile bits of other evidence, suggests that sex between men was common enough to be readily understood and only

¹⁸¹Ronald Hyam, Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990) p212.

¹⁸²Young, Colonial Desire, p25-26.

occasionally prosecuted. The relatively thin record of prosecution, and its particular regional hue, suggests that in many contexts sex between men was relatively accepted, perhaps because of the competing and overriding fears of white-Aboriginal heterosexual unions. Such comparative tolerance would also have been fostered by the existence of a colonial community where men's social and emotional attachments to each other were nourished and reinforced by a wider homosocial culture.

VI: White Men, Drink, Gambling, Violence, and Racial Identity

Some of the most compelling symbols of the homosocial culture of British Columbia's backwoods were those that inverted, recreated, or challenged conventional gender organization. Thus much of the daily practice of this culture was not dissimilar from that practiced by working-class men in customarily gendered societies. In particular, drink, gambling, violence, and a common racial identity held as significant and hallowed places in this culture as they working-class urban centres. In British Columbia, as in the small Ontario towns analyzed by Lynne Marks, these pursuits drew men of all class backgrounds into a common masculine culture.¹⁸³ Yet, in the rough homosocial context of colonial British Columbia, these commonplace practices took on a new and pointed significance.

Drinking was the most significant traditional male pursuit. In 1865, Governor Arthur Kennedy sadly reported to the Colonial Office that there were forty-one licensed public houses outside of Victoria and thirty-five public house licences and

¹⁸³ Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, p125.

twenty-three wholesale licences within the colonial capital. "This enormous drain upon the earnings of the small population of this Colony cannot fail to produce disastrous social results," he wrote.¹⁸⁴ In Victoria, said a British journalist, "There are more drinking saloons and bowling alleys than dwelling houses."¹⁸⁵ Barkerville was similarly endowed with drinking institutions, sporting twelve saloons in 1867.¹⁸⁶ "Any person who looks over the list of imports to these colonies must be struck with the enormous amount of intoxicating liquors consumed amongst us," agreed the Victoria Press.¹⁸⁷

Drinking was both a racialized and gendered practice. In a context where Aboriginal people were legally denied the right to imbibe by statute and where the "Indian liquor trade" was policed by gunboat, easy and lawful access to liquor became a tangible colonial privilege.¹⁸⁸ It was a privilege some had to fight for: the right to drink in public was defended by Victoria's black population in at least two court cases in the year of 1862.¹⁸⁹ The justice of denying First Nations men the right to drink was

¹⁸⁴ Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 24 08 1865, CO 305/26, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-248.

¹⁸⁵ Mikron, "British Columbia and Vancouver Island," p499; J.N., "Incontrovertible Facts," British Colonist, 07 01 1865.

¹⁸⁶ "Barkerville," Cariboo Sentinel, 15 04 1867.

¹⁸⁷ "Inebriation," Victoria Press, 28 04 1861.

¹⁸⁸ See Gough, Gunboat Frontier, Chapter 6.

¹⁸⁹ "The License Question" Victoria Press, 04 07 1862; Irene Genevieve Marie Zaffaroni, "The Great Chain of Being: Racism and Imperialism in Colonial Victoria, 1858-1871," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1987, p129-130.

occasionally debated, but most white men seemed to have enjoyed their monopoly on lawful liquor.¹⁹⁰ While white men drank responsibly, colonial pundits argued, liquor led First Nations men to run amok and violate masculine propriety. Supporting further legal restrictions, one legislator said "a white man when he got drunk the most he might do was to whip his wife, but when the Indian got drunk he put his knife into the first white man he met, or perhaps his squaw."¹⁹¹

Such comments suggest how drink was also deeply gendered. Drink was a symbol of male authority as well as white rights, a cultural practice from which women were excluded. "[I]t is considered a heinous offence against public morals that a lady should be anything but a teetotaler," wrote Byron Johnson.¹⁹² Women who violated this sanction in public faced a range of informal regulatory measures. Mrs. Bell, an older white woman arrested for being drunk and disorderly in the streets of Victoria in 1862, was dubbed "a disgrace to her sex" by the press and had a placard bearing the words "'For sale cheap for cash'" pinned to her back.¹⁹³ That First Nations women drank with as much abandon as men was often presented as a key feature necessitating the prohibition of liquor amongst all Aboriginal people.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ "Debating Class," Daily British Columbian, 01 12 1866

¹⁹¹ "Legislative Council," British Colonist, 02 21 1866.

¹⁹² Johnson, Very Far West Indeed, p142.

¹⁹³ "A Disgrace to her Sex," British Columbian, 11 21 1862. Also see "Distressing Sight," British Columbian, 22 03 1871.

¹⁹⁴ See, for instance, Ninth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1867 (London, Rivingtons, 1868) p11-20.

Backwoods white men frequently exercised their right to drink, and their ardent drinking habits became famed. Gold miners were especially reputed for their penchant for drink. Certainly prosecutions for drunk and disorderly in Victoria peaked during the gold rushes.¹⁹⁵ The popular author known as "A Returned Digger" wrote that "Whether it is the excitement natural to the gold digger's life, or whether it is the desire to be luxurious and dashing, I know not, but this is certain, that an enormous percentage of gold diggers, drink extravagantly of spirits."¹⁹⁶ Drink was certainly the main focus of sociability in mining towns. There were few enough other options. Way-side houses provided the only accommodation and prepared food available to travellers. Saloons were often the sole public meeting places in up-country towns. Missionaries were often forced to hold services in them.¹⁹⁷ As Elliot West has argued for the mining towns of the American mountain states, the saloon was a multipurpose institution: "With its roominess, availability, and large crowds, the barroom filled many practical needs and provided space for public gatherings." Saloons provided housing, gathering places, financial services, and a host of other services which

¹⁹⁵ In Victoria, 154 people were arrested for being drunk and disorderly in 1858, 329 in 1859, 161 in 1860, 157 in 1861, 391 in 1862, 293 in 1863, 158 in 1864. See A.F. Pemberton to Acting Colonial Secretary, 25 02 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mfilm B-1394, File 1393.

¹⁹⁶ A Returned Digger, p4.

¹⁹⁷ See, for instance, Anonymous, "Our North Pacific Colonies," The Westminster Review CLXX (October 1866) p205.

otherwise difficult to secure.¹⁹⁸

Most of all, however, saloons provided drink. Men drank to relieve thirst or consciousness. Drink also affirmed and created common bonds between men with diverse experiences. Regulated by the necessity of ritual "treating," drinking was an intensely social activity. A local magistrate described the Cariboo as a place "where men could earn large wages, treat their friends, play billiards and be jolly good fellows."¹⁹⁹ "A reckless man will go into Yale on Sunday, and spend twenty-five to forty dollars in drink and treating others," wrote Bishop Hills.²⁰⁰ "There is a great deal of 'standing treat' amongst the miners," wrote another observer, "and very expensive work it often proves, in more ways than one."²⁰¹ Aristocratic travellers Viscount Milton and W.B. Cheadle described the protocol at way-side houses. The men, they wrote, "come dropping in towards evening in twos and threes, divest themselves of the roll of blankets slung upon their backs...The next thing is to have a 'drink,' which is proposed by some one of the party less 'hard up' than his friends, and the rest of the company present are generally invited to join in."²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Elliot West, The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1979) p96, p74-9.

¹⁹⁹ "County Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 11 04 1871.

²⁰⁰ "A Journal of the Bishop's Tour in British Columbia 1860," Report of the Columbia Mission, With List of Contributions, 1860 (London, Rivingtons, [1860]) p45.

²⁰¹ Champness, "To Cariboo and Back: An Emigrant's Journey to the Gold Field of British Columbia," Leisure Hour 696 (29 04 1863) p250.

²⁰² Viscount Milton and W.B. Cheadle, The North-West Passage By Land. Being the Narrative of an Expedition from the Atlantic to the Pacific (London, Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1865) p359.

Men who refused ritual drinks, like Friesach, were treated with disdain.²⁰³

While miners earned a special place in the annals of ritualistic liquor consumption, other working men also drank to excess and, at the same time, utilized drink to symbolize their common bonds. New Westminster's fire company, the Hyacks, were described as marching "through the streets and calling in to drink at every grocery in town."²⁰⁴ The mainland's satirical newspaper, The Scorpion, encouraged this practice; "I hope that the public will give this their serious consideration, and keep the Hyacks spirits up by pouring sprits down."²⁰⁵ Sailors also confirmed their world-wide reputation for drink. Esquimalt tars "were a wild and untamable lot," remembered Higgins. On their free days, "Esquimalt road was lined with half-drunken tars wending their way to town, and when the town was reached the streets were filled with hundreds of men from the ships, singing and shouting, and sometimes fighting."²⁰⁶ So much did sailors love their liquor, the Victoria Press commented, that "It is likely they would be equally as contented and happy in jail as on board ship if they could get their daily allowance of grog."²⁰⁷

Drinking took place all year and in all locales, but the winter and the town held

²⁰³ Friesach, "Extracts," p221-231.

²⁰⁴ Admonitor, Untitled, British Columbian, 05 12 1863.

²⁰⁵ Stimulous, "Dum Vivimus Bibamus," The Scorpion, 11 03 1864.

²⁰⁶ Higgins, The Passing of a Race, p76. See Judith Fingard, Jack in Port: Sailortowns of Eastern Canada (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982) Chapter 3; Burton, "The Myth of Bachelor Jack."

²⁰⁷ "Lighthearted Prisoners," Victoria Press, 06 05 1861; "Jack on Shore," Victoria Press, 18 08 1862.

a special place in the festive season of British Columbia's political economy of partying. Miners and other seasonal workers who moved back and forth between city and woods converged on Victoria for the slack season.²⁰⁸ Ensconced for the cold months, miners were targeted by missionaries,²⁰⁹ but more effectively courted by the numerous saloons and dance houses. "Miners spent money lavishly - chiefly in public houses and dance houses and extravagance in general," remembered Helmcken.²¹⁰ Dance houses primarily provided places where white men and First Nations women could socialize, and thus demonstrate the overlap between homosocial and mixed-race cultures in colonial British Columbia. Because they institutionalized and commercialised inter-racial sexual practice and sociability, dance houses were a constant source of ire for local and moralists - a topic explored at length in the Chapter Five.

Dance houses also offered a place where white men could engage in intense bouts of drinking. Indeed, dance houses were usually defended on the grounds that they were uniquely suited to the needs of miners who required a special locale for their seasonal binges. Victoria Magistrate Pemberton allowed the licensing of these businesses on the grounds that "the houses were opened for the amusements of the

²⁰⁸ Arthur Harvey, A Statistical Account of British Columbia (Ottawa, G.E. Desbartes, 1867) p9.

²⁰⁹ See E. Cridge and R.J. Dundas, To the Miners of British Columbia resident for the Winter in Victoria (Victoria [?], np, sn 1861-1865)

²¹⁰ Helmcken in Blakey Smith, ed., The Reminiscences, p208.

miners and at their request."²¹¹ A miner responded to a petition calling for the closure of the dance houses with the comment that if the miner, "should desire to amuse himself while he is passing his holidays and if he proves a little gayer than ordinary, it is because he has been deprived for a long time of any kind of amusement and therefore has a desire to spree a little."²¹² A letter signed "Many Miners" agreed that miners' seasonal rhythms created particular social patterns, but disputed the simple causal connection made between class and rough partying. Indeed, they thought that even the most respectable middle-class man would join in such entertainments if his reputation was not at stake, and argued that "If the authorities want to close the dance-houses let them be closed by all means, and let it not be said that such places are kept open for the special benefit of the miners."²¹³

Opponents of dance-houses hotly challenged the idea that these places were needed and comfortable spaces for working-class sociability. Instead, they presented them as hot-beds of mixed-race immorality superintended by shrewd and devious profiteers. The real patrons of dance houses, wrote Methodist missionary Ephraim Evans, were not miners, but "Tangle leg manufacturers, illicit traders in small wares with the Indians, receivers of goods from parties whose posseccorry [sic] rights are not too strictly scrutinized, light-fingered gentry who are not scrupulous as to the means of

²¹¹ "The Dance House," British Colonist, 12 20 1861.

²¹² Pro Bono Publico, "The Dance House," British Colonist, 23 12 1861.

²¹³ Many Miners, "Dance House- Miners not to Blame," British Colonist, 24 12 1861.

acquisition; and kindred characters, are not to be confounded with an honest and industrial population."²¹⁴ Yet despite such voices and the campaigns they orchestrated, dance houses continued to hold a special place in colonial British Columbia.

While missionaries like Evans and other reformers attempted to convince men to abandon the culture of drink and dance-halls, not everyone lamented the colony's liquored-up culture. Some celebrated it as a potent and appropriate symbol of the homosocial culture of the backwoods. "The Bard of the Lowhee" wrote a "A Reminiscence of Cariboo Life," which playfully began "Oh, I love to snore/On a bar-room floor/And sleep a drunk away!" adding pearls like "I love the barley bree!" and "I love the jolly spree!"²¹⁵ Another poet penned a similar work, to be sung to the tune of "A Man's A Man for a' That." "Hurrah! for rum and whiskey hot," it went, "That fires the brain, and a' that!"²¹⁶

Whether it occurred in a saloon, way-side house, or dance house, drinking often went hand in hand with gambling, the other activity moral reformers associated with British Columbia's homosocial culture, especially as it related to mining. "As in all mining districts," lamented Anglican missionaries about the Cariboo, "drunkenness and gambling are the chief vices."²¹⁷ Ann Fabian has noted that in nineteenth-century

²¹⁴ Eph'm Evans, "Rev. Dr. Evans on the Dance Houses," British Colonist, 25 12 1861.

²¹⁵ Bard of the Lowhee, 'A Reminiscence of Cariboo Life,' Cariboo Sentinel, 11 14 1868.

²¹⁶ Notes from a Bar-Room, "Parody: Bar-Room Song," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 27 1869.

²¹⁷ Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1868 (London, Rivingtons, 1969) p25-26.

America, gambling was most intimately associated with frontier resource economies, "where labor was not yet fully governed by the industry, sobriety, and frugality that moulded daily life to the rhythms of industrial production."²¹⁸ Certainly many British Columbia observers argued that gambling was equivalent or endemic to mining, a product of its privileging of chance and easy gain above hard work, ambition and obedience. "The passion for gambling is an invariable characteristic of communities in countries where mines of the precious metals exists," wrote one newspaper.²¹⁹

Gambling became a symbol and part of the substance of the male homosocial culture of the entire colony. Robert Brown, a travelling scientist, wrote in his private journal that tossing dice was a favourite pastime in Victoria, and a riskier one in the Cariboo, where losers were forced to buy drinks for the whole creek.²²⁰ Hankin remembered that in Barkerville, there were "3 or 4 small public houses" that "the miners would repair to every evening, and gamble, and drink, and as they used to say 'make things hum', until 3 o'clk in the morning."²²¹ In Victoria, gaming took off when miners wintered in town. "We shall have towards the end of Autumn another brick epidemic and barrooms will become hilarious, and gamblers will be on the *qui*

²¹⁸ Ann Fabian, Card Sharps, Dream Books, and Bucket-Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America (Ithica, Cornell University Press, 1990) p6.

²¹⁹ "Gambling in British Columbia," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 01 06 1859. Also see "From the Forks of the Quesnelle," British Columbian 04 07 1861; "Gambling and Sabbath Desecration in Cariboo," British Columbian, 25 07 1863.

²²⁰ Robert Brown, "Diary," BCARS, Add Mss 794, p122-3.

²²¹ Hankin, "Memoirs," p50.

vive for every fortunate returned miner," predicted the Victoria Press.²²²

Gaming was sometimes superintended by the shrewd professionals that troubled mining towns, vying for power and influence with local colonial officials.²²³ According to Royal Engineers' commander Richard Moody, famed gambler Ned McGowan "stated that it is a regular business, certain professed gamblers who do nothing else, go fr place to place among the Miners, & fasten to them like Blood-suckers and are the source of all the mischief."²²⁴ Despite the prominence of professional gamblers like McGowan, however, gaming was usually a casual affair intermeshed with other forms of male sociability. White men played for drink more often than money.²²⁵ Higgins described a gambling den in 1862 Barkerville, making clear that gaming was practised in conjunction with the other social activities like music, drinking, and bare-fisted prize-fighting.²²⁶ Gambling, like drinking, could both link white men together as well as divide them. As Gunther Peck points out in his study of the Comstock Lode, gambling and other risk-taking activities "strengthened rather than weakened miners' commitment to a working-class moral economy that celebrated maleness, mutuality,

²²² "Colonial Immigration," Victoria Press, 06 04 1861.

²²³ See Loo, Making Law, Order, and Authority, Ch.3, for analysis of Ned McGowan, a prominent alleged gambler. Also see Chartres Brew to Lieut. Governor Moody, 04 02 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1310, File 186/3.

²²⁴ Willard E. Ireland, ed., "First Impressions: Letter of Colonel Richard Clement Moody, R.E., To Arthur Blackwood, February 1, 1859" BCHQ XV (January-April 1951) p103.

²²⁵ Report of the Columbia Mission 1860, p45.

²²⁶ Higgins, The Passing of a Race, p257-8.

whiteness, and the power of chance."²²⁷

Violence was another keynote of this homosocial culture. As David Peterson del Mar points out in his study of Oregon, the process of settlement gave white men an "intimate knowledge" of violence and normalized the use of force to control others.²²⁸ Violence was also venerated as entertainment. White men were keen observers of brutal entertainments like cockfights and prize fights, which occurred alongside disorganized brawls. In October 1866, a prize fight between George Wilson, "the Cariboo Champion," and George Baker, "the Canadian Pet" prompted the local press to write: "Cariboo has never witnessed the assemblage of so many people since the white man came to work this 'illihe' [land]."²²⁹

Commonplace, casual violence, as well as its ritual and public counterparts, was a daily part of backwoods life. Commentators like Justice Matthew Begbie routinely boasted that the British Columbian frontier was uniquely peaceful,²³⁰ and the colony's pacific character became crucial to its identity. Despite such fictions,

²²⁷ Gunther Peck, "Manly Gambles; The Politics of Risk on the Comstock Lode," Journal of Social History 26: 4 (Summer 1993) p714.

²²⁸ David Peterson del Mar, What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence Against Wives (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996) p21-23. For an interesting analysis that ignores the relationships between white male violence and social authority, see Elliott J. Gorn, "'Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch': The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry," American Historical Review 90:1 (February 1985) p18-43.

²²⁹ "The Prize Fight," Cariboo Sentinel, 25 10 1866.

²³⁰ See, for instance, Matthew B. Begbie, "Journey into the Interior of British Columbia, Communicated by the Duke of Newcastle, read December 12 1859," (np, nd) p247.

however, bar-room fights broke out regularly,²³¹ and rows occurred almost nightly in towns like Barkerville.²³² "I shall not regale your readers with minutes of the fights which are of daily occurrence on this creek," wrote a Caribooite to a Victoria paper.²³³ "Our moral condition, allegorically speaking, is like the thermometer thirty degrees below zero; drinking, swearing, gambling, pugilistic encounters, and drunkenness is the order of the day," mourned another up-country critic.²³⁴ Violence, like gambling, was a part of urban as well as up-country life. "[A]s you may imagine where there is so much young blood & no female population," wrote British surveyor and diarist Charles Wilson about Victoria in 1858, "there are sometimes fierce scenes enacted & the bowie knife & revolver which every man wears are in constant requisition, but up to this time very few fatal cases have occurred."²³⁵ The threat of violence provided a significant motivation for male friendships and communities, and one author advised group emigration as a means to "resist aggression."²³⁶ Male support could exacerbate violence when mates came forward to defend each other. Commenting on bar-room fights in Barkerville, the Cariboo Sentinel remarked that "Every man has his friends,

²³¹ Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 15 12 1866.

²³² An Inhabitant of Barkerville, Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 07 01 1865.

²³³ "Letter From Cariboo," British Colonist, 16 09 1865.

²³⁴ Tal. O Eifion, "Our Moral, Social, and Political Condition," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 02 1867.

²³⁵ George F.G. Stanley, ed., Mapping the Frontier: Charles Wilson's Diary of the Survey of the 49th Parallel, 1858-1862, while Secretary of the British Boundary Commissions (Toronto, Macmillian, 1870) p24.

²³⁶ Barrett-Lennard, Travels in British Columbia, p170.

and it is not unlikely that some of these fights may end in a general row between the friends of the combatants, and where the strong and the weak fight in a mining camp serious consequences are sure to follow."²³⁷

Violence regulated relations within the white male community, and also reinforced white men's authority over women and First Nations people. As we will see in Chapters Three and Eight, white men's violence against both white and First Nations women was commonplace. Male communities could be a bulwark against state intervention into violence against women. In July 1867, William Williams, possibly Butts' accuser, was found guilty of brutally assaulting Fanny Lucas in public. His friends actively protected him, agreeing "to pay the cost of his board if allowed to remain in Cariboo," ensuring that he would not be sent south to serve his sentence.²³⁸ He had been arrested at least three other times for beating and threatening other woman²³⁹ and only served half of his sentence.²⁴⁰

Aboriginal peoples were also targets of white men's violence. Such violence was often but not only sexual and conjugal. As Robin Fisher notes, constant struggles over resources meant that "there was violence between the miners and the

²³⁷ Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 15 12 1866.

²³⁸ "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 08 1868; "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 01 07 1867.

²³⁹ See "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 07 08 1865; "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 08 13 1866; "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 07 01 1867.

²⁴⁰ "Liberated," Cariboo Sentinel, 07 11 1868.

Indians."²⁴¹ Such brutality was endemic to colonial enterprises. "The white men kick the Indians about like dogs," wrote one observer.²⁴² Such kicks remind us that if British Columbia's homosocial culture constructed a particular vision of white manhood, it rarely, if ever, contested the power that this social identity represented.

Much of this power rested on gender, on the power accorded to men in a society where authority, roles, and relationships were apportioned on the basis of sex. Yet it also was supported by their common identity as *white* men. Settlers hailed chiefly from America, Britain, Canada, and, to a lesser extent Australasia. Ideologies of whiteness, premised on the distinctiveness of the Anglo-Saxon race and its dual superiority to and responsibility for all others, were key to all of these cultures, albeit in different ways.²⁴³ Immigrants carried the racial ideologies learned in their home societies with them to British Columbia, where they were both reinforced and

²⁴¹ Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890, Second Edition (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992) p98.

²⁴² Quoted in Capt. Fenton Aylmer, ed., A Cruise in the Pacific: From the Log of a Naval Officer, Volume II (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1860) p89.

²⁴³ See, for instance, Bederman, Manliness and Civilization; Lake, "The Politics of Respectability"; Hall, White, Male, and Middle-Class; Catherine Hall, "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains...to Africa's Golden Sand'" Ethnicity, Race, and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England," in Gender and History 5:2 (Summer 1993) p212-230; Little work has been done on whiteness per se in mid-nineteenth-century Canada, although available research is suggestive of the centrality of race to nascent Canadian identity. See Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1970); Cecelia Louise Morgan, "Languages of Gender in Upper Canadian Religion and Politics, 1791-1850," PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1993.

reformulated.

White men asserted a shared racial identity in numerous ways. The collective and convivial character of British Columbia's homosocial culture was likely held together in part by a sense of common racial membership. As a minority, white men's bonds were doubtlessly increased by their common fear of Aboriginal people. Most explicitly, however, white identity was asserted by claims of difference, by the process whereby white men identified themselves as distinct from the large and diverse Aboriginal population they encountered in British Columbia. White men were in frequent contact with the majority First Nations population. They fought with them, slept with them, lived next to them, and purchased goods, services, and labour from them. In their writing, white men frequently devoted considerable space to describing First Nations people. Some reported finding them less threatening and more admirable than anticipated. One, for instance, told his family in Canada West that "The Indians are not very troublesome at the mines; they are kept down pretty well."²⁴⁴

Such comments, however, speak of more than difference. White men usually asserted both their separation from and their superiority to First Nations people. They often did so by expressing feelings of disgust, hostility, and revulsion regarding Aboriginal people's basic existence.²⁴⁵ While maudlin and kind when describing his

²⁴⁴ Major, "Letter," p231.

²⁴⁵ On revulsion in white narratives of Aboriginal peoples, see Terry Goldie, Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures (Montreal-Kingston, McGill-Queen's Press, 1989) p64-5.

kin and comrades, Blair called Victoria's First Nations "the most degraded set of Martals ther is in existence."²⁴⁶ Writing about Douglas, Guillod told his family in England that "A journey out here soon destroys all romantic illusions with regard to the Indians; instead of anything noble they are dirty, immoral, and fond of tawdry finery."²⁴⁷ Other white men pledged that they would assist in the gradual creation of a white society in this territory. During a visit to Victoria, an American draper wrote to his brother that "The indolent, contented, savage, must give place to the bustling sons of civilization and Toil, The class privileged to fulfil the divine fiat, who `eat their bread, with the sweat on their brow.'"²⁴⁸ Some singled out gold miners as uniquely fitted as harbingers of civilization. Travel writer Kinnihan Cornwallis spoke of this with passion and conviction, arguing that the "motley yet mighty throng" of gold miners "will extend the empire of British domination, and the spread of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, over regions where the Indian is still a mighty family."²⁴⁹ Gold rushes, another wrote, not only enriched the old world, but were "destined to raise up great and powerful nations of the Anglo-Saxon race in countries hitherto considered inhospitable and unfit for colonization and settlement for civilized man."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Blair, "Diary," p16-17. Also see Major, "Letter," p231.

²⁴⁷ Guillod, "Journal," p200.

²⁴⁸ Willard E. Ireland, ed., "Gold-Rush Days in Victoria, 1858-1859" BCHQ, XII (July 1948) p239.

²⁴⁹ Kinnihan Cornwallis, The New El Durado: or, British Columbia (New York, Arno Press, 1973 [London, Thomas Cautley Newby, 1858]) p279.

²⁵⁰ Anonymous, The New Government Colony: British Columbia and Vancouver Island: A Complete Hand-Book (London, William Penney, 1858) p3.

Missionaries and moral reformers would disagree with such sentiments, arguing that miners' sexual and social excesses unfitted them for the true task of racial domination. In urban reform programmes and missions to the backwoods, they confronted and worked to reshape this homosocial culture. But if others disputed their membership in the brotherhood of Anglo-Saxon men, white men in British Columbia rarely shared these doubts. Along with drinking, gambling, and violence, a shared place in a racial and imperial discourse, whether experienced or articulated as fear, difference, disgust, or superiority, further solidified white men's bonds to each other and helped unite them in a common culture.

VII: Conclusion

White men held a crucial and particular place in the relationship between gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. Colonial British Columbia was a society where prescribed gender organization was profoundly disrupted. Among the primary results of this disruption is the complex homosocial culture forged among and between white men in the colony, which co-existed and sometimes overlapped with the mixed-race community. In the backwoods and urban enclaves, white men reconstructed domestic space without white women, creating their own structures of household life. They formed social, emotional, and sometimes sexual relationships with each other. In reconstructing these bonds, white men in British Columbia embraced same-sex relations at the same time heterosocial modes of sociability and domesticity were becoming hegemonic in

middle-class Anglo-American culture and shaping expectations of working-class life. Similarly, white men drank, gambled, and fought, elevating these acts to social prominence and value at the very moment that metropolitan, middle-class visions of self-controlled, self-contained, and temperate manhood were constructed as both normative and necessary. When these pastimes held on in the working-class taverns and streets of metropolitan communities, British Columbians claimed them as prominent cultural practices and values.

This culture thus constructed, through daily practice and self-representation, a particular if sometimes fragmented vision of what it meant to be white and male. This vision of white manhood, importantly, did not reject, but rather reinforced, the power accorded white men in a colonial and patriarchal society. A shared white identity was celebrated, and men's authority over both women and First Nations people was reinforced through myriad daily practices. Yet as much as the particular alignment of race and gender in colonial British Columbia gave birth to a homosocial white male culture, it also fostered the widespread practice of white-Aboriginal relationships. It is to those intimate relationships between white men and First Nations women that this thesis now turns.

Chapter Three:
‘The Prevailing Vice’: Mixed-Race Relationships and
Colonial Discourse

I: Introduction

In 1870, Anglican missionary R.C. Lundin Brown urged the English public to support evangelical efforts in the obscure locale of Lillooet, British Columbia. In his little wooden church among the mountains, he wrote, he annually preached a sermon, usually in the week of Lent, against what he called “the prevailing vice, concubinage with native women.”¹ Brown went on to speak of “Troops of young Indian girls” who annually migrated to Lillooet to live with white men in “tumble-down cabins.” Such relationships, more than damaging Aboriginal women, imperiled the morality of their white partners. None, wrote Brown, “could live intimately with persons of low tone and habits without sinking to their level.”²

Brown’s tirade speaks to two widely held and interdependent beliefs about sexual, domestic, and nuptial relations between First Nations women and white men in colonial British Columbia: that Aboriginal women were sexually dangerous and that white men were in danger of being deracinated. Along with other self-appointed guardians of racial segregation and sexual morality, Brown feared that white-Aboriginal relationships would lead white men to “go native.” In relinquishing their status as white men through their relationships with First Nations women, they would hinder the colony’s effort to become an orderly, respectable settler society. This

¹ R.C. Lundin Brown, British Columbia. The Indians and Settlers at Lillooet. Appeal for Missionaries (London, R. Clay, Sons, and Taylor, 1870) p6.

² Brown, British Columbia, p7.

chapter explores the connections between white-Aboriginal relationships and the making of colonial society in British Columbia. It first discusses how historians have analyzed mixed-race sexual relationships and marriages. It then addresses the place of mixed-race relationships in colonial British Columbian society and tentatively assesses the character of these relations. The chapter then turns to the contested and fraught place these relationships held in colonial discourse, analyzing popular constructions of First Nations women, mixed-race relationships, and mixed-blood people.

Throughout this analysis, I call attention to the extent to which mixed-race relationships were seen as an acute threat to the development of a white society in British Columbia and attempt to tease out the social implications of this contention. In particular, I argue that relations with Aboriginal women were represented as potent agents of male decline, as vehicles through which men would be stripped of all the better attributes of the white race. Like the white male homosocial culture discussed in Chapter Two, British Columbia's mixed-race community became constructed as a barrier to the establishment of a respectable white settler colony, and in need of immediate reform.

II. Historiography

Mixed-race relationships in British Columbia are a curious historical phenomenon that are simultaneously understudied and thoroughly analyzed. The existing historical literature, dominated by studies of the fur-trade elite, is marked both by substantive theoretical problems and topical oversights. Recent international

literature, however, provides examples of how studies of popular mixed-race relationships can inform our analyses not only of First Nations experience, but of the project of colonialism itself.

The observation that intimate relationships between First Nations women and white men were a significant part of British Columbia's social fabric has been common in historical analyses since the late nineteenth-century.³ In the 1970s, inspired by growing interests in both women's and Aboriginal history, mixed-race relationships in the western Canadian fur trade provided the subject matter for two classic and innovative texts of Canadian gender history by Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer S.H. Brown which inspired interest even from American audiences.⁴ Relations between white men and First Nations women were also touched on by students of the British Columbian fur-trade, most notably Robin Fisher.⁵ These works by no means exhaust

³ See, for instance, Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of British Columbia, 1792-1887, Volume XXXII in The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft (San Francisco, The History Company, 1887) p249-250.

⁴ Sylvia Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties': Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg, Watson & Dwyer, 1980); Jennifer S.H. Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1980). For American works which are overtly inspired by Van Kirk's work, see Jacqueline Peterson's "Women Dreaming: The Religiopsychology of Indian White Marriages and the Rise of a Métis Culture" and John Mark Faragher, "The Custom of the Country: Cross Cultural Marriages in the Far Western Fur Trade," both in Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1988)

⁵ Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890, Second Edition (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992) especially p93, p113.

the topic of mixed-race relationships in British Columbia. Both Van Kirk and Brown deal with British Columbia only as a part of the larger fur-trade west, and do not grapple meaningfully with regional specificities, and Fisher mentions mixed-race relationships only in passing. All three associate mixed-race relationships and *métissage* particularly with the fur-trade and suggest that its decline in the mid-nineteenth-century spelled the end, or at least the deterioration, of mixed-marriage.⁶ This narrow topical focus is compounded by Van Kirk and Brown's emphasis on fur-trade officers.⁷ The net result is a narrow view of fur-trade society that tends to leave significant portions of the European and the Aboriginal population un-analyzed. But that examining mixed-race relationships outside of the fur-trade bourgeoisie before the mid-nineteenth-century is both a necessity and possibility is affirmed by a diverse collection of recent studies.⁸

⁶ See Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' Chapter 10; Brown, Strangers in Blood, Chapter 9; Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p113.

⁷ Brown admits this bias. Brown, Strangers in Blood, pxxi.

⁸ See Sylvia Van Kirk, "Founding Families: Tracing the Fortunes of Five HBC/Native Families in Early Victoria," forthcoming in BC Studies; Jean Barman, "Invisible Women: Aboriginal Mothers and Mixed-Race Daughters in Rural Pioneer British Columbia," unpublished paper 12 February 1996; Jean Barman, "Lost Okanagan: In Search of the First Settler Families," Okanagan History (1996) p9-20; Jean Barman, "New Land, New Lives: Hawaiian Settlement in British Columbia," in Hawaiian Journal of History 29 (1995) p1-32; Robert A.J. McDonald, "Lumber Society on the Industrial Frontier: Burrard Inlet, 1863-1886," Labour/Le Travail 33 (Spring 1994) p69-96; Constance Backhouse, "The Ceremony of Marriage," in Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada (Toronto, The Osgoode Society, 1991); Sarah Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the 'Indian Woman' in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada," in Great Plains Quarterly 13 (Summer 1993) p147-161; David Peterson-del Mar, "Intermarriage and

Historians need to broaden the context in which they recognize white-Aboriginal relationships and also work to re-conceptualize race and gender in these unions. In keeping with the wider priorities of 1970s feminist historiography, Van Kirk especially emphasizes the importance of First Nations' agency to inter-marriages, arguing that "It is necessary to extent this concept of 'active agent' to the women."⁹ It is in this commitment to explore female agency where Van Kirk's brilliance lies. Yet by emphasizing Aboriginal and female volition, she perhaps fails to fully interrogate the extent to which sexuality and conquest were intertwined.¹⁰ Stories of love and affection between the races can function to eclipse coercion and oppression. Mary Louise Pratt, examining travel literature, argues that "transracial love plots" are "imaginings in which European supremacy is guaranteed by affective and social bonding."¹¹ Thus pressing the consensual and committed character of white-Aboriginal relationships, whether in historical research or literature, can obscure their

Agency: A Chinookan Case Study," Ethnohistory 42:1 (Winter 1995) p1-30.

⁹ Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' p7.

¹⁰ On this in the American literature, see Antonia I. Castañeda, "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History: The Discourse, Politics, and Decolonization of History," Pacific Historical Review (1992) p501-533; Antonia I. Castañeda, "Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest: Amerindian Women and the Spanish Conquest of Alta California," in Adela de la Torre and Beatriz M. Pasquera, eds., Building with Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993). The role of sexuality in British Columbia First Nations contact narratives is touched upon by Wendy Wickwire, "To See Ourselves as the Other's Other: Nlaka'pamux Contact Narratives," Canadian Historical Review LXXV: I (1994) p1-20.

¹¹ Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (London, Routledge, 1992) p97.

more coercive aspects and the larger brutality of colonialism. In doing so, as Ron Bourgeault points out, such analyses "fit the neo-colonial model, in that they attempt to redefine historic relationships in a new light in order to retain the status quo."¹²

The characterization of mixed-race relationships as respectful, moreover, has led one international commentator – admittedly an extreme one – to claim that the example of the Canadian fur trade proves that interracial sex across the British empire was more consensual than feminist critics would have it.¹³

There is still much to be said about mixed-race relationships in western Canada. Recent international literature suggests that these relations are a useful vehicle for exploring the fraught connections between race, gender, and the making of colonial societies. Historians of Hispanic America and the Caribbean, blessed with a uniquely revealing legal archive, have examined how marriage functioned to create, challenge, or perpetuate racial and class boundaries,¹⁴ an insight which is echoed by

¹² Ron Bourgeault, "Race, Class and Gender: Colonial Domination of Indian Women," in Socialist Studies: A Canadian Annual No. 5 (1989) p104-5. Also see Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," in Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall, eds., Writing Women's History: International Perspectives (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991)

¹³ Ronald Hyam, Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990) p206. For needed critiques of Hyam's romantic view of white male "sexual opportunity" see Mark T. Berger, "Imperialism and Sexual Exploitation: A Response to Ronald Hyam's 'Empire and Sexual Opportunity,'" Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 17:1 (1988) p83-89; Margaret Strobel, "Sex and Work in the British Empire," Radical History Review 54 (1992) 177-186.

¹⁴ See Verena Martinez-Alier, Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society, Second

historians of the American west.¹⁵ Scholars of Australasia¹⁶ and Asia have made important connections between race, sexual practice, and class in colonial settings. Focusing on nineteenth and twentieth-century Dutch Indies and French Indochina, Ann Stoler brilliantly probes the interaction between poor whites and Asians, expressed most potently through *métissage*. "What is striking," she writes, "when we look to identify the contours and composition of any particular colonial community is the extent to which control over sexuality and reproduction were at the core of defining colonial privilege and its boundaries."¹⁷ To Stoler, relationships between people of

Edition (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1989 [1974]); Ramón A. Guitiérrez, When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1849 (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991)

¹⁵ Peggy Pascoe, "Race, Gender, and Intercultural Relations: The Case of Intermarriage," Frontiers XII: 1 (1991) p5-18. Also see Susan L. Johnson, "Sharing Bed and Board: Cohabitation and Cultural Difference in Central Arizona Mining Towns, 1863-1873," in Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds., The Women's West (Norman, University of Oklahoma, 1987)

¹⁶Ann McGrath, "'Black Velvet': Aboriginal women and their relations with white men in the Northern Territory, 1910-1940, in Kay Daniels, ed., So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History (Sydney, Fontana/Collins, 1984)

¹⁷Ann Laura Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," Comparative Studies in Society and History 31:1 (January 1989) p154. See also Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1995) Ch 4; Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in Micaela di Leonardo, ed., Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era (Berkeley, University of California, 1991); Ann Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia", Comparative Studies in Society and History 34: 3 (July 1992) 514-551; Ann L. Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," American Ethnologist 16: 3 (1989) p634-660.

different racial groups are not merely symbolic of other, deeper relations, but are indeed constituent of the colonial enterprise itself.

Such observations have two important lessons for this examination of mixed-race relationships and colonial discourse in colonial British Columbia. Firstly, they suggest that these relationships were crucial to the establishment and maintenance of social boundaries. Secondly, they encourage us to examine how mixed-race relationships were about European, as well as Aboriginal, status and identity, especially for working-class men. This analysis of mixed-race relationships in colonial British Columbia thus attempts to occupy that crucial historiographical space between existing analyses and plausible inspirations. Responding to gaps in the existing literature on British Columbia, it attempts to introduce a more critical analysis of power relations in mixed-race relationships. It also endeavours to broaden the subject to include non-elite, non-fur-trading populations throughout the 1858 to 1871 period. Responding to rich international analysis, it examines mixed-race relationships as both symbolic and constituent of the power relations upon which colonialism depends.

These goals entail certain methodological difficulties. The limited resources available to nineteenth-century historians working with written sources necessarily impose restrictions on the extent to which any scholar, particularly a non-Aboriginal one, can deduce First Nations' experiences.¹⁸ Even white perspectives on mixed-race

¹⁸ These issues are debated extensively by historians and anthropologists. See Sylvia Rodríguez, "Subaltern Historiography on the Rio Grande: On Gutiérrez's *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away*," *American Ethnologist* 21: 4 (1994) p892-899. I

relationships can be difficult to read. In contrast to the intimate sources available to fur-trade historians working in an earlier period, few of the many authors who commented on mixed-race relationships in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871 were themselves members of white-Aboriginal unions. Those who were rarely admit it, and sometimes suppressed their Aboriginal families from their public memories.¹⁹ The historian, then, is left almost entirely with records penned by observers or those claiming to be observers rather than participants. Available sources, moreover, tend to be written by missionaries and journalists who had specific interests in presenting an exaggerated and sensational portrait of social and sexual life in British Columbia. The necessarily unrepresentative character of the source material renders it impossible to construct a division between the experience and representation of mixed-race

thank Victoria Henfler for this and many other citations. Also see Gananath Obeyesekere, The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992); Marshall Sahlins, How 'Natives' Think About Captain Cook, for Example (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995); Georges E. Sioui, For an Amerindian Auto-History: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic, Sheila Fischman, trans. (Montreal, McGill-Queens Press, 1992)

¹⁹R.H. Pidcock, for instance, does not mention an Aboriginal partner but Anglican Bishop George Hills singled him out in 1865 for living with a First Nations woman at Comox. See George Hills, "Journal 1865" [Transcript] Anglican Church of Canada, Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster/ Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, [hereafter ADNMEPBC] p98; R.H. Pidcock, "Adventures in Vancouver Island 1862," [Transcript] British Columbia Archives and Records Service [hereafter BCARS] Add Mss 728, Vol 4a. A more famous example is John Tod, whose memoirs make no mention of his Aboriginal families despite his plurality of local attachments. See Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, "Career of a Scotch Boy Who Became Hon. John Tod: An Unfashionable True Story" and Madge Wolfenden, "Appendix: Notes on the Tod Family," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly [hereafter BCHQ] XVIII (July-October 1954) p133-238.

relationships, a complexity this analysis tries to respect.

Despite these difficulties, careful and sensitive reading make it possible to hazard some tentative analyses of the extent and character of mixed-race relationships in colonial British Columbia. It is, moreover, surely reasonable to grapple with the prevailing constructions of First Nations women, mixed-race relationships, and mixed-blood peoples. In an effort to describe and analyze mainstream colonial discourse, I undoubtedly sometimes obscure those rebellious voices who disputed both the form and content of this dialogue. Yet the recognition of resistance should not blind us to the increasing hegemony of certain key representations of First Nations women, mixed-race relationships, and mixed-blood peoples. Such representations were related to, but never simply reflective of, the social history of mixed-race relationships in colonial British Columbia.

III: Mixed-Race Relationships in British Columbia Society

Conjugal, domestic, and sexual relations between white men and First Nations women, whether full or mixed-blood, were a key component of British Columbia society. On the coast and in the interior, on the mainland and Vancouver Island, white men formed and maintained relationships with Aboriginal women. Yet mixed-marriages were probably most common in the fur-trade community and throughout the white working-class, both rural and urban.

British Columbia's fur-trade community, like its equivalents in the prairies, had a long tradition of fostering mixed-marriages. By the mid-nineteenth-century, mixed-

relationships were losing their widespread acceptance amongst the higher echelons of the fur-trade. Yet the wage-earning fur-trading class remained deeply enmeshed in domestic and conjugal relationships with Aboriginal women. After attending a ball held at Fort Langley in 1858, Prince Edward Islander C.C. Gardiner remarked that "almost all the Co.'s wives are the native Squaws."²⁰ Anglican missionary Richard Dowson found a similar state of affairs in Fort Rupert.²¹ In 1861, an experienced Orkney servant told Anglican Bishop George Hills that "The custom of living with Indian women was universal in the Hudson's Bay Company service."²²

Mixed-race relationships were also a significant part of other social and economic context. Although the mining towns of the interior were often constructed as inherently male, a significant portion of the mining population was engaged in relationships with First Nations women. White male homosocial culture and mixed-race social environments often overlapped. Travelling the up-country, disillusioned miner John Emmerson wrote that "with one exception the whole of the other white men who had gone to Douglas unmarried had each taken unto themselves, not a wife,

²⁰ Robie L. Reid, ed., C.C. Gardiner, "To The Fraser River Mines in 1858," BCHQ I [October 1937] p248.

²¹ Richard Dowson to Sir, 04 04 1859, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1858-1861," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 1, p17.

²² George Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," [Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, MS 65a, PSA 57, p370.

but a woman in the shape of an ugly Indian squaw."²³ On his tour of the interior in 1861, Hills noted that a group of miners "allowed that every man kept an Indian squaw."²⁴ Mining communities were not as much without women as they were without white women.

Mixed-race relationships were also common in the scattered interior ranching and agricultural communities. George Grant, secretary of Sanford Flemming's surveying party, noted that around Kamloops, "most of the settlers live with squaws, or Klootchman as they are called on the Pacific," referring to the regional term for a First Nations woman or wife.²⁵ Hills, whose interest in mixed-race relationships rarely waned, wrote of the few agricultural settlers on the mainland, that "Many men are living unmarried with Indian women."²⁶ Rural Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands did not present a substantially different picture. In May 1865, the Anglican Missionary catechist for Comox, on the Governor's request, completed an informal

²³ John Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, and Adventures by John Emmerson of Wolsingham (Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1865) p37.

²⁴ George Hills, "Journal 1861," [Transcript], ADNM/EPBC, p88. In the published version, this becomes "They allowed that every man lived irregularly with Indians." See Third Report of the Columbia Mission with List of Contributions, 1861 (London, Rivingtons [1862]) p19. Also see George Hills, "Journal 1 Jan-21 July 1862" [Transcript], ADNM/EPBC, p24, p50.

²⁵ George M. Grant, Ocean to Ocean: Sanford Fleming's Expedition Through Canada in 1872 (Toronto, James Cambell & Son, 1873) p273.

²⁶ Bishop of Columbia to the Secretary of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, 08 05 1860, Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Diocese of British Columbia Archives, [hereafter ADBCA] Text 57, Box 3, File 3, "Bishop Hills Correspondence Book, 1859-1976," p10.

census. He found that twelve white men were married, while another six were "co-habiting," presumably with Aboriginal women.²⁷ Methodist missionary Ebenezer Robson, visiting Salt Spring Island's north settlement, wrote that "The great sins of this place - as at Nanaimo - are Adultery, Drunkenness, & Sabbath breaking. There are 9 men now in this settlement...of their 9 men 5 are living with Indian women in a state of adultery."²⁸ Written sources more frequently document the occurrence of mixed-race relationships in white settlements, but white men also resided with First Nations families in their territories. A survey of the essentially uncolonized Gulf of Georgia in 1860, for instance, enumerated white men "among" many villages, such as William Hughes, who lived amongst the Yukallas of Kupur Island with his wife and three children.²⁹

While mixed-race relationships may have been more common in backwoods locales, they were a significant feature of urban life, especially among the growing working-class in Victoria, New Westminster, Nanaimo, and later, Burrard Inlet. Visiting Victoria, Canadian miner George Blair noticed that "there is scarcely a White man in the place but keeps one of these dirty filthy disgusting Cyprians." Others

²⁷ J.C.B. Cave to Colonial Secretary, 03 10 1863, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, File 280/1, Mflm B-1313. He did not specify the race of these women. Also see Eighth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1866 (London, Rivingtons, 1867) p24.

²⁸ Ebenezer Robson, "Diary," BCARS, Mflm 17A, np. Emphasis original.

²⁹ George William Heaton to W.A.G. Young, 16 06 1860, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1333, File 748/24a.

made similar comments³⁰ A Nanaimo moralist wrote in a similar vein: "The notorious fact that Nanaimo is pre-eminent for the number of white men who have for months and years pursued a system of debauchery and vice, in their keeping Indian women, and exchanging or abandoning them at their pleasure."³¹ In the 1930s and 1940s, Vancouver city archivist J.S. Matthews interviewed local seniors, both white and Aboriginal, compiling information on what he called the "Indian Wives of Whitemen." His files detailed and named some thirty-seven white men with First Nations partners who lived around Vancouver before 1886. Most were men who worked in the infant forestry industry of Burrard Inlet, including a logger, a bull-puncher, a tug-boat operator, a millman, along with the owners of small businesses.³²

Limited quantitative evidence confirms these diverse impressionistic sources. No official nominal census was taken of colonial British Columbia. However, probably because of the colony's imminent entry into Confederation, a Esquimalt police constable took a door-to-door census of Victoria in the spring of 1871.³³

³⁰ George Blair, "Diary, Feb.17 1862 to Dec. 29, 1863" [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 186, p19; Wm. Mark, Cariboo: A True and Correct Narrative to the Cariboo Gold Diggings, British Columbia (Stockton, W.M. Wright, 1863) p18.

³¹ Robin Hood, "From Nanaimo" Daily Press, 28 06 1861.

³² "Indian Wives of White Men, Burrard Inlet: All Had Indian Wives," in "Indian Wives of Whitemen," J.S. Matthews Collection, City of Vancouver Archives, [hereafter CVA] Add Mss 54. Vol. 13, File 06612.

³³ Vancouver Island, Police and Prisons Department, "Esquimalt Charge Book 1862-1866," BCARS, GR 0428. To my knowledge, the only other work which utilizes this source is Irene Genevieve Marie Zaffaroni very useful thesis, "The Great Chain of Being: Racism and Imperialism in Colonial Victoria, 1858-1871," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1987. The constable was probably none other than ever-

Recorded in dull pencil at the back of an old charges book, this relatively untapped source specifies the race, age, and gender of household members. It does not detail their relationship to each other. I have defined households with an adult white male and an adult First Nations woman as "mixed-race family households." Residences containing an adult man and woman of the same race are designated "White," "First Nations," "Black" and "Chinese" family households. Households containing an adult man and woman of different racial configuration are defined as "Other Mixed-Race Family Households." This categorization probably eclipses single-parent families. But since no Aboriginal women were enumerated as the sole adult in households including white children, this has little impact on an analysis of mixed-race relationships.

This census recorded a total of 581 family households in Victoria that were identified by race. (See Table 3.I) Of these, 60 were mixed-race family households, and 31 had resident children. Put differently, over 10 percent of all family households were made up of an adult Aboriginal woman and an adult white man, and another 3.8 percent were mixed-race family households of different composition. When analyzed by street, the census indicate that mixed-race families were clustered in the poorer districts lying at the outskirts of the city's North and South end. Almost one quarter of the mixed-race families enumerated lived on Store Street alone and over 80 percent of mixed-race family households were located on Store, Johnson, Cormorant, Pioneer,

vigilant Jeremiah McCarthy. See "Census," British Colonist, 16 04 1871, for the comment that "Government is engaged to taking a census of the city and district and has detailed officer McCarthy for the duty."

and Broughton and Kane Streets.

Table 3.I: Racial Composition of Family Households,
Victoria, 1871

	Number	Percentage of Family Households	Percentage of all Households
Total Households	1025	n/a	100
Total Family Households	581	100	56.7
White Family Households	404	69.5	25.4
Mixed-Race Family Households	60	10.3	5.9
First Nations Family Households	54	9.3	5.3
Black Family Households	31	5.3	3
Other Mixed-Race Family Households	22	3.8	2.1
Chinese Family Households	10	1.8	1

Source: "Esquimalt Charges Book," p45-105. All numbers are rounded off, and do not equal 100.

This data probably meaningfully underestimates mixed-race relationships for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Songish [Lekwammen] settlement, located across the inner harbour, was not canvassed in the census, and outlying neighbourhoods where mixed-race families congregated were also excluded.³⁴ Secondly, the census-taker

³⁴ On this community, see John Lutz, "Gender and Work in Lekwammen Families, 1843-1970," unpublished paper.

apparently defined race in a way that produced an unusually expansive definition of whiteness by nineteenth-century British Columbian standards. In keeping with local practice, upper-class mixed-race people were classified as white, including the families of former Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) Chief Factor and Governor James Douglas and his half-Cree wife Amelia Connolly, not to mention their politician-physician son-in-law, John Helmcken.³⁵ More significantly, the children of households with an adult Aboriginal woman and an adult white man were always categorized as "white," as were some children living in otherwise First Nations households. Thus people of mixed heritage, although popularly considered mixed-race, were identified as white.

Most significantly, the 1871 census measures the community where mixed-race relationships were likely least common at the moment of time when these unions were probably declining. First, it enumerates Victoria alone, the capital, commercial centre, and seat of formal culture. Here, mixed-race relationships were probably less common than elsewhere and less likely to be acknowledged. Second, this census captures Victoria at the close of the colonial period. Even if mixed-race relationships had been common throughout the 1858-1871 period, massive population decline among the First Nations, especially on the coast, had reduced the numbers in Victoria.

However measured, mixed-race relationships were an important part of social life in colonial British Columbia. In city and town, on the Island and the Mainland, in

³⁵ Both of these families were enumerated on Blanshard Street. See "Esquimalt Charges Book," p100-101.

the interior and on the coast, in white settlements or Aboriginal territory, conjugal and domestic relations between white men and First Nations women were a significant feature of the social landscape. They were, however, probably most common amongst the fur-trading population and amongst the working-class, whether resident in Victoria's outlying districts or in upcountry mining towns.

IV: Character of Mixed-Race Relationships

The character of mixed-race relationships is a more complex issue. Historians have usually told a story of declining honour and increasing exploitation. "An Indian wife was a positive advantage to a fur trader but not to a settler," writes Fisher. "Some settlers did form temporary liaisons with Indian women, but more commonly they provided merely a temporary satisfaction of desires."³⁶ Yet this "fall from grace" model romanticizes earlier mixed-race relationships and ignores the relatively permanent and mutual mixed-race relationships that existed well beyond the close of nineteenth-century. I will argue that white-Aboriginal relationships were varied. Some were permanent unions symbolized by white or Aboriginal ceremony. Others were casual and temporary, based on the exchange of goods or cash, or underpinned by coercion and violence. Whatever their particular hue, these relationships were played out against the backdrop of power relations of race and gender in colonial British Columbia.

³⁶ Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p113. Also see Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' p158-164.

As Van Kirk and Barman have recently analyzed, many consensual relationships between white men and Aboriginal women were relatively permanent. Missionaries described encountering couples who had lived together for years without the benefit of white ceremony. It was usually the event of marriage, rather than the relationship itself, that inspired comment. In the 1860s, Methodist Thomas Crosby remembered, five mixed-race couples with children were married in one missionary visit to Chilliwack.³⁷ In 1860 and 1861, another Methodist, Robson, married at least two mixed-race couples with substantial conjugal histories; one with two daughters and another that had lived together for nine years and also had two children.³⁸

Some of these relationships were unsanctioned by church marriage by choice. When questioned by missionaries, some white men argued that if they wedded by Christian ceremony, their First Nations partners would become too secure and thus less satisfactory mates. Hills wrote about one Fort Rupert couple who had lived together for thirteen years. The white man "objected to marriage because if she knew he was legally bound to her she would probably fall back into her old habits & perhaps cohabit with Indian men & expect him to be home to keep notwithstanding, he said this had happened in several cases when men had married." Yet when Hills asked this

³⁷ Thomas Crosby, Among the An-ko-me-nums of the Pacific Coast (Toronto, William Briggs, 1907) p180.

³⁸ Robson, "Diary," np.

man if "he intended life long fidelity," he said yes.³⁹ Other white men explained to missionaries that it was their Aboriginal partners that refused marriage. A missionary wrote that after a Lillooet sermon, a repentant white man arguing that "their Kloodchmen" often refused the marriage bond.⁴⁰

Other mixed-race couples, however, sought and sometimes attained the status of a legal marriage under white Christian ceremony. The marriage registers of six Anglican churches from the years between 1858 and 1871 were surveyed: St. Paul's of Nanaimo, St. John's of Victoria, St. Mary's the Virgin of Sapperton, St. John the Divine of Yale, Christ Church of Hope. While the information contained in these registers is frequently incomplete or partial, I have identified 16 mixed-race marriages out of the total of 126 listed.⁴¹

An examination of these sixteen unions is revealing. Firstly, as with the white relationships that will be discussed in Chapter Eight, there were significant age

³⁹George Hills, "Journal 1 Jan-10 June 1863" [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p29. Also see Hills, "Journal 1863-1861," p369-70.

⁴⁰ Brown, British Columbia, p7.

⁴¹ "Register of Baptisms and Marriages, 1860-1881, St. Paul's Nanaimo," ADBCA, Text 30, Box 8; "Parochial Register of Baptisms and Marriages for district of St. John's Victoria 1860-1871," ADBCA, Text 202, Box 6; "Holy Trinity Cathedral Marriage Register," CVA, Add Mss 603, Volume I, Mflm m-21; "Christ Church Hope Marriage Register 1862-1872," ADNW/EPBC, RG4.0.34; "St. John the Divine Yale Marriage Register," ADNW/EPBC. All the mixed-race marriages analyzed were conducted on Vancouver Island, although this is likely more a result of the churches selected than a reflection of actual practice. As indication of a First Nations or mixed-blood person, I utilized name, place of birth, and occupation of father. There were no marriages where both men and women were Aboriginal.

differences between the men and women. Of the twelve couples for whom ages were given, the men were on average 31.25 years old, while the First Nations women were 21.6 years. Age differences probably exacerbated racial and gendered difference.⁴²

These marriages also confirm that mixed-race relationships were not confined to the fur-trade. Except for the three men who married daughters of the elite Work fur-trade family,⁴³ all the white grooms listed in these marriage registers had distinctly working-class occupations characteristic of the coastal, resource communities in which they lived: they were sailors, miners, a plasterer, a stonemason, a machinist, a store clerk, a constable, and a labourer. All the First Nations women were members of a local British Columbian nation, and most were members of coastal nations whose territories were adjacent to white settlement. Four were registered as "Tongas" [Lekwammen]; four were Nanaimo, four were from Fort Simpson, two were Seshel [Seshelt], and one Stickeen. This suggests a pattern, akin to marriages between Plains women and resident fur-traders, of marriages between coastal women and white working-class men.⁴⁴

To what extent the image captured by the marriage registers is representative of

⁴² David Peterson del Mar, What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence Against Wives (Cambridge & London, Harvard University Press, 1996) p15.

⁴³ See Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' p134-5.

⁴⁴ See Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' p29. On female Aboriginal ethnicity and white male rank to the south, see William R. Swagerty, "Marriage and Settlement Patters of Rocky Mountain Trappers and Traders," Western Historical Quarterly XI:2 (April 1980) p179.

mixed-race unions in colonial British Columbia is unclear. It is unlikely that they represent the majority of mixed-race relationships, which probably went untouched by Christian ceremony. Many mixed-race relationships, were, however, likely sanctified by Aboriginal ceremonies like those described by Van Kirk.⁴⁵ In 1866, Bishop Hills described a union of a white man and a Tsimshian woman: "Married that is not of course with Xian rites or in legal union but as Indians marry, & as I suppose would satisfy the essentials of marriage, as for instance in Scotland."⁴⁶ Archivist Matthews interviewed Capilano and Musquem elder August Jack Khahtsahlano about nineteenth-century mixed-marriage practices:

Major Matthews: – 'I was taking to Mrs Walker...and she told me that her father married an Indian girl at Musqueam, and that it was done with much ceremony; that Old Kiapilano took 'Portuguese Joe' by the arm, and another chief took the Indian girl by her arm, and put them together, and said they were going to be man and wife, and then gave them a lot of blankets, and then put all the blankets in a big canoe, and sat Joe and his wife on top, and they set out for Gastown. What do you think of it?

August: – 'That's the way all Indians Marry. S'pose I've got a son, and he wants to marry. I go to you and say, 'My son want to marry your girl.' And he says, 'Alright, come on Tuesday', or someday like that. And, they tell all their friends and each one of them come with his blanket; and they boy come with his blanket; and that's the way the Indian get married.'⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties,' p36.

⁴⁶ George Hills, "Hills Journal 1866," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p65.

⁴⁷ "Memorandum of conversation of August Jack Khahtsahlano, who called at the City Archives," 31 October 1838, "Indian Wives of Whitemen," CVA, Add Mss 54, Vol. 13, File 06612, p2-3. Mrs. Walker would be the daughter of the white bridegroom, Joe Silvey, aka 'Portuguese Joe.'

These mixed-race relationships, then, were sanctified much like Aboriginal ones.

Yet not all mixed-race relationships were legitimated by ceremony of any sort, and not all were relatively permanent. Some couples practised a kind of serial monogamy. Hills recounted the story of one such couple: "It is too intricate a matter to unravel the tangled thread of their lives & reinstate each wife to her first husband & each husband to his first wife."⁴⁸ In a mobile society, mixed-race unions could be formed and severed on geographical grounds. In the late 1850s, a naval officer hired a white hunting guide, Phil. At Cowichan, they were joined by an Aboriginal woman, and Phil "very coolly" informed him "she was his wife when he came there."⁴⁹

Richard Mayne described these unions as normal. He wrote that "Whenever a white man takes up his residence among them, they will always supply him with a wife; and if he quits the place and leaves her there, she is not the least disgraced in the eyes of her tribe."⁵⁰

While matrilineal societies were probably relatively accepting of women's marital and sexual histories, assuming that First Nations women were not damaged when abandoned seems romantic. That Aboriginal women were "used as slaves, and turned off at will" became a key point in melodramatic and paternalistic missionary

⁴⁸ Hills, "Journal 1866," p65.

⁴⁹ Capt. Fenton Aylmer, ed., A Cruise in the Pacific: From the Log of a Naval Officer, Volume II (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1860) p315.

⁵⁰ Richard Charles Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (Toronto, S.R. Publishers, 1969 [London, John Murray, 1862]) p248.

critiques of mixed-race relationships.⁵¹ Despite the excesses of this rhetoric, the cessation of mixed-race unions could be a sign of uncaring white male power and mobility. Even if cherished in life, Aboriginal women were sometimes rejected by surviving relatives after their partners' death. Khatsahlano told of his sister, Louisa, whose white in-laws discarded her after her husband died: "But that's the way they do with Indian woman who marries whiteman; when their husbands die, they kick the woman out -- because she's 'just a squaw.'" ⁵² First Nations partners could also be abandoned when men took a white wife. An elderly Vancouverite told Matthews about the marital history of sawmill-owner S.W. Moody. He had four children by an Aboriginal woman, whom he rejected when his white wife moved from Victoria to join him in his large new house in Burrard Inlet.⁵³ In 1868, a middle-aged Okanagan rancher named John Hall Allison married a twenty-three year old white woman, Susan Moir.⁵⁴ With this act, Moir's First Nations partner Suzanne was displaced from the main house and, tellingly, from Susan Moir Allison's published memoirs, although she

⁵¹ Third Report of the Columbia Mission with List of Contributions, 1861 (London, Rivingtons [1862])p26.

⁵² "Memorandum of conversation of August Jack Khahtsahlano, who called at the City Archives," 31 10 1838, in Matthews, "Indian Wives of White Men," CVA, Add Mss 54, Vol.13, File 06612, p2.

⁵³ "Memo of conversation (over the phone) with Miss Muriel Crakanthorp," in Matthews, "Indian Wives of White Men," CVA, Add Mss 54, Vol. 13, File 06612, p2.

⁵⁴ "Christ Church Hope Marriage Register 1862-1872." This register has Allison as 38 years old, while Barman writes that he is 43. See Barman, "Lost Okanagan," p12.

and her children continued to be in regular contact with the white Allison's.⁵⁵

Some such rejections could have tragic results for First Nations women. After transcribing his interview with Khahtsahlano, Matthews added: "August deeply resents such treatment of Indian wives of whitemen."⁵⁶ Anger, resentment, poverty, and loneliness were the obvious results for First Nations women, but sometimes harsher responses occurred. In 1861, a white man in Nanaimo fought with, and subsequently replaced, his Aboriginal wife. In response, the first wife hung herself.⁵⁷ One letter-writer criticized the community's passivity around her death. "Surely Indian life is held cheap here," he commented.⁵⁸ Other women opted for revenge against the erring partner or his new mate. When New Westminster ship's steward Amador Molina "led home a 'blooming bride,'" his rejected First Nations partner set fire to his house.⁵⁹ An 1866 Salt Spring Island poisoning case revealed similar tensions. When accused of poisoning another man, fifteen year-old "half-breed" Mary Ann Sampson counter-accused Lucy, her white husband's former Aboriginal partner, of wanting to poison her. "I know that Lucy lived with my husband before I was married to him," argued

⁵⁵See Margaret Ormsby, ed., A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia: The Recollections of Susan Allison (Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 1976). See Barman, "Lost Okanagan," for a discussion of the multiple families of Allison and the multiple silences of Ormsby.

⁵⁶ Matthews, "Memorandum of conversation of August Jack Khahtsahlano," 31 10 1938, in "Indian Wives of White Men," CVA, p2.

⁵⁷ "Squaw Murder" Daily Press, 18 06 1861; N.P., "Nanaimo," Daily Press, 27 06 1861; Robin Hood, "From Nanaimo," Daily Press, 28 06 1861.

⁵⁸ N.P., "Nanaimo," Daily Press, 27 06 1861.

⁵⁹ "Another Fire," British Columbian, 14 11 1866

Sampson,⁶⁰ as if that fact alone was sufficient explanation for violence.

High rates of venereal disease in white hospitals may also hint at the frequency of casual sexual contact. For the year of 1870, syphilis was the most frequent complaint of patients at Victoria's hospital, affecting twelve of sixty-eight patients. At the New Westminster hospital, seven out of thirty-eight patients suffered from syphilis, which was the second most common ailment. Cariboo's hospital was less stricken by venereal disease, with only six out of thirty-three patients suffering from syphilis.⁶¹ The Aboriginal population, however, suffered the brunt of this disease's ravages. David Walker, ship's surgeon for the *HMS Grappler*, reported after a visit to the north coast that there was a "great amount of disease engendered amongst the localized Indians by the return to camp of men and women deeply tainted with Syphilis." The extent of infection, he continued "is frightful and the results are such as cannot be contemplated without fear."⁶² While it is important not to accept the nineteenth-century notion that disease invariably accompanied inter-racial sex, these figures do indicate some casual sexual contact.

⁶⁰ "Deposition of Mary Ann Sampson", 17 12 1866, British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents, 1857-1966" BCARS, GR 419, Box 6, File 1866/24 [hereafter "Attorney General Documents"].

⁶¹ A. Musgrave to Earl of Kimberley, 18 01 1871, Great Britain, Colonial Office, British Columbia, 1858-1871,"[hereafter CO 60] CO 60/43, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1451, p16, p18, p20 . In 1865, however, four out of twenty-cases at the Cariboo hospital were stricken with syphilis. See "Physicians Report of the Williams Creek Hospital for 1865," Cariboo Sentinel, 14 07 1865.

⁶²David Walker to Colonial Secretary, 21 10 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1372, File 1817.

Whether permanent, serial, or casual, the formation of white-Aboriginal unions could involve the exchange of cash or goods. Critics of mixed-race relationships often charged that white men cruelly purchased their Aboriginal partners. "It was not an uncommon thing for these poor blind heathen parents and relatives to sell their little daughters to the white men for the basest of purposes," wrote Crosby.⁶³ That this trade was an alteration of traditional systems of Aboriginal slavery was suggested by contemporary observers like Gilbert Sproat and by historians like Carol Cooper.⁶⁴ Certainly, the exchange of cash or goods could be a version of bride-price, a symbol of women's value, not men's disdain. As Wilson Duff points out, "Marriages arranged to form alliances between social groups, and accompanied by exchange of gifts, looked to the whites like a violation of the right of individuals to choose their own mates, and like the 'sale' of brides."⁶⁵

Whether accompanied by formal exchange or not, mixed-race relationships often were accompanied by negotiation and bartering. A poem by "Mosquito"

⁶³ Crosby, Among, p60.

⁶⁴ On slavery, Sproat wrote that "Men formerly were preferred to women, but since the Island has been colonized women have brought higher prices, owing to the encouragement given to prostitution among a young unmarried colonial population." Charles Lillard, ed., Gilbert M Sproat, The Nootka: Scenes and Studies of Savage Life (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1987 [1868]) p67. See Carol Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," Journal of Canadian Studies 27 (Winter 1992-3) p58-60

⁶⁵ Wilson Duff, The Indian History of British Columbia: Volume I, The Impact of the White Man (Victoria, Province of British Columbia Ministry of Tourism and Ministry Responsible for Culture, 1992 [1969]) p102.

published in the Cariboo Sentinel recounts a white man cajoling a First Nations woman into living with him. He offers her liquor, a wall-papered cabin, a bed, a stove, messages from friends, and "klosh waw-waw," or good talk. Calling her "love," he offers his humble goods in exchange for cohabitation:

Oh Mary, dear Mary! come home with me now,
 The sleigh from Mosquito has come;
 You promised to live in my little board house,
 As soon as the pap'ring was done –
 The fire brightly burns in the sheet iron stove,
 And the bed is made up by the wall;
 But it's lonesome, you know, these long winter nights,
 With no one to love me at all,
 Oh, Mary, dear Mary! come home with me now,
 Old George with his 'kewton' is here;
 You can, if you like, have your drink of old Tom,
 But I'd rather you'd drink lager beer –
 I've come all the way thro' the cold drifting snow,
 And brought you a message from Yaco;
 And these were the very last words that she said:
 'Klosh waw-waw delate mika chaco.' [Good talk, really, you should come]
 Oh, Mary, dear Mary! come home with me now,
 The time by the watch, love, is three –
 The night it grows colder, and George with the sleigh,
 Down the road, now, is waiting for me,
 She stopped by a stump on her way up the hill,
 And whisper'd for me not to follow,
 But pressing my hand ere I left her, she said,
 'Delate nika chaco tomollow.'"⁶⁶ [Really, I will come tomorrow]

His offering of material goods and drink combined with sweet words and promises suggests the amalgam of affection and exchange that could characterize relationships between First Nations women and white men in colonial British Columbia. It is

⁶⁶ Mosquito, "Mary Come Home," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 02 1869.

unclear what Aboriginal women expected from white partners, but when another white man refused to feed the kin of his First Nations partner, she left him, taking the household goods with her.⁶⁷ This combination of desire and dollars led some white observers to deem all mixed-race relationships as prostitution. This was part of a larger tendency of nineteenth-century, middle-class moralists to conflate all non-marital sex with prostitution. It is also a part of Europeans' tendency to confuse gift exchange with prostitution, and, as Ann McGrath points out, to utilize prostitution as a metaphor for sexual activity from which men could be excused and absolved.⁶⁸

Despite the racist excesses of this logic, prostitution clearly was one of the modes of sexual relations between white men and First Nations women. Informal trade took place along the road to Esquimalt⁶⁹ and outside of Victoria's theatre.⁷⁰ A handful of brothels existed, with First Nations women as labour and white and sometimes Chinese or Kanaka men as superintendents.⁷¹ Police constable Phillip

⁶⁷ "A Victim of Misplaced Confidence," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 24 05 1859.

⁶⁸ See McGrath, "Black Velvet," p236. On images of prostitution and mixed-blood women in Red River, see Erica Smith, "'Gentlemen, This is no Ordinary Trial': Sexual Narratives in the Trial of the Reverend Corbett, Red River, 1863," in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, ed., Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History (Peterborough, Westview Press, 1996)

⁶⁹In 1860, Hills argued that "The Road to Esquimalt on Sunday is lined with the poor Indian women offering to sell themselves to the white men passers by — and instances are to be seen of open bargaining." See Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," p509-510.

⁷⁰ "A Social Grievance," Vancouver Times, 04 04 1866.

⁷¹ Sgt. Blake testified that "the Chinamen kept a number of dens that were used as Indian brothels, and were a great nuisance." See "Cormorant Street Dens," British Colonist, 29 03 1866.

Hankin wrote confidentially described "about 200 Indian prostitutes living in Cormorant, Fisgard, and Store Streets in a state of filth, and dirt beyond all description." In the "Gully," these brothels were two and three stories high, with 6 to 8 people living in each room.⁷² Officials charged Na-hor, a Kanaka man, with maintaining such a place in Humbolt street in 1860.⁷³ Establishment such as these formed an important though probably small part of the colony's sex trade. In British Columbia's urban centres, dance houses were probably the main site of formal prostitution. In Victoria, scientist Robert Brown wrote in his private journal "A 'Squaw Dance House' has now commenced. Filled nightly with Indian women & miners...Some mere children."⁷⁴ A police constable claimed to have seen "squaws and white men" in another dance house in 1864. The men appeared to be miners, while "Most of the Squaws I have seen their get their living by prostitution I believe and some of them live with white men as wives."⁷⁵ Dance houses also flourished in

⁷² Phillip Hankin to Arthur Kennedy, 08 02 1866, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867," PAC, MG 11, CO 305/28, Mflm B-249 [hereafter CO 305]. Also see "Municipal Council," Daily Press, 05 09 1862, for "The Committee on Nuisances" description of brothels. Also see Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures, Volume I: "Journals of the Council, Executive Council, and Legislative Council of Vancouver Island, 1851-1866," p198.

⁷³ Na-hor was described as a Kanaka married to an Aboriginal woman, Catch-hus, in 1859. See "Selling Liquor to Indians," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 24 09 1859.

⁷⁴ Robert Brown, "Journal of the British Columbia Botanical Expedition, Nov. 24-Jan 29 1864," Robert Brown Collection, BCARS, Add Mss 794, Box 2, File 1a, p29.

⁷⁵Testimony of Thomas Patrick, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 3, File 1864/10.

smaller white centres like Lillooet, the Stickeen, and Camereontown.⁷⁶

Prostitution was probably a temporary or seasonal occupation for most of the First Nations women involved. Francis Poole, a mining engineer, wrote that "Queen Charlotte women went to spend the Winter at Victoria," and returned "loaded with blankets, trinkets, tobacco, whisky, and other presents, which they proceeded to distribute among their people."⁷⁷ Arguing for the introduction of a local contagious diseases act, the British Colonist insisted that in 1867 there were "about five hundred Indian women subsisting on prostitution, who from time to time return in many cases to distant tribes with the earnings of this traffic."⁷⁸ Casual participation in the sex trade could be facilitated by the lack of shame some Aboriginal cultures attached to the sex trade. As Cooper notes, prostitution could increase, rather than diminish a woman's status amongst the Tsimshian, Nishga'a and Haida.⁷⁹ Navy surgeon Edward Bogg wrote that "The open practice of habitual Prostitution is not considered as a disgrace, but as a highly legitimate and very lucrative calling, nor does the Indian warrior consider it as in any way derogatory to his manhood to subsist on the earnings

⁷⁶ Eleventh Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1869 (London, Rivingtons, 1870) p20-21; "The Indian Liquor Trade," Cariboo Sentinel, 14 07 1865; "Progress of Civilization," Victoria Press, 15 09 1862.

⁷⁷ John W. Lyndon, ed., Frances Poole, C.E., Queen Charlotte Islands: A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1972 [London, Hurst and Blackett, 1872]) p313.

⁷⁸ "Our Social Evil," British Colonist, 22 10 1867.

⁷⁹ Cooper, "Native Women," p59-60.

of his Squaws at this shameful trade."⁸⁰

What reformers labelled "prostitution" between First Nations men and women, moreover, was often likely a casual exchange of sex for goods. Like the young Ontario women in Karen Dubinsky's study, these women traded intimacy for small gifts.⁸¹ A man told miner and casual labourer Herman Francis Reinhart that in 1858, "the squaws got badly demoralized, the miners had plenty of money to spend with them, and they gave them whiskey...and they dressed up as fine as 'White Soiled Doves' do in California."⁸² The inquest into the death of Lucy Bones, who was found dead in her Barkerville cabin in 1870, is suggestive of such relationships. Charlie, a First Nations man, testified that he was at Lucy's when a white man, later identified as Charles Hughes, "came and asked to sleep there." She responded with flexible negotiations: "Lucy demanded money; the white man said he had none; Lucy told him it was very good if he would get some cocktails; he went and got one bottle; about midnight he went and got another bottle." In the end, testified Charlie, "Lucy and the white man slept in the bed."⁸³ Charlie's reconstruction of Bones' Saturday night is suggestive of another mode of white-Aboriginal relationships. Bones and Hughes'

⁸⁰ Dr. Edward B. Bogg, "Journal of Her Majesty's Hired Surveying Vessel, Beaver, 1863," Public Records Office [hereafter PRO], ADM 101/276, p16-16a.

⁸¹ Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929 (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1993)p78-9.

⁸² Doyce B. Nunis, ed., The Golden Frontier: The recollections of Herman Francis Reinhart, 1851-1869 (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1962) p12.

⁸³ "Sudden Death and Inquest," Cariboo Sentinel, 16 07 1870. The inquest absolved Charles Hughes of any culpability by deeming Bones' a death "by intemperance."

relationship was neither permanent nor domestic, but nor was it equivalent to the usual images of European prostitution.

The debated, negotiated, and contested character of these relationships should not blind us to the presence of coercion and violence in intimate relations between white men and Aboriginal women. Violence was present in permanent and domestic unions. HBC Chaplain Edward Cridge, tying up his lettuces, "heard a white man cursing an Indn. woman dreadfully threatening to kill her." "It was his 'Klutchimen,'" he added.⁸⁴ Such instances seem to have been common. Judge Pemberton argued that "the cowardly habit indulged in by certain men of beating squaws, was becoming as common as it was disgraceful."⁸⁵ One argued that violence was endemic to mixed-race relationships. "Hardly a day passes but one or more fights between squaws and squaw men transpire in that vicinity, and continual howling nightly is maintained by the drunken wretches who occupy or visit the miserable huts that have been erected along the bank of James Bay," wrote the British Colonist.⁸⁶

Such violence was similar to that meted out to women in same-race unions. Yet the nightly melees in Victoria's huts suggest that racial difference and colonialism affected both the intent and impact of male violence. As David Peterson del Mar points out in his study of Oregon, "Violence against Native American wives by Euro-

⁸⁴ Edward Cridge, "Diary, June 6, 1852- Oct. 19, 1854 and Feb. 10- June 3, 1858," [Transcript] Edward Cridge Papers, BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box 6, p105-6.

⁸⁵ "Beating a Squaw," British Colonist, 29 08 1861.

⁸⁶ "A Disorderly Neighbourhood," British Colonist, 14 10 1861.

American husbands was part of a larger pattern of general physical and sexual assault against Native American women by Euro-American men."⁸⁷ Given the broader context of this violence, it is not surprising that witnesses could be reticent to intervene.

When Jenny, a Tsimshian woman, refused Patrick Finnegan, a white man "who came to her house and wanted her company," he beat her and threatened to kill her. "Plenty of Indians were around but they were afraid to interfere," noted the British Colonist.⁸⁸

White men's sexual violence against First Nations women was associated with the larger colonial project of asserting British dominion. As Anne McClintock has recently shown, conquering land and conquering women were intimately twinned in colonial discourse.⁸⁹ Certainly sexual conquest was wedded to the assertion of white dominance in British Columbia. First Nations people at Yale complained "that the whites are almost constantly insulting their wives."⁹⁰ Racial and political conflicts between Aboriginal and white were blamed on such violence. Brown wrote that "The causes of nearly every quarrel between whites and Indians on this coast...may be summed up in three lines," the first of which was "White men taking liberties with their women."⁹¹ The Bute Inlet Massacre, where Chilcotin killed a white road crew,

⁸⁷ Peterson del Mar, What Trouble I Have Seen, p28.

⁸⁸ "Assault Case," Victoria Press, 24 02 1862.

⁸⁹ Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York, Routledge, 1995) p30.

⁹⁰ "Letter From Yale," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 01 09 1858.

⁹¹ "Extract of letter from Mr. Robert Brown, Commander of Exploring Expedition 1864, dated 1st June 1865, " in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 03 09 1866, CO 305/29, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-250. Also see Mayne, Four Years, p248.

was routinely explained as a response to the white men's sexual violence.⁹²

Resorting to court, it seems, was seldom helpful as a response to white men's violence. Hills counselled two Aboriginal women who complained of white men's sexual assault that "to appeal to the English magistrate, he would be their friend, and not allow such conduct."⁹³ Yet women following Hills' advice could find themselves battling the assumption that even the most "respectable" Aboriginal women were sexually available to all white men. In October of 1862, Mary Vauliere and Margaret Garbourie, described as "both Indian women legally married," charged two Saanich settlers with rape. The preliminary inquiry focused on establishing whether the women had grounds to claim unwanted sex:

The first witness, Mary Vauliere, when questioned as to her knowledge of the obligations of an oath, replied, through her interpreter, that she believed in the truths of christianity; she had been baptized by a priest who had given her first name; and she knew that if she did right she would go to heaven; if wrong, that she would go to hell. The two complainants were heard, and they seemed to stand cross examination very well. They both asserted that they were faithful and sober wives, but confessed to having imbibed a few glasses of liquor before the occurrence which led to the trial. The only white witness, George Fey, testified to both women being drunk and to their being well known as

⁹²Chartres Brew to Acting Colonial Secretary, 09 06 1862, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mfilm B-1311, File 198/19. Also see R.C. Lundin Brown, Klatsassan, And Other Reminiscences of Missionary Life In British Columbia (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1873); Tina Loo, Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto, University of Toronto, 1994) p142. On another incident, see "Account of Capt. Snyder's Expedition," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 01 08 1858.

⁹³ "A Journal of the Bishop's Tour in British Columbia 1860," in Report of the Columbia Mission, With List of Contributions, 1860 (London, Rivingtons, [1861] p66.

prostitutes. Mr. John Coles was called to prove that the women were both addicted to loose habits and drunkenness.

After hearing this testimony, the magistrate decided "that though a prostitute was equally entitled to protection," the evidence was insufficient and dismissed the case.⁹⁴ Thus even Christianity, a tough courtroom demeanour, legal marriage, and corroboration could not convince a court that First Nations women were not sexually available for all white men.

In rare moments of clarity, local commentators sometimes remarked on the extent to which white male violence against Aboriginal women was naturalized. The Nanaimo Gazette commented on the lack of legal protection afforded to First Nations women. "Shall the Indian woman remain open to coarse and obscene insult from every ruffian, without the slightest appeal to justice?"⁹⁵ They recognized that this was about race as well as gender. While First Nations men were dealt tough sentences for sexual crime, white men's attacks on Aboriginal women were accepted or even lauded. "The offence, if it must be called such," they wrote, "when committed by a white man is called a lark, a spree, a good joke, a bit of fun."⁹⁶

Mixed-race relationships in British Columbia did not suffer a clear "fall from

⁹⁴"Alleged Rape" British Colonist, 28 10 1862. For another charge made by a mixed-blood woman that was also dismissed, see "Indecent Assault," British Colonist, 30 12 1868 .

⁹⁵Untitled, Nanaimo Gazette, 21 04 1866.

⁹⁶ "An Attempt to Prove the Necessity for a Stipendiary -- the COST of the Attempt," Nanaimo Gazette 19 05 1866.

grace" over the nineteenth-century, transformed from respectful and permanent unions to casual, abusive affairs. Rather, between 1858 and 1871, relationships between First Nations women and white men remained varied. Some were permanent unions sanctioned by Aboriginal ceremony or European marriage rites, others were casual and conditional, others were based on the exchange of goods or cash, and others still were coercive and violent, re-enacting the values of a colonial and patriarchal society which sometimes tolerated and or even encouraged white men's violence against First Nations women. All were all touched by the prevailing construction of First Nations women as sexually dangerous.

V: Constructions of First Nations Women

Since contact, Europeans have deployed a number of potent images of North American women. Ranya Green suggests that images of the "squaw" and "Pochahantas" served as a powerful dualistic metaphor.⁹⁷ The "squaw" was lustful and threatening to white men, while "Pochahantas" was pure and helpful, a cultural mediator, who, like her namesake, protected white interests.⁹⁸ The "squaw" was also

⁹⁷ Ranya Green, "The Pochahantas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," in Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz, eds., Unequal Sisters: A Multi-Cultural Reader in U.S. Women's History (New York, Routledge, 1990). For a different view, see Sherry L. Smith, "Beyond Princess and Squaw: Army Officer's Perceptions of Indian Women," in Armitage and Jameson, eds. The Women's West.

⁹⁸For an uncritical repetition of this image, see Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," Ethnohistory 39: 2 (Spring 1992) p97-107. On this in another racial context, see Carol Barash, "The Character of Difference: The Creole Women as Cultural Mediator in Narratives about Jamaica," Eighteenth-Century Studies 23:4 (Summer 1990) p407-423.

often constructed as overworked and abused, firm evidence of Aboriginal savagism.⁹⁹ As Sarah Carter points out, it was the image of the squaw that "predominated in the Canadian West in the late nineteenth-century, as boundaries were clarified and social and geographical space marked out."¹⁰⁰ In British Columbia between 1858 and 1871, Aboriginal women were constructed as lascivious, shameless, unmaternal, prostitutes, ugly, and incapable of high sentiment or manners. They became the dark, mirror image to the idealized nineteenth-century visions of white women. This image, in turn, was crucial to the construction of mixed-race relationships as inimical to the creation of a respectable white settler colony in British Columbia.

First Nations women were seen by many white male observers as overtly sexual. Sometimes this manifested itself in descriptions of their physicality, which could be interpreted positively, especially around mixed-blood women. Thomas Bushby, a young middle-class British emigrant, was deeply enamoured by his future wife, Governor Douglas's mixed-blood teenage daughter, Agnes. He was particularly charmed by her darkness, and her high spirits, and her freedom, evidenced by rough, physical play with her sisters. He wrote that "they say she looks with no savage eye

⁹⁹See David D. Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge': A Prime Index of Savagism," *Ethnohistory* 29:4 (1982) p281-306.

¹⁰⁰ Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion," p148. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argues that in order to assert their own dominance, "British settlers in North America had to refute the positive representations of indigenous Americans found within British imperial discourse." See her Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Captured Subjects/Savage Others: Violently Engendering the New American," *Gender and History* 5:2 (Summer 1993) p178.

on me - & true she is a stunning girl. black eye & hair & larky like the devil."¹⁰¹ At other times, white men wrestled hard with what they saw as First Nations women's overt sexuality. They were simultaneously attracted and alarmed by Aboriginal women's evident sexual availability. To their eyes, this was particularly indicated by their style of dress. James Bell, a draper visiting Victoria, found that "Among the Females there is a *painful* and *provoking* scarcity of petticoats."¹⁰² Young women's dress, wrote future missionary Henry Guillod about Douglas in 1862, was usually "a very dirty cotton gown shewing her form to perfection."¹⁰³ Others found the physical proximity and openness of Aboriginal culture similarly discomforting. Poole found being asked to sleep beside "a very interesting young girl" in a Haida big-house trying indeed.¹⁰⁴ Another found Northern women's curiosity about men's bodies "frightfully disgusting, more particularly to a man of healthful proclivities."¹⁰⁵

White men's perception of First Nations women as sexually available was reinforced by the widespread conviction that Aboriginal cultures did not promote chastity among women. Diverse writers argued that British Columbia's First Nations peoples, especially coastal ones, encouraged female baseness. A British travel writer

¹⁰¹Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., "The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859", in BCHQ XXI (1957-1958) Blakey Smith, ed., p122.

¹⁰² Willard E. Ireland, ed., James Bell, "Gold-Rush Days in Victoria, 1858-1859" BCHQ, Volume XII [July 1948] p237. Emphasis original.

¹⁰³ Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., "Henry Guillod's Journal of a Trip to Cariboo, 1862", in BCHQ, Volume XIX [July-October 1955] p200.

¹⁰⁴ Poole, Queen Charlotte Islands, p115.

¹⁰⁵"Notes From the Northwest," British Colonist, 30 10 1863.

quoted a local source on "Takellies" [Carrier], arguing that women "are lewd almost beyond conception, and give the reins to the indulgence of their passions from an early age."¹⁰⁶ While interior nations valued female chastity, reported men interviewed by naturalist John Keast Lord, "Among the fish-eaters of the north-west coast it has no meaning, or if it has it appears to be utterly disregarded."¹⁰⁷ Such comments hint at how, in British Columbia at least, images of the generic "Indian woman" were tempered by culturally-specific representations. Usually, North coast nations were singled out for their particularly lascivious and dangerous character, a fact no doubt related to the Haida and Tsimshian's military and cultural power.¹⁰⁸ But commentary took on a specifically gendered and sexualized cast. The Weekly Victoria Gazette called the Haida "bands of thieves and bad women."¹⁰⁹ Missionary John Good wrote that the Stickeen and Haida were "licentious beyond conception, their women almost without exception from the age of ten upwards being common prostitutes" and the Tsimshians only "a slight improvement on the Hydahs."¹¹⁰

The construction of First Nations women, especially from the north coast, as

¹⁰⁶ William Carew Hazlitt, British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London, Routledge, 1858) p69.

¹⁰⁷ Lord John Keast, The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 2 Vol, (London, Richard Bentley, 1866) Volume I, p233.

¹⁰⁸ James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 07 07 1860, PAC, MG 11, CO 305/14, Mflm B-240.

¹⁰⁹ "The Northern Indians," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 03 03 1859.

¹¹⁰ J.B. Good to Sir, 08 06 1861, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1861-1867," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 2, p8.

licentious relied on the assumption that they lacked not only social regulation, but self-regulation and its powerful foot-soldier, shame. That First Nations women were "shameless" became a significant theme in local press reporting. When an Aboriginal women drank from the remnants of a broken bottle of liquor, white passers-by in Victoria shouted "*halo shame*"¹¹¹ [no shame] at her. In 1865, when Lucy was charged for being drunk and disorderly in Victoria's police court, the British Colonist wrote: "The magistrate asked the prisoner in Chinook if the complaint was true, and if she was not ashamed of herself; to which the klootchman modestly replied, 'nowitka, nica patlamb, halo shame nika.'" [Indeed, I was drunk, but I am not ashamed]¹¹²

Aboriginal women were also constructed as lacking in maternal affection, another implicit contrast with an idealized image of white women. Crosby argued that "heathenism crushed out a mother's love."¹¹³ A British travel and emigration writer took another tack and promoted First Nations' women as cheerful abortionists. One wrote of "the habit common among them of extinguishing life in the womb."¹¹⁴ An emigration guide claimed that the "Takelly" [Carrier] women took "with horrible regularity and in fact determination to the practice of foeticide."¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ "Hard Up for A Drink," British Colonist, 03 07 1862.

¹¹² "Halo Shame," British Colonist, 18 07 1865. For an almost exact case, see "Hardened," British Colonist, 29 08 1863.

¹¹³ Crosby, Among the An-ko-me-nums, p62.

¹¹⁴ John Domer, New British Gold-Fields: A Guide to British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London, William Henry Angel, 1858) p26.

¹¹⁵ Anonymous, The Handbook of British Columbia and Emigrant's Guide to the Gold Fields (London, W. Oliver, nd [1862])p29. Also see William Tolmie, quoted in Lord,

The logical extension of the contention that First Nations women were lascivious, shameless, and unmaternal, was that they were also, by definition, prostitutes. According to many white observers, the entirety of female Aboriginals were indeed prostitutes. The Magistrate of Lillooet wrote that the "the wholesale prostitution of the young women and even small children is deplorable."¹¹⁶ The Aboriginal peoples who lived around the city of Victoria received the lion's share of this scorn. Governor Arthur Kennedy regaled the Colonial Office about "the shameless prostitution of the women and drunkenness of the men who live mainly by their prostitution."¹¹⁷ Life in Victoria succeeded in "rendering the females vicious without exception," wrote another commentator.¹¹⁸ Joseph Trutch thought this was still true in 1870. "Prostitution," he wrote, "is another acknowledged evil prevailing to an almost unlimited extent among the Indian women in the neighbourhood."¹¹⁹

The cumulative image of First Nations women was that they were, above all,

The Naturalist, p230-231.

¹¹⁶ T.F. Elliot to Arthur Birch, 09 11 1866, in Frederick Seymour to the Earl of Carnarvon, 11 01 1867, CO 60/27, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1439, p93.

¹¹⁷ Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 01 10 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246. See also "*The following are Extracts from Report of Rev. A.C. Garrett, Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1868*" (London, Rivingtons, 1969) p89-90.

¹¹⁸ "The Removal of the Indians," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 01 02 1859. Also see "Indian vs. White Labor," British Colonist, 19 02 1861.

¹¹⁹ Joseph W. Trutch, "Memo", 13 01 1870, in A Musgrave to Earl of Granville, 29 01 1870, BCARS, GR 1486, CO 60/38, Mflm B-1448, p74. The same letter was reprinted in "Appendix AA, Memorandum by the Hon. J.W. Trutch," British Columbia, Report of the Hon. H.L. Langevin, C.B., Minister of Public Works (Ottawa, I.B. Taylor, 1872)

sexually threatening. But an alternate image of Aboriginal women as physically revolting and base competed and co-existed with this construction. Both representations relied on white women, supposedly asexual and beautiful, as an opposite. A poem, "Lines to a Klootchman," reprinted from the American Puget Sound Herald, explicitly compared white and First Nations women:

Sweet nymph! although of dirtier hue thou art
 Than other ladies brought from eastern climes,
 To Thee I yield the tribute of my love,
 To Thee I dedicate these humble rhymes;
 And if too faint I string my trembling lyre,
 Great Pocantas! thou my verse inspire....

Thy well-squeezed head was flat as flounders are,
 Thy hair with dog-fish oil resplendent shone,
 Thy feet were bare, and slightly inward turn'd
 Thy slender waist and swelling limbs did bind;
 A mild but fishy odor round thee clung,
 As though dried salmon thou hadst been among....

But though thou smellest strong of salmon dry,
 Though innocent of soap thy hands appear,
 Although they toes turn inwards with a curl,
 And though they skull is smash'd from front to rear;
 Though nameless animals thy hair infest,
 Still do I love thee of all maidens best.

Then give me a blanket and a mat,
 Dried claims and fish my only food shall be,
 My only house a half-upturn'd canoe,
 Whiskey my drink, and love alone for thee;
 Thus fair-haired dames for me will vainly shine
 In all the charms of hoops and crinoline!¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Sitkum Siwash [Half-Indian], "Lines to a Klootchman," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 04 30 1859.

This poem's intention in comparing white and First Nations women is ultimately unclear. Does it mock mixed-race relationships or articulate white male desire to embrace the unrefined and sensual? Both cases, though, depend on the image of the repulsive and highly physical First Nations woman.

Another key part in this representation of Aboriginal women as dangerously sexual, mirror opposites to white women was the contention that they were unable to appreciate the finer points of Western love. Another popular poem contrasted the romantic words and lofty promises of a white man with the shallow response of his Aboriginal companion. While he promises her eternal affection and high sentiment, she replies with an offer, in Chinook, to sell him clams:

Come maiden of the wilderness,
And linger by my side;
We'll fly away across the sea,
If you will be my bride....

The maiden raised her lovely head
With eyes meek as a lamb's,
She gazed into his manly face,
And softly whispered, -- C-K -- Clams.¹²¹

Just as "Lines to a Klootchman" contrasts white women with Aboriginal, this poem contrasts European romanticism with First Nations baseness. A missionary describing life on Haida Gawaii made a similar point, arguing that "The beautiful attachment and heroic constancy of affection ending only in death, amongst civilised or Christian

¹²¹ "Lines from the Album of Miss A.," Scorpion, 11 03 1864. This was reprinted in "New Westminster Charivari" British Colonist, 14 03 1864.

nations, is to them unknown."¹²²

Significantly, however, it was not only their distinctly Aboriginal attributes which rendered women unattractive. While First Nations women were critiqued for scanty dress and "native" hygiene and habits, they were also mocked for adopting the conventions of white femininity. At a ball held at Lake Tatla in 1866, observers derided First Nations women's finery. "Indians with their squaws, old and young, the latter portion gaily decked with brilliant mouchoirs; their tresses, if not agreeable perfumed, were plentifully greased, their complexions alarmingly rosy from a free application of rouge."¹²³ In Victoria, the local press mocked "Mary, Sunox, Carol, Kate, Emelie, and Mush, squaws belonging to the northern tribes," for wearing large hoops-skirts at a court appearance.¹²⁴ White commentators also ridiculed First Nations women when they demanded that white men adhere to social proprieties. Hankin remembered dancing with Aboriginal women at Quesnel, and found the women's demand that they be properly introduced truly comical. "I recollect," he wrote "asking one of the Kitty's in Chinook to dance with me and she drew herself up in a very dignified manner, and said 'Halo introduce' which signified I had not been introduced to Her! and I couldn't help laughing which made her very angry."¹²⁵ It was not

¹²² J.J. Halcombe, The Emigrant and the Heathen, or, Sketches of Missionary Life (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, nd [1870?]) p238.

¹²³"The C.O. Tel Exploring Party: How They Spent Their Christmas," British Columbian, 11 04 1866.

¹²⁴ "Arrest of Street Walkers" British Colonist, 8 05 1860.

¹²⁵Phillip Hankin, "Memoirs," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss E/B/H19A, p54.

surprising that Hankin's prospective partner did not take kindly to his derision.

The logical extension of the representation of First Nations women as the mirror image to white women was the exclusion of First Nations women from the category of "woman" altogether. As a number of scholars have suggested, this category, as the nineteenth-century wore on, was increasingly constructed in racially and class bound terms.¹²⁶ In British Columbia, the explicitly racialized character of the category "woman" shaped both casual and formal acts. Local officials, for instance, responded to queries from the Colonial Office about their gaol facilities by commenting that "no woman has yet to undergone imprisonment" and that "Drunken squaws have...been locked up until sobered."¹²⁷ The exclusion of Aboriginal women from the category "woman" happened also in everyday social acts. Hankin's reminiscences describe dancing with First Nations women and not being "fit to sit down at table with Ladies" in one passage.¹²⁸ Just as the gaol's "squaws" were not women, Hankin's ladies, apparently, could not be First Nations.

Not all white people shared these sentiments. Some explicitly defended First Nations women's status. Naval surgeon Edward Bogg, for instance, argued that not

¹²⁶See, for instance, Carter, "Categories and Terrains"; Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free,' Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992)

¹²⁷ See, for instance, Frederick Seymour to Edward Cardwell, 01 05 1865, CO 60/21, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1435, p338.

¹²⁸ Hankin, "Memoirs," p54.

only were Nanaimo's Aboriginal women decent wives and housekeepers, but that their domestic talents outstripped those of their white counterparts. "It is worthy of remark that those miners who have English wives generally have their houses in a dirty, slatternly condition, while, on the other hand, those among the miners who have married Hydah or Tsimshian women have their houses kept patterns of cleanliness, neatness, and comfort,"¹²⁹ he wrote. Scientist Brown made a similar point about Comox farmers, commenting that "several cohabit with native women who, it ought to be said to their credit, look closely to the interests of their 'husbands' in more than one instance which I could mention have been the best Counsellors of their unworthy mates."¹³⁰ Words like these explicitly challenged polarized, racist images of white and Aboriginal womanhood.

Despite dissenting voices, most white commentators in British Columbia shared a fundamentally negative view of First Nations women. But however much the mainstream of formal colonial discourse presented Aboriginal women as the mirror opposite of white, as lascivious, shameless, prostitutes, unmaternal, ugly, and devoid of appreciation of romance and convention, their lives remained intimately intertwined with that of the white population. And it was in this intimate blending that another

¹²⁹ Bogg, "Journal of Her Majesty's Hired Surveying Vessel, Beaver, 1863," PRO, ADM 101/276, p16. Emphasis original.

¹³⁰ Robert Brown, "Journal of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition," in John Hayman, ed., Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1989) p121.

source of horror was located. Colonial discourse built upon its representation of First Nations women as dangerous by constructing mixed-race relationships as an active threat to white men's fragile moral and racial selves.

VI: Constructions of Mixed-Race Relationships

The 1860s witnessed an intensification of negative, hostile imagery around First Nations people and mixed-race relationships. Some critics were legitimately concerned that Aboriginal women were abused and maltreated by white men. Borrowing on images of the "noble savage," paternalistic voices presented First Nations women as moral, dutiful, and beautiful in her native realm yet soiled by contact with white society. Sexual contact with white men particularly accelerated the process of soilage. A poem published in the Victoria press told such a story:

The smoke of her wigwam curling rose
Where the sparkling Lillooet swiftly flows,
To join the impetuous Fraser nigh;
And the blood-red salmon hung to dry
By the lodge where the artless untutored maid
Sprung up like a flower in her native glade....

But the white man came and his proffered gold
Purchased her ornaments untold,
And the maiden so coy in her native guise
Now courts the rude gaze of admiring eyes,
And her cheeks despoiled of their blushing red
Now wear the vermilion's hue instead.

Her limbs, which scant robes erst confine,
Are now encased in stiff crinoline;
And her brow which with flowers bedecked we knew
And stoops to a band of less graceful blue.
Supporting a cradle bestrung with bells

Which the maiden's misfortune plainly tells.¹³¹

Brown also told the tale of the beautiful Lillooet woman cruelly degraded by white male lust.¹³² Moved by a similar concern for First Nations female victimization, missionary Duncan asked the governor to develop divorce legislation specifically designed to allow First Nations women to escape from their abusive and ill-advised marriages to immoral white men.¹³³

British Columbia critics more frequently expressed their concern about the nascent and struggling white society. In particular, colonial discourse constructed mixed-race relationships as dangerous for white men, whose appropriate behaviour and identity would guarantee an orderly white settler colony. White men who wedded First Nations women were said, firstly, to be on a fast road to moral turpitude. The conviction that mixed-race relationships threatened white men's morals came into sharpest reliefs around discussions of public officials, who were argued to be uniquely imperiled by their Aboriginal attachments. One letter attacked Magistrates who engaged in relationships with First Nations women. "Sorrowful has it been to mark

¹³¹ F.N., "The Maid of Lillooet," Daily Press, 20 01 1862.

¹³² See Brown, Klatsassan, p142-146; Brown, British Columbia, p7-9.

¹³³ William Duncan to Frederick Seymour, 18 09 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, File 498/19. The Attorney General replied that such legislation was impossible given "The steps upward from the pure Indian to the comparative civilization of the race of partly white and partly red blood, and thence upwards to the pure white, are so small between such a distincture of blood that it is impossible to make a Marriage & Divorce law the operation of which shall meet the wishes of all Duncan's protegees." See Henry Pellew Crease to William Duncan, 09 11 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1326, File 498/19.

many of the victims of this deadly gangrene," it went, "who once were men of mark for amiability and respectability – now how fallen!"¹³⁴ Governor Douglas' mixed-blood family was used as a causal explanation for what critics saw as his poor government and the fur-trade elite's inherent corruption.¹³⁵

All white men in mixed-race relationships were said to be in immanent moral danger. Their claim to masculinity itself was imperilled by their Aboriginal attachments. One impassioned letter-writer wrote to the British Columbian that white men who lived with First Nations women were indeed not men:

almost without an exception those men who have sunk so low as to live with native women, are degraded below the dignity of manhood. For instance, look at that creature, long haired, badly dressed, dirty faced, redolent of salmon, who may be seen lounging at the door of almost every log cabin in the country, and tell me can that be a man? Enter any up country dancing house; can that half inebriated sot, who whispers obscene love speeches into the ear of yonder unfortunate squaw bedizened in all the finery which his bad taste and wasted money can supply, be a man? Can this fellow offering three horses and ten sacks of flour to yonder old pander, who haggles as to the price of his own flesh and blood, be a man? Or can that ruffian whom I see cruelly beating – whaling I believe is the term – the poor slave whom he has bought with his money, corrupted by his own foul nature and language, and diseased by his vices, be a man? Surely not, or we have indeed cause to be ashamed of our species.¹³⁶

¹³⁴Lux, "Magisterial Morality: A Voice from the Mountains," British Columbian, 14 11 1861.

¹³⁵See Jane Fawcett, "Extracts from Letters and Diary," BCARS, Add Mss 1963, p91-92; Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 15 05 1862; Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 16 08 1862, in Allan Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-1865 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1996) p74-77, p84.

¹³⁶ I.D.C., "' A Man's a Man for a' That,'" British Columbian, 04 06 1862.

White men who married First Nations women were thus seen as dangerously flirting with relinquishing their place amongst the civilized white race. They were, in other words, in danger of being deracinated. Many fur traders, wrote Kinahan Cornwallis, "shunned the haunts of civilisation, even after plunging beyond its pale, and so marrying native women, whom they became as attached to as they could have been to women of their own English, French, Canadian, or American race."¹³⁷

These fears were based on the assumption that white men who lived with First Nations women became more savage, rather than their partners more civilized. Some personal narratives, such as Emerson's, did tell of white men "elevating" their First Nations partners to intelligence and cleanliness.¹³⁸ But most envisioned an opposite process. One writer argued that free mixed-race unions were rendered even more dangerous "when the man allows his own nature and that of his offspring to be drawn down to the level of a savage concubine, instead of using his influence to raise her's nearer so [sic] his own."¹³⁹ Good wrote of a Stickeen woman, dying far in the colony's interior, whose contact with white men had been wholly un-elevating. "Yet, though she has lived in the closest intimacy with these men for years, she has never gathered from their conversation or habits one single worthy notion of God, or duty towards

¹³⁷ Kinahan Cornwallis, The New El Durado; or, British Columbia (London, Thomas Cautley Newby, 1858) p135. Also see Charles Bayley, "Early life on Vancouver Island" [1878?] [Transcript], BCARS E/B/B34.2, p2.

¹³⁸ See Emerson, Travels, Voyages, and Adventures, p48-49.

¹³⁹ I.D.C., "A Man's a Man for a' That," British Columbian, 04 06 1862.

Him," he wrote, adding that "How much worse than heathen lives such men live!"¹⁴⁰

These men lost both their general racial status and the particular hallmarks of the Anglo-Saxon race. Their commitment to agriculture, a uniquely civilized pursuit, diminished. The British Columbia farmer was a failure, thought a journalist, because he "has become half-savage with his Indian woman."¹⁴¹ "It is your ignorant, slothful, unpolished subject," wrote the Cariboo Sentinel, "who digs about a few acres, hunts and goes fishing, and then after having done just sufficient to satisfy the typical wolf at the door, sits down in front of his log shanty and smokes his dodder with his aboriginal companion of the softer sex."¹⁴² Another Victoria journalist, travelling through Washington Territory, wrote that where there was "a dreary, neglected waste, we almost invariably found that the settler led a bachelor's life, or that his 'household fairy' was selected from the nearest Indian village."¹⁴³

Thus, under the influence of mixed-race attachments, white discipline and ambition wasted away, only to be replaced by Aboriginal sloth and distaste for agriculture. The Mainland Guardian argued that "Men living away in the interior, isolated from the centres of population, are fain to console themselves with companions, that too often, render them regardless of the future, and rob them of all

¹⁴⁰ Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1867, p72.

¹⁴¹ "Letter From Victoria -- No. IV.," Cariboo Sentinel, 18 09 1866.

¹⁴² "Profits of Agriculture," Cariboo Sentinel, 24 07 1869.

¹⁴³ Untitled, British Colonist, 04 02 1869.

energy and ambition."¹⁴⁴ Mixed-race relationships, agreed scientist Brown in 1864, were both symbol and substance of British Columbia's poor economic development. Settlers in Cowichan, Chemanius, and Salt Spring Island, often former gold miners, lacked the necessary ambition for economic progress. He wrote that their "only ambition (it is no use mincing matters by refined Language) seems to be 'a log shanty, a pig, a potato patch, Klootchman (Indian woman) and a clam bed'!"¹⁴⁵

White men who engaged in mixed-race relationships ceased to be white and became nearly Aboriginal. Maschell, a white man who married among the Keatsy people of the Lower Fraser, was assumed to have effectively become Keatsy. He "shares with them in pot and lot," wrote the British Columbian, and "is, in fact, as one of them."¹⁴⁶ Hills described an English man found living at Lytton as "living an Indian life."¹⁴⁷ Politician, doctor, and husband of Cecelia Douglas, John Helmcken, agreed that white men "went native," but dubbed it an inevitability which missionaries should accept rather than oppose. In his memoirs, he wrote that "Living among natural people one gets naturalized and imbibes a good many of their natural conceptions...In fact become Indianized!" "Missionaries and others," he thought, "had

¹⁴⁴ "Immigration," Mainland Guardian, 09 02 1871.

¹⁴⁵ Brown, "Journal," p122. Translations his.

¹⁴⁶ "The Indian Reserve Question," British Columbian, 13 11 1867.

¹⁴⁷ Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," p417. Also see "Vancouver Island," London Times, 26 05 1865.

better take note of this and examine themselves and their utterances."¹⁴⁸ Thus while his interpretation differed, Helmcken agreed with the mainstream of British Columbian thought by suggesting that white men's racial identity was compromised by long and intimate contact with Aboriginal peoples.

This process of deracination was seen as an individual process and a palpable threat to the entire white society. Racial mixing, obviously, compromised specific colonial policies that depended on the self-evident character of racial identity and division. When white men married Aboriginal women they threatened the reserve system by disrupting the process of racial identification and land allocation.¹⁴⁹ They challenged the suppression of the liquor trade since Aboriginal wives drank their husbands' legal booze.¹⁵⁰ More profoundly, white men who engaged in mixed-race relationships violated white notions of racial distance and superiority. In general, mixed-race relationships functioned as symbols of social acceptance and equality, a dangerous notion. "There is not perhaps any dislike to the negro or the Indian population, except in view of their intermarrying with whites or attaining the full privileges of Citizens," wrote judge Matthew Begbie.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, this was most

¹⁴⁸ "A Reminiscence of 1850," in Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1975) p326.

¹⁴⁹ "The Indian Reserve Question," British Columbian, 13 11 1867.

¹⁵⁰ Settler, "Our Indian Liquor Traffic Act," Nanaimo Gazette 18 09 1865; "The Ravine," Daily Press, 29 09 1862.

¹⁵¹ Matthew Begbie, in James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 24 08 1860, CO 60/8, PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-83.

clearly articulated when the union of Black and white were discussed. If white liberals really thought Africans were equal, one wrote, they should "intermarry with the blacks, take them to your houses, your tables, your parlours, your *beds*, but do not whine about "social equality" with negroes until you do something to show that you are in earnest."¹⁵² Local Black leader Mifflin Winstar Gibbs exposed the hypocrisy of such sentiments. "It comes with a bad grace for Americans to talk of the horrors of amalgamation," he wrote, "when every plantation of the South is more or less a seraglio, and numbers of the most prominent men in the State of California have manifested little heed to color in their choice of companions in an amorous intrigue or a nocturnal debauch."¹⁵³ Gibbs' biting critique aside, reactionary whites continued to employ black-white relationships as a powerful racist threat.¹⁵⁴ This also suggests how mixed-race unions of different hues and configuration were constructed differently.

Whether supporting or condemning mixed-race relationships, observers agreed that they symbolized racial equality. For most, this was a deeply problematic concept, and mixed-race unions were seen as fundamentally disrupting racial hierarchy and the

¹⁵² Episcopalian, "The Negro Question – Sewing Circles and Churches," British Colonist, 31 09 1861. Also see Henry Sharpstone, "An Earnest Appeal," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 24 08 1858.

¹⁵³ M.W.G., alias Blackstone, "An Answer to 'An Earnest Appeal,'" Weekly Victoria Gazette, 25 08 1858.

¹⁵⁴ See Scrutator, "The Colored Question," Daily Press, 29 09 1861. For a critique, see Jacob Francis, "A Card," Daily Press, 29 09 1861. For the middle-ground, see Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," p337-8; George Hills, "Journal 1862," [ADNW/EPBC] p29-30.

"proper" separation of the races. When mixed marriages took place, "you make any *true* relation between the aboriginal people and the settlers an impossibility," said Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, at a London meeting of the Columbia Mission.¹⁵⁵ Rather than suggest the possibility of equality, white people ought to affirm their racial difference and superiority. Instead of cohabiting with First Nations women, thought one letter-writer, white men ought to "assert our own superiority by ceasing to associate with them on equal terms, and let them feel themselves to be what they really are – less than civilized and far worse than savage."¹⁵⁶ When whites "let down their side," missionaries were deeply worried. Hills, recounting yet another mixed-marriage, wrote that "the poor Indians are close lookers on upon all this depravity in the white race. Truly does it press heavily upon England to maintain a better witness."¹⁵⁷ Other missionaries were similarly disappointed in the failure of their brethren to behave with the superiority colonial discourse accorded them. R.C.L. Brown described a "miner, wild and unscrupulous, fearing neither God nor devil" who took Kendqua, a beautiful Lillooet woman, as his partner. He thought him to be an abysmal representative of his race. "Alas! instead of teaching Christianity to them, they make them more degraded than they were before," he moaned.¹⁵⁸

In these discussions, mixed-race relationships function as a symbol of the

¹⁵⁵ Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1860, p51. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁶ I.D.C., "A Man's a Man for a' That," British Columbian, 04 06 1862.

¹⁵⁷ Hills, "Journal 1865," p98.

¹⁵⁸ Brown, Klatsassan, p14.

imperialism gone awry. They speak of an explicitly white working-class vision of colonialism and mode of interaction with Aboriginal people. Anglican missionary John Sheepshanks, for instance, told a British audience that "The Indians have learned our vices, they have contracted habits of intoxication, and their poor women have been led away, by the ungodly white men, who are often what is called the 'pioneers of civilisation.'"¹⁵⁹ The British Columbian also relied on this metaphor, commenting that "time their daughters have been lured on by the white man's wiles to lives of shameless vice and perpetual misery, and even their lawful wives enticed away from them to become the obedient paramours of the proud invaders of their soil."¹⁶⁰ In another poem, the author used the figure of the brightly dressed dance-house worker as a sign of the success of one form of cultural contact over another:

What a sad and sober moral,
 Are we thus compelled to draw,
 From the missionary's teaching --
 From the Christian's moral law.
 Years and years of good men's efforts
 Seen thus exercised in vain,
 Fiddle and the toe fantastic
 Is the way we're to reclaim
 All the Indian tribes around us,
 From their wild and savage life,
 And we'll teach them all the fashions,
 All the vices that are rife.

¹⁵⁹ John Sheepshanks, "A Lecture on the Origin, Habits, Modes of Thought, Past and Present, and Future of the 'Red Indians of the West,'" in Sixth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1864 (London, Rivingtons, 1865) p49.

¹⁶⁰"Our Relations With the Indians," British Columbian, 10 06 1863. Also see "The Aborigines," British Columbian, 24 12 1864.

And to Donald F. and Cary.,
 And to noble Cochrane J.
 And to those who have an interest
 In the Market Company,
 We will sing the loudest praise,
 For their calm and Christian efforts
 Teaching squaws the Christian's ways.¹⁶¹

Here, relationships between Aboriginal women's work at dance houses demonstrates the triumph of rough, popular white culture over the missionary's vision of a Christian, racially-separate civilizing project. Such ideas do not critique colonialism itself as much as they defend one vision of colonialism over another.

Mixed-race relationships were a matter of great discussion in British Columbia between the years of 1858 and 1871. Mainstream colonial discourse constructed these relationships as deeply dangerous. Unless functioning as symbols of pristine culture, Aboriginal women were rarely the primary objects of concern. Rather, writers feared that mixed-race relationships imperiled white men's morality, manliness, and ultimately their claim to racial distinction and superiority. Since an orderly, industrious, and white population was key to the creation of a respectable white settler society, the tendency of mixed-race relationships to deracinate white men compromised British Columbia's colonial project. So too did the simple existence of mixed-race people. These people were constructed as inherently inferior, physically and morally weak, and a threat to the colony's political stability.

VII: Constructions of Mixed-Blood Peoples

¹⁶¹ "The Civilized Song of the Solomons," Daily Press, 09 03 1862.

If sexual, domestic, and emotional relations between First Nations women and white men disturbed Victorian gender and race systems, the offspring of these unions also deeply troubled the imaginations of white British Columbians. In this sense, their fears were explicitly heterosexual ones, premised not so much on a fear of sex, but on a fear of reproduction. This tendency was reinforced by the fact that the mid-nineteenth-century was a watershed in the development of "scientific" racist thought, particularly as it related to reproduction. While metropolitan in origin, these developments were not lost on that small outpost of empire perched on the northern Pacific shores of North America. The invention of the word miscegenation in the 1864 was duly noted by the Victoria press.¹⁶² Hills owned books outlining racial distinction and advising on how to classify any humans one might encounter.¹⁶³

Yet race and reproduction were not solely intellectual issues for colonial British Columbians. As Homi Bhabha suggests, the hybrid, mixed-blood subject was both deeply symbolic of and troubling to colonial enterprises.¹⁶⁴ Certainly for many white observers, the simple existence of mixed-race people was confusing and often

¹⁶²"Miscegenation," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 20 03 1864.

¹⁶³A Manual of Ethnological Inquiry Being a Series of Questions Concerning the Human Race, Prepared by a Sub-Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science...Adapted For the Use of Travellers and Others. In Studying the Varieties of Man (London, Taylor and Francis, 1852) in ADNW/EPBC, PSA 41, File 3, "Documents."

¹⁶⁴ Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," October 28 (Spring 1984) p125-134. Also see Delores Chew, "'Half-caste Whores': The Construction of Anglo-Indian Gender Identities and the Mythologizing of Sexuality," paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, St. John's, 1997.

disturbing. Mayne wrote that "you frequently see children quite white, and looking in every respect like English children, at an Indian village, and a very distressing sight it is."¹⁶⁵ Gardiner expressed a similar unease with the mixed-race community he encountered at a Fort Langley ball. "There were the English, Scotch, French and Kanackas present," he wrote, "and all so thoroughly mixed with the native Indian blood, that it would take a well-versed Zoologist to decide what class of people they were, and what relation they had to each other."¹⁶⁶

Many white observers, however, were not merely confused. Influenced by prevailing theories of race and reproduction, they constructed mixed-blood people as necessarily inferior and defective.¹⁶⁷ British Columbian writers usually evoked these theories not in scientific jargon, but in everyday, common-sense language. Often, they repeated the trope that mixed-race people combined the worst of both races, or, in Hills' words, "the force of the white race with the viciousness & lowness of the savage."¹⁶⁸ Mayne agreed, arguing that "half-breeds" usually inherited the worst of both races: to "Indian abandonment to vice and utter want of self-control appears to be added that boldness and daring in evil which he inherits from his white parent."¹⁶⁹

The conviction that mixed-race people were morally weak and willful informed

¹⁶⁵ Mayne, Four Years, p248.

¹⁶⁶ Gardiner, "To The Fraser River Mines," p248.

¹⁶⁷ On this, see Robert J.C. Young, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race (London, Routledge, 1995)

¹⁶⁸ George Hills, "Journal 1863," ADNW/EPBC, p29.

¹⁶⁹ Mayne, Four Years, p277.

social practice. That thirteen year-old Mary Ann McFadden poisoned her father was blamed on her mixed heritage. Her white father, James, raised his five children alone on a marginal Salt Spring Island farm. The Victoria press interpreted Mary Ann's violence and anger as the direct result of her First Nations mother. "She is a bright-eyed girl and rather prepossessing in appearance," wrote the British Colonist, "but seems to have sadly lacked the careful moral training of a good mother."¹⁷⁰ McFadden worked with this view, telling the court on cross-examination that "The child was brought up on Fraser River; I did not superintend the bringing up."¹⁷¹ Yet this defense did not save James from being mocked for his backwoods life-style, a perception no doubt related to his having an Aboriginal partner. With laughter in the courtroom, the court ruled that McFadden had never been poisoned,¹⁷² but had merely suffered the gastronomical blows resulting from a breakfast of the "heart and liver of a deer, and a piece of rabbit pie...a basin of wine...potatoes and badly baked bread."¹⁷³

Again following current racial theory, observers also suggested that "half-breed's" inferiority manifested itself in physical weakness and the inability to reproduce. In a treatise on "Physiological Characteristics of Halfbreeds," naval surgeon P. Cornie wrote that "A numerous half breed race exists the result of mixture

¹⁷⁰"A Daughter Attempts to Destroy Her Father By Mixing Strychnine With His Tea," British Colonist, 28 11 1866.

¹⁷¹"The Assizes," British Colonist, 22 03 1867. Also see "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 6, File 1866/24.

¹⁷² "The Assizes," British Colonist, 22 03 1867.

¹⁷³"An Extraordinary Case," British Colonist, 23 03 1867.

of white and Indian blood very deficient in vitality and inheriting none of the good qualities of either race. They are weak and prone to tubercular diseases and polyps very little powers of procreation."¹⁷⁴ These ideas rested on the assumption that sex between people of different racial groups was inherently pathological. It resulted, many thought, not only in debased children, but in particularly virulent forms of venereal disease.¹⁷⁵ Cormie called syphilis one of the "pathological phenomena which have been observed in the case of two Races coming into Contact in the Same Country." Moreover, he wrote that the disease particularly effected Aboriginal people, ironically referring to "Syphilised" nations.¹⁷⁶ Sproat agreed, arguing that syphilis presents "a peculiarly virulent character when the two races commingle."¹⁷⁷

Mixed-blood people were constructed not only as inferior, but as dangerous to the struggling colony of British Columbia. Congregationalist minister Macfie elevated the widely held fear of hybridity's political ramification to new levels of rhetorical excess. He traced the existence of twenty-three kinds of racial "*crosses*."¹⁷⁸ Such intermingling, he worried, would imperil British Columbia's colonial future. "[B]y intermarrying with decedents of Europeans we are but reproducing our own Caucasian

¹⁷⁴ Surgeon P Cormie, "Journal of Her Majesty's Sloop: Sparrowhawk, 1869," PRO, ADM/101/278, p24.

¹⁷⁵ See "Our Social Evil," British Colonist, 22 10 1867.

¹⁷⁶ Cormie, "Journal of Her Majesty's Sloop: Sparrowhawk, 1869," PRO, ADM/101/278, p21-22. Emphasis original.

¹⁷⁷ Sproat, The Nootka, p188.

¹⁷⁸ Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p379.

type," he wrote, but "by commingling with eastern Asiatics we are creating debased hybrids."¹⁷⁹ Macfie's later wrote a book on racial theory which particularly addressed the impact of east Asian immigration on western society. Despite his shift in focus, Macfie's feelings about mixed-blood peoples had not changed. "The result of union between American Indians with all sections of the Aryan race," he wrote, "is uniformly unsatisfactory, for in the *cross* that incapacity for improvement, which is the marked peculiarity of the Indian, is retained."¹⁸⁰

Like Macfie, many observers feared that British Columbia's social institutions were unable to cope with a large mixed-blood population. Hills worried about how to educate these people, whose impulses for disorder were apparently so strong.¹⁸¹ Another letter-writer shared this fear for the mixed-blood's future: "Born, as it is generally the case in mixed races, with the worst qualities of both predominant, and unredeemed by the virtues of either, totally uneducated, deprived of what little guidance the presence of a father might have been, without religion, without morality, what but a miserable fate here and hereafter can be anticipated for them?"¹⁸² Others, like Sproat, had greater faith in white racial solvency. He commented that despite

¹⁷⁹ Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p381.

¹⁸⁰ He added that "the result is slightly more favourable when he amalgamates with the blonde races than when the dark-skinned European families unite with him." See Matthew Macfie, The Impending Contact of the Aryan & Turanian Races, With Special Reference to Recent Chinese Migrations (London, Sunday Lecture Society, 1878) p17.

¹⁸¹ Hills, "Journal 1862," p29.

¹⁸² I.D.C., "'A Man's a Man for a' That,'" British Columbian, 04 06 1862.

fears of amalgamation, "it is extremely improbable that any large population of English descent will mingle their blood, and grow up side by side, with any race that differs widely from them in character and civilized culture."¹⁸³

After the Red River Resistance of 1869, fear of the potential political power of mixed-blood peoples intensified.¹⁸⁴ In 1871, the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, B.W. Pearse, argued that only an intense state-driven reform programme could compensate for mixed-blood people's lack of a white mother and tendency to European vice. Even with the establishment of a system of common schooling, he wrote, the colony's "race of half-castes" would "prove a curse to the Country in the next generation" and "The important part of the education necessary to make a good citizen will still be wanting in these young half castes, who can never have the tender care and virtuous teaching of a christian mother, and who, being so neglected, will be too apt to copy the vices without emulating the virtues of the white man."¹⁸⁵

VII: Conclusion.

Mixed-race relationships were a significant feature of the social landscape in British Columbia from 1858 to 1871. They involved men and women from all sectors of society, but seem most widespread in fur-trading and working-class populations,

¹⁸³ Sproat, *The Nootka*, p183.

¹⁸⁴ "The Revolt and its Lessons," *British Colonist*, 03 12 1869.

¹⁸⁵ B.W. Pearse, "Memo on the Letter of the Bishop of Columbia to the Right Honourable Earl of Kimberley," nd, in *British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents"*, BCARS, GR 419, Box 10, "Indian Improvement - aid to missionary societies," File 1871/23, p11-12.

whether urban or backwoods. All mixed-race relationships were marked by the overriding structures of racism and sexism that prevailed in a society that was simultaneously patriarchal and colonial, and where racial difference reconfigured gendered oppression. Yet these relationships nonetheless varied greatly: some were relatively permanent unions sanctified by Aboriginal or white ceremony; others were casual affairs and others still an exchange of sex for cash or goods. Many were marked by the coercion and violence that white society could tolerate or condone.

Whatever their location or character, all mixed-race relationships were shaped by mainstream colonial discourse. Throughout the 1858 to 1871 period, this discourse constructed Aboriginal women, mixed-race relationships, and mixed-blood peoples in distinctly negative ways. First Nations women were seen as lascivious, shameless, prostitutes, unmaternal, unattractive creatures unable to appreciate or participate in social conventions – as the threatening, mirror opposites of the idealized image of white women. Mixed-race relationships were thus a serious threat to white men which could render them immoral, unmanly, and, above all, would gradually deracinate them, stripping them of their supposed racial superiority. Not surprisingly, the products of these unions, mixed-blood peoples, were also seen as a morally weak, physically defective, and an active, palpable threat to colonial society.

When R.C.L. Brown preached his annual sermon about “the prevailing vice” in Lillooet’s little church, he thus spoke to widely held concerns. In British Columbia, mainstream white discourse constructed the widespread practice of white-Aboriginal

relationships as a danger to individual white men and the development of a respectable, orderly, white settler colony. In response to this and the rough, homosocial culture of the backwoods, they proposed a series of reform efforts designed to inculcate gendered values and practices more in keeping with metropolitan, Anglo-American middle-class culture.

Chapter Four:
Bringing Order to the Backwoods:
Regulating British Columbia's Homosocial Culture

I: Introduction

Enthusiasts of the colonial project in British Columbia were committed to creating an orderly, white settler society but faced a rough, racially plural colony. They identified the emerging white male homosocial culture as inimical to their goal and therefore set out to promote a model of bourgeois, metropolitan manliness. Through temperance campaigns, the creation of alternative sites of male sociability, and the promotion of a missionary model of white masculinity, reformers sought to render white male identity and behaviour compatible with the larger aims of the colonial project. These regulatory efforts show how race and gender combined not merely to determine white men's experience, but also their particular location in the making of colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871.

II: Homosocial Culture, Colonial Discourse, and Historiography

The temperance movement, alternative sites of masculinity and missions to white men were all were informed by a broader colonial discourse about gender, race, and colonial society. As Chapter Two showed, British Columbia's white male homosocial culture was grounded in shared domestic, emotional, and sometimes sexual bonds and emphasized drinking, gambling, violence, and a common white identity. This milieu's centrality to British Columbia did not insulate it from a sharp critique challenging the moral viability of a society constituted largely by white men severed from their collective better halves living in close contact with Aboriginal people.

To many missionaries, travel writers, and reformers, British Columbia was rough and disagreeable, a flawed example of a colonial enterprise. This critique was explicitly gendered and racialized, and rested on the contention that a society with so few white women was necessarily disorderly. Visiting Lillooet, Anglican Bishop George Hills commented that men "were uncivilized & immoral & reckless" in the absence of women.¹ "The man in the mines and the same man at home," agreed a Richfield resident, "with the influence of a loving mother, a wife, or virtuous sisters around him -- bear no analogy to each other."² Such a society was immoral and an embarrassment to the Empire. "If men are permitted to flock there in great numbers while there is an absence of women," wrote Sir Harry Verney, father of *Grappler* commander Edmund Verney, "the Colony will become the scene of the most abominable and infamous demoralization, a disgrace to England."³

Critics suggested that drink was the most extreme examples of the ruin that befell men allowed to run amok without white women's guiding presence. "It is very easy to explain the hold it takes upon men," travel-writer Byron Johnson wrote, as "they have left behind them the customary checks of their family circle, and from the sparseness of the female population, they meet with little of the restraining influence of

¹George Hills, "Journal 1861," [Transcript], Anglican Church of Canada, Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster, Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, [hereafter ADNW/EPBC], p74.

² "A Glimpse of Cariboo," British Colonist, 24 08 1866. Also see Charles Dickens, "Episcopacy in the Rough," All the Year Round, 23 02 1861, p472.

³ "Sir Harry Verney upon British Columbia" British Columbian, 20 08 1862.

women's society."⁴ In 1862, Oxford-educated Walter Cheadle was blunter in describing New Westminster with the following words: "Miners gambling & drinking. Yankees predominating; scarcity of women."⁵ Commentators suggested that working men were especially vulnerable to drink and gambling.⁶

Moral reform movements like these have long been a favourite topic of nineteenth-century social historians. In the American, British and European literatures, scholars have examined the emergence and growth of regulatory institutions like asylums, poor houses, and prisons.⁷ They have hotly debated whether these were overt instruments of social control designed to inculcate social and work discipline amongst the labouring populations of emergent industrial economies. This debate, especially vibrant in the 1970s and early 1980s, did not utilize gender as a central category of analysis. Some historians, however, examined how sexual, familial, and gendered

⁴ R. Byron Johnson, Very Far West Indeed: A Few Rough Experiences on the North-West Pacific Coast, Third Edition (London, Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1872) p276.

⁵ Walter B. Cheadle, Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863 (Edmonton, Hurtig, 1871) p238.

⁶ W. Parker Snow, British Columbia: Emigration, and our Colonies Considered Practically, Socially, and Politically (London, Piper, Stephenson, and Spence, 1858) p34.

⁷ See David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1971); Michael Ignatieff, A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (New York, Columbia University Press 1978); Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, Vintage, 1977); Andrew T. Scull, Museums of Madness: The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England (London, Penguin, 1979)

behaviour was also targeted by reformers in the early industrial period. In particular, these historians probe how the regulation of prostitution and the "emergence" of a male homosexual persona were related to the insurgencies of the social order birthed by increasingly urban and industrial societies.⁸

Canadian historians have also paid attention to moral reform and regulation, particularly analyzing the convergence of religious, social and moral reform that dominated public life between 1880 and 1930.⁹ Since the late 1970s, some historians have drawn out the gendered dimensions of this movement, demonstrating both the extent to which women dominated the social purity movements and how gender figured prominently among its social and political goals.¹⁰ Recently, Canadian historians Jan Noel and Lynne Marks have built on this tradition by delving into the gendered dimensions of nineteenth-century drinking and the movements that sought to

⁸See, for instance, Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, An Introduction Robert Hurley, trans., (New York, Vintage, 1978); Jeffrey Weeks, Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800 (London, Longman, 1981); Judith Walkowitz, Prostitution in Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980)

⁹ See Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971); Susan E. Houston, "The Impetus to Reform: Urban Crime, Poverty, and Ignorance in Ontario, 1850-1875," PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto Press, 1974; Carl Berger, Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983); Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1985)

¹⁰ Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983); Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1991)

regulate it.¹¹ Both suggest that social control analysis simplifies social life and the complex process whereby certain practices are singled out for regulation. Further, they also demonstrate the extent to which nineteenth-century reformers sought to create a certain model of masculinity as well as femininity. Marks especially draws attention to the way that Protestant, self-improving culture encouraged forms of manliness consistent with its larger social and political organization.

This nascent literature on masculinity and moral regulation has not extended its analytic reach as far west as British Columbia. Decades ago, S.D. Clark briefly suggested that efforts to "establish healthy recreational facilities and to promote reforms such as temperance" aimed to protect Victoria's bourgeoisie from the prevailing immorality of the mining population.¹² More recently, Tina Loo has analyzed the establishment of a regime of legal authority over the colony as one important prong of an attempt to create an orderly, respectable settler colony.¹³ British Columbia's missionaries have been the object of sustained historical analysis, but these discussions have concentrated largely on their contact with the Aboriginal population,

¹¹Lynne Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996); Jan Noel, Canada Dry: Temperance Crusades before Confederation (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1995)

¹²S.D. Clark, "Mining Society in British Columbia and the Yukon," in Robert A.J. McDonald and W. Peter Ward, eds., British Columbia: Historical Readings (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1981) p222.

¹³ Tina Loo, Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994) especially Chapters 3-6.

ignoring missionary work amongst the colony's settler society.¹⁴

Despite these historical silences, the rough, homosocial culture of colonial British Columbia attracted considerable regulatory attention. As Chapter Seven will argue, importing white women was the most profound response to the conviction that gender organization needed to be reformed if the colony was to fulfil its colonial potential as a prosperous settler society. Another strategy focused on regulating white men already in British Columbia. Throughout the colonial period, missionaries, politicians, journalists and freelance do-gooders launched an impressive if episodic campaign to reform white men. This was not a unified movement with coherent aims and techniques, but a fragmented group that sometimes was united by nothing more than a vaguely middling class position. But the organizations they supported all worked to regulate white men, and in doing so, crafted an identifiable discourse on race, masculinity, and reform. It is to these organizations and the public discourse they developed, rather than the individuals behind them, that this chapter examines. More particularly, it focuses on three especially revealing manifestations of this impetus to regenerate white masculinity. The fraternal orders, choirs, fire companies,

¹⁴Jean Usher, William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1974); Clarence Bolt, Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian: Small Shoes for Feet Too Large (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992); Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890, Second Edition (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992) Chapter 6. One outdated work, Frank A. Peake, The Anglican Church in British Columbia (Vancouver, Mitchell Press, 1959), does deal with mission work amongst the white population.

militias, sunday schools, theatre societies, and other organizations created in colonial British Columbia can be seen as part of a broader regulatory effort. Here, however, I will focus on three particularly revealing examples: the temperance movement, alternative sites of male sociability, and missions to white men.

III: Temperance

Drink drew white men together across the backwoods. It also served as a potent symbol of rough homosocial culture. It is therefore not surprising that an anti-drink movement developed in the colony. It is also not surprising that it met with only limited success: Noel is correct to argue that the temperance movement in colonial British Columbia made "lacklustre progress."¹⁵ It was unstable and unpopular, and had little impact on either local legislation or behaviour. Yet the temperance movement provides an important example of how reformers targeted white male behaviour and sought to render it compatible with their broader social goals of an orderly, stable white settler colony.

Colonial officials and employers had always discouraged drinking when it interfered with profit motives or rule.¹⁶ But a new era in the regulation of drink began in 1859 when divisions of the Sons of Temperance were formed in Victoria and

¹⁵ Noel, *Canada Dry*, p12.

¹⁶ See James Moore, "The Discovery of Hill's Bar in 1858," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* Volume IV (July 1939) p218; Aurelia Manson, "Reminiscences and Recollections of School Days," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss E/E/M31, p2.

Hope.¹⁷ Popular throughout North America, this group had a largely working-class, male cliental and sought to eliminate drinking with alternative entertainments, insurance schemes, and fraternal rites.¹⁸ The establishment of the Sons of Temperance in British Columbia was locally greeted as a watershed in the colony's transition to a stable, respectable settler colony. The British Colonist interpreted it as indicative of Victoria's progress and of the existence of a respectable and responsible male community who, they said, were nobly "willing to deny themselves, by setting an example, of total abstinence, in order to reclaim, by moral suasion and fraternal kindness, their erring brethren."¹⁹ Despite these auspicious promises, the Victoria Sons of Temperance had disappeared by 1860.

Temperance organizing subsequently shifted to the Dashaways, an organization explicitly adapted to local exigencies. In 1860, the Dashaways had a meeting hall on Victoria's Wharf street and a branch in the mining town of Hill's Bar.²⁰ The Weekly Victoria Gazette thought the Dashaways were particularly suited to British Columbia,

¹⁷ Untitled, British Colonist, 22 07 1859; Ebenezer Robson, "Notes from the Diary of Rev. Ebenezer Robson, D.D., Pioneer Wesleyan Missionary at Fort Hope, B.C., from March 12 to May 13 1860", [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/D/R57/R57.2A, p19, p20.

¹⁸ Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks, p92; Noel, Canada Dry, p37. Internationally, this organization did not admit women until 1866.

¹⁹ Untitled, British Colonist, 22 07 1859.

²⁰ The Victoria branch had about fifty members. See Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory... (Victoria, Edw. Mallandaine & Co., 1860) p55. Also see Untitled, Victoria Gazette, 23 12 1859; "Dashaway Mass Meeting," British Colonist 07 01 1860; Untitled, Weekly Victoria Gazette, 03 02 1860; "Arrival of the Otter From British Columbia," British Colonist, 04 02 1860.

having "adopted a system which renders them more likely to obtain members." Instead of demanding a permanent temperance pledge, "with the Dashaways you can take it for 6 to 12 months."²¹ They also took pains to make their organization a secular one, and banning "the subject of Sectarian Religion or Politics" from their meetings.²² Apparently, a more gradual and less godly approach to temperance was demanded by the hard-drinking, irreligious population of British Columbia. But in other respects, the Dashaways shared much with the larger anti-drink groups that swept British North America in the mid-nineteenth-century. They had an entirely male membership, held regular meetings involving committee reports, singing, and the collection of dues, developed elaborate rules for membership and expulsion, and empowered an "investigating committee" to ferret out slackers.²³

The Dashaways' main goal was to establish alternative places of sociability to replace the morally perilous social spaces of the saloon and the dance-house. In 1860, they opened a gym, hoping to encourage young men to spend their leisure hours in vigorous, moral, and manly physical recreation.²⁴ Their public performances, the local press thought, deserved support because the "progress of these athletic amusements is

²¹Untitled, Weekly Victoria Gazette, 03 02 1860.

²²Constitution and By-Laws of the Dashaway Association of Victoria, V.I. (Victoria, Colonist, nd [1860 or 1861]) p3.

²³Constitution and By-Laws of the Dashaway Association of Victoria, p2-8.

²⁴"Gymnastics," British Colonist, 04 02 1860.

as great an evidence of enlightenment in a community."²⁵ Like the Sons of Temperance, the Dashaways disappeared had a brief existence. In 1862, after a two-year life span, they too were gone.

Temperance work continued in the churches. Anglicans sometimes lectured on temperance, but Bishop Hills remained suspicious about the plebian, suspiciously secular tone of anti-drink groups, commenting in his private journal that they fostered "lower standards than the true."²⁶ Methodists, however, embraced temperance both in public and private. Missionary Cornelius Bryant noted the anniversaries of his temperance pledge in his diary and commented that drink was "one of the chiefest and most potent agents in this work of the Devil."²⁷ Methodist-supported temperance meetings in New Westminster and Victoria gathered both an impressive number of pledges²⁸ and an audience drawn from across the denominational spectrum.²⁹

²⁵ "Gymnastic Exhibition," Victoria Press, 15 12 1861; "Gymnastic Exhibition," Victoria Press, 18 12 1861.

²⁶Hills, "Journal 1861," p46.

²⁷Cornelius Bryant, "Diary - Part II," [Transcript] Central Archives of the United Church of Canada, Victoria University, [hereafter AUCC] 86.047C/TR, File 2, p71, p76-77.

²⁸See "Temperance Meeting at Victoria," British Columbian, 18 10 1862; "The Temperance Meeting," British Columbian, 05 11 1862; "Temperance Meeting" Victoria Press, 14 10 1862; "Lecture," British Columbian, 17 01 1863; "Temperance Meeting," British Columbian, 10 09 1862; "Temperance," British Columbian, 08 10 1862; "New Westminster Temperance Society" British Columbian, 07 01 1863; "New Westminster Temperance Society," British Columbian, 15 04 1863; "New Westminster Temperance Society," British Columbian, 11 03 1863.

²⁹ In 1862, Anglican Charles Hayward attended a lecture on "Total Abstinence" at the Wesleyan Chapel, commenting in his diary that he was "Glad to have had the opportunity of joining in this good work." See Charles Hayward, "Diary 1862,"

Missionary Ebenezer Robson had less success in Nanaimo, where he rustled up a mere seven pledges at an 1863 meeting of the local Total Abstinence Society.³⁰ In Victoria, Methodists asserted their anti-drink politics through a branch of the Independent Order of Good Templars formed in 1863.³¹ The British Colonist credited them with "quietly progressing in this city without making any ostentatious display,"³² but they also spread their wings to the interior and up-island to Nanaimo.³³ Where the Dashaways had sought to reformulate male sociability in a same-sex environment, the Templars created heterosocial events to rival the boozy affairs that dominated nineteenth-century plebian life. An 1864 Good Templars dance was noted for being "largely attended by the fair sex,"³⁴ as was a picnic three years later.³⁵

In a local colonial culture where masculinity, drink, and same-sex sociability were closely connected, the press took pains to present the Templars' heterosocial

BCARS, Mflm A-741; "Temperance Meeting," Victoria Press, 14 10 1862.

³⁰Ebenezer Robson, "Diary," BCARS, Mflm 17A, np. Also see M.B., "Nanaimo Correspondence" Victoria Press, 14 01 1862.

³¹"Independent Order of Good Templars," British Colonist 08 08 1863. See also "Temperance Lecture," British Colonist 18 09 1866; "Victoria Lodge Good Templars," British Colonist 21 09 1866.

³²"Independent Order of Good Templars," British Colonist, 08 08 1868. Also see "Independent Order of Good Templars," British Colonist, 08 08 1868; "The Temperance Movement," British Colonist 06 03 1869.

³³"Independent Order of Good Templars," British Colonist 08 08 1868; "Nanaimo Good Templars," British Colonist, 18 02 1871; "Nanaimo Good Templars," British Colonist, 20 05 1871.

³⁴"Good Templars Soiree," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 22 10 1864.

³⁵"Good Templars' Pic-Nic," British Colonist 18 09 1867.

events as a different, but by no means less festive, form of masculinity. Observing a 1869 picnic, the British Colonist commented that, "by the vigorous manner in which they attacked the edibles," the Templars "proved that if they do not drink they can at least do justice to a good meal."³⁶ A Templars ball a year later was said to disprove all the negative associations with temperance. "Those among us who imagine that austerity and solemnity are the natural results of teetotalism, will learn tonight that a man or woman may be mirthful and rationally jolly without the impelling influence of the contents of the flowing bowl," opined the local press.³⁷

The heterosocial character of temperance activity was reinforced by the female membership of the Templars. A minority of officers were identifiably women, which is especially notable given the relative sparseness of the white female population.³⁸ The Templars specifically stressed their mixed-sex character, promoting it as a group which involved and valued both men and women. In 1864, Amelia Beckwith of England penned a poem to celebrate the formation of the Victoria Good Templars which was proudly printed in the British Colonist. In it, she stressed both the

³⁶ "G.T. Picnic," British Colonist, 03 08 1869.

³⁷ "Good Templars Ball," British Colonist 20 12 1870.

³⁸ See, for instance, "Independent Order of Good Templars," British Colonist 08 08 1863; "Victoria Lodge Good Templars," British Colonist 21 09 1866; "Good Templars," British Colonist 03 05 1867; "Good Templars," British Colonist 08 08 1867; "Good Templars," British Colonist, 08 08 1867; "Good Templars Installation," British Colonist, 06 02 1868; "Good Templars," British Colonist 06 05 1868; "Good Templars Installation," British Colonist 06 11 1868; "Good Templars," 06 05 1869; "Nanaimo Good Templars," British Colonist 18 02 1871.

manliness of male Templars and women's participation in the movement:

Ah yes! your cause is just and holy,
 And you fight a noble fight –
 But your weapons are not hurtful,
 They are truth and love, and right;
 And though strong men well may wield them,
 Woman's hand can grasp them too,
 And can send conviction's arrow
 With a steady aim and true.³⁹

Like mixed-sex events, this poem promoted the temperate life as a vehicle for a different, explicitly heterosocial, masculinity.

All temperate groups aimed explicitly to reformulate male identity. In drawing together men on a regular basis and disciplining their interaction with rules, committees, and agendas, they aimed to create a new model of masculine community united by common purpose and governed by routine and regulation. This bureaucratic, highly regulated community was profoundly different from the rough, easy, male sociability of the saloon and male household. Temperance advocates presented this new, drink-free male community as the more masculine option. They attempted to sever the intimate connection made between drink and manliness in colonial British Columbia's rough, white male culture. At mass meetings, speakers regaled the assembled about the social ruin that befell men who took to booze. At an 1862 meeting, for instance, "For an hour the lecturer piled fact upon fact, statistic upon

³⁹"The Good Templars," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 24 04 1864.

statistic, appeal upon appeal."⁴⁰ Such facts were marshalled in order to demonstrate how drink destroyed men's work and family lives, and ultimately their self-respect and esteem. At an 1866 meeting in Nanaimo, Anglican A.C. Garrett berated the audience with tales of liquor's "disastrous effects attendant on its introduction within the domestic circle -- chilling, blighting, and poisoning wherever allowed ingress, and never satisfied until peace and love industry and self-respect were laid prostrate before it."⁴¹ Organizers also provided their audiences with living examples of a temperate, manly life. At another Nanaimo gathering, missionary speeches were augmented by the confessions of a local reformed drinker, "who related his experience and struggles with 'King Alcohol' in an amusing manner."⁴²

The bachelors of the backwoods, however, seem to have found these pleasures unconvincing and this reformulated community unattractive. Despite their relatively impressive performance in Victoria, Nanaimo, and New Westminster, temperance groups barely penetrated the interior. Even in the towns of the southern coast, support for temperance was centred around the urban middle-class and small factions of the skilled, improving working-class. Comparing listings of the Dashaways' office holders with the Victoria city directory indicates a clear connection between class and involvement in the temperance movement. In 1860, the president, Jos. A. McCraw,

⁴⁰"Temperance Meeting at Victoria," British Columbian, 18 10 1862.

⁴¹ "Temperance Lecture," Nanaimo Gazette, 19 05 1866.

⁴² M.B., "Nanaimo Correspondence," Victoria Press, 14 01 1862; Robson, "Diary" np.

was listed as an auctioneer; its Second Vice-President, Richard Broderick, was the proprietor of Kaindler's Wharf; Samuel Bingham, the Secretary, worked at the Harbor-Master's office.⁴³ In Nanaimo, the president of the "Total Abstinence Society" in 1863 was none other than future coal-baron, union-buster and self-improver par excellence Robert Dusmuir.⁴⁴

As in the Ontario towns studied by Marks, temperance appears to have appealed primarily to improving, skilled men rather than their "rough" counterparts. If it received limited popular adherence, the temperance movement was also unsuccessful in its various efforts to garner support from the local elite. Hills was overtly ambivalent about the use of temperance organizations and the state offered them no support whatsoever. When Jas. McMaster proposed to the Colonial Office that a "Temperance Settlement" be formed in British Columbia, officials blandly rejected his plan.⁴⁵ The efforts of the Good Templars' Albert Lodge to garner attention from the Vancouver Island House of Assembly were an unmitigated failure when their December 1863 petition was rejected as "too indefinite" to even be discussed. A month later, another petition was rejected as not meeting government protocol.⁴⁶

⁴³ See Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, p55, p25, p26.

⁴⁴ Robson, "Diary," np.

⁴⁵ Jas. McMaster to Duke of Newcastle, 28 05 1862 and C.F. to Jas. McMaster, 03 06 1862, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, "British Columbia, 1858-1871," CO 60/14, [hereafter CO 60] Public Archives of Canada, [hereafter PAC] MG 11, Mflm B-87.

⁴⁶ James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, "Volume III: Journals of the

However limited, the temperance movement's attempt to reform white male behaviour was a telling episode in the history of gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia. It demonstrates how reformers targeted drink as a key institution of the disorderly male community. Whether through the sober homosociability of the Dashaways or the temperate hetero-sociability of the Good Templars, they fashioned a reformed male community – small and frail though it was – and argued that it was the most manly option, infinitely preferable to the competing charms of the dance-house and the saloon.

IV: Alternative Sites of Masculinity

The limited success of temperance efforts probably encouraged reformers to create alternative sites of masculinity. In working to establish the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Mechanics and Literary Institutes, and the Sailors' Home, they aimed to provide environments that would act as a surrogate family for white men, and ultimately encourage them to forsake the rough culture of mining camps, dance-houses, and sailor pubs in favour of a masculinity consistent with the aims of a respectable, white settler colony.

The YMCA brought to the fore the values of domesticity, thrift, self-improvement, and Christianity that were shot through the temperance movement. A

Victoria branch was proposed in 1858 but did not appear until the next year,⁴⁷ simply a humble reading room.⁴⁸ At the opening meeting, speakers argued it was needed to counteract the rough, mobile masculinity fostered in a gold-mining colony where white women were few and families scarce. A congregationalist minister argued that the YMCA was particularly needed "where the population was so unsettled; where there was so little public opinion to influence and direct young men; whilst there were so many things incident to the love of money in a gold country to induce youth to contract habits adverse to the progress of morals and religion."⁴⁹ The local press agreed, suggesting that the YMCA would "be a healthy check against dissipation which has made fearful sacrifices in countries like ours where a large portion of the young men were deprived of the society of home."⁵⁰ Where young men lacked the morality-inducing presence of white women and family groups, the association would serve as a surrogate, encouraging habits of sobriety, piety, and steadiness.

Despite its much lauded beginning, the YMCA had died by 1861. British Columbian white men apparently rejected its overt piety. In the words of the Victoria Press argued that "Were we to confine any association to *young men* and *Christians* we very much fear the eligible members of the community would make an

⁴⁷"Laudable Enterprise" Victoria Gazette, 07 07 1858; "Young Men's Christian Association," Victoria Gazette, 06 09 1859; Edgar Fawcett, Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912) p229-232.

⁴⁸ Advertisement, Victoria Gazette, 19 12 1859.

⁴⁹ "Young Men's Christian Association," British Colonist 15 09 1859.

⁵⁰ "Reading Room," British Colonist, 10 10 1859.

exceedingly small show."⁵¹ Its commitment to whiteness also perhaps damaged the YMCA: Black men certainly complained that they were excluded from membership.⁵² Later efforts to reestablish the YMCA met with similar difficulties. In September 1862, Charles Hayward, future mayor of Victoria and a prime example of young, self-improving British manhood, noted in his diary that he belonged to a group that aimed "to have a room where working men may meet after their daily toil and by social and harmless amusements sweeten life - May success attend our efforts. Great God smiles upon the work." After months of meetings with local clergy and others, Hayward and his fellows established the second Victoria YMCA.⁵³ But it languished in relative obscurity until it merged with the Mechanics Institute in 1865.⁵⁴ Attempts to create a New Westminster branch of the YMCA in 1864 were as fruitless.⁵⁵ These efforts flopped despite the assistance of the local elite. Unlike temperance groups, the YMCA's had succeeded in garnering support from officials, including the use of New Westminster's city council halls and the promise of financial support from the Anglican church.⁵⁶

⁵¹ "Intellectual Improvement," Victoria Press, 24 09 1861.

⁵²George Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," [Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, MS 65a, PSA 57, p326-327.

⁵³Hayward, "Diary 1862," np. Also see George Hills, "Hills Journal 22 July to 31 December 1862," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p161.

⁵⁴"Mechanics Institute," Vancouver Times, 04 01 1865; "Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 05 01 1865.

⁵⁵"Young Men's Christian Association," British Columbian, 26 10 1864.

⁵⁶"Municipal Council, British Columbian, 22 10 1864; Hayward, "Diary 1862," np.

The goals of domesticity, discipline and sobriety embraced by the YMCA were given new life when reformers in British Columbia turned to a secular organization, the Mechanics or Literary Institute.⁵⁷ Mechanics Institutes existed throughout the Anglo-American world and were a key aspect of respectable masculine culture, offering libraries, lecture series, and self-improvement courses. The "path to self-improvement offered by the Mechanics' Institute," writes Marks, "was particularly congruent with the Protestant ethic of hard work and self-improvement that the ministers preached."⁵⁸ In colonial British Columbia, Mechanics Institutes were seen as a compromise between many white men's distaste for religion and love of rough sociability and reformers' commitment to sobriety, steadiness, and respectability. Such facilities, wrote sawmill-owner, magistrate, reformer and amateur ethnographer G.M. Sproat, were a needed secular antidote to a place where there was no "institution besides the pulpit and the press for the intellectual improvement of the inhabitants."⁵⁹ Others thought Mechanics and Literary Institutes were an acceptable alternative to draconian moral legislation. The Vancouver Times argued that if a Literary Institution and Theatre were available, "we need not legislate against less moral places," since "we can seduce their supporters into quieter pursuits, by making innocent recreations

⁵⁷ These terms were often used interchangeably in British Columbia. See "Intellectual Improvement," Victoria Press, 24 09 1861.

⁵⁸ Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks, p126.

⁵⁹"Lecture Meeting," Victoria Press, 02 10 1861.

more attractive."⁶⁰

In 1865, the Vancouver Times repeated this point with greater rhetorical flourish. It mocked the pretention of church-goers who complained about the immorality of "compulsory idlers" but failed to support practical regulatory bodies like the Mechanic's Institute. "Many of our citizens, with much ostentation, subscribe abundantly to church matters," the newspaper critiqued, "but has it never occurred to them that the Mechanics Institute, with its concomitant attractions, may be a means, perhaps as efficacious as the church, of seducing some of our young men from the ways of evil?" Indeed, they found this religious reforming rhetoric self-serving:

There is great satisfaction in deploring in loud terms the prevalence of ignorance and sin, in denouncing with much complacency the wicked habits of our neighbours, in bemoaning, with sorrowful countenances, their social delinquencies, but all this will not mend matters nor afford a substitute for the many temptations to idleness and vice with which our city admittedly abounds. It is far better to supersede these places of gross and unhallowed pleasures, by giving substantial aid to the establishment of an attractive intellectual resort for compulsory idlers, than to be merely wasting time by whining about the immorality of the Colony.⁶¹

Thus Mechanics Institutes emerged as the chosen vehicle for regulating rough, homosocial culture. They furthered general Evangelical values and served the local colonial project by mediating the conflict between the need for social regulation and the popular culture of white men in British Columbia.

⁶⁰"Persuasion better than Force," Vancouver Times, 26 11 1864.

⁶¹"The Mechanics Institute," Vancouver Times, 13 09 1865.

Mechanics Institutes were a commercial tool as well as a moral one.

Commentators argued that they could keep wintering miners from fleeing with their dollars to the greater cosmopolitan attractions of San Francisco. "In order to retain miners, we must provide some attraction, both for those who have been lucky and those who have had the misfortune to be unsuccessful," wrote the British Colonist supporting a Literary Institution in 1863.⁶² Indeed, the putative intellectual and social goals of Mechanics Institutes were often subsumed by to their aim to keep miners in town. The local press thought that "Apart from the valuable results arising from a wide spread diffusion of knowledge, and the creation of more elevated tastes amongst the people at large, to say nothing of the humanizing influence of literature" an institution would help make Victoria "attractive as permanent winter quarters for our migratory mining population."⁶³ With an Mechanics Institute, thought the Vancouver Times, "additional attraction has been firmly established in our city to those migratory classes, whose summer avocations tend to get a restless, nomadic state of mind, conducive neither to comfort nor prosperity."⁶⁴ The availability of rational and improving entertainments also became a key plank in some attempts to induce

⁶²"Our Floating Population," British Colonist, 07 09 1863. See also "Public Amusements," British Colonist, 23 09 1863; Untitled, British Colonist, 17 12 1863; "Literary Institute," British Colonist, 04 01 1864.

⁶³"Mechanics Literary Institute," British Colonist, 25 12 1865.

⁶⁴"The Mechanics Institute," Vancouver Times, 02 11 1865.

respectable immigration to British Columbia.⁶⁵

Economy and morality were tightly twinned in this discourse. According to promoters, Mechanics Institutes would attract miners to the colonial towns and ensure that their time was spent in rational self-improvement rather than the dissipation of the dance-house and saloon. In 1858, the local press noted that "At present, the only public places of resort for the stranger or resident here, are the drinking saloons – the best of which are but poor substitutes for a reading-room, either in character or accommodations."⁶⁶ Rational amusements would substitute "a normal condition of society as opposed to the morbid attractions of billiard tables, and saloons."⁶⁷

Governor Arthur Kennedy agreed; one of the greatest objects of the Victoria Institute was "to withdraw men from the haunts of vice and dissipation, to spend their leisure hours in improving and moral recreation," he suggested.⁶⁸

The hope that Mechanics Institutes would succeed in regulating white men unlike any other institution led to their creation across colonial British Columbia.

While promoted from 1861 onwards, a Mechanics Institute was not opened in Victoria

⁶⁵One argued that "Weekly winter-evening lectures on interesting and instructive subjects are delivered by the talent of the colony, and give ample opportunities for improvement to all who desire it: nor need any emigrant fear, therefore, that his children will not be virtuously trained, and only imperfectly educated." See Alexander Rattray, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, Where they are; What they are; And what they may become (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1862)p173.

⁶⁶"A Reading Room and Library," Victoria Gazette, 04 11 1858.

⁶⁷"The Mechanics Literary Institute," Vancouver Times, 14 05 1865. Also see "The Literary Institute," Victoria Press, 29 12 1861.

⁶⁸"The Mechanics Institute," Vancouver Times, 11 01 1865.

until the winter of 1864-1865.⁶⁹ Soon afterward, they boasted a library, a speakers series, elocution classes, a reading class, and a debating club.⁷⁰ There, white men dealt with how to best implement and represent colonialism, debating "Have we the right to dispossess the savage of the soil"⁷¹ and reciting poetry commemorating the Bute Inlet Massacre.⁷² They also dwelled in the realm of self-improvement, pondering issues like "temperance v. teetotalism."⁷³ A genteel atmosphere was maintained, and both smoking and talking was banned from the Institute's reading room.⁷⁴

⁶⁹"A Mechanic's Institute," Victoria Press, 17 10 1861; "Public Library and Reading Room," Victoria Press, 20 10 1861; "Victoria Literary Institute," Victoria Press, 23 10 1861; "Victoria Literary Institute," Victoria Press, 17 11 1861; "The Literary Institute," Victoria Press, 20 11 1861; "Victoria Literary Institute," Victoria Press, 21 11 1861; Britisher, "Rational Amusement," Victoria Press, 17 09 1862; "The Mechanics Literary Institute," Vancouver Times, 26 11 1864; "Visitors at the Mechanics Institute," British Colonist 17 12 1864; "A People's Institution," Colonist, 19 12 1864; "The Mechanics Institute," Vancouver Times, 20 12 1864 "Mechanics Institute," British Colonist 05 01 1865.

⁷⁰In January 1865, they had twenty-two yearly members, one hundred and eighty-two monthly members and six life members. See "The Mechanics' Institutes Lectures," British Colonist, 11 01 1865; "The Elocution Class," British Colonist, 20 03 1865; "Reading Class," Vancouver Times, 06 02 1865.

⁷¹"The Siwash Question," British Colonist, 16 03 1865; "Debating Society," Vancouver Times, 16 03 1865.

⁷²"Elocution Class," British Colonist, 24 04 1865.

⁷³"Debating Club" British Colonist 24 02 1865.

⁷⁴Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 11 12 1864, in Allan Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-1865 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1996) p236. He wrote: "Yesterday afternoon the Mechanics' Institute was opened, and I must say, although I am a partly concerned, that I think all the arrangements for the comfort of the members are admirable: there are two large rooms, with wash rooms &c adjoining: one room is a reading room, with desks and newspapers; the other, rather smaller, is a library, with bookshelves and periodicals; in the latter neither smoking nor talking is allowed."

In keeping with the now-familiar pattern, the Victoria Mechanics Institute was struggling soon after its opening and by June 1865, the local press was predicting its impending doom.⁷⁵ In a public speech, Kennedy said that "It had struck him as very strange that a community that could not support one Mechanics' Institute or one free school could support 85 public houses."⁷⁶ People complained that they rehashed old questions⁷⁷ and had inhospitable hours that forced men "to enter drinking saloons to obtain the news which the mail steamer may bring."⁷⁸ Scientist Robert Brown was apparently so unimpressed with the organization that he refused to accept the honorary membership offered to him.⁷⁹ The Victoria Mechanics' Institute revived itself in the mid 1860s only to have its survival again threatened in 1871.⁸⁰ Echoing the Governor's sentiments years before but reflecting population decline, the British Colonist commented that "we cannot bring ourselves to believe that a community which can support some fifty licensed public houses for the sale of ardent spirits will allow the doors of its only literary institution to be closed."⁸¹

⁷⁵"Mechanics Institute," British Colonist 27 05 1865.

⁷⁶ "Opening of the Central School," British Colonist, 02 08 1865.

⁷⁷"Mechanics Institutes and Public Question," British Colonist, 07 10 1865.

⁷⁸Three of Us, "Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 27 09 1865. See, for response, Thos. J. Weeks, "Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 29 09 1865; One of the Three, "A 'Weakly' Literary Champion," British Colonist, 03 10 1865.

⁷⁹Robert Brown, "Diary, Oct 22 1864 to May 14, 1865," BCARS, Add Mss 794, Box 1, File 17, p98.

⁸⁰"Mechanics Literary Institute," British Colonist, 07 06 1871; "Mechanics Literary Institute," British Colonist, 15 06 1871.

⁸¹"Mechanics's Literary Institute," British Colonist, 08 06 1871.

Unlike the temperance movement and the YMCA, Mechanics Institutes did succeed in backwoods locales like Richfield, Yale, and Burrard Inlet. Curiously, they were more stable in these places, especially in the Cariboo. In 1864, the same year that some Victorians' struggled to set up a Mechanics Institute, a meeting of the Cariboo Literary Institute drew 450 people, 250 of whom were miners.⁸² The Cariboo Literary Institute also operated a reading room in the Camerontown with flexible hours a "well selected and diversified selection of books."⁸³ It met weekly over the winter of 1866-67,⁸⁴ featured "glees and songs" on Wednesday evenings,⁸⁵ and sponsored visiting lecturers who performed in saloons.⁸⁶ Yet the Cariboo Literary Institute closed its reading room in the summer of 1868,⁸⁷ and it was only with government aid that it was rebuilt after the Barkerville fire later that year.⁸⁸ Subsequently, the Reading Room doubled as a post office,⁸⁹ which probably ensured it a modicum of consistent

⁸²"Every Day Life in Cariboo," British Colonist, 12 05 1864.

⁸³Advertisement, Cariboo Sentinel, 28 05 1868; "Reading Room," Cariboo Sentinel, 12 06 1865. By 1866, the Literary Institute had four hundred and thirty-seven volumes, one hundred and four subscribers, and exchanged roughly sixty books a week. See "Cariboo Literary Institute," Cariboo Sentinel, 22 10 1866.

⁸⁴Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 30 11 1866.

⁸⁵Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 15 01 1867.

⁸⁶"Another Lecture," Cariboo Sentinel, 07 09 1867; "Lecture," Cariboo Sentinel, 09 09 1867.

⁸⁷"Institute," Cariboo Sentinel, 16 07 1868; "Reading Room," Cariboo Sentinel, 29 07 1868; "The Reading Room," Cariboo Sentinel, 05 08 1868.

⁸⁸"Institutions," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 10 1868; "Barkerville," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 10 1868; "Literary Institute," Cariboo Sentinel, 31 10 1868.

⁸⁹"Post Office and Library," Cariboo Sentinel, 01 05 1869.

state funding.

The Cariboo Literary Institute blended reforming culture with the easy white male sociability of the backwoods, embracing select aspects of the rowdy culture of gold miners. It published a literary newspaper featuring the unique talents of miner-poets James Anderson and John McLaren.⁹⁰ McLaren used this work as a building-block for a fleeting career in local politics, standing as the "miner's candidate" for the mining board in 1866.⁹¹ Their renown was furthered by regular public performances and ultimately the publication of a book of Anderson's poetry.⁹² In his Sawney poems, Anderson described Cariboo life to a fictitious Scottish reader who functioned as a moral, domestic foil for the ribald tales of backwoods male life. In one, Anderson wrote about the weakness of religious institutions and centrality of informal secular organizations for miners:

There's neither kirk nor Sunday here,
 Altho' there's mony a' sinner,
 An' if we're steep'd in a' that's bad,
 Think ye there's muckle winner?
 There is a little meetin' house
 That's ca'd the Cambrian Ha,
 Its memers few -- but these I view
 As saut preservin' a'--
 But if we hiina got a kirk
 We hae anither biggin
 (Altho' it may na point sae clear

⁹⁰"Chronicles of the Cariboo," Cariboo Sentinel, 24 05 1866.

⁹¹"Our New Candidate," Cariboo Sentinel, 20 09 1866. He declined to run soon after. See "Our Candidates," Cariboo Sentinel, 27 09 1866.

⁹²"Cariboo Literature," Cariboo Sentinel, 17 04 1869.

The way abune the riggin)
 That gies amusement to the boys
 An' brings them a' thegither
 Ae nicht a week for twa short hours
 To laught wi' ane anither
 I dinna ken what name to gi'ed,
 A 'Play-house' ye despise,
 Would 'Amateur Dramatic Club'
 Look better in your eyes,
 You Sayneys are a moral folk,
 Altho' ye will get fou!
 'Twad do ye a' a sight o' guid
 Twa years in Cariboo!⁹³

When Anderson left the Cariboo in 1871, his departure was publicly mourned.⁹⁴ His work, and that of his partner and the organization that supported them, demonstrate how, like the Dashaways in Victoria, reform organization incorporated choice bits of the rough, homosocial milieu they aimed to regulate.

In smaller white settlements, reformers organized clubs that mirrored the activities of the Mechanics and Literary Institutes' of the towns. A debating club was launched in 1862 in Lillooet that, like the other alternative sites of masculinity, aimed provide rational and polite entertainment "in a community where, after their hard summer's toils people are inclined to rest, and where they often mistake indolence for rest, in a society where cards and spirits are more effective than rational amusements

⁹³"Extracts From Sawney's Third Letter," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 07 1868. See also James Anderson, Sawney's Letters and Cariboo Rhymes (Barkerville, Cariboo Sentinel [Toronto, Bibliographic Society of Canada, 1950])

⁹⁴"Goodbye to Sawney," Cariboo Sentinel, 25 11 1871.

and mental improvement."⁹⁵ A similar club existed in New Westminster,⁹⁶ which debated "Is War more destructive than intemperance?" before a large audience in 1863.⁹⁷ In Yale, patrons hoped a Debating Society would "furnish our miners, in addition to newspapers, chess, draughts, &c., the means of whiling away the tedium of inaction without self-reproach and without loss."⁹⁸

These clubs sometimes served as building-blocks for permanent institutions. In July 1865, after two years of agitation, a reading room was established in New Westminster.⁹⁹ By 1868, it had fifty-three members,¹⁰⁰ but nonetheless seems to have collapsed the following year.¹⁰¹ A Library and Reading Room was attempted at Fort

⁹⁵"The Lillooet Debating Club," British Columbian, 20 03 1862; "Lillooet Debating Club," British Columbian, 17 01 1863.

⁹⁶PRO, Untitled British Columbian, 13 09 1862; "A Debating Club," British Columbian, 08 10 1862; Untitled, British Columbian, 29 11 1862; "New Westminster Debating Society," British Columbian, 14 01 1863; "Debating Society," British Columbian, 25 11 1863; "The Debating Society," British Columbian, 28 11 1863; "New Westminster Debating Association," British Columbian, 29 10 1864;

⁹⁷New Westminster Debating Society," British Columbian, 12 12 1863.

⁹⁸Yalensis, Untitled, British Columbian, 07 02 1863; "Yale Institute," British Columbian, 19 12 1863. In 1865, the Yale Debating Society had some forty members and was attempting to create a permanent reading room. "Yale Letter," British Columbian, 04 01 1865. The organization, however, collapsed the next year. See "Letter from Yale," British Columbian, 04 01 1865.

⁹⁹R. Jamieson, "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" British Columbian, 26 09 1863; "A Reading Room," British Columbian, 24 09 1864; X., Untitled, British Columbian, 08 10 1864; "Public Library," British Columbian, 18 01 1865; "Institute Meeting," British Columbian, 28 01 1865; "The Public Library and Reading Room," British Columbian, 17 07 1865; Advertisement, British Columbian, 01 11 1865; "The Public Library," British Columbian, 17 01 1866.

¹⁰⁰"The Public Library," British Columbian, 11 03 1868.

¹⁰¹"Public Library," British Columbian, 01 07 1868.

Hope as early as 1859.¹⁰² At Nanaimo, a Literary Institute emerged from the ashes of a presumably religious organization, the St. Paul's Literary Institute, in 1863.¹⁰³ While the disrepair of the Literary Institute was a local joke and cause for cheap poetry two years later,¹⁰⁴ it survived by relying on benefits and excursions for financing.¹⁰⁵ The local press continued to wax romantic about the Institute, dubbing it a useful organization for transforming male behaviour and identity. One paper insisted that "Among the greatest benefits these institutions confer on mankind are, and must always be, that they draw members away from other enticements" and provide "fitting places for passing away their leisure hour."¹⁰⁶ The racially-plural lumbering settlement of Burrard Inlet also developed a relatively long-lived Mechanics Institute in 1868.¹⁰⁷

Why did reformers turn to Mechanics Institutes in all of these places, regardless of their record of failure? As the Cariboo case clearly shows and some Victoria pundits hoped, these institutions could felicitously combine the rough,

¹⁰²James Douglas to Mr Pringle, 25 09 1859, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1858-1861," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 1, p176.

¹⁰³Robson, "Diary", np.

¹⁰⁴"The Librarian's Lament," Nanaimo Gazette, 13 11 1865.

¹⁰⁵"Literary Institute Excursion," Nanaimo Gazette, 10 07 1865; Alpha, "The Literary Institute," Nanaimo Gazette, 10 07 1865; "The Marsh Troupe," Nanaimo Gazette, 14 08 1865; A Member, "The New Institute Building," Nanaimo Gazette 13 11 1865; Untitled, Nanaimo Gazette 05 02 1866.

¹⁰⁶"Our Literary Institute," Nanaimo Gazette, 27 11 1865.

¹⁰⁷ Burrard Inlet Mechanic's Institute, "Minute Book," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss E/C/B94.

homosocial male culture and metropolitan, self-improving manliness. Like the YMCA, Mechanics Institutes were conceived as alternative socialization agencies for young white men who lacked the restraining presence of family.¹⁰⁸ One Victoria letter-writer thought a Mechanics Institute was needed to "provide rational amusement to those among us who do not enjoy a *home*."¹⁰⁹ In New Westminster, reformers claimed a library was especially valuable for "young men who are separated from home and friends, as it would stimulate mental improvement and keep them out of the way of temptation."¹¹⁰ The Vancouver Times wrote that such institutions were suited to the many "Men who at home have enjoyed all the pleasing and ameliorating influences of social intercourse, have here been thrown wholly on their own resources for recreation," forcing them "to look for society in the billiard room, or even the disreputable establishments which offer too many temptations to those shut out from the society to which they have been accustomed."¹¹¹

Mechanics Institutes' ability to function as a family, significantly, would not merely discourage them from rough entertainments and society. It would also, reformers hoped, encourage them to be responsible, self-controlled men. The British

¹⁰⁸ But some thought that the solution to the predicament of young, footloose men was the greater hospitality of their elders. See Bachelor of Arts, "Social Recreations," Vancouver Times, 24 10 1865.

¹⁰⁹"Institute and Reading Room," British Colonist, 16 11 1864. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁰"A Public Library and a Theatre," British Columbian, 23 01 1864; Ennui, "A Public Library," British Columbian, 21 05 1864.

¹¹¹Untitled, Vancouver Times, 13 11 1865.

Colonist argued that the Victoria Mechanics' Institute, serving as a surrogate home for men, would render them suitable political subjects. "There are hundreds in this community deprived of home comforts and advantages; and to such the Institute presents the ready and convenient means of spending the spare hours of evening in rational amusement or mental improvement," they wrote, and thus was "instrumental in keeping many a young man from a course which would make him less valuable as a citizen and less happy as a man."¹¹² The Mechanics Institutes would reform the rough homosocial culture of British Columbia by providing a positive masculine environment that replicated rather than opposed the political and social functions of the nineteenth-century, middle-class home.

Reformers further reinforced the connections with the bourgeois family by explicitly involving white women. The press publicized white women's role, however small, commenting when the Cariboo Literary Institute met at Jeanette Morris' house, when ladies attended a Barkerville benefit, or when Victoria women made small donations.¹¹³ Such involvement, of course, could be more than symbolic. At the opening of Nanaimo's Institute in 1862, wrote Hills, "The tables were provided by ladies of the place & literally groaned beneath the weight of good things."¹¹⁴ When Miss Wilson left Cariboo in 1865, the reading-room collapsed. Given that she owned

¹¹²"Mechanics Literary Institute," British Colonist, 16 12 1870.

¹¹³"Every Day Life in Cariboo," British Colonist 12 05 1864; "Concert," Cariboo Sentinel, 30 09 1865; "Ladies Donation to the Institute," Vancouver Times, 26 09 1865.

¹¹⁴ Hills, "Journal 22 July to 31 December 1862," p181.

one hundred and thirty of the library's books, this was hardly surprising.¹¹⁵

Victoria promoters took care to foster the idea that Mechanics' Institutes were a bastion of heterosociability. In 1865 the British Colonist promoted a lecture on New Zealand's "brave and intelligent inhabitants, the noblest race of savages on the face of the earth," commenting that they hoped "to see our citizens, especially the ladies, show their interest in so good a cause as the Mechanic Institutes by being present tonight in large numbers."¹¹⁶ At a celebration of their expansion, "the ladies" auspiciously occupied chairs in front of the platform while members sat behind them.¹¹⁷ Kennedy urged Victoria's white women to support the Mechanics Institute whose civilizing mission, he believed, was so like their own. He told local white women "to give their support to this movement, and he assured them that a few hours spent in the rooms of the Mechanic's Institute would render the young men still more fit for their society."¹¹⁸ Individual members were encouraged to bring women to Victoria's Mechanics Institute. For a party, the committee declared that "no member's company will be

¹¹⁵"Letter from Cariboo," British Columbian, 04 04 1865. A Miss Watson of Victoria was a similar patron of the Burrard Inlet Mechanics Institute, donating books to them in 1869. See Burrard Inlet Mechanic's Institute, "Minute Book," p12.

¹¹⁶"The Lecture To-Night," British Colonist, 10 01 1865. See also "The Mechanics' Institutes Lectures," British Colonist, 11 01 1865.

¹¹⁷"Mechanics Institute Conversazione," Vancouver Times, 16 12 1865.

¹¹⁸"The Mechanics Institute," Vancouver Times, 11 01 1865. A Capt. Foster is credited with the same remarks. See "The Mechanics' Institutes Lectures," British Colonist, 11 01 1865.

properly appreciated unless he is accompanied by a lady friend."¹¹⁹ They also promised free admission to a lecture to members accompanied by "ladies."¹²⁰ White women were also implicated in the daily activities, participating in meetings,¹²¹ public performances of the debating class,¹²² and a poetry contest.¹²³

Mechanics Institutes also sought to foster a specific version of class relations. Reformers hoped that these organizations would particularly reshape the poor moral habits of the working classes, which, they believed, were directly linked to colonial progress. In 1864, the British Colonist noted that "we therefore hope to see working men interest themselves in the movement with a determination to place it on its proper legitimate basis, so that the Institution may belong essentially to the people instead of any class or classes."¹²⁴ Its first president wanted the Victoria Mechanics Institute to improve "the condition of those who may be perhaps a step down in the ranks of society."¹²⁵ According to Kennedy, the fundamental purpose of the Victoria Mechanics Institute was uplifting the working classes: "I should beg of you to

¹¹⁹"The Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 13 12 1865; "Conversations at the Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 15 12 1865; "Excursion to San Juan under the Auspices of the Victoria Mechanics' Literary Institute," British Colonist, 27 05 1867.

¹²⁰ "Lecture," British Colonist, 04 12 1866; "Lecture," British Colonist, 07 12 1866.

¹²¹"Mechanics Institute" Vancouver Times, 14 12 1865; "Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 10 11 1867; "Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 11 12 1867

¹²²"Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 01 10 1867.

¹²³ "Novel Feature of entertainment from the Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 23 01 1868.

¹²⁴"Mechanics Institute," British Colonist, 18 11 1864.

¹²⁵"The Mechanics' Institutes Lectures," British Colonist, 11 01 1865.

remember and believe that all colonial prosperity and respectability must mainly depend upon the basis of the working classes."¹²⁶ The extent to which these institutes represented employer values was rendered clearest in resource-towns with a single or major employer. In Nanaimo, the Vancouver Coal Company donated the site for the Literary Institute Hall.¹²⁷ In Burrard Inlet, the Mechanics Institute was "strongly supported" by managers of the local sawmill. "The Mechanics Institute," writes historian Robert A.J. McDonald, "was run throughout its history by leading figures on the north shore, many of them in managerial positions at the mill."¹²⁸ Mill owners S.P. Moody and Co. also helped pay for the erection of the Mechanics Institute Hall, a generosity that earned them unanimous praise from members in 1868.¹²⁹ Moody was also consulted "for his guidance" in the selection of books for the library, and apparently liquidated the Institute's debt in 1869.¹³⁰

Even when major employers did not directly fund or support the organizations, Mechanics Institutes tended to be superintended by the middle-classes. Although Naval officer and evangelist Edmund Hope Verney wrote to his father that a meeting of the Victoria Mechanics Institute "was attended chiefly by working men," and was

¹²⁶"The Mechanics Institute, " Vancouver Times, 11 01 1865.

¹²⁷C.S. Nicol to Henry Wakeford, 19 08 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mfilm B-1350; "Nanaimo Literary Institute," British Colonist, 30 08 1864.

¹²⁸ Robert A.J. McDonald, "Lumber Society on the Industrial Frontier: Burrard Inlet, 1863-1886," Labour/Le Travail, 33 (Spring 1994) p89.

¹²⁹ Burrard Inlet Mechanic's Institute, "Minute Book," p7.

¹³⁰ Burrard Inlet Mechanic's Institute, "Minute Book," p10, p14-15.

particularly pleased to note that his participation was suggested by "a working sawyer,"¹³¹ actual working-class participation was minimal. Mechanics and Literary Institutes were patronized and supported by colonial officials, naval officers, and clergy. At an 1866 performance at the Victoria Institute the governor and his family, "several naval gentlemen," and "a great many of our principal citizens" were present. The Vancouver Times pithily retorted that "'everybody and his wife' were there."¹³² Elite participation was more than symbolic. By 1868, the working leadership of the Victoria Mechanics' Institute was dominated by professional men, often with ties to the colonial state. Dr. Ash, a physician, was president; E.G. Alston, the vice-president, was a barrister and supreme court registrar of deeds, while Thomas Allsop, the Secretary, was a land agent.¹³³ A year later, the class profile of the Mechanics' Institute's governing cabal was similar. Lumley Franklin, the President, was an auctioneer; James Fell, the Vice-President, owned a retail grocery; and Allsop, now the Treasurer, was still employed as a land agent.¹³⁴ Bourgeois men also seem to have dominated the other town Institutes. The Nanaimo Literary Institute was patronized by the improving bourgeois, most notably the ever-present Dunsmuir.¹³⁵ In New

¹³¹Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 29 11 1864, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p232.

¹³²"Mechanics' Institute Performance," Vancouver Times, 09 02 1866.

¹³³Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Second Issue, and British Columbia Guide (Victoria, Higgins and Long, 1868) p23, p24, p38,

¹³⁴Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third Issue, and British Columbia Guide... (Victoria, E. Mallandaine, 1869) p16, p26, p27, p38.

¹³⁵"A Public Meeting," Nanaimo Gazette, 21 08 1865.

Westminster, the Mechanics Institute was criticized for placing "the institution upon too narrow and exclusive a basis."¹³⁶

It was perhaps their intimate connections with state officials and the local bourgeoisie that earned the Mechanics Institutes relatively generous government funding. While the colonial state was unimpressed by the temperance cause, they were downright beneficent to the Institutes', despite their sometimes obvious mismanagement or unpopularity. The Prince Consort himself donated to New Westminster's library,¹³⁷ and the Colonial Secretary seems to have managed that institution for a number of years before protesting.¹³⁸ The Governor paid for Victoria's subscription to the London Times,¹³⁹ and the colony provided the same institution with maps, government publications, and other supplies,¹⁴⁰ and waived its port fees.¹⁴¹ The

¹³⁶ "Public Library and Reading Room," British Columbian, 21 12 1864.

¹³⁷ Arthur Birch to Earl of Carnarvon, 25 10 1866, CO 60/25, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1438.

¹³⁸ "The Library Meeting," British Columbian, 04 03 1868.

¹³⁹ E. Graham Alston to Colonial Secretary, 21 01 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1300, File 13/5.

¹⁴⁰ E. Graham Alston to Arthur Birch, 29 05 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1300, File 13/7; E. Graham Alston to Arthur Birch, 13 05 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1300, File 13/11; E. Graham Alston to Arthur Birch, 09 07 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1300, File 13/12; A.B. Gray to Colonial Secretary, 18 03 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1332, File 671/1; A.B. Gray to Colonial Secretary, 05 04 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1332, File 671/2.

¹⁴¹ Thomas Allsop to Governor, 08 07 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS GR 1372, Mflm B-1300, File 12a/1.

British Columbia government bought the building that housed the Cariboo Literary Society, rescuing it from embarrassing debt,¹⁴² funded the re-building of the Cariboo Reading Room in 1865,¹⁴³ and donated books to it a year later.¹⁴⁴ The colony passed special legislation allowing these groups to incorporate¹⁴⁵ and sometimes allocated money in the annual estimates for libraries and Mechanics and Literary Institutes.¹⁴⁶ Government aid was routine enough that Institutes' were quick to complain when assistance was not speedily forthcoming.¹⁴⁷

Mechanics Institutes emerged as the primary means by which British Columbia reformers sought to compel white men to adopt dominant, nineteenth-century metropolitan visions of masculinity. By providing an alternative site of sociability that mirrored the controlling capabilities of the nuclear families, Mechanics Institutes

¹⁴²H.M. Ball to Colonial Secretary, 03 06 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1311, File 197/2; Chartres Brew to Colonial Secretary 23 10 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1311, File 197/1.

¹⁴³"Reading Room," Cariboo Sentinel, 19 08 1865.

¹⁴⁴"Cariboo Library," Cariboo Sentinel, 14 06 1866.

¹⁴⁵"An Act respecting Literary Societies and Mechanics Institutes," in A. Musgrave to Earl of Kimberley, 25 02 1871, CO 60/43, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1451, p293; James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 1858-1871, Volume IV, "Journals of the Legislative Council of British Columbia, 1866-1871" (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p417-420, p420-1.

¹⁴⁶W.K. Bull to Colonial Secretary, 11 02 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1312, File 229/1; A.B. Gray to Colonial Secretary, 04 03 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1332, File 671/1; Edwin Johnson to J.F. McCreight, 22 11 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1335, File 844a/1.

¹⁴⁷"Cariboo Correspondence," British Columbian, 03 03 1866.

aimed not only to keep miners in town, but also encourage them to forsake rough amusements in favour of rational and improving pastimes. Controlled by dominant classes, these were to be cross-class institutions capable of reintegrating working-class men into a social consensus about acceptable social relationships and values.

Especially in the Cariboo, Institute's successfully reconciled these goals with some choice elements of the white homosocial culture but in town Mechanics and Literary Institutes were overtly bourgeois. It was perhaps their vast distance from working-class white men that led a small band of reformers to launch an unsuccessful but revealing campaign to create a Sailors' Home.

Sailors' Homes, like temperance groups and Mechanics Institutes, were not local inventions sprung from the peculiar minds of British Columbia's reformers. Rather, they existed in port cities throughout the Anglo-American world, working to reform sailors, those mythic nineteenth-century working-class libertines. As Valerie Burton notes, the image of the sailor was a powerful and largely unitary one: "Footloose, careless and fancy-free, he roams the world without constraints of home and family, half hero and half reprobate."¹⁴⁸ Such images existed side-by-side with paternalistic concern about the sailors' victimization by pimps and crimps, wily sailortown exploiters who exploited poor Jack's naivete. The Sailors Home sought to transform the victimized libertine into a model man and worker. Judith Fingard

¹⁴⁸Valerie Burton, "The Myth of Bachelor Jack: Masculinity, Patriarchy, and Seafaring Labour," in Colin Howell and Richard J. Twomey, eds., Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour (Fredericton, Acadiensis Press, 1991) p179.

contends that the Halifax Sailors' Home "was governed by a set of rules and regulations that reflected middle-class notions of the qualities desired in wage earners of the industrial age: punctuality, hard work, temperance, thrift, and obedience."¹⁴⁹ In British Columbia, promoters of the Sailors Home were motivated by similar fears and desires, by a concern that the navy's men were fleeced by Esquimalt's pubs and Victoria's dance houses, and by a yearning for an institution that would not only protect Jack, but encourage him to adopt a metropolitan, self-controlled style of masculine identity and behaviour.

The possibility of opening a Sailors' Home in Victoria was first raised in 1867. Apparently, it was immediately motivated by events at the Esquimalt naval base, where "men belonging to the ships stationed there have lost their lives while laboring under intoxication." A Sailors' Home would help to address the dangerous problem of drunken seamen by providing an alternative site of improving recreation, providing "the comforts of a public house without its contaminating influences."¹⁵⁰ It would also be a place where positive sailor sociability could occur, removed of all its rough and immoral aspects. Seamen, wrote the British Colonist, "hail with satisfaction a Home where they cold smoke, 'yarn' and partake of harmless refreshment without being

¹⁴⁹ Judith Fingard, Jack in Port: Sailortowns of Eastern Canada (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983) p234. On sailors in colonial British Columbia generally, see Barry M. Gough, Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-90 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1984)

¹⁵⁰"A Sailors' Home," British Colonist, 05 11 1867.

exposed to the temptation of grogshops."¹⁵¹ It would also protect him from the sailortown demimonde that sought to fleece the stupid sailor. "As the case stands now," wrote the British Colonist, "Jack finds all doors closed against him except those of persons who, playing upon the poor fellow's weakness and simplicity, seek to relieve him of his hard earned pay."¹⁵²

The Sailors' Home would not only redirect male community, but would, like the YMCA and Mechanics Institute, serve as a surrogate family, a social regulator for the single, vulnerable sailor who so clearly lacked appropriate restraining influences. Without a Sailors' Home, "seamen, cut off as they are from all home ties, are forced to frequent public houses where the vilest of liquor is served out to them, and to contract habits that contribute to the demoralization of the individual and the destruction of his health, and are in the highest degree detrimental to the welfare and discipline of the services," wrote the British Colonist.¹⁵³ While sailors' lack of family ties was not exceptional in colonial British Columbia, reformers complained that they were uniquely excluded from social institutions, arguing that the "Masonic and Odd Fellows Societies, our Turn Verein and Dramatic Societies, and many others where our fellow townsmen meet to enjoy themselves" were all closed to sailors.¹⁵⁴ Thus a Sailors' Home would not only provide a different model of male community, but also

¹⁵¹"A Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 06 03 1867.

¹⁵²"The Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 03 01 1868.

¹⁵³"A Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 06 03 1867.

¹⁵⁴J. Nagle, "Sailors' Home," British Colonist, 04 08 1868.

a substitute family and civil society and thus render the sailor a more moral man and more disciplined worker.

Reformers also supported the creation of a Sailors' Home in the interests of protecting respectable Victorians from the disrespectable antics of sailors on leave. One letter-writer wrote that "is it not fair to the quiet living citizens to let loose swarms of giddy men to play their fantastic tricks before the eyes of all."¹⁵⁵ Others argued that a Sailors' Home would both assist the family sailors' supported at home and protect the community from them.¹⁵⁶ The local press opined that such an organization would also assist the local shipping economy¹⁵⁷ and "attract the more steady and respectable class of sea-faring men from neighbouring countries."¹⁵⁸

Such impassioned pleas did not lead to the creation of a Sailors' Home in Victoria. Naval authorities were apparently considering providing a home for sailors in the British Navy by early 1868,¹⁵⁹ but, some six months later, subscription lists were still being circulated in search of alternate support.¹⁶⁰ Harbour-master Jeremiah Nagle, the moving force behind the campaign, was also frustrated by low attendance at

¹⁵⁵ Neptune, "Sailors' Home," British Colonist, 12 11 1867.

¹⁵⁶ One Who Would Reap a Benefit, "The Proposition to Found a Sailors' Home" British Colonist, 08 03 1867.

¹⁵⁷ "A Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 03 09 1869.

¹⁵⁸ "Sailor's Home," British Columbian, 31 03 1869.

¹⁵⁹ "The Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 03 01 1868.

¹⁶⁰ "Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 11 08 1868; J. Nagle, "Sailors' Home," British Colonist, 04 08 1868.

meetings and insufficient patronage from the Governor and the Admiral.¹⁶¹ By 1870, Nagle had apparently admitted defeat, and the campaign to establish a Sailors' Home had disappeared altogether. Yet this brief campaign serves as another example of the attempt to transform the rough, homosocial culture forged by white men in colonial British Columbia, saving men from themselves and making society safe for others.

V: Missions to White Men

Encouraging rough fellows to become disciplined, sober, and steady was also the goal of Anglican and Methodist missions. Throughout the 1858 to 1871 period, they promoted a variety of social goals consistent with a larger programme of Evangelical piety and white supremacy, some of which directly addressed white male, homosocial culture. Missionaries in backwoods locales worked to encourage temperance through speaking tours.¹⁶² They formed a British Columbian Bible Society with branches at New Westminster, Yale, and Lillooet which, in 1864 alone, distributed five hundred and sixteen bibles and testaments in English, French, Spanish, Gaelic, Welsh, Hebrew, German, Italian, Russian and Irish.¹⁶³ Anglicans aimed to

¹⁶¹"Discourteous," British Colonist, 20 01 1869; "The Sailor's Home," British Colonist, 14 08 1868; J.N., "A Sailor's Home," British Colonist 02 09 1869; "Sailors Home," British Columbian, 31 03 1869.

¹⁶²"Lecture," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 09 1865.

¹⁶³"British Columbia Bible Society," British Columbian, 07 01 1865. Also see "Bible Society Meeting," British Colonist, 08 06 1863; "Bible Society," British Columbian, 07 11 1863; "British Columbian Bible Society," British Columbian, 18 05 1864; "Bible Society" British Columbian, 06 08 1864; "British Columbia Bible Society," British Columbian, 05 11 1864; "Yale Branch Bible Society," British Columbian, 26 11 1864; Protester, "Postponement of the Bible Meeting," British Columbian, 17 12

reach all factions of the white homosocial culture, and boasted of visiting "the backwoodsman in his lonely hut," gathering "together the scattered farmers to the Log Church," and ministering "to the British sailor."¹⁶⁴ Protestant clerics also took their message to urban bastions of rough homosocial white male culture like boarding-houses, saloons, and restaurants and targeted miners wintering over in Victoria.¹⁶⁵

In order to gain the ear and respect of the rough fellows of the British Columbia backwoods, Evangelicals tried to shed Christianity's feminine reputation, reconstructing religion as a manly endeavour. Bishop Hills, for instance, was said to preach in a way specifically "adapted to impress the man who comes in contact with the sterner facts of travel, hardship, and danger every day, by their masculine common sense and Evangelical clearness."¹⁶⁶ Methodists Thomas Derrick made a similar effort, promising that his Barkerville ministry would be suited to the simple manly tastes, not involving any "very profound or abstract doctrines."¹⁶⁷

Missionaries hoped that their religious attentions would ensure that white men

1864; "Bible Society," British Columbian, 17 12 1864.

¹⁶⁴ Ninth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1867 (London, Rivingtons, 1868)p9.

¹⁶⁵ Third Report of the Columbia Mission with List of Contributions, 1861 (London, Rivingtons [1862]) p26; Thomas Crosby, Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship (Toronto, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1914) p18; E. Cridge and R.J. Dundas, To the Miners of British Columbia resident for the Winter in Victoria (Victoria [?], np, sn between 1861 and 1865)

¹⁶⁶Rev. William Burton Crickmer, "Letters," ADNW/EPBC, PSA 50, File 3 [Transcript from original held at BCARS] p9.

¹⁶⁷Thos. Derrick, "Our Thanks to Barkerville," Cariboo Sentinel, 10 20 1869.

severed from traditional social restraints would be provided with new but similarly effective ones. In 1862, the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, spoke at a London meeting, promising that Anglican clergy would provide the social regulation that white miners in British Columbia so obviously lacked. Those men, he wrote:

have but a short harvest of a few weeks in the gold fields, and then, all unused to the possessions of wealth, all unfitted for its spending, all unable to invest it with no calls of the family upon them, no natural and healthy outlets for their new infusion of this new gold, go down for the rest of the year to some city upon the border of that land, and find there the leeches of dissipation and corruption, of lust and of drunkenness, ready to relieve them of the plethora of that unusual fullness, and so are exposed to a new form and set of temptations, against which nothing but habits of morality and religion deeply ingrained into their own nature will defend poor weak human beings suddenly subjected to them.¹⁶⁸

Like Mechanics Institutes and Sailors' Homes, missions were thus conceived as surrogate families able to shelter white men from "leeches of dissipation and corruption, of lust and of drunkenness."

These ongoing goals were the backdrop for a missionary campaign explicitly directed at reforming white male homosocial culture. This mission occurred under the auspices of the Anglican Columbia Mission, founded by wealthy British heiress Angela Burdett-Coutts in 1858 and superintended by the ever-present Hills. The formation of the Bishopric of Columbia was described by famed novelist Charles Dickens as needed to counter the influence white, popular culture on the local colonial project: if the "'untutored heathen' were to be reclaimed from *their* vices, it must be

¹⁶⁸ Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1861, p49.

by a somewhat purer agency than the hideous influence of these lawless godless whites, only occupied in digging up the earth for gold."¹⁶⁹ Despite its aim to challenge rough mining culture's hegemony, the Columbia Mission initially had very little contact with it. No clergy lasted a Cariboo winter before 1866-1867 and even their summer ministrations were minimal.¹⁷⁰

This peculiar combination of alleged interest and actual inattention evoked a protracted critique from Caribooites. In 1865, the end of a Methodist missionary's thirteen month term was marked by the comment that this was "the longest period any clergyman has remained in this inhospitable region."¹⁷¹ Inveterate letter-writer Tal. O'Eifion wrote that the immorality of the Cariboo was inevitable, given that "Those who were at one time sent amongst us to be our spiritual advisers, have entirely deserted us." It was not surprising, he thought, that morality withered under such blatant ecclesiastical disregard. "As a matter of course," wrote Eifion, "when the shepherds are absent the sheep are bound to go astray."¹⁷² When the New Westminster press criticized their raucous Sunday entertainments, Caribooites responded that they could scarcely do better given their lack of religious regulation.

¹⁶⁹ Dickens, "Episcopacy in the Rough," p471. Emphasis original.

¹⁷⁰Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1868 (London, Rivingtons, 1969) p25.

¹⁷¹"Ecclesiastical," British Columbian, 27 09 1865. Also see Tal. O'Eifion, "A Missionary for Cariboo," Cariboo Sentinel, 15 07 1867; C., "Religious," Cariboo Sentinel, 25 06 1868.

¹⁷²Tal. O Eifion, "Our Moral, Social, and Political Condition," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 02 1867.

"If we went to church we should find it closed," they wrote.¹⁷³ The Cariboo Sentinel named three possible causes for this neglect: "namely, that we are too pious to require gospel ministrations, too poor to pay for them, or too corrupt for a modern apostle to cast his lot amongst us."¹⁷⁴

Other critics disparaged the manliness of Protestant clergy too weak to withstand the rigours of an up-country winter. One commented that it was appalling to see "the host of men lounging along the streets" of Barkerville while "the feather-bed 'soldiers of the Cross,' in the lower country, are indulging in good living and easy work."¹⁷⁵ Such arguments led even the New Westminster press to admit that the Cariboo lacked sufficient Protestant attention, leaving the field open for the competing charms of Roman Catholicism and an ill-defined yet pervasive immorality. "It is scarcely creditable to the Protestant churches," wrote the British Columbian in 1867, "that Cariboo, with the largest settled population east of the Capital, and with a large majority of its population of the Protestant faith, should have been literally abandoned – surrendered to Roman Catholicism for nearly two years past."¹⁷⁶

The clergy replied that the Cariboo was a hostile mission field. Even the ever-

¹⁷³"Cariboo Morals," Cariboo Sentinel, 10 10 1867. The New Westminster press had a long history of lambasting Cariboo morals. See "Gambling and Sabbath Desecration in Cariboo," British Columbian 25 07 1863; "Sabbath Desecration," British Columbian, 25 09 1867; "The Sabbath in Cariboo," British Columbian, 23 10 1867; "Sabbath Desecration," British Columbian, 06 05 1868.

¹⁷⁴"Church at Lytton", Cariboo Sentinel, 01 07 1867.

¹⁷⁵J.E., Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 11 06 1868.

¹⁷⁶"The Miners and the Missionaries," British Columbian, 31 07 1867.

sincere R.C.L. Brown had to admit that the dearth of piety in the Cariboo was daunting.¹⁷⁷ After a tour in 1865, A.C. Garret commented that "This emphatically is not the place for inferior men."¹⁷⁸ Not only were many residents simply disinterested, wrote another Anglican cleric, but some Cariboo miners were "always ready to attribute sordid and avaricious motives to the clergy."¹⁷⁹ Hills regularly wrote to his British superiors requesting a Cariboo missionary, but had very little success convincing anyone to undertake the obscure and inhospitable field.¹⁸⁰

This impasse between the daunted Anglican missionaries and the ambivalent Cariboo public came to a point in the summer of 1868. Hills agreed to send a clergyman if a local committee could raise over half his salary.¹⁸¹ Such an offer, wrote one letter-writer, was like "an advertisement to run an express between Cariboo and heaven, fare \$1500: if we don't like or can't afford to pay this, we may go to

¹⁷⁷ Fifth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1863 (London, Rivingtons, 1864) p7.

¹⁷⁸ A.C. Garret, "Sketches of a Missionary Tour to Cariboo," 02 06 1865, ADNW/EPBC, M.S #3, p76. Emphasis original.

¹⁷⁹ Rev. C. Knipe, "Mission to the Mines of Cariboo British Columbia -1862", in G. Columbia to Bullock, 04 02 1863, in Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1861-1867," Volume 2, [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, 81-94.

¹⁸⁰ See, for instance, G Columbia to Bullock, 20 10 1865, in Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 172-173; G Columbia to Sir, 31 12 1867, in Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1868-1874," Volume 3, [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, np.

¹⁸¹ Clergy of the Diocese, "Religious," Cariboo Sentinel, 09 07 1868.

hell."¹⁸² In 1868, the Bishop nonetheless appointed James Raynard as resident missionary to the Cariboo, much to the relief of Mission supporters.¹⁸³ With this appointment, the Columbia Mission began its concerted mission to create responsible, Christian manhood where rough, homosocial culture reigned largely uncontested.

Raynard brought his wife and children with him and thus served as a living representative of heterosocial, familial masculinity in the backwoods. Missionaries were often expected not merely to extol the virtues of white families, but to practice what they preached. Until his own marriage in 1865, Hills was remonstrated for his single state: Verney commented that "being wifeless he is but half a bishop."¹⁸⁴ While some local residents initially objected to the presence of a missionary wife, Hills thought "her presence there would do incalculable good, not only in supporting her husband in a fight almost too great for any man, unaided by human sympathy, but also in affording an example of the order and beauty (even amidst manifold privations) of family life, in a place where virtuous women were, to say the least, excessively scarce."¹⁸⁵ In published reports, the Columbia Mission argued that the white

¹⁸²W. Smithe, "Religious," Cariboo Sentinel, 16 07 1868.

¹⁸³"Religious," Cariboo Sentinel, 23 08 1868; "Diocesan Church Society," British Colonist, 26 09 1868.

¹⁸⁴ Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 25 05 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p64.

¹⁸⁵Eleventh Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1869 (London, Rivingtons, 1870) p53. He also thought that "the presence of a lady - though certain to suffer great hardship - would be of much value to such a community, and that her presence with her children would be a pledge to the people that the clergyman purposed to settle down and cast his lot with them." See Tenth Annual Report of the

missionary family indeed had the intended reformatory effect on the single, rough men that surrounded them. Although, they argued, "at first the miners were disposed to shun this family, as too uncomfortable a rebuke to themselves...they are beginning to admire and appreciate, and better still to imitate; for Mr. Raynard reports three marriages - a thing unheard of before on William Creek."¹⁸⁶ The Raynard family was thus a reform effort unto itself, a reminder of the superiority of family-centred masculinity, a "rebuke" to the single, rough men of the backwoods.

Raynard augmented his promotion of domesticity and heterosociability with efforts to reconfigure same-sex male community. He launched the "Cariboo Church Institute," an organization that, like Mechanics Institutes, offered men rational amusements and education. In the winter of 1868-9, the Church Institute sponsored elementary education, bi-weekly Bible classes, and "an entertainment of singing and reading, or lectures on popular science, or history, or music" on alternate Thursday nights.¹⁸⁷ Raynard also held a daily class especially for Chinese men.¹⁸⁸ The Church Institute held concerts which promised a "pleasant and rational evening's entertainment" to anyone who bought a ticket and offered occasional lectures and

Columbia Mission, p26. These lofty sentiments went against Hills' earlier comments, where, in a private letter, he explicitly requested a single missionary from Britain. See G. Columbia to Bullock, 20 10 1865, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Volume 2, p172-173.

¹⁸⁶Eleventh Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, p53.

¹⁸⁷"Cariboo Church Institute," Cariboo Sentinel, 19 12 1868. The next winter's fare was similar. See Advertisement, Cariboo Sentinel, 04 12 1869.

¹⁸⁸Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1869, p57.

entertainments like magic lantern shows.¹⁸⁹ Raynard tried hard to make his ministrations compatible with the easy sociability of white male culture in the backwoods. Writing about his Church Institute and band, he commented that he aimed for a festive but nonetheless improving atmosphere:

'I encourage the young men to be cheerful, not to consider their parson as a death's head, and at the practising I make welcome all who choose to come. Our room is often full, and 'the boys' are kept from the dance-house till ten o'clock, and then go quietly to their cabins. I am working this band, hoping to build a club-room attached to the Church Institute, where they can meet, smoke their pipes, have a song, or a game at chess. As it is, these things, harmless in themselves, are made to them sources of temptation and mischief.'¹⁹⁰

Raynard thus attempted to render his exertions compatible with the informal male community that thrived in the Cariboo. In doing so, he aimed to disassociate male community from rough and smutty pastimes and reformulate it.

Despite meaningful ecclesiastical differences, the Methodists and Anglicans found much to agree on about the moral state of the Cariboo. Arriving in 1868, Methodist missionary Derrick began a mission to white men akin to the Anglicans'.¹⁹¹ Visiting the saloons across the backwoods, he lectured on various vaguely improving topics like "enthusiasm,"¹⁹² "Stumbling Blocks and how to remove them,"¹⁹³ and the

¹⁸⁹"Mr. Raynard' Concert and Reading," Cariboo Sentinel, 30 01 1869; "Church Institute – Concert and Readings," Cariboo Sentinel, 06 02 1869; "Church Institute Concern and Readings," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 03 1869; "Church Institute Entertainment," Cariboo Sentinel, 11 03 1871.

¹⁹⁰Eleventh Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, p55.

¹⁹¹"The Missionary for Cariboo," British Columbian, 05 09 1868

¹⁹²"Lecture," Cariboo Sentinel, 02 01 1869.

history of Christmas.¹⁹⁴ In 1869 and 1871, he more directly challenged the prevailing local model of masculinity in a highly popular lecture on "Manliness." At Williams Creek and Van Winkle, Derrick argued that it was manly to be virtuous, self-reliant and studied. More significantly, he explicitly connected manliness, domesticity, and the family. "Man to be manly must have a home and love it," argued Derrick, adding that "The love of home and memories of childhood were incentives to manliness."¹⁹⁵

After the burst of reforming enthusiasm, Protestant interest in the rough men of the backwoods waned. By the winter of 1871-2, Raynard had abandoned the hard fare of Cariboo for the comparative urbanity of Nanaimo.¹⁹⁶ Derrick survived only three years of the "peculiar and difficult" field of the Cariboo.¹⁹⁷ Like temperance groups and alternative sites of masculinity, missions to white men in British Columbia found fostering an orderly, respectable manliness consistent with the broader aims of the colonial project a difficult and generally thankless task.

VI: Conclusion

British Columbian white men's ambiguous response to these missions suggest their generally complex relationship to reforming efforts. For the most part, they

¹⁹³"Mr. Derrick's Lecture," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 02 1869.

¹⁹⁴"Christmas Lecture," Cariboo Sentinel, 25 12 1869.

¹⁹⁵"Lecture on Manliness," Cariboo Sentinel, 21 08 1869; "Lecture and Divine Service at Van Winkle," Cariboo Sentinel, 11 03 1871.

¹⁹⁶"Ecclesiastical -- A Church to Let," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 10 1871 .

¹⁹⁷Ebenezer Robson, "How Methodism Came to British Columbia," [Transcript], ca. 1902, AUCC, 86.226C, p22.

responded to missionaries, temperance advocates, and alternative sites of masculinity with indifference. Yet they also, as in mid-1860s Cariboo, complained bitterly and publicly when they thought Protestant clerics neglected them. At other times, they bristled at reformers' attention, particularly challenging metropolitan missionaries' right to adequately represent them to British audiences. In the early 1860s, the British Colonist waged an extended campaign against the Columbia Mission, claiming that "ludicrous things are retailed to the venerating multitudes in England."¹⁹⁸ The writers took particular umbrage at their characterization of British Columbia as "homeless."¹⁹⁹ In challenging the right of missionaries' to depict their community as a hotbed of immorality, they disputed the imperial production of knowledge and defended their status as white men.

In defending their status as white men, these authors suggest both the power of British Columbia's rough, homosocial male culture and the regularity and persistence with which it was critiqued and attacked. Missionaries, politicians, journalists, and other self-appointed moral guardians saw the homosocial world of the backwoods as an inherently immoral society inimical to the creation of a prosperous, respectable white settler colony. While many called for the emigration of white women, others

¹⁹⁸"British Columbia Mission," British Colonist 11 09 1861; "The British Columbia Missionary Meeting," British Colonist, 31 01 1861. Also see "A Pleasant Prospect For a Pious Preacher," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 12 05 1859; Lady Lavinia Skewton (pseudonym), The "Occasional Paper" (Victoria, Colonist, 1860)

¹⁹⁹"The British Columbia Missionary Meeting," British Colonist, 31 01 1861.

worked to create institutions that, in their absence, would serve an analogous social function. A temperance movement encouraged hard-drinking white men to become sober. Alternative sites of masculinity aimed to serve as surrogate families and communities for young single men. Missions to white men offered living examples of domestic, familial masculinity and disseminated this model among the mining population of the Cariboo. The short life of most of these projects suggests that the objects of reform resisted those working to reshape them. The persistence of reformers in creating new efforts demonstrates how significant contests about definitions of gender and race were to the making of colonial society in British Columbia, a point that is reconfirmed by the various campaigns to transform the mixed-race community.

Chapter Five: Marriage, Morals, and Segregation: Regulating Mixed-Race Relationships

I: Introduction

Relationships between white men and First Nations women held a special and contested place in the making of colonial society in British Columbia. Mixed-race relationships, I have argued, were constructed as a powerful threat to the nascent colonial society between 1858 and 1871. Not only would they strip white men of all of the noble attributes of the white race, but they would produce dangerous mixed-blood peoples. In response to these perceived threats, reformers offered two loosely-defined and overlapping reform programmes. One sought to render white-Aboriginal relationships compatible with white sexual and social norms by encouraging mixed-race couples to wed in legal or Christian ceremonies and by religiously educating First Nations women and mixed-blood children. The other approach identified mixed-race relationships as fundamentally unredeemable and discouraged them in both the white and Aboriginal communities and promoted, more radically, racial segregation in urban settlements. This chapter will briefly analyze the existing historiography on mixed-race relationships before discussing each reform stream. Lastly, I will touch on the resistance these efforts engendered, arguing that these regulatory schemes and the opposition they inspired hint at the complex relationship between gender, race, and the making of colonial society.

II: Historiography

While the campaign to reform mixed-race relationships in colonial British

Columbia has not been the object of sustained historical attention, research on western Canada, race and reform, missions, and mixed-race relations throughout the colonial world cumulatively suggest its importance. Historians of western Canada note that unions between white men and First Nations women came to be seen as dis-reputable in the mid-nineteenth-century.¹ Sylvia Van Kirk has connected shifting conceptions of mixed-race relationships to increasing white settlement, growing racism and the presence of missionaries, arguing that Anglican clergy in the North-West "denounced marriage *à la façon du pays* as being sinful and debased" and succeeded in "gaining widespread recognition for the necessity of church marriage."² Recently, Sarah Carter has shown how the state and moral reformers discouraged mixed-race relationships in the prairies in the wake of the Métis rebellions, thus sharpening the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate colonial relationships and identities.³ These arguments suggest that the declining status of mixed-race relationships was neither a natural nor inevitable but was rather, in part, the result of a specific campaign orchestrated by clergy and state. This important point is reinforced by studies demonstrating the

¹Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890, Second Edition (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992) p113; Jennifer S.H. Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company in Indian Country (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1980) p211.

²Sylvia Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties': Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg, Watson and Dwyer, 1980) p145-6.

³ Sarah Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the 'Indian Woman' in the Early Settlement Era in Western Era," Great Plains Quarterly 13 (Summer 1993) 147-161.

centrality of race and racial purity to the social reform movements of *fin de siècle* Canada. Mariana Valverde's and Kay Anderson's tantalizing analyses of images of white racial purity and Asian pollution and Karen Dubinsky's rich examination of discourses of sexual danger in northern Ontario all suggest how reform movements not only sought to create appropriate gendered and classed subjects, but aimed to produce and protect a certain model of racial identity.⁴

If historians have only recently explicitly probed the connections between race and reform, there is a longer tradition of examining how missionaries worked to regulate Aboriginal communities in British Columbia.⁵ There is certainly a rich literature analyzing missionary efforts, especially Catholic ones, to transform the gender organization of central and eastern Canada's First Nations.⁶ Another literature

⁴Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queens Press, 1991); Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1880-1920 (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1991) Chapter 5; Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929 (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993) p146-162.

⁵Frank A. Peake, the Anglican Church in British Columbia (Vancouver, Mitchell Press, 1959); Jean Usher, William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1974); Clarence Bolt, Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian: Small Shoes for Feet Too Large (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992); Forrest E. LaViolette, The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1973 [1861]); Joan Weir, Catalysts and Watchdogs: B.C.'s Men of God: 1836-1871 (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1995)

⁶ Karen Anderson, Chain Her by One Foot: The Subjugation of Native Women in Seventeenth-Century New France (London, Routledge, 1991); Carol Devens, "Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization in New France," American Quarterly 38:3 (1986) 460-480; Carol Devens, "'If We Get

details the significance of women to Canadian Protestant missions abroad.⁷ That gender was crucial to missionary endeavours is echoed by a nascent British Columbia historiography examining how mission homes, residential schools, and other reform institutions sought to orchestrate the wholesale transformation of First Nations culture through the regulation of women.⁸

Studies of other colonial contexts demonstrate how the regulation of mixed-race relationships can illuminate the processes whereby colonial boundaries were drawn and certain models of gender fostered. While some scholars of western America have broached these questions about mixed-race relationships and regulation,⁹ historians and anthropologists of Asia and Africa have produced the most compelling analyses. Ann Stoler, examining the legal efforts to define and restrict concubinage

the Girls, We Get the Race': Missionary Education of Native American Girls," Journal of World History 3: 4 (1992) 219-237.

⁷ Rosemary R. Gagan, A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925 (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queens Press, 1992); Ruth Compton Brouwer, New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and Indian Missions, 1876-1914 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990)

⁸ Margaret Whitehead, "'A Useful Christian Woman': First Nations' Women and Protestant Missionary Work in British Columbia," Atlantis 18: 1&2 (Summer 1992-1993) 142-166; Jean Barman, "Separate and Unequal: Indian and White Girls at All Hallows School, 1884-1920," in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds., Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History, 2nd edition (Toronto, Copp Clark Pittman, 1992); Myra Rutherdale, "Revisiting Colonization through Gender: Anglican Missionary Women in the Pacific Northwest and the Arctic, 1860-1945," BC Studies 104 (1994-95) p3-23.

⁹ See, for instance, Peggy Pascoe, "Race, Gender, and Intercultural Relations: The Case of Intermarriage," Frontiers XII: 1 (1991) p5-18.

and *métissage* in the French and Dutch Indies, exposes the centrality of debates around race and citizenship to colonial political life.¹⁰ Kenneth Ballhatchet and Mrinalini Sinha have both analyzed official attempts to control sexual contact between British men and Indian women, suggesting the extent to which the sexual excesses of the working-class white men were seen as an active threat to colonial control.¹¹ Luise White's study of prostitution in Nairobi demonstrates the connections between colonial administration, prostitution, and the ordering of civic and domestic space.¹² John and Jean Comaroff's insightful treatment of South African missions, while not explicitly discussing mixed-race relationships, illuminates the process whereby race, domesticity and reform were intimately wedded in nineteenth-century Christianization efforts.¹³

¹⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," Comparative Studies in Society and History 31: 1 (January 1989) 135-161; Ann Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia", Comparative Studies in Society and History 34: 3 (July 1992) 514-551; Ann L. Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," American Ethnologist 16: 3 (1989) p634-660.

¹¹ See Mrinalini Sinha, "Gender and Imperialism: Colonial Policy and the Ideology of Moral Imperialism in Late Nineteenth-Century Bengal," in Michael S. Kimmel, ed., Changing Men New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity (New York, 1987); Kenneth Ballhatchet, Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1783-1905 (London, Werdenfeld and Nicholson, 1980)

¹² Luise White, The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990) Ronald Hyam's work, vociferous anti-feminism aside, also begins to trace shifts in British policy on concubinage and the colonial service. See Ronald Hyam, Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990) Chapter 7.

¹³ John and Jean Comaroff, "Homemade Hegemony," in John and Jean Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination (Boulder, Westview Press, 1992)

Cumulatively, these disparate literatures suggests the usefulness of examining how reformers specifically worked to reorganise or eradicate unions formed by white men and First Nations women in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. Building on Chapter Three's social history of mixed-race relationships, this chapter examines efforts to regulate mixed-race relationships in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. As with the movement to reform white men, this was not a unified or programmatic campaign, but instead a loosely connected set of initiatives by an equally loosely connected collection of law-makers, missionaries, and journalists. Despite the absence of an organized, self-identified crusade, legal records, published and unpublished missionary papers, government documents, and newspapers do indicate the existence of two specific reform streams, one seeking to reformulate mixed-race relationships and the other working to eradicate them. This division is admittedly schematic: men like Anglican missionaries George Hills, John Good and R.C.L. Brown, upon whose papers this chapter heavily relies, endorsed both of these approaches at different times and in different contexts. Rather than tracing shifts in individual positions, this chapter aims to make sense of the cumulative discourse that emerged from their writings. At any rate, all were united in the conviction that relationships forged between white men and Aboriginal women were a prime example of the failure of respectable gender and racial organization to develop in British Columbia and thus of the need for change.

III: Reconstructing Mixed-Race Relationships

One major stream of reformers sought to transform mixed-race relationships by rendering them compatible with European values of Christianity, monogamy, and legality. In their efforts, they turned to the law. As Tina Loo points out, "the Europeans who inhabited the area that became British Columbia took an active and critical interest in the law, seeing it as central to their identity and to securing their future in Britain's far western possession."¹⁴ White British Columbians looked to the law not only to actualize lofty ideals of liberalism, but also to transform mixed-race, consensual relationships into marriages consistent with white social and sexual values.

There was much to reform in the colony's marriage practices. Getting married was expensive, protracted, and often inaccessible on both the mainland and the Island. From 1859 onwards, Vancouver Island couples could wed by banns or undergo an elaborate procedure to secure a license.¹⁵ Congregationalist minister Matthew Macfie described the system in 1865:

the Marriage Act of Vancouver Island provides for matrimony being entered upon, if so deemed expedient by the lovers, within a brief space after their minds are made up upon the momentous question of having the knot tied. By paying a fee of ten dollars, and making a declaration under Government House that no legal impediment exists to the union,

¹⁴ Tina Loo, Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994) p4.

¹⁵See James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, Volume I: "Journals of the Council, Executive Council, and Legislative Council of Vancouver Island, 1851-1866" (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p25-6, p39-40.

the bridegroom can procure a special licence under the hand and seal of the Governor. On presenting this document to a clergyman or minister, and advancing to him a further sum of not less than 11.2s.6d., the desired privilege may be had.¹⁶

Getting married thus required dedication and a certain level of bureaucratic proficiency in addition to either good standing at one of the colony's few churches or cash, a means of getting to Victoria's Government House, and contact with a clergyman.

However difficult marrying was on the Island, it was much harder on the mainland. Before 1865, marriage licenses could be obtained only on Vancouver Island, forcing residents to make the long ocean trek to the Island or to post banns. This enraged mainland critics, who took it as an indication of broader administrative failure. "Amongst the numerous anomalies of our present absentee system of Government is the absence of any authority for issuing marriage licenses in this Colony," complained New Westminster's British Columbian. "Any one desiring to take unto himself a wife must either procure a license from the neighbouring Colony, or submit to the tedious process of publishing the banns in Church."¹⁷ It was not only "only expensive and inconvenient, but rather humiliating to be obliged to go to another Colony for such a purpose," they later added.¹⁸

¹⁶ Matthew Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia: Their History, Resources, and Prospects (London, Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865)p402.

¹⁷ "Could'nt get Spliced," British Columbian, 05 11 1962.

¹⁸ "A Marriage Law Wanted," British Columbian, 11 02 1863. Others saw marrying by banns as similarly humiliating for equally unclear reasons. See Susan Abercrombie Holmes [Nagle], "Diary, January 1-December 31, 1871," Volume 3, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, [hereafter BCARS] Add Mss 2576, p24, for a

Confusion compounded expense, difficulty and inaccessibility. British Columbia's colonial legislatures had considerable difficulties developing a uniform system of legitimating, registering and conducting marriage. It was first unclear if dissenting ministers could perform a marriage.¹⁹ Whether weddings had to be held in church was another article of debate, as were the allowable hours.²⁰ How and by whom the income from marriage fees would be spent was another, more vexing and controversial question.²¹ Clergy and the intended were equally baffled. Methodist missionary Ebenezer Robson reminded himself in 1864 to "Write for papers on marriage law."²² R.C. Lundin Brown, Anglican missionary to Lillooet, lectured

respectable white woman's strong objection to marriage by banns.

¹⁹ See James Douglas to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, 03 05 1859, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867, CO 305/1, [hereafter CO 305], Public Archives of Canada, [hereafter PAC], MG 11, CO 305/10, Mflm B-239. Also see Hendrickson, ed., Volume I, p25-6, p26-27, p39-40. Also see Rev. Ebenezer Robson, "Notes from the Diary of Rev. Ebenezer Robson, D.D., Pioneer Wesleyan Missionary at Fort Hope, B.C., from March 12 to May 13 1860", [Transcript], BCARS, H/D/R57/R57.2A, p17-18. Robson wrote: "Was called upon this morning to perform the marriage ceremony for Mr. Jacob Gamm of Portland" (Oregon) and Miss Caroline A. Gray of Hope. Went over and consulted His Honor Chief Justice Begbie as to the requirements of the laws. He laid so many restrictions on all parties save the ministers of the Established Church" (of England) "that we found it would be impossible for them to get married without waiting near two weeks and employing a 'Church of England' minister." Eventually, Robson married the couple in American territory.

²⁰ See Matt. B. Begbie, to Governor, 07 03 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1307, File 142a/15.

²¹ James Douglas used the monies from licenses for "discretionary" purposes, a practice which came under attack after his retirement. See, for instance, Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 25 05 1865, PAC, MG 11, CO 305/25, Mflm B-248.

²² Ebenezer Robson, "Diary," BCARS, Mflm 17A, np.

Government House on their administrative deficiencies when it came to marriages. His problem, he wrote, was the result of "the ignorance of clergy & everybody as to the marriage law in the force in the Colony...and to mismanagement in response of your officials, which causes & has caused many vexatious & tedious delays."²³

These problems and confusions created very real barriers for those in the mixed-race community who might seek out official marriage. Yet, as Chapter Three discussed, some did manage to receive official sanction for their relationship. Files of the state are certainly dotted with the letters of backwoods missionaries and government officials requesting that a marriage license be sent by the next steamer. Sometimes, these requests made clear that the license was to wed a white man to a First Nations woman.²⁴ There were, after all, tangible benefits to being officially wedded. Marriage could be an important mark of distinction and a key symbol of respectability – especially for the Aboriginal, for whom white acceptance was indeed elusive. Recall that for Mary Vauliere and Margaret Garbourie, proving themselves "Indian women legally married" was a key part of their attempt to claim legal protection from white men's sexual assault.²⁵ They were not alone in turning to marriage licenses in an effort to legitimate themselves in the eyes of doubting white

²³ R.C.L. Brown to W.A.G. Young, 16 02 1863, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1311, File 214/2.

²⁴ J.B. Good to H. Wakeford, 16 07 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1331, File 653/9.

²⁵ "Alleged Rape," British Colonist, 28 10 1862.

authorities. When miner and future missionary Henry Guilloid hired a Catholic First Nations man, Joseph, to canoe him about, he proudly showed Guilloid a bundle of symbols attesting to the white community's approval of him, one of which was a marriage certificate.²⁶ This treasuring and display of marriage certificates was not only a Catholic phenomenon. In his memoirs, Anglican missionary John Good asked the reader to imagine meeting Lillooet Chief Quls-opah's wife showing a certificate proving her various religious attainments, including "her marriage, thereby sanctifying her union with her husband."²⁷

Legal European marriage also lent an air of respectability to mixed-race unions. Some white observers drew a sharp distinction between those white-Aboriginal couples who were married and those whose conjugal relationship went unsanctioned by colonial authorities. Naval surgeon Edward Bogg explicitly argued that white coal miners who married to Haida and Tsimshian women had tidy, comfortable homes, but that "when a man is simply co-habiting with an Indian Squaw, then dirt and discomfort reign Supreme."²⁸ Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works B.W. Pearse

²⁶Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., "Henry Guilloid's Journal of a Trip to Cariboo, 1862", in British Columbia Historical Quarterly Volume XIX [July-October 1955] p231.

²⁷John Booth Good, "The Utmost Bounds of the West: Pioneer jottings of forty years missionary reminiscences of the Out West Pacific Coast A.D. 1861 - A.D. 1900," Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster/Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology [hereafter ADNW/EPBC], PSA 52, File 9 [Transcript from original held at BCARS, pagination added] p113.

²⁸ Dr. Edward B. Bogg, "Journal of Her Majesty's Hired Surveying Vessel, Beaver, 1863," Public Records Office [hereafter PRO] ADM 101 276, p16. Emphasis original.

agreed, insisting in 1871 that white-Aboriginal relationships were productive of evil "especially where such unions are not legalized by Marriage."²⁹ For Bogg and Pearse it was not the racial character of the union that alone determined its respectability, but also whether or not they had sought and received white sanction for their union.

Poor backwoods whites, apparently finding British Columbia's marriage laws inappropriate for their social and sexual aspirations, also frequently maintained consensual relationships. Anglican cleric John Sheepshanks recalled encountering such a couple in the backwoods near Antler. When he told them he would marry them only if "all is right, and after proper notice," they decided it was not worth the fuss, telling him "Wal, y'understand, it is only to be for the season."³⁰ For this couple, the trials of legal marriage were not merited for a relationship intended to last only the brief yet all dominating mining season. In 1863, Robson visited another family near Yale and noted in his diary that he "has a woman living with him who has borne him two children but is not his lawful wife. She has another older child with the father of which she was living with & left Fort Yale in 1860. The man is a Cornish man and I think she is a Cornish woman. They are like many others on these roads."³¹ When, two years later, Caribooite Mary Boyle was charged by her partner

²⁹B.W. Pearse, "Memo on the Letter of the Bishop of Columbia to the Right Honourable Earl of Kimberley," nd, in British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents", BCARS, GR 419, Box 10, File 1871/23, p11.

³⁰Rev. John Sheepshanks, A Bishop in the Rough Rev. D. Wallace Duthie, ed., (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1909)p93.

³¹Robson, "Diary", np. Also see Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p400.

Samuel Nathan with stealing his gold dust and cash, whether they were legally married or not became a point of significant conflict in their highly publicized trial.³² Both publicans and regulars in the colony's police court, the Nathans had apparently lived together for years in Australia and in British Columbia without formal union. A year later, moreover, Mary had a new partner.³³ It is hard indeed to imagine the Nathans either going to church or submitting to the protracted steps needed to acquire a legal and legitimate marriage.

It was not, however, the common-law white couples who became the primary objects of reformers' attentions. When colonial officials tampered with the marriage system, they had mixed-race couples foremost in mind. A better marriage law, they hoped, would especially encourage Aboriginal-white couples to wed. In 1862, Bishop Hills wrote to the British Columbia Attorney General, H.P.P Crease, arguing that the ideal law should maintain the Christian sacrament of marriage while providing for "the convenience of those who cannot be married by Xian rites through one of the parties being heathen, but also may desire to live in legal not in illegal cohabitation for the

³²"Police Court" Vancouver Times, 01 12 1864; "The Charge Against Samuel Nathan," Vancouver Times, 02 12 1864; "The Charge of Robbery Against Samuel Nathan, A Caribooite," Vancouver Times, 03 12 1864; "The Charge Against Saml Nathan," Vancouver Times, 06 12 1864; "The Second Charge Against Samuel Nathan," Vancouver Times, 08 12 1864; "The Assizes," Vancouver Times, 30 03 1865; "The Assizes," British Colonist, 31 03 1865.

³³"Scandal in Cariboo," British Colonist, 27 07 1866.

sake of the offspring and morality."³⁴ Such sentiments were probably informed by the mid-nineteenth-century retreat of sexual nonconformity and the increasing hegemony of legal marriage in Britain so ably analyzed by John Gillis,³⁵ but were overtly coloured by local politics of race and gender.

Legislation passed in 1865 reflected these specifically racial and broadly social goals. Mandating marriages by banns or by civil license, "An Ordinance respecting Marriage in British Columbia" imposed regulations similar to Vancouver Island's on the mainland. But on other key points, this law aimed to make marriage more accessible; it allowed dissenting clergy to wed, empowered secular, government-appointed "registrars" to conduct civil weddings, loosened the restrictions on the place of marriage and removed the necessity of parental consent for underage girls whose guardians were overseas.³⁶ While the bill initially specified a five dollar

³⁴Bishop of Columbia to H.P. Crease, 02 05 1862, Text 57, Box 6, File I, "Bishop of Columbia, Correspondence Outwards 1860-1884," Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Diocese of British Columbia Archives, [hereafter ACC/ADBC], p55-56.

³⁵John R. Gillis, For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985) p231. Also see James Snell, 'The White Life for Two': The Defence of Marriage and Sexual Morality in Canada, 1890-1920s," in Bettina Bradbury, ed., Canadian Family History: Selected Readings (Toronto, Copp Clark, 1992)

³⁶ See "British Columbia, No.21, An Ordinance Respecting Marriage in British Columbia," British Columbia Government Gazette, 15 07 1865, CO 63/2, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1489. Also see, for a later modification, "No.33, An Ordinance to regulate the Solemnization of Marriage," British Columbia Government Gazette, 04 05 1867, CO 63/3, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490; Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 16 09 1867, CO 60/29, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1440, p120. This Ordinance extended the British Columbia legislation to Vancouver Island.

registration fee, this was later deemed inimical to the goals of the new legislation and was eliminated. One legislator claimed that "there should be no impediment whatever thrown in the way of marriages in the colony," while another added that "Marriage should be encouraged, as conducing to the morality and happiness of the community."³⁷ The mainland press thought that the 1865 marriage law was "concise and tolerably well adapted to the circumstances of the country."³⁸

The 1865 marriage law was initially part of a broader attempt to subject British Columbians to rational processes of gathering and creating information. It was twinned with a law mandating the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, commonly referred to as the census law, and deemed a key index of colonial progress. "A country without statistics is like a clock without a dial plate," opined the Victoria Press.³⁹ As Benedict Anderson has recently argued, after 1850, the census was indeed a key institution in shaping "the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion - the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry."⁴⁰ Tellingly, dreams of a census in British Columbia were elusive. The 1865 registration law was dropped, the colony being deemed altogether too confusing to count and classify. According to the Attorney General, it was put

³⁷"House of Assembly," British Colonist, 04 26 1865.

³⁸"The Marriage Ordinance," British Columbian, 01 04 1865.

³⁹"Our Colonial Statistics," Victoria Press, 16 12 1861.

⁴⁰Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition (London, Verso, 1991) p164.

aside because of "the difficulty of procuring assent to the principle of compulsory registration, in a new Colony containing a large Indian population."⁴¹

Private correspondence reveals that some law-makers thought it was the mixed-race character of the colony that prevented its careful enumeration. Having again been pestered by the Colonial Office to pass a law ordering the registration of births, marriages and deaths for years, Governor Frederick Seymour in 1869 plainly explained that mixed-blood children were not worthy of modern state information gathering:

I really do not know how a general system of Registration could be worked satisfactorily here. The population is greatly scattered. The majority are Indians whom we could hardly expect to register any one of the great events of life. Many of the white men are living in a state of concubinage with Indian women far in the Interior. They would hardly come forward to register the birth of some half breed bastard.⁴²

This answer apparently satisfied the Colonial Office, whose queries about the absence of registration laws in British Columbia subsequently ceased. The alleged difficulty of classifying a transient, disorderly and racially-plural colonial society continued to dog British Columbia's legislative efforts throughout the 1858 to 1871 period, and a registration or census law was never successfully developed.⁴³

⁴¹Henry Pellew Crease to Colonial Secretary, 01 06 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1303, File 65/25. Also see Hendrickson, ed., Volume I, p295.

⁴² Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chados, 11 08 1868, CO 60/33 BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1444, p248-250.

⁴³ Governor Frederick Seymour tried to pass a Bill modeled on Ceylon's in February 1869, but met with little success. See James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871 Volume IV, "Journals of the Legislative Council of British Columbia, 1866-

Thus the 1865 marriage law emerged as the only remnant of a wider campaign to bring British Columbia's regulatory apparatus in line with current colonial practices. Perhaps it survived because it was regarded as uniquely useful in encouraging mixed-race couples to wed by legal, white ceremony. The implicit racial goals of the 1865 marriage law were spelled out in private correspondence between British Columbia officials and the Colonial Office. Initially London bureaucrats worried that it would, among other things, "render invalid for the future all marriages celebrated by Native Indians among themselves."⁴⁴ They sought legal opinions and informed colonial legislators of their concerns. Crease responded in a confidential note that he was unconcerned by this omission since Aboriginal people, he thought, neither required nor were capable of British marriage. "In the present state of that race," he wrote, "it is utterly impracticable to make any regulation as to marriage especially suitable to their condition." Mixed-race people, or "the large class of persons who have an admixture of native and white blood" were as able to partake in the law as suited their moral, geographical, and social situation.⁴⁵ That this law effectively excluded the Aboriginal and large parts of the mixed-blood population from colonially legitimated marriage

1871" (Victoria, Public Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p207-209; Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chados, 11 08 1868, CO 60/33, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1444.

⁴⁴Robert Hillman to Edward Cardwell, 04 10 1865, CO 60/23, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1437, p110.

⁴⁵ Henry P. Pellew Crease to Birch, nd, in Arthur Birch to Edward Cardwell, 28 04 1866, CO 60/24, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1437.

practices disturbed the Colonial Office more than it did local politicians.

British Columbia legislators were nonetheless committed to encouraging white men to wed their Aboriginal partners. The new legislation would make marriage more accessible to mixed-race couples by empowering backwoods "Registrars" to perform marriages, Crease insisted. "There are many cases at this moment in the Colony of white men living in remote districts with Indian women as wives to whom the facilities for marriage afforded by this Ordinance will be a great boon," he wrote.⁴⁶ The Colonial Office eventually accepted British Columbia's new, more liberal marriage law.⁴⁷ While it flirted dangerously with rendering marriage too accessible amongst whites, they thought that there was more risk "in requiring too much in respect of the leniency of such places, that marriages will not be solemnized at all."⁴⁸

The difficulties involved in drafting the marriage law of 1865 point to some of the troubles encountered by lawmakers committed to encouraging mixed-race couples to conform to white visions of appropriate marital relations. They found it difficult to create legislation loose enough to facilitate the participation of mixed-race couples in the trappings of white morality without robbing the legislation of all its cherished strictness or violating common-law tradition. Ironically, this problem re-emerged

⁴⁶ Crease to Birch, nd. Registrars seem to usually have been magistrates.

⁴⁷ See Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham & Chados, 16 09 1867, CO 60/29, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1440.

⁴⁸ C., 04 08, draft reply, en verso in Robert Hillman to Earl of Carnarvon, 27 08 1866, CO 60/26, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1439.

when Anglican missionary William Duncan sought special divorce procedures to allow First Nations women legally to shed their immoral white husbands. The Attorney General thought this an admirable but impossible aim, given the impossibility of easily dividing white and First Nations. "The steps upward from the pure Indian to the comparative civilization of the race of partly white and partly red blood, and thence upwards to the pure white, are so small between such a distincture of blood that it is impossible to make a Marriage & Divorce law the operation of which shall meet the wishes of all Duncan's protegees," he wrote.⁴⁹ The inherent instability of racial identity in a racially plural and mixed colony, it seems, complicated efforts to standardize and strengthen respectable relationships.

The law was not the only site of reform for those who sought to reshape mixed-race relationships to conform to normative standards of white matrimony. Others worked to achieve the same goal by relying on the timeworn, old-fashioned technique of moral persuasion: they merely urged, harangued, and beseeched mixed-race couples to wed. Journalists and missionaries worked to bring about a change in white sentiment and convince lax white men to behave responsibly and marry their First Nations partners. In arguing this point, they relied on the overlapping languages of manliness, race, and morality. White men, they argued, should act in a manner fitting to their status as Christian, white, and moral men, protecting both lesser beings

⁴⁹Henry Pellew Crease to William Duncan, 09 11 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1326, File 498/19. Also see William Duncan to Frederick Seymour, 18 09 1867, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, File 498/19.

and the reputation of their race and colony. Matthew Macfie wrote in the British Colonist that he was "Deeply anxious for the removal of the injustice and dishonor a considerable portion of the immigrants are bringing upon the native population in this island and British Columbia." He therefore implored "all who are conducting themselves improperly toward *cloutchmen*" to wed by civil ceremony. In doing so, they would not only improve themselves, but the entire colony and, perhaps most of all, the tarnished reputation of their once-noble race. "It has become proverbially a disgrace to civilization that the countries which send forth Christian teachers to toil for the temporal and spiritual welfare of aboriginal races are also the chief source of hinderance to the success of moral and religious mission," he wrote.⁵⁰

Others, including important voices in the secular community, shared Macfie's desire to encourage marriage amongst mixed-race couples. If white men would marry their First Nations partners, wrote an editorialist in the British Colonist, they would make an important step toward achieving the respectability that so far had eluded them: "if they cannot themselves attain to any very exalted *status* in society, they will at least legitimate their offspring, and send them forth into the world free from the taint of illegitimacy which would otherwise attach itself to them." Marriage would not only elevate their lacklustre morality, but also their partners and offspring. "Humanise yourselves, civilise your paramours, and legitimise your children without

⁵⁰Matt. Macfie, "A Laudable Marriage," British Colonist, 19 05 1861.

delay," the paper urged.⁵¹ Again, such comments bid white men to marry their First Nations partners in order to cement their own racial and gender status and to serve as colonizers within their own families.

Reformers harangued white men through mass mediums like the local press, and also sought in diverse ways to persuade individual white men to take up the wedded life. Robson commented in his diary when a white man married his Aboriginal partner that "I wish that others who are living as he has been would take his example & follow it."⁵² Hills grilled a long-time fur-trade worker, trying to convince him that legal marriage was the moral course regardless of cultural context. He recorded their conversation in his journal:

Had a conversation with a man named Yates – a servant of the Hudsons Bay Co., 11 years in their employment. Speaks the native language. Lives with an Indian woman and has a child. Is not married. Defends the unmarried state has happier...I asked if he would be comfortable to live in an unmarried state in his own country. He said there was a great difference. There were Churches in Orkney and white women. I shewed him that the sin was the same here as in Britain. He allowed it was not right – but said he had been very comfortable.⁵³

Failing in his arguments, Hills responded by deploying two other missionaries against this unrepentant co-habitator. Perhaps the Bishop hoped that their cumulative efforts would convince Yates that marriage was manly and moral, whether in Orkney or the

⁵¹"How To Get Rid of the Troublesome Question," British Colonist, 29 05 1862.

⁵²Robson, "Diary," np.

⁵³George Hills, "Journal 1836-1861," [Transcript], MS 65a, PSA 57, ADNW/EPBC, p369-70,

backwoods of British Columbia.

The effort to encourage mixed-race relationships to adopt the trappings of white, Christian unions occurred in the Aboriginal as well as the white community. Brown advocated that mixed-race couples wed by Christian ceremony under specific conditions. He recounted visiting a Shist kin, or underground house, near Lillooet in 1861, and preaching against short mixed-race connections and in favour of legal, Christian marriage.⁵⁴ In the underground house, he argued that while "concubinage of their women with the whites" was "a thing accursed," monogamous, life-long, and clerically sanctioned unions were holy and desirable:

If any white man wanted honestly to wed with an Indian girl, that, we said, was another thing; they should be married; 'leplate' [priest] would make them join hands, and give them God's blessing; they should then be no longer two but one, and live together as man and wife for ever till they died. But, as for those temporary and unhallowed connexions, they were thoroughly bad. Indians must steer clear of them, or their canoes would be smashed among the rocks; and if any girl there was already entangled in such a connexion, so degrading, so offensive to the Great Spirit, so deadly, - she must not hesitate, but do at once what God required of her, - she must break it off.⁵⁵

Others worked to convert individual couples through the female partner. Hills wrote of an Aboriginal woman who, under missionary instruction at Metlakatlah, "learnt to

⁵⁴This term comes from Good. See Good, "The Utmost Bounds," p97.

⁵⁵ R.C. Lundin Brown, Klatsassan, And Other Reminiscences of Missionary Life In British Columbia (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1873) p151-2. This story is repeated from R.C. Lundin Brown, British Columbia. The Indians and Settlers at Lillooet. Appeal for Missionaries (London, R. Clay, Sons, and Taylor, 1870) p9-11.

see her sin" and separated from her white partner. Hills was convinced that this act had a beneficial impact on her spouse, who also "became impressed with a sense of shame" and agreed to a wedding. "She has steadily improved, and has made her husband a good wife," wrote the Bishop.⁵⁶

In their efforts to compel mixed-race couples to wed, missionary tactics were sometimes more flexible than official policy would suggest. Brown's narrative tells that after the service in the S'hist kin, a young woman named Kendqua sought counselling, asking him if she should leave her white partner in order to right herself in the eyes of the Lord. The missionary advised that she demand marriage from her white partner, but that he be given a few weeks to decide.⁵⁷ Yet Brown's narrative ultimately discounted his allegedly flexible advice. Wowing his British readership with a suitably melodramatic ending, Brown has Kendqua's loutish partner refuse to wed her, forcing her to leave him and return to a certain death, both moral and physical, in the S'hist kin. Despite this rhetorical excess, contrasting the harshness of missionary preaching with incidents of greater adaptability suggests an important gap between official rhetoric and actual practice on this matter, as with so much else.

Other missionaries felt strongly that Aboriginal women required an extensive programme of re-education before being allowed to marry a white man. In part, this

⁵⁶Eighth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1866 (London, Rivingtons, 1867) p27; George Hills, "Hills Journal 1866," [Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, p11-12.

⁵⁷Brown, Klattasan, p153.

involved religious instruction directed to equipping First Nations women with the requisite "Christian knowledge" to contract the sacred rite of marriage. In 1864, Mr. Cave, Anglican catchecist to Nanaimo and Comox, listed the "Preparation of Indian women, cohabitating with white men, for baptism and marriage and confirmation" as one of his six main duties.⁵⁸ The work of Cave and his superior Good in this effort was widely regarded as successful. Hills later observed the confirmation of four Tsimshian women who lived with white men, noting that Good "has taken much pains with them, and their present improvement is a great contrast to their former selves."⁵⁹ These missionaries also sought to instill broad social as well as religious truths in Aboriginal women. Like the mission schools studied by Carol Devens, they worked to indoctrinate First Nations women "with the ideals of Christian womanhood- piety, domesticity, submissiveness, and purity," ridding them of the carelessness, dirtiness, and laziness thought to characterize Aboriginal women.⁶⁰ At their Cowichan convent, the Sisters of Saint Ann taught "young female Indians and half-breeds" to card wool.⁶¹ In the early 1860s, Duncan proposed that the Songish women of Victoria be put to

⁵⁸Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1864 (London, Rivingtons, 1865) p32.

⁵⁹Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1866, p19.

⁶⁰Devens, " "If We Get the Girls,"" p228.

⁶¹British Columbia, Report of the Hon. H.L. Langevin, C.B., Minister of Public Works (Ottawa, I.B. Taylor, 1872) p29; Sister Mary Providence to Governor, 26 05 1871, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1360, File 1545.

work in a laundry⁶² while A.C. Garret thought instruction in needlework would be more fitting.⁶³ Anglican missionary Anna Penrice spent three afternoons a week at Garret's "Indian school" in order "to teach the women and children to work."⁶⁴

Often, it was missionary wives who superintended these efforts. Hills thought that missionary wives were not sufficiently expert to instruct white women, yet were admirably suited for work in First Nations education.⁶⁵ While their husbands waxed religious from the pulpit, missionary women laboured to school First Nations women in white domesticity. Mrs. Tugwell, who worked briefly at Metlakatlah, was thought to have special bonds with First Nations women.⁶⁶ Mrs. Reynard and Mrs. Hills taught Aboriginal women to knit stockings in Victoria's Humbolt Street mission in the late 1860s.⁶⁷ The attending missionary, James Raynard, wrote that "Our little school on this side of the water has gained the goodwill of the Indian women for whom it was designed," many of whom seem to have had white male partners.⁶⁸ At Cowichan,

⁶²William Duncan to Anonymous, 22 06 1860, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1326, File 498/1.

⁶³AC Garret, "Report as to the Social Conditions of the Songas Indians," in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 23 08 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246.

⁶⁴Report of the Columbia Mission, With List of Contributions, 1860 (London, Rivingtons, [1861]) p94-5

⁶⁵"Another Letter From Bishop Hills," British Colonist, 14 03 1861.

⁶⁶"Metlakatla Mission," British Columbian, 13 06 1863.

⁶⁷Ninth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1867 (London, Rivingtons, 1868) p18.

⁶⁸"The Victoria Mission: From the Journal of the Rev. J. Reynard, 1866-67," in Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1867, p23-4.

Mrs. Reece taught women to sew and knit twice a week.⁶⁹ Mrs. Raybold, "a good lady from town," instructed First Nations women to sew under Methodist auspices in early 1860s Nanaimo.⁷⁰ By harnessing the efforts of missionary wives, these missions offered, as Myra Rutherdale points out, a living model of white, domestic womanhood.⁷¹ Perhaps, too, they would help to render First Nations women less sexually threatening and dangerous. In these efforts, British Columbia missionaries hoped to make First Nations women fit partners for Christian white men, suitable mates for those fragile yet crucial colonial subjects.

These efforts to remake Aboriginal women were mirrored by regulatory efforts that targeted mixed-blood people. Part white, part Aboriginal people, reformers thought, were dangerously allowed to wallow in the savage aspects of their parentage. Submitting them to formal education might nurture white attributes and minimize their First Nations, hybrid character. Hills noted that another man told him that "When brought up in good company" half-breeds succeeded, yet "Otherwise they drink & are dissolute."⁷² But the Bishop nonetheless worried that even Christian education could not save these people, so doomed were they by their fundamental hybridity.⁷³ Hills'

⁶⁹"Cowitchien. European and Indian Mission," in Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1867, p36.

⁷⁰Thomas Crosby, Among the An-ko-me-nums of the Pacific Coast (Toronto, William Briggs, 1907) p45.

⁷¹ Rutherdale, "Revisiting Colonization," p21.

⁷²George Hills, "Journal 1861," [Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, p104.

⁷³George Hills, "Journal 1863,"[Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, p29.

workers tried nonetheless. In addition to training Aboriginal wives, the Columbia Mission's Comox and Nanaimo branch undertook the "Education and training of the half-breed race."⁷⁴ Garret's Victoria mission also included a "half-breed school."⁷⁵ Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works Pearse also had faith in the ability of education to transform mixed-race peoples, commenting that a "a system of Common School education" might help prevent mixed-race people from becoming "a curse to the Country in the next generation."⁷⁶ If domestic and religious education would make First Nations women good wives for white men, schooling for mixed-blood peoples would help to rescue them from the pains of their hybrid heritage and render them adequate citizens of the colony and later, the nation.

All of these diverse efforts shared the goal of rendering mixed-race relationships compatible with normative standards of white, Christian relations. By bringing marriage to the masses, legislators and their advisors hoped to encourage mixed-race couples to recreate themselves anew in a mould compatible with normative white social and sexual standards. By urging the dissolute and unwed to take holy bonds, journalists and missionaries hoped to further this goal. By training First Nations women, they would make them fit partners for white men, and by educating their mixed-blood children, they might rescue them from their ill-begotten origins. In

⁷⁴Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1864, p32.

⁷⁵Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1867, p14.

⁷⁶Pearse, "Memo on the Letter of the Bishop of Columbia to the Right Honourable Earl of Kimberley," BCARS, GR 419, Box 10, File 1871/23, p11.

these three main ways, reformers hoped to recreate mixed-race relationships, casting them in the form of normative white unions.

IV: Eradicating Mixed-Race Relationships

Those who sought to reform mixed-race relationships built on a traditional missionary model. While white-Aboriginal unions were immoral, they could, with correct and timely guidance from appropriate leaders, become holy, righteous and Christian. Others displayed no such familial faith in the potential of the mixed-race relationships. A significant body of colonial opinion indeed worked to discourage any legal or religious recognition of relationships that they viewed as inherently illicit and corrupt. Rather than working to recreate mixed-race relationships, this reform programme laboured to stop them. As early as the 1830s, an unhappy missionary, Herbert Beaver, tried to wage a campaign against mixed-race relationships and their social acceptance, calling for the intervention of various British authorities into Hudson's Bay Company fort life.⁷⁷ Beaver, however, met with little success and a great deal of active opposition. By the early 1860s, however, voices like his found their audience and mixed-race relationships came under attack as both symbol and substance of the prevailing immorality plaguing the fragile colonial community of British Columbia.

This regulatory position was articulated most clearly in discussions of marriage.

⁷⁷See Thomas E. Jesset, ed., Reports and Letters of Herbert Heaver 1836-1838, Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company and Missionary to the Indians at Fort Vancouver (Portland, Champoege Press, 1959)

In 1861, a minor controversy erupted in Victoria over whether clergy should marry mixed-race couples. Macfie launched the debate with a letter to the British Colonist complaining of another, unnamed clergyman's refusal to wed "a praiseworthy Englishman and an Indian woman." Macfie united the couple in a civil ceremony in order to relieve the Englishman from "the alternative of living in a state of open guilt."⁷⁸ Macfie, in providing a civil marriage but denying a religious contract, acted in concert with those who sought an intermediate approach that would preserve the sacrament of marriage but also encourage consensual, mixed-race relationships to conform to basic white norms of morality.

This view, however, did not go uncontested. Anglican Alexander Garret, missionary to the Songish [Lekwammen] settlement at Victoria, quickly responded to Macfie's charge that other clerics were failing in their nuptial duties. He claimed that he had refused to marry the couple in question because the Aboriginal women had insufficient Christian knowledge, and "was therefore entirely incapable of making *any religious* promise or contract of a Christian kind." It was a violation of religious sanctity to wed heathen and Christian. The "object of the original institution of marriage was that the woman 'might be a help-meet' for the man," he wrote, "and that for a Christian to respect an ignorant and idolatrous Heathen, to prove such is most

⁷⁸Matt. Macfie, "A Laudable Marriage," British Colonist, 19 05 1861. This conflict was undoubtedly increased by the recent struggle over Macfie segregating the African parishioners in his church and Hills' vocal and strident opposition to this move.

extremely irrational."⁷⁹ For Garret, a relationship between a white and an Aboriginal could not be anything other than immoral, ill-begotten, and illegitimate.

In taking this position, Garret was following the directions of his Bishop, Hills. While he sometimes encouraged particular mixed-race couples to wed, Hills' official policy suggested that this course was appropriate only under exceptional circumstances. In 1861, he responded to queries from missionary clergymen about the policies around legitimating mixed-marriage, or, as he put it, "Marriage between a professing Xian and a Heathen woman."⁸⁰ Quoting copiously from biblical and legal sources, Hills argued that these marriages could not be considered for four reasons: scripture, antiquity, marriage service, and reason. Ultimately, he urged missionaries to deny mixed-race couples the marriage sacrament. Instead, if the relationship was permanent, missionaries should counsel them to seek immediate civil marriage and work towards the long-term conversion of the First Nations woman. If the relationship was casual, the white man should shun his Aboriginal partner but make financial provision for her and her children.⁸¹ Two years later, Hills had not changed his mind. He wrote in his private journal that mixed-race relationships were inherently unequal

⁷⁹Alex C. Garret, "The 'Laudable Marriage,'" British Colonist, 20 05 1861. Macfie responded with a lecture on the legal, not religious, meaning of marriage. See Matthew Macfie, "The 'Laudable Marriage' Again" British Colonist, 23 05 1861. On Garret, see A.C. Garret, "Reminiscences," [Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, PSA 52, File 57.

⁸⁰ Bishop Hills to Rev. C. Knipe, 06 03 1861, "Bishop of Columbia, Correspondence Outwards 1860-1884," ADNW/EPBC, Text 57, Box 6, File I, p43.

⁸¹ Bishop Hills to Rev. C. Knipe, 06 03 1861, p44-45.

and untrue, and "Hence the Church can never sanction by her blessing the union."⁸²

Hills' decision that white-Aboriginal couples should not usually be wed by Christian ceremony was based, primarily, on deep fears of white male deracination. He worried, like many other white British Columbians, that white men's morality would inevitably be imperiled by connections with Aboriginal women. Defending his decision, he wrote that "An untaught, an uncouth, superstitious heathen cannot be a fit companion for a Xian." He thought there was "great danger of being led further away from God both as to faith & morals." While marriages to white woman elevated men, mixed-marriages merely reinforced their base character. "A man who seeks a Heathen wife must have only his grosser appetites in view," he thought. For these reasons, concluded Hills, mixed-race marriages were "Unreasonable and fraught with danger."⁸³ This view became a component of Anglican rhetorical technique. Another missionary, visiting Brown's Lillooet church, preached the Biblical tale of Ball and Jezebel, arguing it illustrated how white men were degraded by their Aboriginal partners. He also phrased this sentiment differently, telling the assembled white men that "Thou

⁸²Hills, "Journal 1863," p37.

⁸³Bishop Hills to Rev. C. Knipe, 06 03 1861. Hills had similar opinions about whether children of heathen parents should be baptized. See G. Columbia to Rev A.C. Garret, 20 11 1860, "Bishop of Columbia, Correspondence Outwards 1860-1884," ACC\ADBCA, Text 57, Box 6, File I. He also refused to baptize First Nations people who lived in free unions or had plural partners. "The Bishop," wrote Good, "following the recommendation of the Church at large, laid down as an absolute requirement that an one seeking Holy Baptism must content themselves with one wife, which union was to be solemnized after by a proper service and certificate binding them to live together until parted by death." See Good, "The Utmost Bounds," p101-2.

art mated to a clown, And the grossness of his nature shall have weight to bring thee down."⁸⁴

Other clergy, however, were more confused than decisive about how to cope with the many consensual mixed-race relationships they found in colonial British Columbia. Hills, it seems, was not alone in his apparent inconsistency on this matter. James Raynard, labouring in rural Vancouver Island, wanted to encourage First Nations women to leave their immoral white partners, but was afraid it would lead them straight back into unmitigated savagery, a state he could hardly encourage. He wrote about Tsa-lo-wat, a high-status Cowichan woman, who abandoned the mission school to live with a white settler:

These unions are regarded by the poor women as quite natural, and honourable enough *for them*, brought up from childhood to regard themselves as inheriting only servitude, in one form or another, although they are well aware that we regard them with disapprobation.... At present, if they were to leave their (all but) husbands, they must return to their native way of living, which will not do. Shame for such connexion they have to learn. Greatly do we need Christian gentlewomen, veritable 'Sisters of Mercy,' to help us here. It is a difficult matter for a young catechist to deal with.⁸⁵

While Raynard's solution to the dilemma of mixed-race consensual relations – to employ female missionaries specifically dedicated to inculcating a sense of shame in Aboriginal women – was relatively uncommon, his confusion exemplifies a more

⁸⁴ Brown, British Columbia, p7. This passage is quoted, but the original author is described only as the missionary to the Cariboo, who could be one of a number of individuals.

⁸⁵ Raynard, Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1867, p24-5.

general bewilderment of missionaries in British Columbia when faced with free white-Aboriginal relationships.

Confused or not, many concluded that white men should dis sever themselves from First Nations women, whatever the consequences. A secular critic of public officials with First Nations partners urged that these men "purge themselves *at once* from the pollutions with which they are charged."⁸⁶ Most worked in informal ways to persuade white men to disengage themselves from mixed-racial relationships. Hills counselled a group of miners in Yale in 1861 against their Aboriginal attachments, deeming these relationships among the reasons "why the blessings of God did not rest upon the miners, even in temporal things."⁸⁷ Anglican John Good sought to change the general climate of opinion about the legitimacy of consensual mixed-race unions. In Nanaimo in 1861, he wrote that "This Community must be reformed: unblushing vice which now lifts its self on high & stalks abroad must be made to cover & hide its hideous head from the gaze of the public eye & eventually be crushed out of our midst."⁸⁸ Tellingly, Good later became perhaps the most consistent Protestant missionary promoter of the reform of mixed-race relationships, working to reorganize

⁸⁶Lux, "Magisterial Morality: A Voice from the Mountains," British Columbian, 14 11 1861. Emphasis original.

⁸⁷Third Report of the Columbia Mission with List of Contributions, 1861 (London, Rivingtons [1862]) p15.

⁸⁸J.B. Good to Sir, 06 01 1861 [1862?], Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1858-1861," [Transcripts] BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 1, p216-7.

and legitimize these unions at his posts in both Nanaimo and Lytton.

Rather than proselytising to the white community, other clerics sought to convince Aboriginal people of the sinfulness of unsanctioned connections with white men. Duncan, the messianic leader of the model Tsimshian mission village at Metlakatlah, did this primarily by isolating First Nations women from both their families and white men. As Jo-Anne Fiske points out, he identified female sexual activity and autonomy as a primary object of his reformatory efforts.⁸⁹ Rather than trying to make mixed-race relations more Christian, Duncan sought to isolate Tsimshian women and thus prevent mixed-race relationships from occurring. He established a much observed residential girls' home at Metlakatlah in an ongoing effort, as Hills put it, to counteract "the corruption of the youth of the female sex through the evil influence of the Heathen homes & the association at times with depraved whites."⁹⁰

While Duncan was the only Protestant missionary who successfully created a home dedicated to cloistering First Nations women and girls from the deleterious attentions of white men before confederation, it was a dream other clerics shared.

⁸⁹Jo-Anne Fiske, "Colonization and the Decline of Women's Status: The Tsimshian Case," Feminist Studies, 17:3 (Fall 1991) p524-526. For a general study, see Usher, William Duncan.

⁹⁰ Hills, "Journal 1866," p29. Also see Rev. J. J. Halcombe, Stranger Than Fiction (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1872) p93; "Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Metlakatlah Mission, British Columbia," British Colonist, 29 10 1868.

Raynard, faced with the difficult dilemma of providing women with a practical alternative to white partners, wrote that "I am longing for the day when I can ask them to break such unholy bonds, and offer them maintenance in some industrial school."⁹¹ Another Anglican, Archdeacon Reece, also looked to a school to rescue a First Nations woman from the ungodly path which he was unable to save her from. "If there had existed in the diocese an Indian institution for girls, how different might have been the result!" he wrote.⁹² Positioned at Fort Simpson, Methodist Thomas Crosby had similar convictions but, ultimately, more success. In 1879, he and his wife, with the help of the Canadian Women's Missionary Society, opened the Crosby Girls Home,⁹³ which aimed to "save and protect the young girls of that coast from being sold into the vilest of slavery."⁹⁴

While missionaries were on the forefront of efforts to eradicate mixed-race relationships, they were not entirely alone. At least one employer tried to prevent his white workmen from forming conjugal relations with First Nations women. For Frances Pooles' eight white copper miners, access to First Nations women ultimately became a strike issue in the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1862-3. Poole was outraged

⁹¹Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1867, p24-5.

⁹²Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission, for the Year 1868 (London, Rivingtons, 1969) p77.

⁹³See Whitehead, "A Useful Christian Woman"; Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, p17, p21.

⁹⁴Thomas Crosby, Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship (Toronto, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1914) p85.

when an Aboriginal woman appeared in camp "saying that one of my workmen had told her to come and take up her residence there and that her box of things was to go underneath his bunk." He wrote: "I could not of course mistake the meaning of that. The proceeding was inadmissible for every moral and sanitary reason."⁹⁵ His men were also angered by the lack of maple sugar and grog in their rations and promptly revolted. "It was a mutiny for all intents and purposes," wrote the furious Poole.⁹⁶ Only being empowered to act as magistrate, he thought, would have equipped him to manage the men he called "white savages" and "misguided louts."⁹⁷ His workmen thus demanded not only the usual fruits of pre-industrial paternalism - sugar and booze - but also their right to take Aboriginal partners. Yet Poole recognized neither the claims of his miners or the possible legitimacy of their connections with local women.

The law was also evoked as a participant in the effort to discourage mixed-race relationships and prove them inherently immoral and impracticable. When the Victoria press urged mixed-race couples to wed, an author claimed that under British law, marriage could not alter the illegitimacy of children produced by the couple before their wedding.⁹⁸ Usually, however, missionaries, journalists, and other reformers were disappointed that the law did not and would not prevent mixed-race

⁹⁵John W. Lyndon, ed., Frances Poole, C.E., Queen Charlotte Islands: A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1972 [London, Hurst and Blackett, 1872]) p246-7.

⁹⁶Poole, Queen Charlotte Islands, p255.

⁹⁷Poole, Queen Charlotte Islands, p245, p255.

⁹⁸Lex, "How to Get Rid of a Troublesome Question," Daily Press, 01 06 1862.

relationships. "When will our *Christian* Legislature give their due attention to this subject?" wrote a Nanaimo contributor to the Daily Press. He proposed "a law enacted whereby we could get rid of this pest of our community, viz: - the cohabitation of white men with Indian women."⁹⁹

Others asked that a host of existing laws be used to punish mixed-race relationships. The British Colonist suggested that "the white and black men who glory in keeping" First Nations women should be "proceeded against under the Vagrancy Act."¹⁰⁰ In 1866, one commentator wrote from Boston Bar, suggesting that white men be taxed ten dollars a year if they kept one "clootchman" and more if they kept two,¹⁰¹ presumably in an effort to discourage mixed-race relationships as well as generate colonial revenue. Other reformers looked to protective legislation to shelter First Nations people from the deleterious sexual attentions of white men. One argued that protective legislation restricting Aboriginal access to liquor and other aspects of white culture could also help to save First Nations women from colonizing men.¹⁰² Hills agreed, arguing that an "Indian Protector" would help combat the "frequent instances of the abduction of wives & children of Indians by dissolute white men."¹⁰³ These quixotic proposals show the many ways that white British Columbians thought

⁹⁹Robin Hood, "From Nanaimo," Daily Press, 28 06 1861.

¹⁰⁰"A Disorderly Neighbourhood," British Colonist, 14 10 1861.

¹⁰¹Castigator, "Letter from Boston Bar," British Columbian, 03 10 1866.

¹⁰²"Legislation in Reference to Indians," British Columbian, 23 02 1867.

¹⁰³George Hills, "Journal 1 Jan-21 July 1862," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p11.

the state might be able to reasonably intervene to end mixed-race relationships.

Reformers were generally unsuccessful in convincing a reticent colonial government to meddle in mixed-race relationships, beyond tampering with marriage laws. Methodist missionary Crosby angrily claimed that mixed-race relationships involved the sale of girls and thus were based on slavery, that institution so repugnant to British justice and thus deserved immediate legal attention. When confronted with his arguments, the magistrates, he argued, "would stammer a little and with feigned indifference they would claim that it was an Indian custom and form of marriage which they would not interfere with."¹⁰⁴ Mixed-race relationships, wrote Crosby in 1906, continued to persist, as did government lack of interest in dismantling them. The British Columbia government, he thought, should enact laws similar to those in force in Washington State compelling white men to marry Aboriginal women or women return to their "home."¹⁰⁵

Some journalists, missionaries, and politicians turned to a harsher tool: complete racial segregation. Rather than work to persuade individual white men to abandon their partners or specific First Nations women to avoid white men, they worked to create a racially segregated society which would, by definition, prevent mixed-race relationships. Aboriginal women's public behaviour was policed in white settlements, the sex trade was suppressed, and, most dramatically, racial segregation

¹⁰⁴Crosby, Among, p60.

¹⁰⁵Crosby, Among, p66.

was encouraged and occasionally enforced on a local level. Massive smallpox epidemics in the 1860s provided the necessary rationale for the implementation of longstanding dreams of racial separation. Importantly, I do not mean to suggest that smallpox epidemics were a mere ruse for the covert machinations of a beleaguered imperial minority. Smallpox decimated the Aboriginal population and terrified whites. Yet despite and perhaps because of its material reality, smallpox did provide reformers with a convenient vehicle for implementing visions of racial segregation that a few laws and too much preaching had so far manifestly failed to achieve.

Throughout the 1858 to 1871 period, local police forces actively regulated Aboriginal women's public presence in white settlements. They frequently arrested them for those small-change offenses that formed such a significant part of nineteenth-century police courts cases, such as drunk and disorderly. For these crimes, women were usually given small fines of one to ten dollars and released. The Victoria police court devised another mode of punishment which they reserved particularly for Aboriginal women: they shaved their heads. This punishment aimed to shame, associating erring First Nations women with both European female sexual miscreants and Haida and Tsimshian slaves, whose shaved heads marked them from their free.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶See "Squaw Barbarieed," Daily Press, 13 06 1861; Chief of Police to W.A.G. Young, 09 08 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1356, File 1382, for prisoner's lists from the Victoria gaol, including "An Indian Woman" whose crime was "Drunkenness" and her Sentence "Her hair cut off & discharged." See Aug. T. Pemberton to W.A.G. Young, 17 08 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, B-1356, File 1382, for "An Indian Woman" charged with "Felony" and her sentence being "Hair cut off and discharged."

Critics also worked to stamp out the sex trade, another widely publicized arena of white-Aboriginal sexual contact. Given the broader equation between First Nations women and prostitution, it took little to "prove" their participation in the sex trade. When, in 1860, the courts prosecuted a Kanaka man named Na-hor for keeping a disorderly house, the chief evidence against him was that many First Nations women lived in his house and that when men passed by, they would say "chako" [come] and "cla-how-a" [how are you].¹⁰⁷

Others thought individual arrests and punishments insufficient to control Aboriginal women's presence in white settlements. In the early 1860s, reformers attacked dance-houses, which, to their disgust, were tolerated by civic officials more concerned with attracting the business of young, white, seasonal male workers during the yearly slack periods than with protecting anyone's morals.¹⁰⁸ Victoria Magistrate Augustus Pemberton thought "it better to have all the bad characters collected together, in one spot, where the surveillance of the police prevented the introduction of spirits than having them scattered about in various directions indulging in all manner of riot and excess."¹⁰⁹ Local editorials frequently attacked both the dance houses and the tolerance politicians showed them, criticizing the houses and what they dubbed

¹⁰⁷Testimony of George Catman and Francis Gonieau, in R. v. Na-Hor, British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents 1857-1966," BCARS, GR 419, Box 1, File 1860/19.

¹⁰⁸See "The Dance House" British Colonist, 12 12 1861.

¹⁰⁹Untitled, British Colonist, 14 11 1863.

"the disgraceful orgies practised there by permission of the civic authorities."¹¹⁰

Reformers bristled at the suggestion that "*legalized* licentiousness is a social necessity."¹¹¹ Such fury was directed not only at the disorderly character of these institutions, but at their facilitation of mixed-race sociability and sex. "A dance house is only a hell hole where the females are white; but it is many times worse where the females are squaws," wrote the British Colonist.¹¹²

Opponents of dance houses tried various remedies, mainly haranguing the civic government of Victoria, urging it to deny these institutions licenses and thus state legitimation. They gathered petitions calling for the their closure.¹¹³ Failing that, they suggested that the government force them to locate outside of the white settlement, so that respectable white families might be protected from their noise, immorality, and excess.¹¹⁴ Hills wrote to the police complaining that these hot-beds of vice were tolerated in a British colony.¹¹⁵ Others tried to shame their white patrons and sponsors as when the Daily Press threatened to print the names of all who profited

¹¹⁰ "The Squaw Dance House," British Colonist, 17 12 1863.

¹¹¹ Censor, British Columbian, 27 02 1862. Emphasis original. Also see Censorious, British Columbian, 24 06 1863.

¹¹² "Dance House," British Colonist, 28 11 1862.

¹¹³ "The Dance House," British Colonist, 12 12 1861.

¹¹⁴ "The Dance House," British Colonist, 29 12 1861.

¹¹⁵ He wrote "I wrote yesterday to the Chief Commissioner of Police on the subject, expressing the feelings of the Clergy. They are nothing worst & less than places for immorality. I was told to day that in America they are not allowed. Sad indeed if in a British Colony evils of this kind should be greater than in a country not noted for its purity." See Hills, "Journal 1861," p167.

from dance houses if the government did not stamp them out.¹¹⁶

Especially after the change in governor in 1864, anti-dance house forces experienced some modest successes. New Vancouver Island Governor Arthur Kennedy was deeply disturbed by the extent of Victoria's sex trade, the widespread participation of First Nations women in it, and, perhaps most of all, the white community's apparent toleration of it. In his inaugural address to "Indian Chiefs," Kennedy warned that he would take a firm hand with prostitution and advised them to beware of immoral whites.¹¹⁷ He also shared these opinions with relevant white authorities. "The present Indian Settlement at Victoria, is a disgrace to humanity," he told the Colonial Office, "and I cannot learn that any effective measures have been taken to prevent the shameless prostitution of the women and drunkenness of the men who live mainly by their prostitution."¹¹⁸ Presumably with Kennedy's support, the local police began to prosecute dance houses as "disorderly houses" or, more vaguely, "nuisances."¹¹⁹ In 1864, when a Victoria dance house was charged as a disorderly house in a widely publicized case,¹²⁰ Methodist missionary Ephriam Evans appeared as

¹¹⁶"The Dance House," Daily Press, 22 12 1861.

¹¹⁷"The Governor's Address to the Indians, Victoria August 22nd, 1864," in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 23 08 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246.

¹¹⁸Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 01 10 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246. Also see Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 07 07 1864, CO 305/22, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246.

¹¹⁹For a nuisance charge, see "Squaw Dance House," British Colonist, 09 12 1864.

¹²⁰R. vs. Sting and Solbergh, British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents 1857-1966," BCARS, GR 419, Box 3, File 1864/10. There was an odd verdict which deemed the defendants not guilty but condemned "any gathering of squaws" a

a witness. He explained how dance houses offended his moral and industrial sensibilities, and also his fundamental conviction that white men and Aboriginal women should not mix on such an intimate and public level:

there was an almost constant ingress & excess of white men and Indian women. I heard most disgusting lewd and obscene language from the lobby and in front of the building - for Thursday and Saturday nights I saw men come from the building in company with Indian women...The noises coming of loud stamping & shouting mingled with Music I disapprove of dancing personally and I would rather see persons better employed.¹²¹

For Evans, then, dance house not only facilitated general lewdness and laxity but inappropriately mixed the races.

The cities of colonial British Columbia also sought intermittently to banish First Nations people from their streets altogether. These campaigns were sometimes explicit attacks on Aboriginal peoples' sexual and social contact with the white community, and were sometimes responses to small-pox epidemics. In 1862-3 alone, at least 20,000 Aboriginal people died of small-pox. There was an overall population decline of around 62 percent, while the Northwest Coast population is estimated to have been decimated by roughly 90 percent.¹²² Yet the near-devastation of Aboriginal

nuisance. See "The Dance House on Johnson Street" Vancouver Times, 07 11 1864; "The Court of Assize" Vancouver Times, 17 11 1864; "The Squaw Dance House in Johnson Street," Vancouver Times, 18 11 1864; "Court of Assize," Vancouver Times, 21 11 1864; "The Squaw Dance House on Johnson Street," Vancouver Times, 08 12 1864; "The Squaw Dance House Again," Vancouver Times, 09 12 1864.

¹²¹Testimony of Ephraim Evans, R. vs. Sting and Solbergh.

¹²²Steven Acheson, "Culture Contact, Demography and Health Among the Aboriginal Peoples of British Columbia," in Peter H. Stephenson, Susan J. Elliott, Leslie T.

populations and the white fear it generated cannot alone account for the movements to ban First Nations peoples from white settlements. Even when framed in the language of public health, these campaigns were directed at controlling sexual and social behaviour. As White notes in her study of prostitution in Nairobi, Kenya, colonial administrators conflated disease and purveyors of disease, and the control of urban space "became control over African social and sexual relations."¹²³

Campaigns to ban First Nations people from white settlements occurred sporadically throughout the colony. Every few years, a crusade to evict the Aboriginal population of New Westminster was launched. In 1861, the British Columbian claimed that their removal was required to prevent "that abominable licentious intercourse" with the whites which was "a burning disgrace to any people claiming to be civilized or christian."¹²⁴ The presence of First Nations people was deemed an evil on both "moral and sanitary" grounds.¹²⁵ Later that year, a small reserve was created to house this threatening population.¹²⁶ In 1866, New Westminster postponed their annual government-sponsored potlatch commemorating the Queen's birthday for fear of

Foster, and Jill Harris, eds., A Persistent Spirit: Towards Understanding Aboriginal Health in British Columbia (Victoria, University of Victoria, 1995) p12.

¹²³White, The Comforts of Home, p46.

¹²⁴"The Indian Question Again," British Columbian, 19 12 1861.

¹²⁵"The Indian Question Again," British Columbian, 03 05 1862.

¹²⁶"The Executive Demented," British Columbian, 21 05 1862.

smallpox.¹²⁷ Two years later, the forced removal of Aboriginal people being deemed impossible, the city council burned First Nations homes and cleaned others.¹²⁸ Smaller colonial centres like Lillooet also occasionally evicted their Aboriginal population.¹²⁹

It was, however, in Victoria that the campaign to segregate the population and prevent sexual contact between white and Aboriginal reached its apogee. As early as 1859, the Grand Jury recommended that First Nations people be removed from the city limits.¹³⁰ Soon after, orders demanding that Aboriginal people leave the city at night were passed.¹³¹ Initially, only men were included in this directive. After 1860, however, the ruling was expanded to include Aboriginal women. Police officers, wrote the Victoria Gazette, were "ungallant enough to enforce it against the women, and the streets are now cleared from a nuisance which has long infested them."¹³² It subsequently became common for the press to assume that these orders were directed against First Nations women specifically. White men's presence in First Nations settlements, as a corollary, was also occasionally policed, as when a young white man

¹²⁷"The Celebration," British Columbian, 06 10 1866. These events were sponsored by the colonial government, and involved First Nations from across the mainland visiting New Westminster for festivities and gifts.

¹²⁸"Report of the Board of Health," British Columbian, 11 11 1868.

¹²⁹"Lillooet," British Columbian, 25 02 1863.

¹³⁰"Report of the Grand Jury," Victoria Gazette, 15 01 1859; Untitled, Victoria Gazette, 22 02 1860.

¹³¹While often called "laws," given the lack of clarity of their origin and the absence of written records, it is likely that such "laws" were often not official, but rather informal police pronouncements.

¹³²"Squaws Arrested," Victoria Gazette, 09 05 1860.

was arrested for being found asleep in Victoria's Haida camp, which was self-evidently "a place where no person with morals other than lax should be found."¹³³

The repeated smallpox outbreaks of 1861 and 1862 provided a useful rationale for intensifying efforts to rid Victoria of First Nations people. By August of 1861, the local press was complaining that the existing ban was being ignored and First Nations people were seen in numbers after dark.¹³⁴ The police responded, in part, by burning down the houses occupied by Northern nations, an act regarded by some as overly cruel.¹³⁵ After the Northern peoples were ejected, wrote missionary Garret, "the whole deserted camp was set fire to, and one grand conflagration raged from end to end. And Oh! what a stench"!¹³⁶

However drastic, many considered the forced removal of the Northern peoples and the intentional destruction of their homes insufficient and called for a re-intensification of the campaign to segregate the city. In December of 1861, Evans complained about the lapsed segregation policy, arguing that the presence of the First Nations women was especially damaging to the fragile morals of local white men:

¹³³"Police Court," British Colonist, 13 03 1862.

¹³⁴"Indians," Daily Press, 18 08 1861.

¹³⁵"Indian Convictions," Daily Press, 05 09 1861; Alex. C. Garret, "Indian Police," Daily Press, 05 09 1861.

¹³⁶Rev. Alex. C. Garret, "Missionary Tour in British Columbia," 06 09 1862, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1861-1867," [Transcripts], BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 2, p54-55. Also see Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 15 05 1862, in Allan Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-1865 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1996) p61-3.

A short time ago the constabulary had orders to oblige all Indian women to leave the town for their encampments after dark. Now they are to be harbored in the dance houses until half the night is spent, and turned out to roam at large in their drunken excitement. The whole system of permitting them to frequent the town, or to live in its vicinity, is radically wrong, and should be abrogated before a harvest of evil shall be reaped fearful to contemplate. Beyond the demoralization of the settled population occasioned by their presence, what must be the effect on the health, and the discipline of troops, should this be made a military station?¹³⁷

Such comments made the links between race, sexual contact and public health efforts explicit. Evans did not fear smallpox as much as he dreaded that the presence of First Nations women would imperil the apparently feeble morals of white men.

When small-pox broke out in late April 1862, voices like Evans' multiplied, and the campaign to remove all First Nations people from Victoria again picked up speed.¹³⁸ The disease justified white people's disgust at the simple presence of Aboriginal people within colonial settlements. "They line our streets, fill the pit in our theatre, are found at nearly every open door during the day and evening in the town; and are even employed as servants in our dwellings, and in the culinary departments of our restaurants and hotels," raged the British Colonist.¹³⁹ These sentiments, when coupled with fear of contagion, were sufficient to motivate a sustained programme of forced removal. Throughout the month of May, the police cajoled the Haida,

¹³⁷Eph'm Evans, "Rev. Dr. Evans on the Dance Houses," British Colonist, 25 12 1861. Also see "The Indian Question," Daily Press, 27 04 1861.

¹³⁸"The Small-Pox Among the Indians," British Colonist, 28 04 1862.

¹³⁹"The Small-Pox Among the Indians," British Colonist, 28 04 1862.

Tsimshian, and Stickeen to leave Victoria, eventually resorting to again burning their homes and compelling them to leave by force.¹⁴⁰ Racial segregation, apparently, was to be as complete as possible. White people were also banned from walking on the abandoned and razed Aboriginal settlement.¹⁴¹ The Police then issued a "sweeping" order "to compel all Northern Indians and squaws to evacuate the city limits" in the first week of June 1862.¹⁴² While this was officially a response to the smallpox epidemic, the Daily Press also commented that "The wholesale ejection of man, woman and child, will effect, no doubt, a marked moral change in the state of the town."¹⁴³ While the earlier efforts banned First Nations women from being in town after nightfall and ejected specific national groups, this order, significantly, demanded the wholesale removal of all Aboriginal peoples.

Enthusiasts of racial segregation, however, were disappointed when it proved difficult to separate the white and First Nations populations. Mixed-race relationships, it seems, proved a meaningful barrier to segregation. A week after it was passed,

¹⁴⁰The Daily Press took care to point out the First Nations people understood that having their homes burnt was indeed a benevolent act, arguing "It is due to the Indians to remark that they were thoroughly understand the intention and spirit of these orders, and fully appreciate the humanity and wisdom of the regulation. They will take up their temporary abode upon some of the many beautiful Islands that lie between this and the Plumper Pass." See "Migration of the Indians" Daily Press, 11 05 1862; "Conflagration on the Indian Reserve" Daily Press, 13 05 1862.

¹⁴¹"Inconsistency," Daily Press, 19 05 1862.

¹⁴²This time, the press took care to note that the Tsimshian "voluntarily" burnt their homes. See "The Small-Pox and the Indians," Daily Press, 01 05 1862.

¹⁴³"Compulsory Departure of the Indians," Daily Press, 27 05 1862.

popular resistance resulted in the June 1862 ruling being modified, according to the British Colonist, "to exclude from its provisions those squaws who are living as mistresses with white men!"¹⁴⁴ Aboriginal female partners of white men were to obtain a permit from the police, which they would show in case of the order's enforcement. This pass-law was apparently popular, and many applications were received at the police office from "from those having Indian servants and wives."¹⁴⁵ The British Colonist was furious that consensual mixed-race relationships and First Nations women were being legitimized in this way: "squaws, with neither decency nor cleanliness to recommend them, are allowed to remain because they wear hoops and are prostitutes!"¹⁴⁶ Police orders, gunboats and burnt homes notwithstanding, Aboriginal people continued to live cheek-by-jowl with whites. "[T]here is scarce a street in town but can boast its native residents," raged the press,¹⁴⁷ and First Nations women especially continued to live within the city's confines and, more seriously, in intimate partnership with white men.¹⁴⁸

In response to this perceived failure, in December of 1862 reformers turned to civic legislation as a vehicle for banning First Nations women from Victoria. Mr. Copeland, a city councillor, proposed "a Supplementary Bye Law, declaring it to be

¹⁴⁴ "Prostitution Recognized By Government," British Colonist, 02 06 1862.

¹⁴⁵ "Compulsory Departure of the Indians," Daily Press, 28 05 1862.

¹⁴⁶ "Prostitution Recognized By Government," British Colonist, 02 06 1862.

¹⁴⁷ See "Small Pox," Daily Press, 06 06 1862; "Removal of the Indians," Daily Press, 09 06 1862; "More Small-Pox in Town" Daily Press, 16 06 1862.

¹⁴⁸ "Small Pox," Daily Press, 17 06 1862; "The Small-Pox," Daily Press, 19 06 1862.

unlawful for any person to Harbor Indian women within the City limits excepted always such parties as may be married and their wives are living with them and where such Indian women may be bona fide as servants."¹⁴⁹ As legal rationale, he considered that "the squaws might all be considered as prostitutes, and that was sufficient grounds for their ejection." The mayor and Magistrate, however, advised that this was beyond the limits of legal justification. Copeland then altered his resolution to refer only to "squaw dance houses,"¹⁵⁰ but Council also rejected this.¹⁵¹

Kennedy's appointment as Vancouver Island Governor in 1864 lent support for more sophisticated legal apparatus. His predecessor James Douglas had been at best ambivalent about racial segregation. As Paul Tennant has argued, Douglas' land policy assumed eventual assimilation and the possibility of a biracial society.¹⁵² When whites in Victoria clamoured for the removal of First Nations people, Douglas sternly refused to comply. While he conceded that they were "a public inconvenience," Douglas argued that "their violent removal would be neither just nor politic."¹⁵³ He

¹⁴⁹City of Victoria, "Meeting of the Town Council held this 22nd day of December 1862," "Council Minutes," Volume O, August 25 1862 to 11 July 1871, City of Victoria Archives, [hereafter CVicA] City Record Series 1, p79.

¹⁵⁰ "City Council," British Colonist, 23 12 1862.

¹⁵¹ "Meeting of the Town Council held this 5th day of January 1863," City of Victoria, "Council Minutes," CVicA, p82-5.

¹⁵² Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1990) p35.

¹⁵³James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, Volume II, "Journals of the House of Assembly, Vancouver Island, 1856-1863" (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980)p72.

explained that Aboriginal people were a useful component of colonial society.

"[M]uch apprehension is felt by the inhabitants at the close contiguity of a body of Savages double to them in number," he told the Colonial Office. "In these apprehensions I do not share, for the object of the Indians in visiting this place is not to make War upon the white man, but to benefit by his presence, by selling their Furs and other commodities."¹⁵⁴

Governor Kennedy, in contrast, was a true enthusiast of racial segregation, particularly in its capacity to prevent white-Aboriginal sexual contact. "I think a great mistake has been made in permitting an Indian settlement to grow up and continue in juxta-position with a city like Victoria," he told the Colonial Office, "and a still greater error has been committed in leasing a portion of their Reserve, thus mixing the two Races together to the greatest degradation of the one, and the demoralization of both."¹⁵⁵ Kennedy had to be content with indirect legislation, however. The elaborate law regulating the sale of liquor to Aboriginal people passed in 1865 can be interpreted as an indirect instrument of racial segregation since under it, any person found with liquor in an Aboriginal abode was "liable under this Ordinance to be deemed *prima facie* to be in such house, tent, or place of abode, for

¹⁵⁴James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 08 08 1860, CO 305/14, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-241.

¹⁵⁵Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 01 10 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246.

the purpose of giving such intoxicating liquor to Indians," and thus for arrest.¹⁵⁶

Yet, as in other outposts of empire, it was ultimately public health legislation that served as the most effective foot-soldier of racial segregation. As Nicholas Thomas points out about Fiji, "almost anything to do with the organization of custom or village life could potentially be modified in the name of sanitation, since this did not emerge from any interested attempt to impose British or Christian values, but from the state's rational interest in preserving the native race."¹⁵⁷ Some journalists proposed that a version of the British Contagious Diseases Act should be passed to slow the fearful spread of venereal disease. By "endeavouring to mitigate such a disease we are not sanctioning any evil, but by attempting thus to control it we shall aid in the preserving the native races until, it is hoped, moral and religious influences have time to take root," they argued.¹⁵⁸ Yet public health or sanitary legislation passed in the late 1860s ultimately allowed the state to segregate white from Aboriginal in British Columbia. Beginning with Victoria in 1868, city governments passed laws facilitating the wholesale removal of First Nations people,¹⁵⁹ apparently with great success.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶"British Columbia, No.16. An Ordinance to prohibit the sale or gift of intoxicating Liquor to Indians," British Columbia Government Gazette, 03 06 1865, PAC, MG 11, CO 63/2, Mflm B-1489.

¹⁵⁷Nicholas Thomas, Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994) p116.

¹⁵⁸"Our Social Evil," British Colonist, 22 10 1867.

¹⁵⁹See "Corporation By Laws, City Clerks Office 1862-1888," CVicA, City Record Series 1, p7-11.

¹⁶⁰"Sanitary," British Colonist, 22 10 1868; "Sanitary Report," British Colonist, 25 10 1868.

"Since the Indian exodus on account of the small-pox, the Court has been freed from the trouble the notorious Hydahs were constantly giving," rejoiced the British Colonist.

¹⁶¹ A year later, the local press was again calling for the removal of all First Nations people not employed as servants.¹⁶²

It was when public health laws were enacted on a colonial level, however, that their implicit racial motivations became clear. Victoria's civic government wrote to the colony's Executive Council early in 1869, "recommending provision being made for the removal of the Indians from the City of Victoria." The Council replied that "that the end might be attained by somewhat extended powers proposed to be created by the Board of Health Bill."¹⁶³ By July the colony had passed public health legislation facilitating the removal of Aboriginal people from New Westminster and Victoria.¹⁶⁴ While some thought it autocratic and arbitrary,¹⁶⁵ Governor Frederick

¹⁶¹ "Police Court," British Colonist, 10 11 1868

¹⁶²"Sanitary," British Columbian, 22 07 1869.

¹⁶³Hendrickson, ed., Volume IV, p112.

¹⁶⁴"Public Health Ordinance" British Colonist, 01 01 1869. See "Municipal By-Law, to Regulate the Sanitary Condition of the City and Port of Victoria, B.C." British Columbia Government Gazette, 10 07 1869, PAC, MG 11, CO 63/4, Mflm B-1490. This empowered the city, with written permission of the Stipendiary magistrate and published notice, "from time to time, and at any time, to prevent and remove all or any Indians, not for the time being actually in the service of any person residing in or about the said City, from living within the limits of the said City, and to specify the conditions (if any) under which they, or some of them, shall be allowed to remain there." New Westminster's legislation was almost exactly the same. See "Health By-Law, To regulate the Sanitary condition of the City and Port of New Westminster, British Columbia," British Columbia Government Gazette, 16 07 1870, PAC, MG 11, CO 63/4, Mflm B-1490.

¹⁶⁵Untitled, British Colonist, 27 01 1869.

Seymour hoped that this legislation would allow the state legitimately to take measures which had previously been performed without the sanction of the law.¹⁶⁶ Removing First Nations people from the homes and streets of white British Columbia, it seems, remained a compelling but elusive goal.

V: Resistance

Ultimately, efforts to transform and eradicate mixed-race relationships generated a significant amount of resistance, some conscious and some unconscious, some overt and some passive. White resistance usually did not oppose the racism and imperialism upon which these efforts were based but merely disputed the method of its implementation. In doing so, however, these white critics exposed some of the key contradictions in reformers' efforts to regulate white-Aboriginal relationships.

Those who sought to remodel mixed-race relationships along the lines of normative white, Christian unions met with few overt victories. Certainly, the 1865 marriage law caused no flood of penitent, hybrid sinners seeking the sanction of the state, and indeed it seems to have disappointed the trickle that sought it out its attentions. Despite the unusually tortured process that produced it, this marriage law proved as difficult to enforce as it was to develop. In 1868, the Cariboo Sentinel was advising readers on the particulars of British Columbia's marriage law, and as late as

¹⁶⁶ Frederick Seymour to Earl of Granville, 10 03 1869, Great Britain, Colonial Office, British Columbia, Original Correspondence, 1858-1871," CO 60/35, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1445, p178-9.

1869 clergy were requesting copies of the marriage act.¹⁶⁷ Even urban clergy had trouble locating the necessary forms for "registering" couples according to the Act.¹⁶⁸ These problems led the backwoods press to complain, in 1871, that "the Executive has failed to provide for the connubial wants of the people of Cariboo," as there were no valid marriage licenses available in the up-country.¹⁶⁹ Missionary exhortations and journalistic campaigns, moreover, did not motivate any discernable, large-scale shift in the character of mixed-race unions.

Reformers' efforts to persuade both white and First Nations to scorn mixed-race relationships met with similarly limited success. In typical frustration, Crosby wrote that "We reasoned with their parents and heathen relatives, but our efforts were in vain. We went to the cabins of white men and expostulated with them, and were driven out with fiendish curses and told that it was none of our business."¹⁷⁰ British Columbia white men not only swore at meddling missionaries, but defended the legitimacy of their attachments to Aboriginal women. They sometimes did this simply by utilizing the conventions and language of genteel European gender systems to describe themselves and their First Nations partners. Robson was horrified to hear of

¹⁶⁷"Matrimony," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 10 1868; See Archdeacon Woods to H.P.P. Crease, 15 10 1869, BCARS, Add Mss 55, Box 3, "H.P.P. Crease, Miscellaneous Papers, 1823-1901," File 26/11-13.

¹⁶⁸See Ephraim Evans, to W.A.G. Young, 10 02 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1327, File 536/11.

¹⁶⁹Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 02 12 1871.

¹⁷⁰Crosby, Among, p63.

a Yale event specifically advertised as "a grand New Year's party...For the White gentleman and their native ladies."¹⁷¹ A Cariboo correspondent told the Victoria press that the Aboriginal women who attended a 1868 party "conducted themselves during the whole performance in such a becoming and ladylike manner as to stand the hardest test of security from any Puritan whatever." Their white partners were as gentlemanly as the women respectable, he noted, and the women "were very gently handled throughout by the rough-bearded part of the assembly."¹⁷²

Other white men explicitly defied all those who questioned their right to take First Nations partners. Brown became famed not only for denouncing mixed-race relationships from his pulpit in Lillooet, but also for generating widespread popular opposition. In his diary, Hills wrote that "Mr Brown has very properly preached against this frightful evil & has of course given offense."¹⁷³ Lillooet's white men were not merely offended, but also offered compelling counter-arguments to Brown's admonitions. When Brown preached his annual sermon against mixed-race relationships, he was "interrupted by some one instancing Solomon as having many wives, and yet didn't the Bible say he was a man after God's own heart!" The next week, his sermon was boycotted by white men apparently unaccustomed to such insults.¹⁷⁴ It was this defence of mixed-race relationships in the interests of unfettered

¹⁷¹Robson, "Diary," np. Emphasis original.

¹⁷²B.D., "Letter from Cariboo," British Colonist, 27 03 1868.

¹⁷³Hills, "Journal 1861," p73.

¹⁷⁴Brown, British Columbia, p7.

male sexual license that white feminists of early-twentieth century British Columbia would single out for sharp critique.¹⁷⁵

These stories suggest how profoundly reformers failed to convince all of the white population of the merits of their social vision. Whatever the views of articulate social critics, many simply accepted mixed-race relationships as a necessary social fact, even if they acknowledged that Aboriginal women suffered by them. Gilbert Sproat deemed other authors slipshod in discussions of the "vices of civilization" which he considered a necessary feature of colonial enterprises. He wrote that "whenever any considerable number of white men are congregated, their seduction, debauchery, and disease become the fate of the native females."¹⁷⁶

Attempts to cloister First Nations women also failed to achieve their putative goals. The Columbia Mission and Methodist church both aspired to operate female industrial schools, but only the Methodists succeeded in this goal, and then not until 1879. Anglican lay minister Duncan, the only Protestant who successfully created a home for Aboriginal women during the 1858 to 1871 period, gained a dubious sexual reputation for his trouble. "Perhaps Mr. Duncan's management of the young women is one of the most wonderful and most successful of his works," wrote naval officer

¹⁷⁵See, most notably, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire prize story of 1924, John Pease Babcock, 'Peace River Joe' (Victoria, Litchfield's, 1924); Frances E. Herring, Nan and Other Pioneer Women of the West (London, Francis Griffiths, 1913)

¹⁷⁶Charles Lillard, ed., Gilbert M Sproat, The Nootka: Scenes and Studies of Savage Life (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1987 [1868])p188, p192.

and general do-gooder Edmund Hope Verney, "and at the same time not the best appreciated by the public: to take into his own house, and to entertain at his own table young women at the most critical ages, is a task that few young men would care to undertake." Verney, not surprisingly, added that he thought a married missionary would be a better choice for the post.¹⁷⁷ The young naval officer was not alone in being troubled by the lone white male missionary living amongst all those Aboriginal girls. By 1868, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was worried enough about Duncan's sexual behaviour to send HBC chaplain Edward Cridge to investigate. The CMS urged Duncan to immediately accept a "sensible, matronly married woman" as assistant and appointed a married missionary to join him in his labours.¹⁷⁸ More seriously, they tried, without success, to bully Duncan into taking a white wife. His superiors were deeply worried that he would marry one of his Tsimshian converts and himself join the ranks of those he was supposed to be converting. "We hope that he is not intending to marry one of them," they commented, "as such marriages in other missions have usually been great hinderance to a Missionary's usefulness."¹⁷⁹ In the next months, Cridge noted in his diary a "Long talk w Duncan on his marriage."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 06 10 1864, in Pritchard, ed p226.

¹⁷⁸William Collinson, the missionary appointed to assist Duncan in 1873, was given unusually quick permission to marry, presumably so that he and his wife could act as another bulwark against Duncan's feared descent into mixed-race relations. See Charles Lillard, ed., William Henry Collison, In the Wake of the War Canoe (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1981) p18.

¹⁷⁹John Mee to Edward Cridge, 22 01 1868, BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box I, File 4.

¹⁸⁰Edward Cridge, "Diary, 1868," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box 7, p83.

Ironically, to white observers, Duncan's efforts to prevent mixed-race relationships led him closer, rather than further away, from them: in sheltering First Nations women from white men, Duncan placed himself in dangerous intimacy with them.

Efforts to transform mixed-blood peoples were also largely fruitless. Reformers were thwarted by the instability of racial categories. Duncan apparently initially considered the separate education of the mixed-blood, but found "they have been so long abandoned by their fathers they have forgotten every word of English, and become so much like the Indians that I shall be obliged to deal with them as such."¹⁸¹ Some whites challenged the very notion that mixed-blood peoples were immoral, threatening, and defective by reconfiguring discourses of hybridity to argue for mixed-blood people's superiority. After visiting British Columbia, Canadian politician Malcolm Cameron told the Young Men's Christian Association in Montreal that "It is a mixed race which produces a great people, a powerful nation."¹⁸² Navy surgeon Bogg made a detailed argument about the physical fitness, reproductive prowess, and political reliability of British Columbia's "half-breed" population. His words turned prevailing theories of race and reproduction on their head:

The offspring of intermarriage between the white and aboriginal races are generally of medium height, well-formed, and muscular, having a

¹⁸¹William Duncan quoted in Richard Charles Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (Toronto, S.R. Publishers, 1969 [London, John Murray, 1862]) p308.

¹⁸²Lecture Delivered by the Hon. Malcolm Cameron to the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (Quebec, G.E. Desbates, 1865) p21.

very light olive complexion, and high cheek-bones, while, to the intelligence of the Father, they add the quickness of observation and restless activity of the Savage. They are prolific, and are calculated to become a fine and intelligent race of people. Their antipathy to the Aborigines is very violent and intense, and should any serious difficulty arise with the natives, the Half-Breeds will afford valuable assistance in quelling the disturbance.¹⁸³

As he did with the Haida and Tsimshian wives of Nanaimo miners, Bogg harnessed the language of mainstream colonial discourse to a distinctly different end.

The failure that characterized the campaign to rid colonial settlements of institutions of mixed-race sociability like dance-houses also demonstrated the hollowness of the logic that represented them as unique vehicles of disorder. Critics pointed out that dance-house could not be logically singled out for either the presence of Aboriginal women or drinking. One letter-writer questioned why Methodist anti-dance-house demagogue Evans "is only contesting against these dance-houses, and not, for instance, against drinking houses or against the very act of men keeping a cloutchman."¹⁸⁴ Other white men also disputed that dance-houses were inherently disreputable, and instead likened them to the gatherings of the most respectable elements of self-improving white Victoria society. In response to Evans' court-room testimony, Thomas Adams Williams, a bar-keeper, compared the dance-house to meetings of the Good Templars, arguing that he lived next door to the offending dance house and that

¹⁸³ Bogg, "Journal of Her Majesty's Hired Surveying Vessel, Beaver, 1863," PRO, ADM 101/276, p16.

¹⁸⁴ John H. Rosenberg, "Dance-Houses Again!" British Colonist, 26 12 1861.

he did "not hear anything different now as regards noise than when the Templars are there." James Reid Robertson, an engineer and builder, made a similar point: "I have not heard more noise within the past week scarcely so much, as when the Good Templars and Germania Sing Verein have had Balls there they have broken the furniture."¹⁸⁵ In making these arguments, such people not only defended the moral viability of mixed-race relations, but sharply criticized the supposed superiority of those institutions of metropolitan masculinity discussed in Chapter Four.

Efforts to banish First Nations people, especially women, from white settlements garnered resistance as did efforts to regulate sites of mixed-race sociability. Politicians like Douglas insisted on the economic importance of Aboriginal people to colonial settlements and fought against the prevailing hysteria. Some editorials in the local press likened the expulsion of the Northern nations to the eviction of Irish tenants and named it as unjust.¹⁸⁶ Others mocked what they saw as the spurious morality, prudishness and hypocrisy of critics of Aboriginal women's public presence. One author advised those "who are so shocked by the presence of a squaw in our streets" to "look a little less at the *disgusting creatures*, and never speak to them, nor go near them, nor encourage them."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵"Police Court", 08 11 1864, in R. vs Sting and Solbergh. Germania Sing Verein was a German cultural group that met regularly in Victoria. Emphasis original. Also see "Court of Assize," Vancouver Times, 21 11 1864.

¹⁸⁶"Indian Convictions," Daily Press, 05 09 1861.

¹⁸⁷ An Ass, "Astute Suggestions for the Stupid," Victoria Gazette, 02 04 1859.

Despite the constant escalation of methods and honing of legal tools, the urban settlements of colonial British Columbia were never successfully segregated.

Aboriginal people continued to live amongst white and continued to have extensive sexual and social contact with the colonial community. In 1866, the local press again complained about the presence of First Nations women and their "degraded" white male partners in the city, sounding an alarm that was by then painfully familiar:

the moral as well as the physical atmosphere is polluted by the presence of hundreds of Indian prostitutes in all the principal streets, to such an extent, especially after sundown, the ladies dare hardly venture along the main thoroughfares, and in some places, such as in front of the theatre, it is difficult for any one to elbow his way through them. The hovels in the alleys and bye-ways of the town are filled by these wretches and their degraded male companions, whose filth and obscenity annoy the entire neighbourhood, and add largely to the probabilities of the breaking out of some contagious disease.¹⁸⁸

Relations between white men and First Nations women were as much a part of British Columbia society as the fur trade or gold rush. Despite the prevailing construction of mixed-race relationships as agents of white male decline and the various efforts made by missionaries, journalists, and lawmakers to either abolish mixed-race relationships or render them compatible with white visions of appropriate sexual and social behaviour, these relationships persisted both in the lives of white men and First Nations women and in the worried, churning minds of reformers and critics.

These resistances, failures, and limitations are as important, perhaps, as are the attempts to prevent or radically reconfigure mixed-race relationships. The issues of

¹⁸⁸"A Social Grievance," Vancouver Times, 04 04 1866.

mixed-race relationships and reform garnered such intense commentary because they struck at the fragile heart of the colonial enterprise. The many and diverse attempts to force First Nations people, especially women, from white settlements exposed what Stoler identifies as two powerful yet false premises upon which colonialism depends: the notion that Europeans were an easily identifiable and discrete entity, and that boundaries between colonized and colonizer were clear and complete.¹⁸⁹ Events like the small-pox epidemic of 1862 made it painfully clear that white and Aboriginal people shared ties, homes, children, and labour. In doing so, they challenged colonialism's foundational fictions. While they did not confront the white supremacy of these reform efforts and the society that spawned them, critiques and resistances did expose some of their more damning contradictions and complexities.

VI: Conclusion

Mixed-race relationships held a significant and contested place in the relationship between gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. The colony developed a gender and racial organization that was particular and, according to many commentators, immoral. It not only gave birth to a rough, homosocial white male culture, but fostered the widespread practice of white-Aboriginal heterosexual relationships. Just as reformers worked to transform the rough fellows of the backwoods into rational, orderly men, they also worked to regulate mixed-race relationships. Missionaries, law-makers,

¹⁸⁹ Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable," p635.

journalists, and politicians, responding to prevailing construction of mixed-race relationships as agents of white male decline, tendered two overlapping but distinct modes of reform. One sought to render consensual, mixed-race relationships compatible with white social and sexual norms through encouraging legal marriage and Christian conversion. The other worked to eradicate mixed-race relationships by proselytizing among both the white and First Nations communities and also, more extremely, enacting racial segregation through the forced expulsion of Aboriginal people from white settlements.

These reform programmes did not wholly regenerate or eradicate mixed-race relationships. The failure of this social vision combined with the inability of reformers to transform the homosocial culture through voluntary organizations may have shifted reformer's attention to the white population. Politicians and reformers turned to land and immigration policies hoping not merely to attract a large white population, but also to encourage it to form orderly, nuclear, agricultural families. If they could deliver a sufficient number of white people to this rough, racially plural, and immoral place and encourage them to adopt a lifestyle befitting their racial identity, perhaps British Columbia could become the orderly white settler community of their dreams.

Chapter Six:
Land and Immigration, Gender and Race:
Bringing White People to British Columbia

I: Introduction

In their effort to bring order and respectability to British Columbia between 1858 and 1871, reformers and politicians persistently turned to land and immigration policies. Immigration schemes were promoted as a means to draw a respectable, British population, while liberal land policies were encouraged to render this population more permanent and encourage nuclear family organization and agriculture.

In these ways, bland land laws and immigration policies were intended to transform the gendered and racial character of British Columbia. Instead of intemperate, independent miners and lackadaisical, lascivious partners of First Nations women, white men would become responsible yeoman farmers, joined by a stream of hardworking, upstanding white families making their permanent home in the colony.

Like the attempts to reform both rough male homosocial culture and mixed-race relationships, these ambitions were never easily actualized. The ongoing movement to liberalize British Columbia's land policies was hampered by frictions between local elites and the Colonial Office and no large-scale mass immigration programme was implemented between 1858 and 1871. Despite their brilliant dreams of free land and cheap passages for the teeming masses of Europe, white British Columbians had to be content with a gradual loosening of land policy and with minor and episodic assistance with emigration. Yet despite these manifest failures, reformers, journalists and politicians continued to look to both land laws and

immigration policy when attempting to transform British Columbia into an orderly, white settler colony anchored with respectable gender norms and racial identities.

II: Historiography

Land and immigration policies are surely among the most analyzed aspects of British North American society. Both state tools lie at the heart of cherished popular images of the new world and upward mobility. Romantic images of striving yeomanry aside, land was crucial to Europe's attempt to reconstitute itself in the new world. Thus historians have hotly debated the character of eighteenth and nineteenth-century agriculture in both French and English Canada, particularly probing its role in creating and sustaining European economies and polities.¹ More recently, Canadian historians have singled out the social history of land use and rural life for particular scrutiny. They have examined how ordinary white families replicated the practices of the European peasantry, utilized land to achieve their own interests, and experienced gendered politics of land and markets in the nineteenth-century.²

¹See, for instance, H. Clare Pentland, Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860, Ed. Paul Phillips (Toronto, James Lormier, 1981) especially Chapter 5; Fernand Ouellet, Economic and Social History of Quebec, 1760-1850: Structures and Conjunctures (Toronto, Gage, 1980); John McCallum, Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980) Serge Courville, Entre ville et campagne: l'essor du village dans les seigneuries du Bas-Canada (Quebec, Universite de Laval, 1990); Andrew Hill Clark, Three Centuries and the Island: A Historical Geography of Settlement and Agriculture in Prince Edward Island, Canada (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1959)

²Allen Greer, Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1985); David Gagan, Hopeful

This rich historical tradition of examining land and society in Ontario, Quebec, and the prairie west, however, lacks any meaningful British Columbia counterpart. As Ruth Sandwell elegantly suggests, the imperative of proving the centrality of highly exploitative resource industries to British Columbia has led historians consistently to minimize the importance of agriculture and rural life.³ While scholars have probed the removal of First Nations populations from the land,⁴ they have not examined if and how whites established themselves on the same territory. There is, though, much to be said about land and white society in British Columbia. While resource extraction early established its dominance, land was a significant site of social debate and regulation. As Robert E. Cail remarked a quarter century ago, in the nineteenth-century "the most complex and comprehensive legislation in British Columbia was that concerned with public lands."⁵ Land was elaborately regulated not merely because it

Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1981); Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988); Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988)

³ R.W. Sandwell, "Peasants on the Coast? A Problematique of Rural British Columbia," in Donald Akenson, ed., Canadian Papers in Rural History X (Ganonoque, Langdale, 1996) p275-303. Also see R.W. Sandwell, "Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History," Histoire Sociale/Social History XXVII: 53 (May 1994) p1-32; David Demeritt, "Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia," BC Studies 108 (1995-6) p29-60.

⁴Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1990)

⁵Robert E. Cail, Land, Man, and the Law: The Disposal of Crown Lands in British Columbia, 1871-1913 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1974) pxi.

was economically important, but because of its key role in displacing existing peoples and positioning white people as heirs to the contested soil.

Immigration to British North America has similarly received substantial, yet incomplete, attention from historians. As with the subject of land, historians of British Columbia have been more concerned with discussing the absence of migration before the late-nineteenth-century than with exploring its particular history. John Belshaw's unpublished work is probably the most comprehensive analysis of immigration policy and politics in colonial British Columbia.⁶ A few articles deal with assisted female migration.⁷ Yet British Columbia's historians have spent more energy examining efforts to discourage the immigration of specific peoples, most notable East Asians and to a lesser extent, South Asians, than they have analyzing those programmes that fostered and supported immigration.⁸ While these racist anti-immigration movements deserve historical attention, the notion that British Columbia should not accept certain peoples were premised on the firm conviction that *other* peoples were more suitable

⁶ John Douglas Belshaw, "British Coalminers on Vancouver Island, 1848-1900: A Social History," PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1987, Chapter 3.

⁷ Marilyn Barber, "The Gentlewomen of Queen Mary's Coronation Hostel," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria, Camosun College, 1984); Jackie Lay, "To Columbia on the Tynemouth: The Immigration of Single Women and Girls in 1862," in Barbara Latham and Cathy Kess, eds., In Her Own Right: Women's History in B.C (Victoria, Camosun College, 1980)

⁸ See, for instance, Patricia Roy, A White Man's Province: Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914 (Montreal-Kingston, McGill-Queen's Press, 1989); Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal-Kingston, McGill-Queen's Press, 1991)

migrants.

The broader literature on migration to North America provides little help in creating a challenging analysis of land and immigration efforts in colonial British Columbia. The literature on new world migration is frequently race-blind, treating the movements of European peoples as simple, apolitical movements to large, empty spaces.⁹ While immigration was, without doubt, motivated primarily by straightforward social and economic needs, it was also an imperial act, part and parcel of the on-going effort to assert white dominance and displace Aboriginal populations.¹⁰ Yet British factory workers who became Ontario farmers were not simply Lord Curzon writ small. Cecillie Swaisland, in her study of female emigration to Southern Africa, is surely right to point out that it is unclear if "the imperialist motive was held as strongly by the emigrants themselves as it was in official circles or by those who ran the emigration societies that enabled women to go overseas."¹¹ Acknowledging this tension between high imperial politics and everyday life suggests the importance of

⁹ See Bernard Bailyn, The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction (New York, Knopf, 1986). For a local study which explicitly defines Ontario's Leeds and Landsdowne townships as "empty," see Donald Harman Akenson, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History (Montreal-Kingston, McGill-Queens Press, 1984) p55.

¹⁰ On this point in a later period, see Stephen Constantine, "Introduction: Empire migration and imperial harmony," in Stephen Constantine ed., Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions between the Wars (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990)

¹¹ Cecillie Swaisland, Servants and Gentlewomen to the Golden Land: The Emigration of Single Women from Britain to Southern Africa, 1820-1939 (Oxford and Providence, Berg and the University of Natal Press, 1993) p4.

probing the connections between international migration and imperialism.

It is these connections between land, immigration, race, and gender that this chapter reckons with. I will examine how British Columbia's colonial promoters and government officials turned to land and immigration laws not merely to attract a white population, but also to shape its gendered and racial character. In doing so, I hope to address the historiographical silences that surround agriculture, land settlement, and immigration in British Columbia and bring the analytic categories of race, empire, and gender to the history of nineteenth-century migration.

III: Looking to the Land

Politicians, journalists, and commentators devised various schemes in their effort to reform colonial society. Among the most prominent and persistent solutions advanced were reforms to British Columbia's land policies. Colonial promoters thought generous land grants would draw white migrants and encourage them to form nuclear families and become permanent, agricultural colonists. Yet efforts to liberalize land policy were consistently thwarted by the Colonial Office, raising important gaps between metropolitan and local interpretations of the colonial project. Small victories in reforming land policy and sponsoring immigration, moreover, were balanced by the failure of agrarian values to take root in the colony and low levels of white migration.

As in other settler colonies, land lay at the heart of British Columbia's colonial project. It was the arena in which the fundamental struggle of colonization occurred. "Colonization necessarily involves the contact, and practically the collision, of two

racess of men – one superior, and one inferior, the latter being in possession of the soil, the former gradually supplanting it,” argued the British Columbian in 1865.

“The history of every civilized country illustrates the truth of this proposition.

Everywhere, in obedience to what appears to be a natural law, the uncivilized native has receded before the civilizer.”¹²

Land was what colonizers sought, and the right to grant it was a significant tool in the hands of the local elite. From the outset of sustained white occupation, land was the medium through which colonial society aimed to reconstitute itself. Modelled after the ideas of colonial theorist Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the land laws imposed by the Colonial Office on Vancouver Island in 1849 attempted to reproduce British class relations by using high land prices to deflect poorer immigrants into the local labour pool. They also aimed to recreate a specific model of family organization. Wakefield had argued that single immigrants should be rejected, since if all were married, “each female would have a special protector from the moment of her departure from home” and “no man would have an excuse for dissolute habits.”¹³ While such ambitious plans were never realized, the Wakefieldian plan did mandate that land be sold at L1 an acre and purchasers of one hundred or more acres “take out

¹²“The Aborigines and the Soil,” British Columbian, 02 12 1865.

¹³ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, “A View of the Art of Colonization: With Present Reference to the British Empire: In Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonist,” in M.F. Lloyd Pritchard, ed., The Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield (London, Collins, 1968 [1849]) p972.

with them five single men, or three married couples, for every hundred acres."¹⁴ By encouraging the sponsorship of married couples, this scheme worked to reproduce both class and gender relations in a colonial context.

Yet the 1849 scheme was widely regarded as incompatible with local conditions. As Richard Mackie notes, it "depended on the presence of agricultural land, on a steady flow of wealthy emigrants in search of land, and on the presence of landless immigrants willing to engage in wage labour for the landowners," none of which prevailed on Vancouver Island.¹⁵ Ironically, the Wakefield policy probably encouraged the growth of the footloose, male population that later land policies tried to address. Local officials' immediate response was to modify official policy by granting land on more generous terms to local whites. Their flexibility did not save the Wakefield scheme from a great deal of local criticism. From the late 1850s onwards, critics led by the self-appointed "reform" paper, the British Colonist, demanded the creation of a more liberal land law.

The quest for a liberal colonial land policy was motivated by the particularities of British Columbia's colonial project but gained legitimacy from broader trends. Agrarianism, a "discourse celebrating agriculture as the source of all wealth and the wide distribution of land among yeoman farmers as the source of freedom and

¹⁴[Hudson's Bay Company], Colonization of Vancouver Island (London, Horace and Son, 1849) p4.

¹⁵Richard Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858," BC Studies 1849-1858," BC Studies 96 (Winter 1992-3) p9.

democracy," lent heavy ideological weight to colonial land reform.¹⁶ But the values of agrarianism were inevitably justified with reference to the needs and aspirations of the local colonial community. Accessible land, its promoters argued, would perform three particular feats: it would draw a white population, encourage nuclear families, and, most of all, transform footloose sojourners into agricultural settlers.

First, an appropriate land policy was crucial in the basic effort to dispossess First Nations people of the soil and create a white society in its stead. British Columbia, the British Colonist argued, had stupendous potential as a settler colony: "a brilliant future — and not far distant, is in store for these colonies, and those rich valleys and extensive plains, which are now the hunting ground of the red man, will be converted into smiling fields, and the happy homes of a thickly-settled rural population will take the places where now alone are seen the dingy huts of the native savage."¹⁷ Coloured by this enthusiasm, even a simple soil sample was compelling evidence of British Columbia's future imperial and agricultural grandeur. "[I]n soil, as in climate," wrote the British Columbian, "British Columbia offers a most desirable field for rural industry, and is destined, as it is fitted, to be the happy home of many

¹⁶Demeritt, "Visions of Agriculture," p40. On the conviction that Western Canada could and should be an agricultural settlement, see Doug Owsram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980). Oddly, Owsram excludes British Columbia from his study.

¹⁷"Our Future Destinies," British Colonist, 16 02 1861.

millions of the Anglo-Saxon race."¹⁸ Yet free or cheap land was needed to draw these millions. "The land system of British Columbia does not tend to populate and settle the country," wrote the British Colonist in 1859.¹⁹ Two years later, they argued that cheaper land was crucial in the effort to acquire a "hardy, industrious population of agriculturalists, who constitute the bone and sinew of any country."²⁰

Accessible land would do more than simply bring white bodies to British Columbia. Colonial promoters' second hope was that a new land policy would encourage the adoption of an orderly model of white family organization. In popular colonial discourse, farming and nuclear, white families became intimately bound. There was, thought the Victoria press, "something in a man having a comfortable farm for himself and his family, instead of being a wanderer from place to place as times and circumstances may move him."²¹ The farmer, wrote the British Columbian, "returns to his dwelling, where, awaiting his coming, he meets a smiling wife, surrounded by a group of rosy and merry-faced children...a thousand times more happy and contented than if he were a monarch."²² Inscribing concrete rewards in land

¹⁸"The Soil of British Columbia," British Columbian, 03 02 1863.

¹⁹Untitled, British Colonist, 05 03 1859. Also see Untitled, British Colonist, 23 04 1859.

²⁰"Cheap Lands for Actual Settlement," British Colonist, 09 02 1861. Also see "British Columbia," London Times, 10 10 1859.

²¹"Enducement Towards Taking up Land," British Colonist, 14 03 1863. Also see "The Gold Diggings of British Columbia," London Times, 25 03 1862.

²²"British Columbia An Inviting Field for the Agriculturalist," British Columbian, 12 12 1861.

policy would further encourage nuclear families. "To every single man, farmer or fisher, should be given 250 acres at least, and every head of a family 500 acres," the British Colonist demanded in 1859.²³

A liberal land policy would also induce footloose young men to become permanent, agricultural settlers. "What is discovered," wrote the Victoria Press, "to be effectual in making actual residents and agriculturists will prove to be equally successful in inducing a population."²⁴ Colonial official Herman Merivale agreed, responding to an 1859 missive with the comment that "The question here being, not to attract a population from a distance, but to tie down an existing nomad population to the soil."²⁵ If agriculture was the supreme industry, gold mining, as Chapter Two argued, was constructed as a disreputable trade that made men wandering, immoral, and anti-social, the opposite of steady rural yeomanry. George Grant, secretary of a surveying party, argued that the gold rushes brought "not an emigration of sober, steady householders, whose aim was to establish homes, and live by their own industry, but of fever-hearted adventurers from all parts of the world, - men without a country and without a home."²⁶

For British Columbia to fulfil its imperial potential, miners would have to

²³"Self-Supporting -- Self-Dependent," British Colonist, 17 10 1859.

²⁴"The Prospects of the Colonies," Victoria Press, 16 01 1862.

²⁵Note en verso H.M. [Herman Merivale], James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 18 10 1859, CO 60/5, PAC, Mfilm B-81.

²⁶George M. Grant, Ocean to Ocean: Sandford Fleming's Expedition Through Canada in 1872 (Toronto, James Cambell & Son, 1873) p308.

become farmers. In 1859, Governor James Douglas told the Colonial Office that "The mining population are proverbially migratory and unsettled in their habits, seldom engaging in any other than their own absorbing pursuits, and therefore, it is he who tills the soil, the industrious farmer, who must clear the forest, bring the land into cultivation, and build up the permanent interests and prosperity of the Colony."²⁷

Miner's inadequacies as colonists indeed became axiomatic in popular colonial discourse. "It must be admitted that a very considerable section of our population is composed of adventurers, who, having been attracted to our shores by our gold, feel little or no interest in the permanent success of the Colony," wrote the British Columbian, adding that agriculture was the only true social foundation.²⁸ "Casual rushes of miners, however great, may give a temporary impulse and a transient success to newly settled lands, but until the immigrants sit quietly down to till the soil and build homesteads, there can be no substantial progress," agreed the Vancouver Times.²⁹

Such arguments suggest the great political import that journalists and politicians placed on land policies' ability to encourage a specific model of racial and gender identity amongst British Columbia's white population. This discourse encouraged officials to tinker with land policy throughout the 1858 to 1871 period. In

²⁷James Douglas to Edward Bulwer Lytton, 11 07 1859, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, British Columbia, 1858-1871, CO 60/4, [hereafter CO 60], Public Archives of Canada [hereafter PAC], MG 11, Mflm B-80.

²⁸"Arterial Highways," British Columbian, 02 01 1862.

²⁹"Inducements to Emigrants," Vancouver Times, 20 04 1866. Also see "Agricultural," Vancouver Times, 09 07 1865.

addition to bringing nascent conflicts between the local colonial elite and London to the fore, developing land policy demonstrates how land law was used as a tool to shape the colony's racial and gendered character.

Colonial officials began fiddling with land laws soon after the mainland colony of British Columbia was established. In 1858 and 1859, Douglas cut the price of unsurveyed land and allowed aliens to purchase land if they swore allegiance to the crown. Early in 1860, he further liberalized land policy by allowing men with suitable national credentials to pre-empt one hundred and sixty acres of unsurveyed land (not including townsites, mining areas, or First Nations settlements) for a nominal down-payment. If they 'proved up' their claim within two years, the land, as Sandwell puts it, became a commodity.³⁰ Douglas hoped this law would "have the effect of enlisting the sympathies, and letting loose the energy, intelligence and activity, of the whole Emigrant population upon the public domain adding daily to its value."³¹ Whether it succeeded in actualizing these lofty agrarian and national visions or not, Douglas was apparently happy with the initial affects of the 1860 land law,³² as was a reluctant

³⁰Sandwell, "Peasants on the Coast?" p277. For analyses of this land policy, see Cail, Land, Man, and the Law, Chapter 1; J.I. Little, "The Foundations of Government," in Hugh Johnson, ed., The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia (Vancouver, Douglas and MacIntyre, 1996) p77-80; G.P.V. Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg, British Columbia Chronicle, 1847-1871 (Victoria, Discovery Press, 1977) p208-209.

³¹James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 12 01 1860, CO 60/6, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-82.

³²See Douglas to Newcastle, 23 05 1860.

Colonial Office.³³ The pre-emption law gave the Governor hope that British Columbia could indeed be a white, prosperous society. Looking at the mainland, Douglas told London, "I could not repress the wish that those gorgeous forest might soon be swept away by the efforts of human industry, and give place to cultivated fields and the other accessories of civilization."³⁴ Yet a few months later, he was again angling to have the allowable size of pre-emptions increased.³⁵

Despite Douglas' initial optimism, efforts to further liberalize land law generated profound opposition from imperial masters in London. In 1860, Douglas proposed that British subjects be given free grants of twenty-five acres of land on Vancouver Island. In response, the Colonial Office consulted Frederic Rogers of the Emigration Office, who objected to a free grant on the grounds that it could "offer no temptation to any person above the rank of a labourer." Further, the colony's location ensured that even that class would not be tempted:

But to obtain this grant a labouring man with a family proceeding from this Country would...have to undertake a voyage of 4 or 5 months duration at an expense of about L75. It is superfluous to observe that none of the labouring population of this Country are in a position to

³³See T.W.C. Murdoch and Frederic Rogers to Herman Merivale, 07 02 1860, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84. He commented that "Without denying that under the peculiar circumstances of British Columbia, it may be more important not to discourage persons disposed to settle on the land, than to maintain strictly the rule which forbids the sale or grant of unsurveyed crown Land."

³⁴James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 31 05 1860, PAC, MG 11, CO 60/6, Mflm B-83.

³⁵James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 24 08 1860, CO 60/8, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-83.

incur such an expense out of their own means, and even if persons of a somewhat superior class such as Artizans and skilled labourers could be tempted to Emigrate by the prospect of obtaining land on easy terms we apprehend that the expense of the voyage to Vancouver's Island would be conclusive against their proceeding hither - since for a fourth of that sum they could pay the expense of their passage to, and purchase an equal quantity of Crown land, free of all conditions in Canada, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia.

Yet ultimately Rogers was more concerned about who the twenty-five free acres would attract than who it would deter. Such grants, he argued, "if they had any effect at all, attract settlers from the neighbouring States of the Union."³⁶ The Colonial Office, in other words, feared that free land grants would attract American, and not British, settlers. This would have especially pleased the "reform" faction of the local elite, who supported *white* colonization of any national flavour. Should the colony, the British Colonist asked, "lure away from our doors a moral, orderly, industrious and thrifty foreign immigration, to guard against undefined fears of an improbable international struggle, or even on the visionary grounds of pioneering our virgin soil or our rich miners for a purely British immigration that may never come till we are able to pay their passage?"³⁷ Yet the Colonial Office had these very "improbable

³⁶Frederic Rogers to Herman Merivale, 06 01 1860, in Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867, CO 305/15, [hereafter CO 305], PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-241. Also see Herman Merivale to Lord Woodehouse, 19 01 1860, draft reply, and T.W.C. Murdoch to Frederic Rogers 09 06 1860, in CO 305/15, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-241.

³⁷"Foreigners," British Colonist, 22 02 1861. Also see "English vs. Colonial Immigration," British Colonist, 01 02 1861; "Do We Want Population?" British Colonist, 26 03 1870.

international struggles" foremost on their administrative minds. They demonstrated little interest in British Columbia other than displaying an episodic desire to ensure it remain within the orbit of British sovereignty. If a liberal land policy would threaten that political control, it was not worth whatever white settlement it would motivate. One historian, adopting the perspective of the Colonial Office, argued that Douglas' free-land grant proposal was "inane and received short consideration."³⁸ This, then, was a conflict over whether colonial policy should pivot on the axis of *race* or *nation*, two related, but ultimately separate, categories.

Conflicts between local officials and London also shaped the tortuous path of land laws on the mainland. Some six months after he first wrangled with London over Island land, Douglas applied to have limits on the pre-emption of British Columbia land loosened. Apparently anticipating the Colonial Office's opposition, Douglas buried them in a mound of paper arguing that British Columbia was a unique and anomalous case that deserved their particular consideration.³⁹ It was, he argued, such a poor, racially plural, and unsettled place that prevailing theories of private property and social development did not apply.⁴⁰ These arguments apparently succeeded in convincing the Colonial Office to sanction the expansion of pre-emption

³⁸Fred H. Hitchins, The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931) p234.

³⁹James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 24 08 1860, CO 60/8, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-83.

⁴⁰Matthew Baillie Begbie, in James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 24 08 1860, in Colonial Office, CO 60/8, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-83.

rights. "Whatever future inconvenience may arise from the occupation of unsurveyed land with preemptive rights," they thought, "it will apparently be less injurious than the risk of driving away from the Colony the only persons who are likely to bring any part of its soil into cultivation of perhaps several years."⁴¹ In the spring of 1861, Douglas again loosed the pre-emption law.⁴²

While the Colonial Office allowed these slight expansions of pre-emption limits on the mainland, they remained deeply suspicious of any attempts to give free land grants in either colony.⁴³ Not only would free land fail to augment colonial coffers, but it set an improper tone for colonial society. In 1865, Edward Cardwell, referring to the failure of free grants in Australia, warned Governor Frederick Seymour that "You will on no account make any such grant except under special circumstances - and with my previous approval in each case."⁴⁴ This suspicion of free land prevailed in London throughout the 1858 to 1871 period.⁴⁵ Metropolitan and colonial elites' differing perceptions of land law shows how the imperial enterprise generated not only

⁴¹T.W.C. Murdoch to Frederic Rogers, 20 11 1860, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84.

⁴²See James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 23 04 1861, CO 60/10, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84; T.W.C. Murdoch to T.F. Elliot, 13 12 1861, CO 60/11, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-85.

⁴³See J Walcott to Frederick Elliot, 23 09 1865, CO 60/23, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, [hereafter BCARS], GR 1486, Mflm B-1437, p97-98.

⁴⁴Edward Cardwell to Frederick Seymour, 07 10 1865, draft reply, CO 60/23, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1437, p102.

⁴⁵See, for instance, T.W.F. Murdoch to Frederic Rogers, 30 04 1868, CO 60/34, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1445. Some thought that the local state was as cautious as London. See "The Fate of the Homestead Bill," British Columbian, 21 03 1866.

conflicts between white and Aboriginal, but between different levels of colonizers.

Despite this conflict, British Columbia legislators did succeed in gradually loosening land policies. In 1868, the Colonial Office assented to a more liberal policy, commenting that "in a political point of view increasing the population is so urgent, while the difficulty of inducing settlers to go the Colony is so great, that it seems invertible to accept this contingency as the necessary condition of the settlement."⁴⁶

The process whereby London balked at but ultimately consented to British Columbian land law became almost axiomatic⁴⁷ and slowly the amount of land allowed for pre-emption was expanded. By 1870, adult men with the correct national affiliations could pre-empt any tract of unoccupied, unsurveyed, unreserved Crown Lands under 320 acres north or east of the Cascades, and 160 acres in the rest of the colony.⁴⁸

Such modest innovations did not satisfy local critics, who clamoured for free land throughout the colonial period.⁴⁹

⁴⁶T.W.F. Murdoch to Frederick Seymour, 31 10 1868; Duke of Buckingham and Chados to Frederick Seymour, 21 12 1868, draft reply, in CO 60/34, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1445, p205.

⁴⁷See, for instance, A. Musgrave to Earl Granville, 05 02 1870, CO 60/39, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1448, p134; A. Musgrave to Earl Granville, 11 07 1870, CO 60/39, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1448.

⁴⁸"The Land Ordinance, 1870, in Force," British Colonist, 21 10 1870; "The Land Ordinance, 1870," British Colonist, 22 10 1870.

⁴⁹See "Free Grants," British Colonist, 22 06 1863; "Free Grants for Immigration," British Colonist, 09 07 1863; "Emigration – Free Grants of Land," British Columbian, 04 05 1864; Sincerity, "Emigration," Nanaimo Gazette 14 08 1865; "The Land Laws," British Columbian, 01 02 1866; "Free Homesteads – Free Peasantry," British Colonist, 16 04 1870; "Free Homesteads," British Colonist, 24 08 1870

While colonial conflicts prevented British Columbia from reforming land policy in line with critics influenced by agrarian discourse, they did not prevent it from becoming a vehicle for gendered, national and racialized aspirations. Most overtly, pre-emption laws explicitly worked to prevent the majority First Nations population from obtaining title to the land. Yet this was not always a self-evident process. As Cail points out, the 1860 Land Ordinance did not explicitly prevent Aboriginal people from pre-empting. When administrators heard that First Nations people were acquiring land along the Fraser River, they amended the legislation to prevent them from pre-empting without the prior consent of the governor. When an Aboriginal man did obtain permission, a special Minute in Council authorized the transaction.⁵⁰

Land laws worked to restrict Aboriginal access to the land and aspired to secure white British Columbian's British, loyal identity in the face of the threat of American expansion. In 1859, the Commissioner of Lands and Works argued that "All theories of Colonization affecting sales of Land I submit must for the present yield the more important point of practically & effectually beyond all peril securing the British Crown in a legitimate and economical matter these Colonies."⁵¹ Pre-emption laws, Douglas agreed, should ensure that colonization would be explicitly

⁵⁰Cail, Land, Man, and the Law, p177-8. Tennant has a different interpretation. See Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1990) p34-38.

⁵¹ See Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to James Douglas, 13 08 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1337, File 9i7/39.

British, defeating the large presence of American nationals on the mainland. He argued that his 1860 land law would "induce a loyal population attached to British Laws, Institutions, and Rule, to reside in the Country, as it is of far greater importance to the Empire, that the character of the population should be such, even though the success of settlement should be somewhat retarded, than that the colony should be rapidly filled by an Alien population, expensive and difficult to govern, and who would probably seize the first opportunity of discarding their allegiances."⁵²

While debates over race and nationality were foremost in discussions about land policy, gender was a constant undercurrent and occasional keypoint. British Columbia's land laws never distinguished between married and unmarried men, perhaps because of the tiny number of white women and large number of white-Aboriginal relationships on the mainland. Vancouver Island, home to a more equal white gender-ratio, explicitly rewarded those white men who were married and, better yet, had children. In March 1861, a proclamation was issued allowing single men to pre-empt 150 acres of country land, and married men 200 acres, and an additional 10 acres for each child under ten.⁵³ These bonus' could only be claimed, as one

⁵²James Douglas to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 07 10 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1325, File 585/8f.

⁵³"The New Land Proclamation for Vancouver Island," British Colonist, 08 03 1861; "Salt Spring Island," Victoria Press, 10 11 1861; Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p205.

pamphleteer commented, when "these blessings reside in the colony."⁵⁴ These legislative efforts were reinforced by various small-scale attempts to actively involve white women in agricultural societies and exhibitions and thus reinforce the connections between white nuclear families and farming.⁵⁵

The extent to which land law was designed to promote a certain model of family and gender organization was made especially clear in negotiations around "homestead laws." British Columbia's social organization fostered white male mobility and occasioned a related fear that men would overstep the boundaries of that freedom. In an attempt to shore up nuclear families, reformers in the 1860s sought a homestead law. In preventing men from selling the family farm and sheltering women from debt, the Vancouver Times argued, such a law would not only protect the vulnerable from louts, but also encourage family migration and a generally moral climate:

Numbers of men who would gladly bring their wives and children amongst us, and establish themselves permanently in the colony, are afraid to trust the comfort of those whom they love on the chances of

⁵⁴A.J. Langley, A Glance at British Columbia and Vancouver's Island in 1861. (London, Robert Hardwick, 1862) p7. Also see Charles Forbes, Prize Essay. Vancouver Island: Resources and Capabilities, as a Colony (Victoria, Colonial Government, 1862) p52. The Colonial Office's Colonization Circular described this somewhat differently and probably incorrectly. They wrote "If a single man, 100 acres; if a married man whose wife is resident in the Colony, 150 acres; If the parent of children resident in the Colony, and under the age of 18, 10 additional acres for each such child." England, Emigration Commissioners, Colonization Circular, No. 22, 1863 (London, Groombridge and Sons, nd) British Library, B.S. 72/1, p63-4.

⁵⁵See "The Exhibition," British Columbian, 16 10 1867; "Yale Agricultural Exhibition," British Columbian, 23 09 1868. Partisans urged that white women get involved in an agricultural society. See "An Appeal to the Ladies," British Columbian, 18 12 1867.

trade, or of mining, or on the uncertainty of health and employment in a country where should their own means fail, there is no limit on the law of distant, and where they cannot expect that assistance should they become victims of misfortune which they would obtain in other places from friends and kinsman. If our legislators are ambitious in winning the good opinion of the permanent population of the country, of earning the gratitude of women and children who are now amongst us or who may hereafter join their relations, if they would encourage sobriety, industry, and marriage, if they will enact a law which will allow every family to acquire for themselves a homestead of some reasonable value, say \$1000, and place it beyond the reach of sequestration.⁵⁶

A protective homestead law, partisan Amor de Cosmos agreed, would serve to "promote immigration and to keep families in the country."⁵⁷

Despite such compelling rhetoric, the first proposed homestead law was defeated in 1865.⁵⁸ Two years later, calls for a protective law were partially answered when British Columbia's Homestead Ordinance was revised to ensure that, if wives were resident in the colony, men could not alienate homesteads' without their permission and that widows would automatically inherit this property.⁵⁹ Explaining local support for this legislation, Attorney General Henry Crease spoke of the need to reinforce fragile nuclear family bonds in British Columbia, telling the Colonial Office

⁵⁶"A Homestead Law," Vancouver Times, 03 12 1864.

⁵⁷"House of Assembly" British Colonist, 23 02 1865.

⁵⁸"The Homestead Law," Vancouver Times, 23 02 1865; "The Latest Tragedy" British Colonist, 07 07 1865.

⁵⁹See "No.16, An Ordinance to assimilate the Law exempting the Homestead and other Property from forced Seizure and Sale in certain cases in all parts of the Colony of British Columbia," British Columbia Government Gazette, 30 03 1867, CO 63/3, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490; "Homestead Ordinance, 1867," British Columbian, 16 03 1867; Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, British Columbia: Information for Emigrants (London, Agent General for the Province, 1873) p8.

"That it is merciless to sell up all a Debtor's property in a Colony where the establishment of families is of infinitely more difficulty than in the Mother Country."⁶⁰ Others, like the aspiring politician who promoted his candidacy with an advertisement reading "Ladies', Beware! If your husbands vote for Young they will be voting against a Homestead Law,"⁶¹ explicitly appealed to the female support.

While land laws might reward and protect nuclear families, colonial legislators made clear that their intention was not to empower white women. As Bettina Bradbury has shown, common law was altered over the nineteenth-century to increase married women's property rights in other white settler colonies.⁶² British Columbia's land policy made no similar concessions, suggesting the profound masculinism of both colonial and agrarian discourse.⁶³ Yet some white women did manage to pre-empt land, shrewdly utilizing their status as white women and military widows to acquire rights not normally accorded to their gender. In particular, widows claimed their right to the one hundred and fifty free acres of land promised to Royal Engineers upon completion of their military service, but only after Sarah Brown successfully argued for their inclusion. She started a trend that other women quickly followed. Some

⁶⁰Henry P.P. Crease to Frederick Seymour, 21 06 1867, in Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chados, 05 09 1867, CO 60/29, BCARS, GR 1486, Mfilm B-1440, p48. Emphasis original.

⁶¹Advertisement, British Colonist, 27 04 1866.

⁶² Bettina Bradbury, "From Civil Death to Separate Property: Changes in the Legal Rights of Married Women in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," The New Zealand Journal of History 29:1 (April 1995) p40-66.

⁶³ Demeritt, "Visions of Agriculture," p40.

acquired relatively valuable tracts of land in Pitt Meadows and Sea Island.⁶⁴

These exceptions aside, that free land was only for men, and more especially non-Aboriginal ones, was confirmed when legislation was drafted that inadvertently could have allowed both women and First Nations people to pre-empt land. In 1867, a truculent house bent on liberalizing land law drafted "An Ordinance for regulating the acquisition of Crown Lands in British Columbia," which did not define "person" in gendered or racialized terms. Such inclusiveness, while probably unintended, disturbed officials in Victoria and London alike. Crease recommended that the Colonial Office disallow it. "In defining 'person' it is a question whether room should be made for the Red Man (who in this Country are far superior in intelligence to the average of the lower class of labourers in the Agricultural Counties at home) to go in and cultivate alongside with the whites."⁶⁵ For Crease, then, this legislation was

⁶⁴ See Mrs. Sarah Brown to J.W. Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 28 May 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1912, File 216a; Joseph Trutch, to Mrs. Sarah Brown, 30 06 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1912, File 216a; Mrs. Sarah Brown to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 03 03 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1312, File 216a; Pheobe Campbell to Joseph Trutch, 20 12 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1312, File 266a; Pheobe Campbell to Anonymous, 23 10 1868, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1312, File 266a; Pheobe Campbell to Joseph Trutch, 27 04 1871, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1312, File 266a; Mary Ann Rowbotham to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 09 03 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1362, File 1543c.

⁶⁵ Henry P. Pellew Crease to Frederick Seymour, 02 11 1867, in Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chados, 22 11 1867, CO 60/29, BCARS, Mflm B-1441, p457.

subversive because it raised the uncomfortable possibility that First Nations people would be allowed to compete equally with whites.

For Joseph Trutch of the Department of Lands and Works, it was not the racial but gendered implications of the proposed 1867 legislation that were most troubling. He so strongly objected to the possibility of women pre-empting that further condemnation of the proposal seemed unnecessary.⁶⁶ Trutch meant business on this point. A few years later, he refused to allow the Sisters of St. Ann to pre-empt land at Cowichan, even though this teaching order had previously been informally exempted from the gender-exclusive land law, presumably because the nuns, not surprisingly, could produce no suitable man to register their claim.⁶⁷ Such vehemence on this point reaffirms that British Columbia's land policy aimed not to simply encourage white female migration, but to foster a certain form of family formation – which included, but could not be represented by, white women. White women were necessary ingredients in the reconstruction of the colonial order, but as lesser partners.

Land law's conspicuous place in public debate either masked or mirrored the fundamental truth that very few white people were even remotely interested in pre-

⁶⁶Joseph W. Trutch to Frederick Seymour, 19 11 1867, in Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chados, 22 11 1867, CO 60/29, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1441, p463.

⁶⁷See Sister Mary Providence to Joseph Trutch, 19 01 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1364, File 1601; Joseph Trutch to Sister Mary Providence, 25 01 1870, GR 1372, Mflm B-1364, File 1601. She eventually purchased the land in her own name. See Sister Mary Providence to Joseph Trutch, 04 04 1870, GR 1372, Mflm B-1364, File 1601.

empting agricultural land in colonial British Columbia. Those who did often failed to transform the land in accordance with the goals of mainstream agrarian discourse.

Modest victories were tempered by recognition of the slowness with which agricultural society established itself in the colony. In 1861, the Victoria Press claimed that of the roughly 200 pre-emptors between Langley and the mouth of Fraser river, only five had become "actual settlers."⁶⁸ By 1868, 27,797 acres of mainland land had been sold, but almost all of it was "unimproved," only 20,000 acres were fenced and 6000 under cultivation. Of 1696 individual claims, only about 500 were settled. Vancouver Island was not in an entirely better position. There, 75,000 acres of land had been sold, about 8500 acres farmed and 2500 cultivated.⁶⁹ Local officials despaired of these statistics, but took heart in the knowledge that, if nothing else, land law furthered the cause of white supremacy by expressly preventing Aboriginal people from pre-empting.⁷⁰

Disappointment in the failure of European agrarian practices to take root in British Columbia was widespread. Yet, as Sandwell points out, this "failure" primarily reflects the priorities of nineteenth-century European economic discourse, which presented commercial agriculture and capital accumulation as the only viable economic

⁶⁸"The Pre-Emption Law," Victoria Press, 16 04 1861.

⁶⁹T.W.F. Murdoch to Frederick Seymour, 31 10 1868, CO 60/34, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1445, p197-198.

⁷⁰Henry Crease to Arthur Birch, 21 04 1866, in Arthur Birch to Edward Cardwell, 21 04 1866, CO 60/24, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1437.

goals. She argues that settlers on Salt Spring Island had different aims than Adam Smith and Wakefield: "land, and the economic flexibility it offered to those living on it, and not capital accumulation, was the goal sought by most families."⁷¹ The failure of agriculture in colonial British Columbia likely reflected this gap between dominant categories of acceptable lifestyle and popular white rural practices which, much to the dismay of observers, more closely mirrored local Indigenous practices than bucolic notions of sturdy yeoman farmers in a new and lush world.

John Helmcken, politician, physician, and iconoclastic voice of the remnants of the fur-trade elite, did not accept the argument that slow progress was because of "the large price of land hitherto charged." In his reminiscences, he suggested that this argument was a "fallacy," and that the lack of agricultural settlement was the simple result of the colony being "too far from the source of emigration."⁷² In part because of the problems identified by Helmcken and others, colonial promoters looked beyond land legislation when working to encourage and shape British Columbia's white population. Journalists, politicians, and reformers also laboured consistently to promote immigration and sponsor migrants' passage. Without the "combined inducement" of free land and cheap passage, wrote one author "it will be in vain for

⁷¹ Sandwell, "Peasants on the Coast?" p293.

⁷² Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1975) p179.

the Colony to bid successfully for immigration."⁷³ Despite the constant demands for assisted immigration, British Columbia never successfully sponsored a major immigration outside of white female migration (the topic of Chapter Seven). The colony's efforts inevitably were restricted to advertising and small-scale financial assistance. Yet critics continued to call for a massive importation of white bodies, arguing that only with a large white population would the colony fulfil its elusive goals.

IV: Promoting Immigration

Like land, white population lay at the heart of British Columbia's colonial project. Colonial promoters blamed the absence of a large white population for all of the colony's multitude of failures and difficulties. The British Columbian argued that British Columbia's poor showing stemmed from its under-population, "because we have only a mere handful of population, a few thousand people living upon one another."⁷⁴ The colony lacked white population of nearly every description. "If we enter our churches," wrote the Victoria press, "they want worshippers; our school houses want scholars; our streets and highways want pedestrians and vehicles; our merchants want trade; our traders want customers; our steamboats want passengers and freight; our workshops want workmen; our fertile valleys want farmers; our gold and

⁷³E. Graham Alston, A Handbook to British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London, F. Algar, 1870) p15.

⁷⁴"Our Great Want," British Columbian, 09 01 1869.

silver mines want miners; in short, the two Colonies want population."⁷⁵ While the colony had resources, wrote the Cariboo Sentinel, "without a population a country may remain forever a barren wilderness, dotted here and there with a few fisherman's huts and a few miners' and lumberman's cabins, and known only to the world as an inhospitable and poverty-stricken place."⁷⁶

If colonial promoters suggested that British Columbia's ills stemmed from the sparseness of the white population, they had a related and almost boundless faith in the political potential of white bodies to make it a successful colonial enterprise. Immigration would make British Columbia a great colony and, in doing so, help relieve Britain's surplus population.⁷⁷ But even the most shameless boosters recognized that British Columbia's distance from centres of white population meant that active state intervention was required for mass immigration to occur. If they wanted a white population, they would have to work for it, bidding it to come hither, assisting its passage, and supporting it on arrival. "To have our country filled up we must not only assist people to reach our shores, but we must show them the way to earn a living after they get here," wrote the British Colonist in 1866.⁷⁸ "What right has the most remote of the British Colonies to expect immigration without even *asking*

⁷⁵"Our Wants," British Colonist, 05 06 1861.

⁷⁶"Emigration," Cariboo Sentinel, 18 06 1868.

⁷⁷"Is There Not An Evil in this Land?" British Columbian, 04 07 1869. Also see "Emigration to British Columbia," British Colonist, 30 07 1864.

⁷⁸"Assisted Immigration," British Colonist, 11 12 1866.

for it," agreed the New Westminster press, "to say nothing of *assisting it?*"⁷⁹

Colonial promoters did not want just any sort of immigrants. Despite the supposed neutrality of terms like "population," the effort to draw European peoples to the northern Pacific was an overtly racialized process. Most obviously, they did not want Aboriginal North Americans, whose over-abundant presence the emigrants were to counter. But not all non-Aboriginal peoples were equally desirable. British Columbia's colonial promoters did not want convicts,⁸⁰ although one was willing to tolerate juvenile offenders so long as they were placed on First Nations settlements.⁸¹ While Douglas had encouraged the migration of African-Americans associated with the Pioneer Society of San Francisco in 1858, many others did not share his enthusiasm. Despite African-American's apparent fit with the colony's putative values of hard work, Protestantism, and respectability, their sizable presence in Victoria was regarded by many white people as a problem.⁸²

It was Chinese immigration, however, that created the most ambivalence

⁷⁹ "Population, Population," British Columbian, 29 05 1869. Also see "Immigration," British Colonist, 09 06 1865.

⁸⁰ "Convict Labor," British Columbian, 11 01 1865. Some did support a penal colony. See "Letter From Victoria – No.V," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 06 1866.

⁸¹ "Juvenile Offenders – Colonization," British Columbian, 30 05 1869.

⁸² For an argument for Black migration to Vancouver Island, see Mary A. Shadd, A Plea for Emigration; or, Notes of Canada West, in its Moral, Social, and Political Aspect With Suggestions Respecting Mexico, West Indies, and Vancouver's Island, for the Information of Colored Emigrants (Detroit, George W. Pattison, 1852) p43-4. On Black people in Victoria society, see Irene Genevieve Marie Zaffaroni, "The Great Chain of Being: Racism and Imperialism in Colonial Victoria 1858-1871," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1987, Chapter 4.

among British Columbia's white commentators. They welcomed Chinese people's perceived industriousness but feared they would never become adequate members of British Columbia's colonial society. The Grand Jury of Cayoosh (later Lillooet), for instance, told the Governor in 1860 that Chinese settlers were a benefit to white traders and the government alike and asked that the state "afford them every due protection to prevent their being driven away, wither by attacks from Indians or otherwise."⁸³ Yet the conviction that Chinese men could never be adequate members of colonial society more often held sway. The Cariboo Sentinel argued that Chinese men should not be colonists for a variety of reasons, all indicating their fundamental difference and many invoking explicitly gendered images. The Chinese, they argued, were "aliens not merely in nationality, but in habits, religion"; they never became "good citizens" or served on juries or fire companies; they never married or settled outside of China, and were "more apt to create immorality than otherwise"; they dealt "entirely with their own countrymen;" they hoarded their money and evaded taxes; and, lastly, they were "inimical to immigration."⁸⁴ In an effort to ease tensions between competing and contradictory racist planks, some called for special taxation to

⁸³"Address of the Grand Jury at Cayoosh to Governor Douglas," in James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 09 10 1860, CO 60/8, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-83. Also see Roy, Chapter 1, "The Colonial Sojourners, 1858-1871."

⁸⁴ "Our Chinese Population" Cariboo Sentinel, 16 05 1867. Also see "Chinese Labor," British Colonist, 02 09 1871; "The Chinese Question," British Columbian, 24 11 1866; "Chinese Immigration," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 31 03 1859.

compensate for the Chinese men's distance from white economy and community.⁸⁵

In calling for immigration, then, colonial promoters sought not merely raw population, but rather white people who would serve as the building-blocks of a settler society. They routinely turned to the state to facilitate this immigration and had some limited success. Colonial governments consistently allocated small sums to disseminate information, subsidize mail, and explore territory,⁸⁶ and occasionally gave assistance to individual immigrating families.⁸⁷ Usually, the colony's immigration efforts were confined to printing essays and hiring lecturers to regale the masses of various urban centres. In 1861, for instance, British Columbia created an exhibit for the World's Fair designed to prove to "struggling, hard worked Englishmen how easily a livelihood may be earned here."⁸⁸ Even these modest campaigns and humble efforts were beset with controversy. In 1863, British Columbia's "prize essay," written by

⁸⁵See "Chinese Immigration" Cariboo Sentinel, 12 06 1865. Some opposed this idea. See "Our Chinese Immigration," British Colonist, 18 05 1865.

⁸⁶See "Immigration Question" British Colonist, 26 07 1861.

⁸⁷ See James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, Volume I: "Journals of the Council, Executive Council, and Legislative Council of Vancouver Island, 1851-1866" (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p133-4. But usually they refused. See, for instance, Hendrickson, Volume I, p124; Edward Cridge to Mr. Street, 17 03 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1322, File 396/3; Daniel Penny Daniel to Mr. Street, 17 03 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1322, File 396/4; C.S.O. to W. Blackie, 31 05 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1309, File 156/1; Charles Street to W.A.G. Young "Colonial Correspondence," 21 03 1864, BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1322, File 396/4.

⁸⁸"Industrial Exhibition Circular," British Columbian, 30 05 1861.

Anglican missionary Robert Lundin Brown, was censored for its nasty comments about the dominance of an elitist clique in New Westminster, which further enraged critics of the colony's immigration policy or lack thereof.⁸⁹ Things were similarly rocky on the Island. In 1864, it was widely reported that Matthew Macfie – Congregationalist missionary, proponent of white-African segregation, racial theorist, and foe of the local Anglican elite – had been hired as Vancouver Island's emigration lecturer.⁹⁰ Many objected to this choice,⁹¹ causing Macfie to dub them "imprudent partisans."⁹² Macfie returned to England without the mandate to serve as lecturer,⁹³ but other lecturers apparently received some government funding.⁹⁴

While the governments of both British Columbia and Vancouver Island proved unable to orchestrate a large-scale emigration, it was not for lack of false starts and

⁸⁹"The Prize Essay of British Columbia," British Colonist, 25 09 1863; "The Prize Essay - Official Fraud," British Columbian, 12 09 1863; "Resugram," British Colonist, 09 09 1863.

⁹⁰"Vancouver Island as a Field for Immigration," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 01 03 1864; "Public Meeting," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 13 03 1864; "Emigration," British Colonist, 23 02 1864; Matthew Macfie, "The Immigration Vote," British Colonist, 25 02 1864; "The Lecture Movement," British Colonist, 14 03 1864; "Immigration Mass Meeting," British Colonist, 14 03 1864; "The Immigration Deputation," British Colonist, 15 03 1864.

⁹¹John J. Cochrane et al to W.A.G. Young, 25 02 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1314, File 306/16a.

⁹²Matthew Macfie to James Douglas, 01 03 1864, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1345, File 1082.

⁹³"Departure," British Colonist, 16 06 1864.

⁹⁴A.W. Harcombe to W.A.G. Young, Colonial Secretary, 03 01 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1332 File 711/2.

aborted schemes. In 1861, a special committee of Vancouver Island's House of Assembly was struck to consider how the colony's land system could better meet the needs of immigrants.⁹⁵ This committee, after a year of meetings, succeeded in having 500L allocated for the "Diffusion of Information respecting Vancouver Island,"⁹⁶ of which only L60 seems to have been spent.⁹⁷ In 1865, Vancouver Island designated \$2,500 for immigration, although no money seems to have been actually spent.⁹⁸

British Columbia's efforts to orchestrate a system of general assisted immigration were similarly regular and botched. In April of 1864, a select committee was formed to consider assisted emigration from Britain through either subsidized passages or free grants of land.⁹⁹ This committee was re-struck early in 1865, when it quickly recommended a limited assisted immigration that prioritized young, single

⁹⁵James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, Volume II: "Journals of the House of Assembly, Vancouver Island, 1856-1863," (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p285-6.

⁹⁶Hendrickson ed., Volume II, p336-338.

⁹⁷ See 1862's Colonial Estimates in Hendrickson, ed., Volume II, p442.

⁹⁸James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, "Volume III: Journals of the House of Assembly, Vancouver Island, 1863-1866" (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p280. The "Schedule of Estimates for 1865" lists \$2,500 for "Expenses of introducing Immigrants."

⁹⁹James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871, Volume IV, "Journals of the Executive Council, 1864-1871, and of the Legislative Council, 1864-1866, of British Columbia," (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980)p227-9; "Emigration," British Columbian, 15 06 1864.

women and married couples.¹⁰⁰ But this plan was inconsistently promoted and ultimately not executed. "The subject of adopting some scheme of assisted immigration has been under the consideration of the Legislative Council on two occasions," a local official explained to the Colonial Office, "but without I regret to say any satisfactory results."¹⁰¹ The Emigration Commission was confused and for two years, their Colonization Circular noted that "In 1864 the Legislative Council voted 3,000L. towards the payment of free passages of unmarried female domestic servants, and towards the passages of farm labourers and married couples. The details of this scheme are not, however, known in this country; nor to whom applications for passages should be made."¹⁰² This plan had been altogether scuttled by early in 1866, the promised money unspent.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Hendrickson, Volume IV, p263-4, p270; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 18 01 1865; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 25 01 1865; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 21 02 1865; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 23 02 1865; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 25 02 1865; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 09 03 1865; "Colonial Estimates, British Columbia, 1865" British Columbia Government Gazette, 04 03 1865, CO 63/2, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1489; "British Columbia," Vancouver Times, 28 02 1865; Harvey, A Statistical Account, p9.

¹⁰¹ Arthur Birch to Earl of Carnarvon, 31 10 1866, CO 60/25, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1438.

¹⁰² England, Emigration Commissioners, Colonization Circular, No. 25, 1866 (London, Groombridge and Sons, nd) British Library, B.S. 72/1, p8. This was repeated in England, Emigration Commissioners, Colonization Circular, No. 26, 1867 (London, Groombridge and Sons, nd) British Library, B.S. 72/1, p8.

¹⁰³ "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 10 02 1866; "Comparative Statement of the Estimated Expenditure of British Columbia for the Year 1865, and the Actual Expenditure of the Year..." British Columbia Government Gazette, 10 11 1866, CO 63/3, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1489. The "Estimated Expenditure as Voted" for

While the union of Vancouver Island and British Columbia in 1866 was in part justified in the name of increased state efficiency, it did not have the desired effect in the area of immigration. In 1867, the Legislative Council again re-invented the immigration wheel by calling for, in effect, the intensification and rationalization of immigration efforts in British Columbia.¹⁰⁴ Most of their ambitious reform programme was not acted on, and a few months later, Helmcken was asking the Colonial Secretary "Whether it be the intention of the Executive to make provision for the encouragement of Immigration?"¹⁰⁵ In 1869, another, more successful (at least in the area of female immigration, a subject analyzed in the next chapter) select committee was struck, the work of its predecessor seemingly forsaken.¹⁰⁶ It was this repeated inconsistency that led critics to call for regular immigration funding and efforts.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps in response to the difficulty of launching large-scale immigration schemes, local officials occasionally entertained the proposals of entrepreneurs, although all were ultimately rejected.¹⁰⁸ The government also declined to involve

Immigration was \$3,000 but the "Actual Expenditure" was nil.

¹⁰⁴Hendrickson, ed., Volume IV, p93-6.

¹⁰⁵Hendrickson ed., Volume IV, p177.

¹⁰⁶Hendrickson, ed., Volume IV, p212-3.

¹⁰⁷Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third Issue, and British Columbia Guide... (Victoria, E. Mallandaine, 1869) p13-14.

¹⁰⁸"Mr Klaucke's Immigration Scheme," British Colonist, 11 04 1867; "Failed," British Colonist, 16 12 1867; Hendrickson, ed., Volume II, p161-2; Hendrickson, ed., Volume IV, p75-6; T.W.F. Murdoch to Frederick Elliot, 26 04 1867, CO 60/30, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1441.

themselves with agencies like the British and Colonial Emigration Fund.¹⁰⁹ When the Colonial Office inquired about the emigration of distressed Lanchashire mill operatives, local officials were similarly unreceptive -- despite the fact that these immigrants were the very sort imagined in colonial discourse. Douglas replied that "this Colony offers but a poor field for destitute immigrants," warning that "instead of improving their condition, it is to be feared, that by emigrating in great numbers to this Colony, they would only be involved in a more hopeless state of distress and poverty." British Columbia, he concluded, could only accept a limited number of a special category of immigrants, an offer London, not surprisingly, declined.¹¹⁰ These officials were ultimately as fearful of organized immigration's class implications -- of the shovelling out of paupers -- as were others in British North America.

This cyclical proffering and abandoning of emigration schemes deeply disturbed those who saw a large white population as the keystone to a successful settler society. In 1864, the mainland press commented that excepting "fifty pounds

¹⁰⁹See, for instance, H. Sandish Haly to Sir, 22 03 1869, British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents", BCARS, GR 419, Box 10, "Papers Related to Immigration, 1872," File 1872/1; Stewart C. Bailey, Emigrant and Colonists' Aid Corporation, to Philip J Hankin, Colonial Secretary, 17 06 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1304, File 84/1; Stewart C. Bailey to J.W. Trutch, 30 08 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1304, File 84/2; Joseph Trutch to Anthony Musgrave, 1 11 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1341, File 956/18; "Colonization," British Colonist, 08 05 1870.

¹¹⁰James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 14 07 1863, CO 305/20, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-244; James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 14 07 1863, CO 60/16, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-89.

paid to a parson at Lillooet for an Essay," the colony had "not yet expended a single dollar" on immigration.¹¹¹ Five years later, the British Colonist moaned that no emigration promotion had occurred, "Although urged again and again, both by Legislative revolutionising and through the Press."¹¹² Has the state, asked the New Westminster press the same year, "hitherto assisted directly or indirectly, to bring a single man or woman to our shores?"¹¹³ Such inaction was indicative of poor political priorities. "Amongst the army of officials who absorb the revenue of the Colony, is there one whose business it is to meet the intending settlers, and supply that advice and information so necessary to a stranger? Not one," they ranted.¹¹⁴

Bitter complaints aside, government confusion and passivity on immigration was hardly surprising. Throughout the 1858 to 1871 period, the Colonial Office expected British Columbia to be financially self-sufficient and finance major road-building. Anticipated revenues from land sales, as Jack Little points out, were inevitably less than expected.¹¹⁵ In this context, raising money for immigration proved difficult or impossible. In April of 1861, Anglican Bishop George Hills wrote in his journal: "Called on Governor. Spoke of Emigration...He had no plan. All money at

¹¹¹"Emigration," British Columbian, 15 06 1864.

¹¹²"Immigration," British Colonist, 09 11 1869.

¹¹³"`Tis Strange, `Tis a Pity," British Columbian, 22 05 1869.

¹¹⁴"What Shall We Do With Them,?" British Columbian, 04 06 1869.

¹¹⁵ See Little, "The Foundations," p75.

present must go for Roads."¹¹⁶ Two years later, government commitments had not changed, and Hills was again unsuccessfully urging the Governor to provide "some machinery for bringing out the families of settlers."¹¹⁷ However widely embraced the goal of mass immigration was, financing large scale projects was consistently beyond the means and priorities of British Columbia's local governments.

But these difficulties also stemmed from Colonial Office disinterest in both assisted emigration and British Columbia. London consistently declined to sponsor immigration because they aimed to foster British Columbia's self-sufficiency and also because they thought the colony possessed limited political potential. They argued that given its location, British Columbia could only reasonably expect emigrants from the Australasian colonies, and not from Britain.¹¹⁸ In 1862, they told one intending emigrant that "H. Mas: Government has no intention of undertaking a scheme of Emigration either to British Columbia or to Van Couver's Island"¹¹⁹ a point which was later advertised in official publications.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶George Hills, "Journal 1861," [Transcript], Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster/Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, [hereafter ADNW/EPBC], p43.

¹¹⁷George Hills, "Journal 1 January-10 June 1863," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p6.

¹¹⁸T.W.C. Murdoch and Frederic Rogers to Herman Merivale, 28 04 1859, CO 60/5, PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-81.

¹¹⁹C.F. [C. Fortescue] to William Whittle, 08 05 1862, draft reply in William Whittle to Duke of Newcastle, 02 05 1862, CO 305/19, PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-244.

¹²⁰Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 38, 1863, No. 430, "Emigration: Number of Emigrants who left the United Kingdom for the *United States, British North America, the several Colonies of Australasia, South Africa, and other Places respectively; distinguishing, as far as practicable, the Native Country of*

This persistent disinterest stemmed partly from British Columbia's isolation, but also from the particular political climate of Britain in the early 1860s. When pestered to subsidize steam communication, Colonial Office staff made it clear that they lacked the requisite political will. "When this Country was supposed to be overpeopled, there was the appearance of a domestic object in schemes for using the proceeds of English taxes to encourage emigration. But that state of things has long ceased to exist," one noted.¹²¹ Domestic issues as overpopulation fuelled the various assisted emigration schemes of the 1830s and 1840s and would again motivate major emigration schemes in the *fin de siècle*. But these efforts ground to a near halt when such fears subsided or waned at mid-century and events like New Zealand's Maori Wars and the Indian rebellions of 1857 challenged British faith in the imperial project. In this context, white British Columbians' efforts to disturb what they dubbed "the lethargy of the Colonial Office"¹²² had little success.

Faced with a seemingly needy and lacklustre colony and inadequate political resources, the Colonial Office despaired of what to do with the imperial albatross that was British Columbia. In 1865, Thomas Elliot, assistant under-secretary to the Colonial Secretary, responded to a request for additional military assistance against possible Aboriginal resistance with exasperation. "I am so obtuse," he wrote, "that I

the Emigrants, 1860-1863," Mflm 69.303, p7.

¹²¹H.M. [Herman Merivale], 08 04, note en verso in T.W.C. Murdoch to Frederic Rogers, 31 03 1862, CO 60/14, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-87.

¹²²"English Immigration," Victoria Press, 14 05 1862.

never could quite understand why we were so anxious to colonise British Columbia & Vancouver, and I certainly always felt that inasmuch as for practical purposes they are the most inaccessible spots on the Globe to either British Forces or Immigrants, they must unavoidably be for us the weakest, if not the most useless."¹²³

Given local difficulties and imperial disinterest, it is hardly surprising that devising and orchestrating a government-sponsored immigration scheme fell largely on the combined shoulders of the local colonial elite and those who earned their living marketing emigration from Britain. In Victoria and New Westminster, prominent, middle-class whites, often the same souls involved in the various voluntary reform efforts examined in Chapters Four and Five, gathered together to represent what they constructed as the interests of the colony. Inevitably, this involved white immigration. In 1862, for instance, an "Immigration Office" worked to match workers and bosses and, in doing so, further colonial interests.¹²⁴ One prominent member of this cabal, sawmill owner, magistrate, ethnographer and emigration promoter Gilbert Sproat,

¹²³T.F.E. [Thomas Frederick Elliot] to Edward Cardwell, 07 07 1865, draft reply en verso of Frederick Seymour to Edward Cardwell, 13 03 1865, CO 60/20, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1435. Some officials had opposed the colonization of Vancouver Island from the outset. See Henry S. Hall, The Colonial Office: A History (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1937) p175-6.

¹²⁴Its members were J.D. Walker, A. Waddington, Rev. E Cridge, W.A. Anderson, R. Mackewie, R. Lewis, Lieut. Verney, W.G. Carey, M.R. Burnaby, A. Rhodes, G.M. Sproat. See George Graham to W.A.G. Young, Colonial Secretary, 18 10 1862, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1332, File 664; "Immigration Board Meeting," British Colonist, 05 08 1862; "Immigration Board - Who Wants Work," British Colonist, 08 08 1862.

turned his voluntary immigration work into something resembling a career when in the early 1870s he succeeded in having himself appointed "Agent General" of British Columbia.¹²⁵ From his ill-funded London office, Sproat wrote copious hand-written reports and managed to publish a few emigration guides.¹²⁶ More often, Sproat sat around in London waiting, as he put it, "for instructions as to the principles and duties of the Government plan for stimulating immigration."¹²⁷ Instructions never came.

While the local improving middle-class worked to encourage migration and ensure that immigrants were suitably received, metropolitan boosters plied a similar yet separate trade. In London, a small army of entrepreneurs worked to turn emigration into a business. They published a plethora of emigration guides advising Britons how to get anywhere in the globe, including, especially in the late 1850s and early 1860s, to British Columbia. These pamphlets usually included information on shipping, maps, and other practical advice. Often, they were little more than a peculiar amalgam of clippings from the metropolitan and local press and Colonial Office material. While scholars have lately paid growing attention to travel literature

¹²⁵Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, "Memorandum of Rough Plan of work for English Agency referred to as Memorandum B, in G.M. Sproat to the Honourable The Provincial Secretary, 29 08 1872, in British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents", GR 419, Box 10, "Papers Related to Immigration, 1872," File 1872/1.

¹²⁶See G.M.S., "Memorandum on Immigration, Oct 1872," in British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents", GR 419, Box 10, "Papers Related to Immigration, 1872," File 1872/1.

¹²⁷G.M. Sproat to Provincial Secretary, 29 08 1872, in British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents", GR 419, Box 10, "Papers Related to Immigration, 1872," File 1872/1.

and empire,¹²⁸ little work exists on this material, which – given that its authors had often never been to the destination being discussed – may better be characterized as “not-travel literature.” In British Columbia, not-travel literature had purveyors as famous as Charles Dickens.¹²⁹ In the way it constructed and disseminated knowledge about colonies for a metropolitan audience, not-travel literature provides a sleazy and under-developed variation on the Orientalist thought so influentially analyzed by Edward Said.¹³⁰ Yet it was through such literature that much of the practical work of empire took place, marketed by individuals with distinctly limited experience and a seemingly limitless profit motive.¹³¹

¹²⁸ See, for instance, Sara Mills, Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism (New York, Routledge, 1991); Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest (New York, Routledge, 1995); Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (New York, Routledge, 1992)

¹²⁹ Charles Dickens, “Episcopacy in the Rough,” All the Year Round, 23 02 1861, p470-474

¹³⁰ Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York, Vintage, 1979)

¹³¹ See, for instance, William Carew Hazlitt, British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London, Routledge, 1858); William Carew Hazlitt, The Great Gold Fields of the Cariboo with an authentic description, brought down to the latest period of British Columbia and Vancouver Island with an accurate map (Victoria, Klanak Press, 1874 [1862]); Anonymous, Handbook to Vancouver Island and British Columbia with Map (London, F. Algar, 1862); Anonymous, The Handbook of British Columbia and Emigrant's Guide to the Gold Fields (London, W. Oliver, nd [1862]); Anonymous, The New Gold Fields of British Columbia and Vancouver's Island (London, Plummer's Library, 1862); Anonymous, The New Government Colony: British Columbia and Vancouver Island: A Complete Hand-Book (London, William Penney, 1858); Thomas Rawlings, Emigration, With Special Reference to Minnestoa, U.S., and British Columbia (London, Clayton, 1864); John Domer, New British Gold-Fields: A Guide to British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London, William Henry Angel, 1858); W. Parker Snow, British Columbia, Emigration, and our Colonies considered Practically,

It was not only self-interested metropolitan pamphleteers who promoted British Columbia through literary mediums. While British Columbia was too far from well-established European tourist routes to be visited by a many white travellers, a handful of authors published travelogues of the colony between 1858 and 1871.¹³² Aristocratic overlanders Viscount Milton and Lord Cheadle produced probably the best known of these works,¹³³ and other white men with personal experience in British Columbia also got in on the emigration-literature business, parleying their colonial days, however short, into literary currency.¹³⁴ All of this work was watched closely in British

Socially, and Politically (London, Piper, Stephenson, and Spence, 1858). Some were published in North American centres. See Arthur Harvey, A Statistical Account of British Columbia (Ottawa, G.E. Desbates, 1867)

¹³²See Grant, Ocean to Ocean; Capt. Fenton Aylmer, ed., A Cruise in the Pacific: From the Log of a Naval Officer, Volume II (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1860); Capt. C.E. Barrett-Lennard, Travels in British Columbia: With the Narrative of a Yacht Voyage Round Vancouver's Island (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1862); Lord John Keast, The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 2 Volumes, (London, Richard Bentley, 1866); M. Stannard, Memoirs of a Professional Lady Nurse (London, Simpkin, Marshall, 1873)

¹³³See Viscount Milton and W.B. Cheadle, The North-West Passage by Land. Being the Narrative of an Expedition from the Atlantic to the Pacific (London, Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1865); Walter B. Cheadle, Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863 (Edmonton, Hurtig, 1971)

¹³⁴See, for instance, Pemberton, Facts and Figures; Sproat, British Columbia: Information for emigrants; Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia; J.D. Churchill and J. Cooper, British Columbia and Vancouver Island Considered as a Field for Commercial Enterprise (London, Rees and Collin, 1866); E. Graham Alston, A Handbook to British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London, F. Algar, 1870); Richard Charles Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (Toronto, S.R. Publishers, 1969 [London, John Murray, 1862]); Alexander Rattray, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, Where they are; What they are; And what they may become (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1862); Alexander C. Anderson, Hand-Book and Map to The Gold Region of Frazer's and Thompson's Rivers... (San

Columbia, and frequently found wanting by home-town pundits.¹³⁵

In promoting emigration to British Columbia, pamphleteers, travel-writers, and autobiographers trotted out many of the same arguments made by state officials. They regaled readers with promises of high wages, cheap land, and easy gold, and warned them of hard labour, false promises, and trying journeys. Like government officials who used land legislation to foster nuclear families, some travel and immigration writers laboured to encourage white men to take up the path of the married farmer. In an immigration pamphlet, Sproat offered "Special Advice to Young British Columbian Farmers." Foremost was "Get a wife."¹³⁶ Others were more ambivalent,

Francisco, J.J. Le Count, 1858); Kinahan Cornwallis, The New El Durado: or, British Columbia (New York, Arno Press, 1973 [London, Thomas Cautley Newby, 1858]); Alfred Waddington, The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or, the History of Four Months (Victoria, De Cosmos, 1858); Jo. Lindley, Three Years in Cariboo: Being the Experience and Observation of a Packer... With Distances, Notes and Facts, Relative to the Salmon River and Nez Perces Gold Fields, by T.R. Oleny (San Francisco, A. Rosenfeld, 1862); Champness, "To Cariboo and Back: An Emigrant's Journey to the Gold Field of British Columbia," Leisure Hour (1862); John W. Lyndon, ed., Frances Poole, C.E., Queen Charlotte Islands: A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1972 [London, Hurst and Blackett, 1872]) ; R. Byron Johnson, Very Far West Indeed: A Few Rough Experiences on the North-West Pacific Coast, Third Edition (London, Sampson Low, Marston, Low and Searle, 1872); John Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, & Adventures by John Emmerson of Wolsingham (Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1865); Wm. Mark, Cariboo: A True and Correct Narrative to the Cariboo Gold Diggings, British Columbia (Stockton, W.M. Wright, 1863)

¹³⁵See "Vancouver Island Authors Abroad" British Colonist, 30 08 1865; "Mr. Macfie's Book," British Colonist, 24 11 1865; "Mr. Macfie and Emigration," British Colonist, 25 11 1865; "Mr. Macife on Immigration," British Colonist, 28 11 1865.

¹³⁶Sproat, British Columbia, p30. Also see Langley, A Glance, p14; Forbes, Prize Essay, p51.

like "A Returned Digger" whose much-reprinted emigration guide advised that "A family is a burden till a man is established."¹³⁷

Immigration pamphlets were also concerned with representing British Columbia as a suitable place for a white settlement – a somewhat difficult argument given its location and large and relatively powerful First Nations population. A favourite point was the climate. If nothing else argued for this colony being a suitable venue for white supremacy, this surely did. While Canada was too cold and Australia too warm, British Columbia's mildness was uniquely suited to the English constitution, making it an attractive place especially for married men who benevolently feared for the health of their women and children. Alexander Rattray wrote that a married man would have "the comfort of knowing that his family is to reside in a country with a climate at least as healthy as that of England, and probably more salubrious than that of any other colony to which he could resort."¹³⁸ For "the European constitution," another work argued, the colony's climate was "one of the finest in the world."¹³⁹

Others took care to explain that the Aboriginal population was not as large or threatening as prospective settlers might imagine. Emigration Commission surveys presented them as prospective cheap labour and as possessing "a strong desire to see

¹³⁷A Returned Digger, The Newly Discovered Gold Fields, p8, also p15; "Answers to Canadian Correspondents," Victoria Press, 12 03 1862.

¹³⁸Rattray, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p170.

¹³⁹Churchill and Cooper, British Columbia and Vancouver Island considered, p4. Also see Forbes, Prize Essay, p61.

the white men settled among them."¹⁴⁰ Others took care to distinguish First Nations from the threatening "Indians" of popular European lore. "The Indians are not of the same tribes that the American backwood's man has to encounter in the United States, but a peaceful and well conducted set," wrote one pamphleteer. As something of an added bonus, they were dying out. "They number considerably less than 100,000, and their numbers are decreasing yearly, so that in a quarter of a century more, an Indian will be considered almost a novelty in this fine colony."¹⁴¹

Not-travel literature also peddled a package of more spectacular half-truths. Stories that probably began with a single author were picked up and repeated by subsequent writers. Among the more bizarre yet telling examples of this method of producing knowledge was the claim that First Nations widows threw themselves on their husband's funeral pyres, a story reprinted in a number of works.¹⁴² One suggested that "this custom comes from Hindustan, that the widow or widows lie on the funeral pile, and are only permitted to leave it after the fire has been applied, and

¹⁴⁰England, Emigration Commissioners, Survey of the Districts of Nanaimo and Cowichan Valley (London, Groombridge and Sons, 1859) p14. See H. Spencer Palmer, British Columbia. Williams Lake and Cariboo. Report on Portions of the Williams Lake and Cariboo Districts, and on the Fraser River, from Fort Alexander to Fort George (New Westminster, Royal Engineer's Press, 1863) for a less positive survey report.

¹⁴¹A Successful Digger, Guide Book for British Columbia (London, Dean and Sons, 1862) p5.

¹⁴²See, for instance, Aylmer, ed., A Cruise in the Pacific, p138-139; Hazlitt, British Columbia and Vancouver Island, 95-96.

their bodies have become more or less honorably blistered."¹⁴³ This is surely an overt example of the process where by profoundly different peoples – here those of the Indian sub-continent and northern part of North America's Pacific coast – were collapsed into one single menacing and bizarre "other." The Victoria press made note of the circulation of this story, noting that "Of all the heavy yarns we have heard, we believe it to be the heaviest."¹⁴⁴

The difficulty both local and colonial officials had in executing large scale immigration schemes, however, did more than create space for the entrepreneurial and authorial. It led some to fundamentally challenge British Columbia's ability or, more profoundly, its need to attract a large white immigration. In 1861, the Victoria Press argued that mass immigration was an impractical goal cooked up by people unaccustomed to colonial labour, race politics, and labour relations. "It may suit a number of lackadaisical beings who are entirely unfitted for Colonial, or in fact any practical useful life, to be enabled to obtain, by a superabundant supply of immigrants, civilized *servants* at the same price they now pay for Indians," they wrote.¹⁴⁵ There was no point, they thought, to seeking immigrants when the existing colonial population lacked work. This anti-immigration position, indeed, became this newspapers' chief editorial plank, evoked frequently to distinguish them from the

¹⁴³Anonymous, The Handbook of British Columbia, p28.

¹⁴⁴"What they Think of our Natives Abroad," British Colonist, 06 15 1861.

¹⁴⁵"The Immigration Bubble," Victoria Press, 27 07 1861. Emphasis original.

competing and relentlessly pro-immigration British Colonist.¹⁴⁶ The Victoria Press's position was held by Helmcken, who in 1869 went so far as to argue that "Immigrants were mythical beings."¹⁴⁷ Years later, he would replicate this view in his memoirs, deeming those bent on massive immigration patently unrealistic. "The grumblers," he opined, "did not heed that the length and expense of travel and unwillingness to come to an unknown country were great drawbacks - they wanted to see the country made populous at once."¹⁴⁸

Yet those who questioned the merits or feasibility of mass white immigration never captured the mainstream of public discourse. The Victoria Press claimed that they had been accused of "libelling the fair fame of these progressive dependencies [sic] of the British Crown" for criticising those they dubbed "ardent immigrationists."¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, British Columbia's apparent inability to attract white, especially British, emigrants served not as a reason for challenging the viability of colonialism, but rather as a rationale for the colony's entry into confederation.¹⁵⁰ Those not enamoured with

¹⁴⁶"Immigration but no Occupation," Victoria Press, 19 07 1861; "A Weak Invention," Victoria Press, 27 08 1861; "Inducements to Families to Settle in Victoria," Victoria Press, 02 12 1861; "A Few Words to the Miners of California," Victoria Press, 05 12 1861; A New Brunswicker, "Encouragement to Emigration from New Brunswick," Victoria Press, 23 02 1862.

¹⁴⁷"Legislative Council," British Colonist, 04 02 1869.

¹⁴⁸Helmcken, in Blakey Smith, ed., The Reminiscences, p116.

¹⁴⁹"Vancouver Island Immigration," Victoria Press, 10 07 1862.

¹⁵⁰Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chados, 24 09 1867, BCARS, GR 1486, CO 60/29, Mflm B-1440, p189-190; "The Colony as it is," Mainland Guardian, 07 12 1870; "Emigration," Cariboo Sentinel, 18 06 1868.

the prospect of American annexation had long thought that only an overland route would make mass white migration (especially of the all-important farm families) practical,¹⁵¹ and confederation seemed the only way to achieve it. That confederation was acceptable because it would solve British Columbia's emigration woes was a widespread enough view to lead the British Colonist to caution against it.¹⁵² In this sense, the failure of land and immigration policies to work their intended miracle resulted not in the questioning of colonialism, but merely a shift in the particular shape of the local colonial project, a fine-tuning, as it were, of the imperial machine.

V: Conclusion

Journalists, politicians, and travel authors looked to emigration for much the same reason they called for an activist and liberal land policy in British Columbia. Between 1858 and 1871, assisted immigration and a liberal land policy were widely considered to be capable of reshaping British Columbia's languishing colonial fortunes. A new land policy would not only draw white settlers, but also encourage them to adopt nuclear families and become permanent, agricultural settlers. An effective programme of assisted immigration would provide the white bodies upon which any orderly settler society was premised. While land and immigration policies were repeatedly called for, neither were really implemented. The Colonial Office thwarted efforts to liberalize land policy, and the goals of agrarian discourse were never widely

¹⁵¹"The Overland Route," Victoria Press, 16 03 1862.

¹⁵²"Our Great, Great Want," British Colonist, 06 10 1870.

embraced. Despite many attempts, the British Columbia government never succeeded in orchestrating a mass immigration effort, and promoting white settlement was largely left to local elites and a peculiar, self-interested lot of pamphleteers. Ultimately, it was only in the specific area of female immigration that these efforts paid off. Here, the sheer ideological weight of the conviction that white women were a necessary component of any adequate society provided the necessary motivation to transform vague desires and schemes into concrete action.

Chapter Seven:
'fair ones of a purer caste':
Bringing White Women to British Columbia

I: Introduction

For many observers, colonial British Columbia developed and sustained a gender and racial organization that was deeply problematic. In response to the inability of reform efforts to re-shape British Columbia's gender and racial organization along the lines of an orderly white settler-colony, reformers turned to a well-worn imperial panacea: white women. If white women in sufficient numbers were brought to British Columbia, they thought, the colony would become the prosperous, settled, and racially homogenous place of their dreams. Under the influence of their collective better halves, white men would forsake rough, homosocial culture and the company of First Nations women and become productive, settled and responsible colonial subjects. At last, they would give up the gambling table, the bar-room, the dance-house, the Aboriginal home, and their mixed-race families for identities and behaviours befitting an outpost of British civilization. White women thus held a key place in the history of gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia. Four times between 1858 and 1871, reformers succeeded in organizing importations of largely working-class women from England. This chapter examines these immigration movements and the ideas behind them, arguing that white women were represented as able to reconstruct individual white men and, in doing so, transform British Columbia's colonial society as a whole.

II: Historiography

In the past ten years, historians have mounted a sustained effort to probe how gender informed colonialism and how, in turn, race and imperialism shaped gendered relations, identities, and behaviours. Probing these connections in both the colonial and metropolitan world, scholars have argued that gender and race cannot be understood separately. Rather, they have called for analyses that recognize the significant ways that notions of colonizer and colonized worked to structure expectations and experiences of manliness and womanliness, male and female.¹ One significant branch of this growing literature focuses on white women and colonialism. This work finds additional motivation in the political conviction that white feminists must examine their own racial heritage, privilege, and politics.² As Marilyn Lake points out, "Feminism's great animating insight lies in the recognition of the systematic

¹See the influential work of Catherine Hall: White, Male, and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History (London, Routledge, 1991); "Gender Politics and Imperial Politics: Rethinking the Histories of Empire," in Verene Shepherd et al eds., Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective (New York, St. Martin's, 1995); "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains...to Africa's Golden Sand': Ethnicity, Race, and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England," Gender and History 5: 2 (Summer 1993) p212-230.

²Hazel V. Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, ed., The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain (London, Hutchinson, 1983) p232. Also see Himani Bannerji, "But Who Speaks For Us? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms," Thinking Through: Essays on Feminist, Marxism, and Anti-Racism (Toronto, The Women's Press, 1995); Chandra Mohanry, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," Feminist Review 30 (Autumn 1988) p61-88.

nature of men's power over women; its concomitant blindspot is the frequent failure to see that the sisterhood of women also involves systematic relations of domination between women."³ In an effort to address this blindspot, Vron Ware argues that "what we need to do is to trace ideas that have historically constructed definitions of white womanhood and to ask how these ideas have been formed either in conjunction with or in opposition to feminist ideology."⁴

In response to calls like Ware's, historians have offered a number of analyses of white women's particular racial location. Scholars of the American west have examined how gender, race, and domesticity informed American expansion in the nineteenth-century, interrogating oft-repeated images of "gentle tamers."⁵ Historians of French, British and Dutch colonialism in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific have probed

³ Marilyn Lake, "Between Old World 'Barbarism' and Stone Age 'Primitivism': The Double Difference of the White Australian Feminist," in Norma Grive and Alisa Burns, eds., Australian Women: Contemporary Feminist Thought (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1994) p80.

⁴Vron Ware, Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History (London, Verso, 1992) p43. Also see Ruth Frankenberg, White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993) Chapter One.

⁵See Glenda Riley, Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915 (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1984); Elizabeth Jameson, "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West," in Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds., The Women's West (Norman, University of Oklahoma, 1987); Peggy Pascoe, Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939 (New York, Oxford, 1990); Robert L. Griswold, "Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology in the American West in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1988)

how white women were implicated in various colonial projects.⁶ Demonstrating how imperialism also effected metropolitan contexts, scholars like Antoinette Burton have shown how white women were marshalled to both bolster and challenge the politics of imperialism and slavery in Britain.⁷

In these investigations, scholars have regularly returned to three central and overlapping points: that women experienced colonialism differently than men, that white women served as potent symbols of European civilisation, and that claims of white women's centrality to racism have been exaggerated in the interests of absolving white men of their fundamental responsibility for the ravages of imperialism. The last

⁶See Margaret Strobel, European Women and the second British Empire (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991); Napur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1992); Susanna Hoe, The Private Life of Old Hong Kong: Western Women in the British Colony (Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1991); Amirah Inglis, The White Women's Protection Ordinance: Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Papua (London, Sussex University press, 1975); Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things (Durham North Carolina, 1995) especially Chapter 4; Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in Micaela di Leonardo, ed., Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991)

⁷See Antoinette Burton, Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Ware, Beyond the Pale; Vron Ware, "Moments of Danger: Race, Gender, and Memories of Empire," in Ann-Louise Shapiro, ed., Feminists Revision History (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1994); Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest (New York, Routledge, 1995) especially Chapters 2-3; Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," History Workshop 5 (Spring 1978) 9-66.

point has been the most controversial, motivating a series of monographs dedicated to proving that, contrary to reputation, white women were not the "ruin of empire," destructive and petty agents bent on wrecking harmonious race relations in colonial contexts.⁸ While this work has been crucial in restoring women to colonial studies, it has also, as both Margaret Jolly and Jane Haggis point out, minimized or indeed rendered invisible the politics of race and empire. "In the ways in which white women have been brought to the fore of the historical and analytical stage," writes Haggis, "colonialism is no longer a problem of power, exploitation, and oppression, but rather of the gender identity of the rulers."⁹

Haggis' trenchant critique serves as an important caution for historians of white women and colonialism. While examining white women can problematize their privilege, it can also unwittingly reaffirm it by ignoring or minimizing white women's imbeddedness in structures and practices of racial domination. Studies of white women in colonial contexts, indeed, repeat some of the most hoary tropes of western

⁸See Claudia Knapman, White Women in Fiji, 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire? (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986); Helen Callaway, Gender, Culture, and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1987); Beverly Gartrell, "Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?," in Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardner, eds., The Incorporated Wife (London, Croom Helm, 1984); Strobel, European Women, Chapter 1.

⁹Jane Haggis, "Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender? Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism," Women's Studies International Forum 13:1/2 (1990) p105-115. Also see Margaret Jolly, "Colonizing Women: The Maternal Body and Empire," in Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman, eds., Feminism and the Politics of Difference (Halifax, Fernwood Press, 1993)

gendered wisdom by portraying white women as sensitive, kindly, benevolent, and suffering. Without denying that white people's experience was profoundly gendered, historians need to recognize that white women were also racialized, and critically examine their relationships with people of colour and how these relationships shaped their colonial experiences.

Such a critical stance on white women and colonialism can also benefit from greater attention to colonialism's social history. With the important exception of scholars like Ann Stoler, scholars of gender and imperialism tend to replicate some of the central limitations of traditional colonial studies by concentrating on the articulate elite --missionaries, officers', travel-writers, and their families -- at the expense of the vast bulk of the white, colonial population. While this focus reflects the inevitable bias of historical sources, it also implicitly denies that colonialism was a popular movement that involved not only the machinations of state, but the movement of hundreds of thousands of working people. Examining the place of these inarticulate colonizers in the imperial projects of European powers will create not merely a more representative history, but also reveal how colonial societies were classed. Raising questions about popular agency, imperialism, and migration, moreover, can capitalize on interesting links between female immigration and race made by scholars like James Hammerton in the Australasian context,¹⁰ Yves Landry in the Québécois history,¹¹

¹⁰ See A. James Hammerton, Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1914 (London, Croom Helm, 1979). On female emigration to Australasia, also see Charlotte Macdonald, A Woman of Good Character: Single

Barbara Roberts and others in the Canadian literature,¹² and Marilyn Barber and Jackie Lay in British Columbian historiography.¹³

These forays into the history of assisted female immigration suggest the relevance of the literature on gender and colonialism to Canadian history, a point confirmed by work on women and whiteness. Sylvia Van Kirk's treatment of white

Women as Immigrant Settlers in Nineteenth-century New Zealand (Wellington, Bridget Williams, 1990); Patricia Clark, The Governesses: Letters From the Colonies, 1862-1882 (London, Hutchinson, 1985); Janice Gothard, "'Radically Unsound and Mischievous': Female Migration to Tasmania, 1856-1863," Australian Historical Studies 23:93 (October 1989) p386-404.

¹¹Yves Landry, "Gender Imbalance, Les Filles du Roi, and Choice of Spouse in New France," in Bettina Bradbury, ed., Canadian Family History (Toronto, Copp Clark, 1992)

¹²See Barbara Roberts, "'A Work of Empire': Canadian Reformers and British Female Immigration," in Linda Kealey, ed., A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto, The Women's Press, 1979); Susan Jackel, ed., A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1982); Suzann Buckley, "British Female Emigration and Imperial Development: Experiments in Canada, 1885-1931," Hecate 3:2 (July 1977) p26-40; Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestic for Ontario Homes, 1870-1930," in Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume II (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1985). On assisted immigration more generally, see Desmond Glynn, "'Exporting Outcast London': Assisted Emigration to Canada, 1886-1914," Histoire Sociale/Social History XV: 29 (May 1982) p209-240; Joy Parr, "'Transplanting from Dens of Iniquity': Theology and Child Immigration," in Kealey, ed., A Not Unreasonable Claim; Joy Parr, Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924 (London and Montreal, Mc-Gill Queens and Croom Helm, 1980)

¹³Marilyn Barber, "The Gentlewomen of Queen Mary's Coronation Hostel," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria, Camosun College, 1984); Jackie Lay, "To Columbia on the Tynemouth: The Immigration of Single Women and Girls in 1862," in Barbara Latham and Cathy Kess, eds., In Her Own Right: Women's History in B.C (Victoria, Camosun College, 1980)

women in the fur-trade suggest how white women could perpetuate both racism and sexism.¹⁴ More recently, Barbara Kelcey's dissertation shows how living in Northern Canada forced European women to rethink race.¹⁵ While Van Kirk is maybe too sure of white women's instrumentality in heightening the racist climate of Red River and Kelcey overly dedicated to disproving the relevance of race as a both a social factor and an analytic category, their work nonetheless demonstrates that examining Euro-Canadian women as white women is both possible and productive.

Building on such analyses, this chapter tries, like the ships that carried immigrants from Britain to British Columbia, to make its way through the rough waters of race, gender, and assisted emigration. It first discusses why and how assisted female emigration emerged as a political response to the perceived problems of colonial society in British Columbia. Secondly and substantially, it examines four attempts to directly import white women to British Columbia, offering a new interpretation of two better-known efforts and a detailed analysis of two hitherto ignored immigrations. Throughout, I will show how these efforts, policies, and discourses imbued altogether ordinary, working-class white women with racial import, political prowess, and imperial mission.

¹⁴Sylvia Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties': Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg, Watson and Dwyer, 1980) especially Chapter 7-8.

¹⁵ Barbara Eileen Kelcey, "Jingo Bells, Jingo Belles, Dashing Through the Snow: White Women and Empire on Canada's Arctic Frontier," PhD Dissertation, University of Manitoba, 1994. Ironically, however, Kelcey ultimately argues against the relevance of race. See Kelcey, "Conclusion."

III: White Women and Colonial Discourse in British Columbia

Why did white women emerge as something of a generic social panacea in colonial British Columbia, a solution to myriad gendered and racialized dilemmas? On the one hand, they were thought to bring the qualities of gentility, morality, and piety so routinely and intimately connected with white women throughout the nineteenth-century English-speaking world. Yet commentators also contended that white women would specifically serve British Columbia's colonial project. First, they would compel white men to reject the rough homosocial culture of the backwoods in favour of normative standards of masculinity and respectability. Second, they would both address shortages in the local labour market and relieve over-population in Britain. Thirdly, white women would discourage mixed-race sexual, domestic, and conjugal relationships. This discourse emphasized the political utility of ordinary, working-class women above those who held an official role in the colonial project like missionaries' or officials' wives. Their contribution, moreover, was not to be in independent action, but rather in their familial roles, and more especially in their ability to transform plebian men.

The scarcity of white women in British Columbia was widely acknowledged as a problem throughout the colonial period. In January 1861, a letter published in the London Times called attention "to a crying evil" in British Columbia, namely "the want of women." "I believe," the letter continued "there is not 1 in every 100 men at the mines; without them the male population will never settle in the country, and

innumerable evils are the consequence."¹⁶ A popular emigration guide by "A Returned Digger" made similar comments in 1862. "The great curse of the colony, so far, as it must always be the curse of any colony in which such a want exists, is the absence of women. I doubt if there was one woman to a hundred men twelve months ago. I am quite sure that now, when I am writing, there must be at least two hundred men to every woman."¹⁷

Lengthy discussions of white women's lamentably small presence were not only the province of scandal-seeking journalists and emigrant-encouraging pamphleteers. Local politicians joined the ranks of those who decried their absence. In 1859, Governor James Douglas commented that "The entire white population of British Columbia does not probably exceed 5,000 men, there being, with the exception of a few families, neither wives nor children to refine and soften, by their presence, the dreariness and adversity of existence."¹⁸ Four years later, things had not changed in Douglas' mind.¹⁹ Six years later, acting Colonial Secretary Charles Good made similar comments. "It will be observed," he wrote, "that a terrible disproportion exists

¹⁶Anonymous, "British Columbia: To the Editor of the Times" London Times, 01 01 1862.

¹⁷A Returned Digger, The Newly Discovered Gold Fields of British Columbia (London, Darton and Hodge, 1862) eighth edition, p7.

¹⁸James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 18 10 1859, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, British Columbia, 1858-1871, CO 60/5 [hereafter CO 60], Public Archives of Canada [hereafter PAC], MG 11, Mflm B-80.

¹⁹James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 02 07 1863, CO 60/16, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-89.

between the male and female population, the former exceeding the latter by some 277 percent." Like many other commentators, Good assigned this demography serious social weight. "It is impossible," he continued, "to lay too much stress on this evil which does more to retard the advance of the Colony than any other."²⁰

White women's absence was considered a problem for colonial development not because they possessed independent qualities, but because they were capable of compelling white men to reject the rough culture of the backwoods in favour of a respectable, stable masculinity. Observers regularly despaired of the sorry fates that befell white men severed from their female counterparts, associating all the hallmarks of the rough homosocial culture discussed in Chapter Two with white women's absence. White women, an emigration writer explained at length, were necessary if white men were to be drawn away from the rough ways of the mines:

One thing has yet to be mentioned in connection with the gold diggings of this colony, and that is the *scarcity of women*. The emigrant from Europe will be greatly surprised to find himself among a class of individuals that know not the value of 'better halves' or to whom the definition of 'sweetheart' is as new as to read to them the names of some great Roman orators. And this generally accounts for the gambling and drunkenness that the diggings are plagued with. If every man, or say every other man, was provided with a wife, or sweetheart, or sister, he would find in their company much greater pleasure than by associating with groups of Californian miners whose policy is to become the dupes of clever 'Jews' of the diggings – those men that keep the gaming

²⁰Charles Good to Lord Office of the Government, 21 08 1869, CO 60/35, British Columbia Archives and Records Service [hereafter BCARS], GR 1486, Mflm B-1446, p407. Good's statistic was picked up and repeated in the British press. See "British Columbia," London Times, 12 10 1870.

tables, and the pipe and glass.²¹

Here, white women are represented as the only real solution to the hallmarks of backwoods male culture - gambling, drunkenness, and ethnic plurality under an odious American cast. Temperance organizations, alternative sites of masculinity, and other reform organizations pale in comparison to the explicit reformatory prowess of white wives, sweethearts, and sisters.

The notion that only white women could provide a sufficient counter-attraction to disorderly white male culture was widely held. Congregationalist missionary Matthew Macfie thought white women capable of reforming individual men even in the face of the compelling attractions of a rough, disorderly male culture. "Frequently have I been delighted to see the beneficial change effected by marriage, in arresting the process of dissipation," he wrote. Even if men did not marry, Macfie thought that the simple presence of single, and therefore desirable and available, white women was capable of altering male behaviour. He only regretted "that the paucity of respectable females in Vancouver Island and British Columbia limits so much the opportunities of single men to cultivate domestic virtues, and lead sober lives."²²

Unlike First Nations women, who were usually represented as instruments of white men's degradation, white women were almost always constructed as agents of

²¹A Successful Digger, Guide Book for British Columbia (London, Dean and Sons, 1862) p23.

²²Matthew Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia: Their History, Resources, and Prospects (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865) p408.

male uplift. An anonymous poem spoke to women's transformative prowess, which "Will make us sober, staid, sedate" and "run us home at night."²³ "Women! women! women! are the great want," wrote Harry Verney, aristocrat and father of Edmund Hope Verney. "The normal state is man with a help meet for him, and if something is not soon done, either by the Imperial or Colonial Government, or by some philanthropists at home, I know not what will become of us. Poor man goes sadly down hill if he remains long without the supporting influence of women," he continued, conflating individual and imperial fates.²⁴ Publicly retelling 1860s social life, former colonial official Benjamin William Pearse replicated these sentiments in 1900. "Looking back to those happy, if somewhat arcadian days," he wrote, "one can trace the immense influence for good, of the ladies, to those who submitted themselves to it for those alas: who shunned it what can now be said?"²⁵

Missionaries added a religious spin, arguing that white women would Christianize men in a context where religiosity was thought to be profoundly lacking. "Dissevered from the softening influence of women," wrote Anglican R.C. Lundin Brown, "men become more or less rough...[t]o many men the Son of Mary still reveals

²³ "Woman," British Colonist, 18 01 1862.

²⁴"Sir Harry Verney Upon British Columbia," British Columbian, 20 08 1862. For his son's private comment on this letter, see Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 07 08 1862, in Allan Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-1865 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1996) p78-80.

²⁵Benjamin William Pearse, "Early Settlement of Vancouver Island, 1900" [Transcript,] BCARS, Add Mss E/B/P31, p18.

Himself through woman, and through her puts forth His healing and civilizing grace."²⁶ "The great drawback, to the wholesome progress of society is the dearth of female population," wrote Anglican Bishop George Hills in a widely-reprinted 1861 letter.²⁷ Unless there were equal numbers of men and women, thought Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, the colony would become not only an immoral and tawdry place, but also a poor and backwards society. "There must be the dwelling-place of every deep degrading moral abomination unless you provide for an equality of the sexes."²⁸

Notions of respectable masculinity were in many ways consistent throughout much of nineteenth-century Anglo-American culture, but took on a particular contour in this colonial setting. In British Columbia, permanent settlement played an important role in defining respectability, and white women, in turn, were considered crucial in the ongoing effort to make footloose men, especially miners, permanent colonists.. A local journalist argued that "the society here and throughout these colonies will prove *shiftless* for a long time, except Government or someone else provides wives for our young men."²⁹ White women's stabilizing presence was also assigned an economic role since without them, men would roam, "their industry as

²⁶R.C. Lundin Brown, British Columbia: An Essay (New Westminster, Royal Engineer Press, 1863) p53.

²⁷"Another Letter From Bishop Hills," British Colonist, 14 03 1861.

²⁸"Columbian Emigration Society," British Columbian, 21 06 1862.

²⁹"Inducements for Families to Settle in Victoria," British Colonist, 30 11 1861. Emphasis original.

producers and expenditures as consumers being lost to the colonies."³⁰ Such ideas about white women and stability remained largely constant throughout the colonial period. In 1869, the British Colonist opined that "Nothing will cure a conscientious, thoughtful man of nomadic habits so thoroughly as a good wife and a knowledge of the fact that little ones will look up to him as their natural protector and guardian."³¹

In making white men respectable and settled, white women would also help to enlarge the tiny white population. "Given, the injunction 'increase and multiply' and how is it to be done? that is the practical question for the men of the Pacific," wrote one commentator.³² Others argued that white women would increase the population through their influence, not their reproduction. One of the "two grave obstacles to a rapid increase of population," thought the British Colonist, was "the scarcity of women in the agricultural districts to win by their influence and example the settler and miner from nomadic and improvident habits and convert them into steady-going and prudent members of society."³³ Another journalist agreed that a white female migration would motivate population growth, commenting that "Labourers and others will follow them in due course."³⁴

In this discourse, the presence of white women both created and was indicative

³⁰Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p497.

³¹Untitled, British Colonist, 04 02 1869.

³²"Our London Correspondence," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 26 10 1864.

³³Untitled, British Colonist, 23 02 1869.

³⁴Cariboo, "The Immigration Vote," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 04 04 1864.

of colonial progress and stability. "All colonies," it was said, "but especially gold-producing colonies" needed "the influences that radiated from the domestic hearth-stone" and lent "an air of permanence to the country."³⁵ Thus that there were "three white ladies" in residence in 1862 Lytton was an index of the town's prospects.³⁶ The Vancouver Times prophesied that "Every year will see an increase in the number of families in the colony, and more of the refining influences of women will be stamped on our habits. As this change takes place Christmas in Victoria will become more generally a happy and joyful season."³⁷ As individual wives or even as available objects of male desire, white women were constructed as natural agents of social control and genitors of stability, prosperity and population growth.

The second service white women would perform for colonial British Columbia was to simultaneously address the local labour market and relieve over-population in Britain. It became axiomatic to argue that British Columbia lacked a sufficient number of domestic servants. Without an adequate supply of white women to labour in the colony's households, supposedly normal gender, race, and class relations were disrupted. Men were forced to assume unfamiliar domestic chores, most notably the care of children. Sophia Craycroft, travelling companion of Lady Frankin, wrote that "It is quite common to see gentlemen carrying the children" since even ladies like

³⁵"National Education," British Colonist, 14 02 1860.

³⁶"Letter From Lytton," British Colonist, 16 05 1862.

³⁷"Christmas Eve," Vancouver Times, 24 12 1864.

Mrs. Moody, wife of Royal Engineers' commander Colonel Richard Moody, lacked servants.³⁸ This predicament was represented visually by William Crickmer, Anglican missionary to Derby (later Langley). He sketched a series of pictures of his family in 1859, where his wife was the "head nurse" and he the unlikely and ironic "under-nurse."³⁹

Not only was the gendered division of labour disrupted by the absence of white female servants, but white families were compelled to hire First Nations, and later Chinese, servants in their stead. Without white women, colonists relied on "Indian labour and native or half-breed servants" who, one writer thought, "are often too obtuse, dirty, and untidy, to be of much use."⁴⁰ The British Colonist agreed, commenting that "domestic angles are picked up so quickly by bachelors that fine ladies have generally to do their own work with the assistance of an aborigine [sic], male or female, whom they instruct in the domestic arts."⁴¹ By the late 1860s, Chinese men would fulfil the role that white women did not in British Columbia.⁴²

³⁸Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., Lady Franklin Visits the Pacific Northwest: Being Extracts from the Letters of Miss Sophia Craycroft, Sir John Franklin's Niece, February to April 1861 and April to July 1870 (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia Memoir No. XI, 1974) p65-66.

³⁹See Vancouver City Archives, Photograph Out.P.826, N.382 #1; Photograph Out.P.826, N.382, #2.

⁴⁰Alexander Rattray, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, Where they are; What they are; And what they may become (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1862) p175.

⁴¹"What Vancouver Island and British Columbia have Got to Offer Emigrants in New Brunswick," British Colonist, 22 02 1862.

⁴² See, for instance, Grant, Ocean to Ocean, p301; "Domestic Servants," British Colonist, 12 11 1871. See Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, British Columbia: Information for

More startling than disrupting gendered and racialized divisions, the absence of white female servants challenged class hierarchies by forcing bourgeois men and especially women to perform labours normally reserved for their lessers. "Gentlemen clean their own boots cut their own fire wood, and do other similar work: ladies are their own cooks and housemaids, dressmakers & almost everything else," wrote a perplexed missionary in 1859.⁴³ Even when ladies found servants, normal power relations were disrupted by the domestics' choice position in the under-stocked labour market. Craycroft wrote about a missionary's wife, Mrs. Pringle, whose Hope home was dominated by her only servant who possessed both greater knowledge and bargaining power. "So the positions of mistress & servant have been for some time nearly reversed," she commented.⁴⁴ Scientist Robert Brown, reflecting on the unlikely predicament of having to clean his own boots, wrote that "They dictate to the 'missus' entirely."⁴⁵ "Servants," another agreed, "will not serve unless they are permitted to rule, and those ladies who cannot consent to become the slaves of their domestics have the privilege of slaving for themselves."⁴⁶ Thus class relations were profoundly and dangerously disrupted by the scarcity of working-class white women. "It is the

Emigrants (London, Agent General for the Province, 1873) p8, for a discussion of the peculiarities of male Chinese and First Nations servants.

⁴³James Gammage to Sir, 03 05 1859, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1858-1861," [Transcripts] BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 1, p33.

⁴⁴Craycroft, in Blakey Smith, ed., Lady Franklin, p61.

⁴⁵Robert Brown, "Diary," BCARS, Add Mss 794, Box 1, File 17, p101-2.

⁴⁶A Successful Digger, Guide Book, p19.

ladies who are most to be pitied," Craycroft later commented, "as they must absolutely & unreservedly devote themselves to the smallest cares of every day life."⁴⁷

For these racial, class, and gender disruptions to be normalized, an immigration of working white women was required. "But perhaps the greatest want of all is felt in the absence of female servants," wrote colonial official John Despard Pemberton, who prayed that some benevolent soul would send some.⁴⁸ An "immigration of respectable young and middle-aged women as domestic servants and nurses, is very much needed," commented Vancouver Island's prize essay for 1861.⁴⁹ Such calls for domestic servants were inevitably accompanied by promises of high wages and fair conditions, which apparently had some effect on women considering emigration. In 1862, Mary Norman wrote to Bishop Hills from Australia about the prospect of immigrating as a single woman to British Columbia. "Is it true," she wrote, "that domestic servants even are making from twenty to thirty-five dollars a month, and some even more?"⁵⁰

Arguments about British Columbia's need for white women were neatly

⁴⁷ Craycroft, in Blakey Smith, ed., Lady Franklin, p81.

⁴⁸ J. Despard Pemberton, Facts and Figures Relating to Vancouver Island and British Columbia Showing What to Expect and How to Get There (London, Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860) p140.

⁴⁹ Charles Forbes, Prize Essay. Vancouver Island: Resources and Capabilities, as a Colony (Victoria, Colonial Government, 1862) p63.

⁵⁰ Mary A. Norman to Bishop Hills, 18 02 1862, "Bishop Hills Correspondence," Box 8 of 8, File 4, Anglican Church of Canada, Achieves of the Diocese of New Westminster/Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, [hereafter ADNW/EPBC].

matched by metropolitan fears of surplus women. If locals hoped that white women would address the problems of social life in British Columbia, Britons believed their migration would assist the mother country. Especially after the release of the 1851 census showing disproportionately high rates of unmarried women, the "surplus woman" became a flashpoint in British debate.⁵¹ While feminists like Jessie Boucherett and conservatives like W.R. Greg struggled over the meaning of unmarried women, both saw colonial migration as part of the solution.⁵² This argument was widely disseminated, and the transferring of single women from metropole to hinterland became widely regarded as both reasonable and necessary. While the lack of eligible men forced decent English women to take the supposedly unnatural path of wage-work or, worse yet, prostitution, white men throughout the colonies pined for wives, servants, and moral guardians.

The surplus women argument was frequently invoked to bolster the female immigration movement in metropolitan circles. One author argued that British Columbia could absorb Britain's surplus women while the women could prove crucial

⁵¹See Judith Worsnop, "A Reevaluation of the 'The Problem of Surplus Women' in 19th-Century England: The Case of the 1851 Census," Women's Studies International Forum 13: 1/2 (1990) p21-31; Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988) Chapter 1.

⁵²Jessie Boucherett, "How to Provide for Superfluous Women," in Josephine E. Butler, ed., Women's Work and Woman's Culture (London, MacMillan, 1869); J.B., "LIV.- On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women," The English Woman's Journal 4:24 (01 02 1860) p361-375; W.R. Greg, "Why Are Women Redundant?" National Review, 28 (April 1862) p431-460.

nation-builders in the nascent and struggling colony:

Certainly there is a great abundance if not a redundancy of female life in this country, and if ten thousand should leave our shores in a week, so far as the general public is concerned, they would not be missed, whilst on your Pacific coast such an accession would transform an unsettled multitude into an organized community and lay the foundation of a nation[']s life. My own deep conviction is that the virtuous, conjugal state the sanctity of home and of home life, is the very basis and foundation of national well-being.⁵³

A British correspondent wrote that the "part of the female population that have no lords and masters to look after them" should be paired off with British Columbia's "surplus population of diggers."⁵⁴ Thus colonialism and emigration were evoked as a mechanism for resolving crises in British gender relations and organizations.

British Columbia observers easily appropriated the discourse of surplus women for their own purposes. A female immigration, wrote one, "would be as great a boon to the colony as I am sure it would be to many of the under-paid, under-fed, and over-worked women who drag out a weary existence in the dismal back streets and alleys of the metropolis."⁵⁵ It was this argument Good used when appealing to the Colonial Office for funds. He wrote that "while thousands of women, who could find happy homes here, either as servants or wives, are perhaps starving at home, their energies overtaxed, and their bodies wasted by too much work and too little food, and no

⁵³B., "Immigration -- Important Letter from South Wales -- What We Ought to Do," British Colonist, 02 07 1869.

⁵⁴"Letter from London," Victoria Press, 29 06 1862.

⁵⁵A.D.G., "British Columbia: To the Editor of the Times," London Times, 01 01 1862.

opportunity occurs to them to reach this far off shore."⁵⁶ Quoting Greg, the British Columbian presented the colony as a wonderful remedy to the "redundancy of women." "There are in British Columbia hundreds of respectable men," they wrote, "who would be all the better for having wives and who would make excellent husbands; but there are no wives for them." It was, they continued, "no credit to our nation that while thousands of her daughters are withering under enforced celibacy at home thousands of her sons are pining in the colonies for want of wives."⁵⁷

White women would also address the other central "problem" of British Columbia's gender organization, namely the widespread practice of white-Aboriginal conjugal relationships. To some, mixed-race relationships were a problem that could only be resolved if white men's "natural" object of desire – white women – were available. Naval man R.C. Mayne saw white women's ability to halt white-Aboriginal relationships as their primary use in the colony: "If nothing else pleads for the introduction of Englishwomen to British Columbia, this fact surely does."⁵⁸

White and First Nations wives were directly compared and the latter found wanting. "That many of the native women are cleanly, industrious, and faithful, we do

⁵⁶Charles Good to Lord Office of the Government, 21 08 1869, CO 60/36, BCARS, GR 1486, Mfilm B-1446, p407-8. Also see Capt. C.E. Barrett-Lennard, Travels in British Columbia: With the Narrative of a Yacht Voyage Round Vancouver's Island (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1862) p278.

⁵⁷"The Redundancy of Women," British Columbian, 11 06 1869.

⁵⁸Richard Charles Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (Toronto, S.R. Publishers, 1969 [London, John Murray, 1862]) p75.

not pretend to deny," wrote the New Westminster's Mainland Guardian, "but, we regret to to [sic] say, they are the exceptions. With the increase of our white female population, we look for new life in our agricultural pursuits and we hope that every inducement will be offered to healthy industrious women, who are desirous of finding good husbands and comfortable homes, in this province, to come out to us."⁵⁹ White-Aboriginal heterosexual unions, thought another, were an "evil" that could "only be remedied by the introduction of fair ones of a purer caste into the Colony."⁶⁰ To give credence to such generalizations, authors offered specific tales of white men who, though surrounded by mixed-race relationships, yearned for a white partner. Miner John Emmerson wrote about a Mr. Pearman, a wifeless English baker in Douglas who bucked the local trend by spurning Aboriginal women. "I will do without for ever rather than have one of those ugly-brown skinned devils," he supposedly said. As much as he hated local women, the backwoods baker waited for a white one, anxiously inquiring about the possibility of "a ship's load of English girls were coming out to Victoria" and telling Emmerson and his companions that "'I will have one of them by hook or by crook.'"⁶¹ Such dialogue, like overt pronouncements, presented white female immigration as the ultimate challenge to mixed-race relationships.

Other authors agreed that only an immigration of white women would dampen

⁵⁹"Immigration," Mainland Guardian, 09 02 1871.

⁶⁰One of the Disappointed, Untitled, British Columbian, 07 06 1862.

⁶¹John Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, and Adventures by John Emmerson of Wolsingham (Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1865) p37.

the widespread practice of white-Aboriginal heterosexual unions. "Colonista," a woman who claimed to have lived in British Columbia, wrote that "there are hundreds of men, well able to marry, who, if they be particular to a shade of colour, cannot get wived. Surely there is something rotten in the state of society which sadly requires putting to rights." Saving white men from dubiously coloured women could only be accomplished, she continued, if white women could be persuaded to migrate.⁶² In 1865, a handful of white women in Cowichan was said to have held back the progress of mixed-race relationships. "That 'social evil,' by which so many in this country have lost self-respect, religion, and social status, has not made much progress," wrote an observer. "One thing which tended to nip this evil in the bud I recognised in the powerful presence of some respectable young ladies, whom worthy parents have brought with them to their forest home in this beautiful valley. All honor to these pioneer sires and their fair wives and daughters."⁶³

In saving white men from Aboriginal women, white women would save the colony as a whole. It was not simply that individual white men cleaved themselves too closely to those of lesser race when white women were absent. Rather, the practice of mixed-race relationships was thought to damage and imperil the colony as a whole. Wilberforce, speaking at an 1861 meeting of the Columbia Mission, argued that inappropriate racial mixing was necessitated a female emigration attempt:

⁶²Colonista, "Marriage or Celibacy?" British Colonist, 02 09 1868.

⁶³Traveller, "Cowichan District," Nanaimo Gazette, 17 07 1865.

And, then, I need not dwell upon those degrading moral abominations which will be introduced into the population of that young state, unless you bring about an equality of the sexes. You first make any true relation between the aboriginal people and the settlers an impossibility. I am not going to dwell upon it, but I know, from letters I have myself seen, that the great hinderance to Christianizing the natives of that country arises from abominations which from this cause have spring up in the colony. And how can it be otherwise? With a degraded people to deal with, with people used, under their heathen system, to a low, 'squaw' estimate of woman, how is it possible but that, in pouring forth from this country a mass of men, not governed by high moral or religious principles, you should be doing to that native race the most deadly and the most irreparable wrong? It must be so.⁶⁴

Thus white women would ensure that proper – namely European – gender roles would hold sway over the inherently degraded First Nations notions of manliness and womanliness that threatened to engulf the nascent colonial society of British Columbia.

Colonial promoters thus envisioned a particular role for white women in the process of creating an orderly settler colony in British Columbia. This discourse did not emphasize those women who occupied a formal role in the imperial project, but rather privileged ordinary, working-class white women who would marry miners and farmers and perform domestic and agricultural labour. Making this point clear, "A Returned Digger" wrote that "They want no governesses or ladies' companions," but women "who can look after families and houses, who can brew, bake, do all other domestic offices, and meet the husbands, brothers, and employers with smiling faces

⁶⁴Third Report of the Columbia Mission with List of Contributions, 1861 (London, Rivingtons [1862]) p51-52.

when the men return from the day's work."⁶⁵ As these words suggest, white women's importance lay not as autonomous political subjects but rather in their ability to shape and control white male behaviour, as *objects* that would shape the behaviours and identities of the true *subjects* of colonization, white men.

This discourse about white women and colonialism ultimately provided the necessary motivation to transform vague rhetoric into concrete action in British Columbia. While reformers, journalists and officials called for an activist land policy and a programme of general assisted immigration throughout the 1858 to 1871 period, it was only in the area of female immigration that these calls were substantially answered. Here, the sheer ideological weight of the conviction that a society lacking white women could not be a moral or even adequate one provided the motivation necessary to orchestrate, as opposed to merely call for, assisted immigration. Four times – in 1859, 1862, 1863, and 1870 – British Columbian reformers and officers worked in concert with British parties to co-ordinate the movement of white women.

IV: Assisted White Female Immigration to British Columbia

In some senses, assisted white female migration had been a part of colonial life in British Columbia from the onset of sustained white settlement. Vancouver Island's Wakefieldian land system encouraged land-owners to sponsor the passage of married

⁶⁵A Returned Digger, The Newly Discovered Gold Fields, p6.

couples.⁶⁶ More significantly, a female emigration scheme was piggy-backed on the arrival of the Royal Engineers, the soldier-settlers sent by Colonial Secretary Edward Bulwer Lytton to assure British military authority over the mainland and colonize it.⁶⁷ Putting it plainly, Lord Lytton told them "you are to be the Pioneers of Civilization."⁶⁸ Given the extent to which white women were constructed as standard-bearers for civilization and empire, it is not surprising that women and children were necessary ingredients for the Royal Engineers to succeed in this mission. Certainly Mary Moody was the first conspicuous white woman to reside on the mainland, and her presence was widely heralded as symbolic of order, class privilege, and gentility.⁶⁹ The colony, wrote Canadian politician Malcolm Cameron, owed much to Moody's "amiable and pious wife" who had helped elevate New Westminster's morals.⁷⁰

It was not only bourgeois women like Moody who were assigned a role in that part of British Columbia's colonial project superintended by the Royal Engineers. Women associated with the men of the Engineers were also constructed as significant

⁶⁶ [Hudson's Bay Company], Colonization of Vancouver Island (London, Horace and Son, 1849) p4.

⁶⁷ See Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991) p70-71.

⁶⁸ Lytton, cited in The Earl of Lytton, The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton, Volume II (London, MacMillan, 1913) p292.

⁶⁹On her, see Jaqueline Gresko, "'Roughing it in the Bush' in British Columbia: Mary Moody's Pioneer Life in New Westminster 1859-1863," in Latham and Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money.

⁷⁰Lecture Delivered by the Hon. Malcolm Cameron to the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (Quebec, G.E. Desbartes, 1865) p16.

enough colonial players for their passage to the Pacific to be paid for by the state. The initial detachment of the one hundred and twenty-one Royal Engineers was accompanied by thirty-one women and thirty-four children.⁷¹ At least another nine children were born on board the *Thames City* as it travelled via Cape Horn.⁷²

In bringing women and children with them, the Engineers contributed to transplanting British familial and gender relations as well as building roads, preventing American invasion, and deterring Aboriginal resistance. In the ship-board newspaper produced on the *Thames City*, they envisioned their future in British Columbia, painting a picture of agrarian familialism remarkably similar to that so often invoked by local journalists in their frequent calls for an orderly, pastoral colonial culture:

By and bye when provisions are cheap and plentiful we shall have settlers from old England to cultivate the country, whose bright and happy faces will form a delighted contrast to the care-worn, dissipated, and scoundrelly physiognomies of the gold diggers in general; and, finally, let us hope the day will come when we shall see many of the detachment, with their wives and families, comfortably settled on comfortable little farms.⁷³

That the Royal Engineers had a familial, as well as military and colonial mission, was

⁷¹"British Columbia - Its Attractions As a Field for Emigration," British Columbian, 30 12 1863. This argued that 139 men, 32 women, and 43 children arrived.

⁷²"Naval and Military Intelligence," The Emigrant Soldier's Gazette and Cape Horn Chronicle, 1 (06 11 1858) in Charles Sinnett, ed., The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette, and Cape Horn Chronicle (New Westminster, the 'British Columbian', 1863)

⁷³The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette, and Cape Horn Chronicle, 11 (29 01 1859) in Sinnett, ed., The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette.

reconfirmed when the detachment was disbanded in 1863.⁷⁴ Each man committed to remaining in British Columbia was awarded one hundred and fifty acres of free land, a grant that was, in response to requests, later extended to their widows.

The women and children accompanying the Royal Engineers were soon joined by more. In 1860, Moody inquired about the possibility of assisting the passage of non-commissioned soldiers' wives and partners who had not joined the initial detachment. These men, Moody wrote, "are most anxious for their wives and 'promissi sposi' to join them and have petitioned me to use my endeavours to obtain passages for them under Government or Emigration auspices."⁷⁵ Moody enclosed a list of seven women -- three sharing the surname of their "sponsoring soldier" and four not -- and six children requested by his men.⁷⁶ In a fit of unusual enthusiasm that would never again be repeated, the Colonial Office immediately pledged their support and sought the expertise of the Emigration Commissioners.⁷⁷ Their patronage was

⁷⁴ See G.P.V. Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg, British Columbia 1847-1871 (Vancouver, Discover Press, 1977) p282-3.

⁷⁵ Colonel Moody to James Douglas, 29 03 1860, in James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 12 05 1860, CO 60/6, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-82.

⁷⁶ Sergeant Wm. McColl requested Mrs. McColl and four children (aged 8, 6, 4, and 2) of Northamptonshire; Sapper R. Goskirk requested Mrs. Goskirk of Peebleshire; Sapper H. Holroyd [aka Dramsfield] requested Mary Ann Holroyd and two children [aged 4 and 6] of Yorkshire; Sapper John Jaffray requested Catherine May of Kent; Sapper Wm. Franklin requested Jane Bingley of London; Corp. Geo. Hand requested Sarah Jane Crossland of Manchester; Corp. Jas. Flax requested Sarah Gill of Kent.

⁷⁷ G.C. Lewis to James Douglas, 11 08 1860, draft reply, in James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 12 05 1860, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-83; M. Walcott to Frederic Rogers, 31 08 1860, and R. Moody to Under Secretary of State, 09 04 1860, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84.

premised on a rationale that would be evoked again and again in future discussions of colonialism and gender: female immigration was desirable because it was both indicative and generative of respectable male behaviour, here represented most potently by permanent settlement. A marginal note by a Colonial Office staffer remarked "The men sending for their wives is so strong an indication of an intention to stay" that elaborate repayment schemes were not necessary.⁷⁸

By the autumn of 1860, the Emigration Commissioner had co-ordinated the passage of the women on board the *Marcella*.⁷⁹ Yet things did not go as planned. Initially, all but one of the women accepted the offer of a free passage. On further rumination, however, three declined to go to British Columbia for a variety of reasons relating to the precarious circumstance and proud culture of working-class women in 1860s Britain. The Colonial Office recorded their reasons thus: "the first alleging that she had not the means to travel from Scotland to London to join the vessel, the second that she had been informed that she was to go out as an Emigrant and not as a passenger - and the last because she was an Indoor patient at the Dover Hospital with but little prospect of recovery." One seriously ill, one insulted by the suggestion that she would be considered an "emigrant" or object of charity, and another, not surprisingly for a working-class woman, lacking the necessary money to reach the

⁷⁸G.C.L. [G.C. Lewis], in R. Moody to Under Secretary of State, 09 04 1860, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84.

⁷⁹S. Walcott to Frederic Rogers 20 10 1860, PAC, MG 11, C.O. 60/9, Mflm B-84.

port, these women were either unable or unwilling to emigrate. The *Marcella* ultimately carried only three women and four children,⁸⁰ their passages sponsored by the Emigration Commissioners.⁸¹ Years later, whether the Engineers were responsible for a portion of the passage-money would be an item for debate.⁸²

Anticipating the excitement that greeted the arrival of later immigrations, Victoria residents excitedly awaited the docking of the *Marcella* in the spring of 1861. Rumours flew about an inflated number of women on board, causing "quite a flutter visible for a time among the young bucks, who spruced themselves up with a view of 'doing the agreeable' towards the 'forty young Ladies' said to be aboard."⁸³ When the *Marcella* arrived with her cargo, young men attempted to infiltrate the ship in the harbour, and a crowd met the women as it docked. The male mass was distinctly disappointed when it was discovered that only four women were aboard. A "large number of citizens," the British Colonist, wrote:

had gathered to obtain a glimpse of the pretty faces and symmetrical figures of the forty blooming English lassies some time since reported to be aboard. Some could not curb their impatient longings till the vessel reached the dock, but procuring small boats boarded her in the channel. When it was found, however, that instead of forty, there was

⁸⁰T.W.C. Murdoch to Frederic Rogers, 14 11 1860, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84.

⁸¹See C.F. [C. Fortescue] to James Douglas 16 11 1860, draft reply, CO 60/9, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-84. Also see Geo. A Hamilton to F. Rogers, 18 11 1861, CO 60/11, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-85.

⁸²See James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 03 11 1863, CO 60/16, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-89.

⁸³"Unfounded," British Colonist, 23 05 1861.

only *four* ladies aboard, a general desire to return to the shore was manifested...The hoax was a cruel one; and the wretch who could thus wantonly trifle with the affection and feelings of our young bachelors deserves to pass a month in the chain-gang.⁸⁴

Here, the disappointment between the romantic construction of white women – “pretty face and symmetrical figures” of “blooming English lassies” – is contrasted with the generalized male disappointment which the four soldiers’ partners actually produced. This foray into assisted female migration, apparently, was not what anyone anticipated.

The confusion, excitement, disappointment, and mismanagement that characterized the arrival of the *Marcella* proved a harbinger for the female immigration projects of 1862 and 1863. These efforts, preserved in popular British Columbia lore as the “brideships,” were the most spectacular example of efforts to bring white bodies to the colony and the result, in part, of metropolitan feminist and missionary activity. The related discourses of surplus women and white women’s colonial prowess provided mid-nineteenth-century British feminists with a point of entry into female immigration work. In London, a small group of well-to-do women centred around by Maria Rye, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Jessie Boucherett, Jane Lewin, and Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, launched a multifaceted effort to broaden the acceptable sphere of activity for women, especially middle-class ones. These “ladies of Langham Place” were responsible for establishing both the Society for the Employment of Women, which worked to expand women’s employment opportunities

⁸⁴“Arrival of the ‘*Marcella*,’” British Colonist, 21 05 1861.

by challenging the gender-typing of jobs, for opening businesses providing work for middle-class women such as a law-copying office, a register office, a printing press, and a telegraph station.⁸⁵ They also founded the English Woman's Journal, which published a wide variety of women's writings on economic and political issues and served as a significant locus for the development of British feminist thought from 1858 until it was superseded by the Englishwoman's Review in 1866.

It was this desire to expand middle-class women's possibilities that led these mid-century feminists to turn to assisted migration. Throughout 1859, 1860, and 1861, the English Woman's Journal carried a series of stories promoting emigration to British settler colonies, most notably Australia and New Zealand, as a useful option for both working-class and middle-class women and the feminist movement.⁸⁶ This suggests, as Hammerton argues, how feminists took advantage of the positive view of female immigration that emerged after the scandals of the 1830s and 40s, when it was

⁸⁵See Maria S. Rye, "XXIX- The Colonies and their Requirements", The English Woman's Review 8:4 (01 11 1861) p165-171. On this group, see Jane Rendall, "Friendship and Politics: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-91) and Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829-1925), in Susan Mendus and Jane Randall, eds., Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century (London, Routledge, 1989)

⁸⁶See "XXXIII- What Can Educated Women Do?" The English Woman's Journal 4: 22 (01 12 1859) 217-227; R., English Woman's Journal 4: 22 (01 12 1859) p276-278; E.H., Untitled, English Woman's Journal 4:18 (01 08 1859) p424-428; B.R.P. "XLIII- What Can Educated Women Do? Part II," The English Woman's Journal 4:23 (01 01 1860) p289-298; "Emigrant-Ship Matrons," The English Woman's Review 5: 25 (01 03 1860) p24-35; M.S.R., "XXXIV - On Assisted Emigration" The English Woman's Journal, 5: 28 (01 09 1860) p235-240; S.C., "Emigration for Educated Women," The English Woman's Journal 7:87 (01 03 1861) p1-9.

widely constructed as a little more than a vehicle for rampant plebian immorality.⁸⁷

Reaping the benefits of the shifting public opinion was not without political costs. Speaking to the Association for the Promotion of Social Science in 1861, Rye explained how assisted female emigration emerged as a political compromise between the feminist conviction of the need for women's independence and popular opposition to the expansion of women's waged work:

I believe that all present must remember the fact, that soon after the establishment of the 'Society for Promoting the Employment of Women' remonstrances were made by no inconsiderable portion of the press against the movement. To this we replied, 'Are women to perish simply because they are women?' and when it was proved, as unfortunately it was proved only too clearly, that there were thrown upon their own resources hundreds of educated women - women of unblemished character, and, in many instances, women of capability and power - but who could literally find no employment whatever - and this in London alone, the unanimous advice from all quarters, from papers of the most opposite political opinions, and from pens the most antagonistic on every other subject, was invariably 'Teach your *protégés* to emigrate; send them where the men want wives, the mothers want governesses, where the shopkeepers, the schools, and the sick will thoroughly appreciate your exertions, and heartily welcome your women.'⁸⁸

Thus, for Rye, female emigration was a workable compromise between feminist goals and prevailing anti-feminism. "[I]n spite of the real progress made by the Society in other branches of trade," she admitted, "my sympathies and my judgement lean every

⁸⁷Hammerton, Emigrant Gentlewomen, p117. Regarding an example of the moral reputation of assisted immigration in the 1830s and 40s, see Superintendent of the *Layton* Immigrant Ship, A Few Copies of Letters and Remarks Upon Sundry Documents on the Subject of Female Emigration (Sidney, William Jones, 1834)

⁸⁸Rye, "XXIX- The Colonies and their Requirements," p165.

day more and more towards the establishment of some scheme by which educated women may with safety be introduced into the colonies, and inclines less and less to their commencing new trades at home."⁸⁹

In this way, British feminists exploited colonial sentiments and utilized the prevailing politics of imperialism to argue for the expansion of white women's roles and possibilities. As Antoinette Burton argues, "The beginnings of the organized British women's movement at mid-century coincided with the apogee of British imperial preeminence," and this deep connection proved profoundly influential for the women's movement which continued to be premised on racialized constructions of both white women and their various and shifting others.⁹⁰ Certainly inserting white women into the rhetoric and geo-politics of empire proved easier than challenging the British gendered division of labour or even the more modest goal of finding women paid work in London.

When metropolitan feminists searched the globe for colonial realms where white women could acquire independence and rights, they soon looked to British Columbia. The colony received a good deal of popular press and attention in the late 1850s and early 1860s. More significantly, it also acquiring a small but influential cabal of missionary boosters in London, headed up by philanthropist Baroness Angela Burdett Coutts, who founded the Anglican Bishopric of British Columbia in 1859.

⁸⁹Rye, "The Colonies and their Requirements," p165.

⁹⁰Burton, Burdens of History, p2.

Ultimately, the overlapping interests of metropolitan feminists and missionaries that provided the organizational impetus for the bride-ships of 1862 and 1863. At a London meeting in February 1862, the Anglican Columbia Mission founded the Columbia Emigration Society, a mission-related group dedicated entirely to promoting emigration.⁹¹ Attended by influential supporters including Wilberforce, Member of Parliament Arthur Kinnaid, and the Lord Mayor of London, this meeting represented a substantial block of improving, Evangelical, bourgeois circles, and garnered, not surprisingly, a substantial amount of attention in both Britain⁹² and British Columbia.⁹³ The Victoria press proudly noted that "some of the wealthiest and most influential business men in the metropolis" were involved.⁹⁴

The February 1862 meeting was a dramatic affair which set the sensational tone for the assisted immigration effort that would follow. Missionary John Garret read an allegedly confidential note from a supposedly local source, portraying it as a juicy secret he felt compelled to share. "Though this note is confidential, and not intended for the public ear," he said, "there is one thing which you may make public - - nay, even proclaim from the housetops. It is this -- the cure for what, if left alone, will ultimately ruin religion and morals in this fine country -- I mean an emigration of

⁹¹See report in Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1861.

⁹²"The Columbia Mission," London Times, 28 02 1862.

⁹³See "Immigration to British Columbia," Victoria Press, 08 05 1862; "Wives for our Bachelors," British Colonist, 04 06 1862; "Hope for Bachelors" British Columbian, 10 05 1862; "Columbian Emigration Society," British Columbian, 21 06 1862.

⁹⁴"Columbian Emigration Society," Victoria Press, 08 06 1862.

white women from Great Britain."⁹⁵ Not to be outdone, Willberforce regaled the London Tavern with tales of work-house girls bred into a life of crime and wild young colonial men who, unless tamed by woman and church, would ensure British Columbia's quick descent into massive immorality. Kinnaird, for his part, took the voice of moderation and foresight, marshalling support and planning how this remarkable emigration would be carried out.⁹⁶ After the meeting, they announced that the Columbia Emigration Society had been "founded in the first instance to facilitate the Emigration of Industrious Women to the Colony of British Columbia."⁹⁷

From the outset, the Columbia Emigration Society explicitly argued that white women had a special role in the imperial project in British Columbia, an assertion that feminists loudly applauded. "Think of the 600,000 more women at home than there are men," Garret bade the audience at the London Tavern, "and then think what society must be here. Churches may and must be built, our faithful witness must be borne for holiness and virtue, but where there is no wedded life, church-going must be difficult, because morality is almost impossible."⁹⁸ While feminists committed to expanding the parameters of women's roles might have objected to the construction of women as synonymous with wife and mother, they found common ground with the

⁹⁵"The Columbia Mission," London Times, 28 02 1862. The note was from Alexander Garret, missionary to the Songish reserve in Victoria. See Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1861, p40.

⁹⁶See Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1861, p42-56.

⁹⁷"Columbian Emigration Society," Victoria Press, 08 06 1862.

⁹⁸Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1861, p43.

missionaries in the representation of white women as powerful imperial agents. The English Woman's Journal noted that even the missionaries had to admit that "religion and morality would be altogether ruined unless an emigration of white women from Great Britain took place."⁹⁹ Missionaries' returned this support by recognizing the importance of middle-class women in the imperial effort. Wilberforce applauded bourgeois women who gave their attentions "which have been wasted upon lap-dogs" to the "salvation of souls," according them a special role in superintending the passage of working-class girls to British Columbia.¹⁰⁰

This convergence between mid-century metropolitan feminists and imperialism was further entrenched when the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (FMCES) was founded in May of 1862. This group officially proclaimed its intention to see that "women who are superior in birth and attainments to most of those who have hitherto been sent to the Colonies, might receive protection and assistance to emigrate, and thus lessen the number of our ill-paid and starving, *because superfluous*, workers at home."¹⁰¹ With a retinue of influential patrons and patronesses, the FMCES was effectively managed by Lewin and Rye, its "Secretaries." They aimed not merely to aid women in emigration, but also to reconstruct female migration as a respectable endeavour. The FMCES not only distanced themselves from immigration's rough,

⁹⁹"Stray Letters of Emigration," The English Woman's Journal 9:50 (01 04 1862) p109.

¹⁰⁰Annual Report of the Columbia Mission 1861, p53-4.

¹⁰¹"Female Middle Class Emigration Society Annual Report, 1861" Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University, [hereafter Fawcett Library], 1/FME, Box 1, File 1, p7.

plebian image by conspicuously placing the term "middle class" in its title, but specified that its emigrants should be educated women well-schooled in domestic labours with suitable and sufficient references¹⁰² and guaranteed that the emigrants would be shepparded and sheltered by the organization and its minions.¹⁰³

The FMCES initially met with some modest success. Its primary work was to co-ordinate the emigration of women and pay their passage, so long as they agreed to repay all they owed within two years and four months. In its first year, the FMCES claimed to have been deluged with applicants, and to have officially assisted some fifty-four women and unofficially aided another three hundred and fifteen.¹⁰⁴ While the FMCES received no formal state support, Colonial Office staff did demonstrate their support for their work by sending suitable women their way on occasion.¹⁰⁵

The FMCES's organizational prowess would be challenged by their first major, large-scale immigration, which was directed to British Columbia. This effort would

¹⁰²"Female Middle Class Emigration Society Annual Report, 1861," p3-4.

¹⁰³"The greatest obstacle hitherto to gentlewoman emigrating alone, has been the supposed impossibility of sending them without a male protector on the voyage, or a their destination, until they (like men) an find suitable situations." S.C., "Emigration for Educated Women," The English Woman's Journal 8:87 (01 03 1861) p6.

¹⁰⁴"Female Middle Class Emigration Society Annual Report, 1861," p4, p7-8. Most of the 315 were probably assisted by Rye during 1861, when she seemed to have been working informally for female migration.

¹⁰⁵See Mrs Ward to Anonymous, 08 07 1862, CO 60/14, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-87; T.W.C. Murdoch to T.F. Elliot, 14 07 1862, CO 60/14, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-87. They were more worried that Rye would assume they were recommending Mrs. Ward than they were about endorsing Rye's scheme to this Irish widow and her daughter. See C.F. [Charles Fortescue] to Mrs Ward, 11 08 1862, draft reply, in T.W.C. Murdoch to T.F. Elliot, 14 07 1862, CO 60/14, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-87.

test the boundaries not only of their organizational abilities, but of the FMCES's claim to ensuring its emigrants' respectable, middle-class status. Early attempts to establish a local committee in Vancouver Island were thwarted by the conviction that the colony did not require an immigration of educated white women and would prove morally dangerous to all but the most stalwart of working-class women. In 1861, Sarah Crease, wife of the Attorney General, wrote in reply to inquiries that "I regret that I cannot give you any hopes of being able to benefit educated women by sending them out here," although "Maid-servants (of course of decent character) would be a great boon to us, if not too many at a time."¹⁰⁶ Crease also worried about their morality in the perilous, rough environs of Vancouver Island. "The bane of the country is drink; assisted much by the removal of the pressure of that portion of public opinion consisting of social and family influence, which at home has so powerful an effect in helping to keep things straight," she wrote. "Personal character comes out here, sharply and clearly defined." Given local labour needs and moral climates, Crease considered family migration more suitable.¹⁰⁷

The establishment of the Columbia Emigration Society in the spring of 1862 provided the encouragement that correspondents such as Crease had explicitly failed too. After the establishment of this agency, the English Woman's Journal noted

¹⁰⁶Sarah Crease, in M.S.R. and B.R.P., "Stray Letters on the Emigration Question" The English Woman's Journal 8:45 (11 01 1861) p241.

¹⁰⁷Crease, in "Stray Letters on the Emigration Question," p241.

"there is always a superabundance of female labor in this country, we should not be surprised to find its course directed towards British Columbia."¹⁰⁸ In September of 1862, Rye commented that British Columbia would likely be as important a destination for assisted female migrants as Australia.¹⁰⁹ To actualize this vision, the FMCES set about establishing local contacts, and their first report listed Governor Douglas, Bishop Hills, Archdeacon and Mrs. Wright, Colonel and Mrs. Moody as their colonial correspondents for British Columbia.¹¹⁰

It was indeed in their connection to the Columbia Emigration Society and, to a lesser extent, the local Anglican elite, that the FMCES found the necessary support and backing to organize an emigration to British Columbia. Initially, Rye merely asked if she could attach a smaller party to a larger group of women chosen to travel on the *Tynemouth* by the Columbia Mission's emigration arm. While their selection procedure is unclear, the Mission seems to have gathered poor young women and older girls from various public institutions. It was these women who Rye's smaller party would join. "I venture to ask for your protection on behalf of some 20 young women, who will start by the 'Tynemouth' in company with the Mission 40 & under

¹⁰⁸"Stray Letters of Emigration," The English Woman's Journal 4:50 (01 04 1862) p109.

¹⁰⁹Maria S. Rye, "Female Middle Class Emigration," The English Woman's Journal 10:55 (01 09 1862) p29.

¹¹⁰"Female Middle Class Emigration Society Annual Report, 1861," p1.

the care of the same Matron," she asked Hills in May of 1862.¹¹¹ Building on this alliance, the Columbia Emigration Society apparently requested that Rye co-ordinate their entire female emigration effort. "The Columbian female Emigration Society," reported FMCES committee member Barbara Smith Bodichon, "has asked Miss Rye to undertake its affairs in conjunction with our Society & Miss Rye is inclined to think much energy could be saved by having only one society."¹¹² While serious divisions remained between the forty mission-selected migrants and the twenty sponsored by the FMCES,¹¹³ Rye seems to have taken a decisive role in superintending both.

While the FMCES continued to publicly represent their organization as dedicated to assisting middle-class women, Rye admitted that the British Columbia migration would focus on working-class women. "I am fully aware," Rye told Hills in May of 1862, "that none but working women are wanted in British Columbia."¹¹⁴ In July of the same year, Rye reprinted what she called an "admirable letter" from Colonel Moody in the London Times, which made clear that middle-class women had

¹¹¹Maria S. Rye to Bishop Hills, 16 05 1862, ADNW/EPBC, "Bishop Hills Correspondence," Box 8 of 8, File 4.

¹¹²Madame L.S. Bodichon to Anonymous, , ND [1862], Autograph Letter Collection, Fawcett Library. She also wrote that "The Columbian Female Emigration Society are going to put their affairs with Miss Rye's hand..." See Madame L.S. Bodichon to Lord Shaftesbury, 26 07 1862, Autograph Letter Collection, Fawcett Library.

¹¹³Joan Weir, Catalysts and Watchdogs: B.C.'s Men of God, 1836-1871 (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1995) p69. The Victoria Press claimed that fifty of the women on the Tynemouth were sponsored by the "Female Emigration Society," and another ten paid their own way. See "Arrival of the Tynemouth," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

¹¹⁴Maria S. Rye to Bishop Hills, 16 05 1862, ADNW/EPBC, "Bishop Hills Correspondence," Box 8 of 8, File 4. Emphasis original.

no place in the colony of British Columbia. "I am sorry to say the opening for educated women here is at present very slender," he wrote. "Household work is what is demanded. Our wives, the ladies of the colony, from the highest to the humblest, have to labour in the kitchen, the nursery, and the washhouse." Moody went on to connect maids' work with marriage, arguing that "Marriage after marriage would keep up the vacancies much faster than half a dozen of the most active societies at home could possibly keep filled up." He added that his family would like a nursemaid and a washerwoman, a request his wife, for one, had occasion to later regret.¹¹⁵

That the FMCES did not fight local correspondents on the point of class was partially a response to the particularities of British Columbia and partially a result of a general shift in organizational goals and policy. In November 1862, Rye told a meeting held to mark her departure for Australasia that she now aimed to facilitate the movement of both working and middle-class women. Rye said that the FMCES "began by sending out governesses only, but they soon found out that if they adhered to that principle the whole scheme would fall to the ground. They therefore resorted to an amalgamated system of emigration, which had been attended with success." Of the four hundred women aided by the FMCES, only forty had been governesses.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵Maria S. Rye, "Female Middle Class Emigration," London Times, 28 07 1862. Others confirmed Moody's point. See W., "Female Middle-Class Emigration to British Columbia," London Times, 02 08 1862; "Female Middle-Class Emigration Society," London Times, 12 09 1862; "Our London Letter," British Colonist, 22 09 1862.

¹¹⁶"Female Emigration," London Times, 03 11 1862.

This admission, perhaps more than anything, demonstrates how quickly the thin veneer of middle-class respectability adopted by the FMCES faded. By 1871 Rye was tired of the political conundrum which she privately described as "the removal of high class women creating indignities at home -- or the removal of low class women...creating an equal indignation abroad." She gave up altogether on adult women, arguing that "the removal of children although of the pauper class -- is the best way to over come all objections & all differences."¹¹⁷ Yet these decisive shifts have not stopped historians from continuing to refer to the FMCES and the organizations that followed it as catering to middle-class women or, more often, "gentlewomen."¹¹⁸

Through meetings and letters, then, British missionaries and feminists formed a productive alliance. This all came as something of a shock for the local elite in Victoria. Missionaries, journalists, and officials had long called for an assisted female migration, arguing that only white women could ensure British Columbia's entry into the exalted status of respectable, prosperous white settler colonies. A member of the Vancouver Island House, Selim Franklin, made something of a career of promoting female migration as a panacea for the colony's many ills. In 1859, his election platforms included exploration, road-building, a new land policy, and "the aiding of

¹¹⁷Maria S. Rye to Lord Ripon, 21 03 1871, British Museum, Manuscript Collections, Ripon Papers, Vol. 133, Add Mss 43,623, ff81.

¹¹⁸See, for instance, Clark, The Governesses, Chapter One; Jackel, A Flannel Shirt and Liberty, "Introduction."

immigration, with the preference given to respectable females."¹¹⁹ While the local press mocked Franklin's dedication to female immigration, his commitment was unwavering.¹²⁰ In 1861, he gave the House all the usual reasons for white female migration, arguing that "The population at present attracted hither was most migratory in its character. He wished to see a more permanent population, and especially female immigration encouraged."¹²¹ The British Colonist said that Franklin "canvassed the electors with a promise to bring out from England or somewhere a cargo of damsels." While people might object to other aspects of his platform, they thought that if "he had fulfilled his promise he would have proved a father to his country," an interesting comment given Franklin's status as a Jew and a bachelor.¹²²

In spite of the propaganda, when the long-sought after assisted white female immigration was inaugurated, the local elite was confused and uninformed. "This London 'Columbia Mission Meeting' has taken us quite by surprise," wrote New Westminster missionary H.P. Wright in a private letter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in April 1862. While he had told metropolitan friends of British Columbia's desire for white female immigrants, he had

¹¹⁹"Electors of Victoria Town," British Colonist, 20 12 1859. Also see Untitled, Weekly Victoria Gazette, 28 12 1859.

¹²⁰"Mr. Selim Franklin's Address to the Victoria Town Electors," British Colonist, 20 12 1859. They cast aspersions on his own marital status. "And whence Mr. F.'s special anxiety on this point? Is he tired of single blessedness, but afraid to plunge into matrimony until servants girls' wages are lowered?"

¹²¹"Vancouver Island House of Assembly," Victoria Press, 09 10 1861.

¹²²"Enducements to Families to Settle in Victoria," British Colonist, 30 11 1861.

expected neither the pace nor the form that it took. "The Bishop is as much puzzled as I am," he added.¹²³ The local press was not much better connected or informed. They had been reporting since late in 1861 that Bishop Hills had a female immigration scheme underway,¹²⁴ but could produce little more than snippets of conflicting and incorrect information throughout the spring of 1862.¹²⁵

It was not until June of 1862 that a "local committee" was formed in Victoria to "co-operate with the Columbian Emigration Society lately formed in London with a view of facilitating the Emigration of industrious women and other suitable classes to the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia."¹²⁶ This committee looked much like the other manifestations of the local, improving elite, constituted, as it was, by a potent mix of Anglican clergy, improving businessmen, colonial officials, and naval officers.¹²⁷ There apparently was no room for white female immigration's

¹²³H.P.W. to Sir, 30 04 1862, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Letters Received Columbia 1861-1867," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss H/A/So2, Volume 2, 49-50.

¹²⁴"Female Immigration," Victoria Press, 30 12 1861.

¹²⁵"English Emigration" Victoria Press, 07 05 1862; "Female Immigrants" Victoria Press, 08 05 1862.

¹²⁶"Columbia Emigration Society" Victoria Press, 08 06 1862; "Columbian Immigration Society," British Colonist, 09 06 1862. Also see George Hills, "Journal 1 January-21 July 1862," [Transcript], ADN/EPBC, p58.

¹²⁷Its membership was Bishop Hills (Chair); Archdeacon Wright; Dr. W.F. Tolmie; Robert Burnaby; Gilbert M. Sproat; Lieut. Commander E. Hope Verney; Robert Courtney (Secretary).

Jewish "father," Franklin. A committee of prominent wives of the colonial elite¹²⁸ was to be formed after the arrival of the emigrants.¹²⁹

Even after the establishment of this committee, communication between the Columbia Emigration Society and FMCES in London and British Columbia was sharply limited. Local committee member Verney wrote to his father, explaining that the Victoria group was confused about the basic intentions, structure, and opinions of their British benefactors.¹³⁰ On the mainland, the colonial elite was frustrated when the Columbia Emigration Society's British committee played into inter-colonial rivalry and resisted all attempts to form a local committee.¹³¹

Limited communication hinted at a deeper conflict between the intentions of the metropolitan female emigration movement and local whites. Women in the FMCES embraced emigration as one way of fostering white female independence. A contributor to the English Woman's Journal was blunt: "the promoters of female emigration look upon it as anything more than one among many means of improving the condition of women. The most effectual mode of helping women, both at home

¹²⁸Its members were Mrs. Douglas; Mrs. Harris; Mrs. Alston; Mrs. Cridge; Mrs. Arthur Fellows; Mrs. Mowatt; Mrs. McCreight; Mrs. Nagle; Mrs. Rhodes; Mrs. Trutch; Mrs. R Woods. See Rev. Cridge to James Douglas, 14 07 1863, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1322, File 396/3.

¹²⁹"The Female Immigrants," Victoria Press, 21 09 1862.

¹³⁰Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 07 08 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p78-80.

¹³¹Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 16 08 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p83.

and abroad, is no doubt to remove all industrial disabilities."¹³² The FMCES explicitly distanced themselves from those who equated female emigration with the marriage market. They argued that women should never look upon immigration as a mere means to marriage: emigrating women must "fully understand that they go for *work for independence*, not to marry, and be idle."¹³³

From the outset, white British Columbians made clear that their reasons for supporting the assisted migration of white women were different. They wanted female immigrants as wives for working-class white men, especially miners. The Victoria Press's London correspondent argued that:

According to the last census there are in England 544,021 more females than males; in Scotland 167,279, and in Ireland 144,621; so you see we could spare you one hundred thousand and feel no loss, because the softer sex have a majority of 855,921 over their sterner lords. The College of Female Emigration for British Columbia and Vancouver Island are using all their endeavours to supply the market with that most desirable of all commodities - wives for the diggers, - that they may continue to dig into the bowels of the earth still deeper, and accumulate sufficient to support them in their declining years.¹³⁴

The overwhelming prevalence of the conviction that the assisted migrants were to be wives overpowered their putative role as servants. Writers made clear that while

¹³²C.E.C., "XIV-Middle-Class Female Emigration Impartially Considered: The Emigration of Educated A Women Examined from a Colonial Point of View. By a Lady Who Has Resided Eleven Years in One of the Australian Colonies," The English Woman's Journal 10:68 (01 10 1862) p83.

¹³³S.C., "Emigration for Educated Women," The English Woman's Journal 8:87 (01 03 1861) p8. Emphasis original.

¹³⁴"Letter from London," Victoria Press, 29 06 1862.

British Columbia wanted white female servants, it did so because service prepared women for marriage to working men. One newspaper, for instance, called for the migration of servant women on the grounds that "Good servants make excellent wives for poor men, a fact which the latter are fully alive to."¹³⁵ While high wages and good working conditions were offered, white working-class female independence was not ultimately compatible with the colonial project.

The ability of colonial discourse to subvert the possibility of white female independence in this realm suggests the extent to which the feminist intentions of the female migration movement were modified in colonial contexts. Upon receiving news that British Columbia was to be an object of the FMCES's benevolent intentions, the local press made clear that the colony would accept the assisted migrants only on explicitly anti-feminist terms:

We never knew a man with matrimony in his eyes who expressed any affection for 'bluestockings'...The women we want in this and other colonies are women prepared to rough it as well as ourselves, women who, while acting as domestic servants, the class we particularly lack, will possess all the fair graces of womanhood and the virtues which will make them an ornament to their sex, at once model servants as well as model wives.¹³⁶

Like W.R. Greg, this journalist saw female migration as a means of fortifying the binary status of nineteenth-century gender.¹³⁷ Women like Rye's goals for female

¹³⁵"Yankee Girls," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 23 04 1864.

¹³⁶"Hope for Educated Women," British Colonist, 01 07 1862

¹³⁷Greg, "Why Are Women Redundant?" p431-460.

emigration were undermined by existing colonial discourses and the unwillingness of metropolitan feminists to provide a substantive critique of them.

Lack of communication and divergent political goals did not dampen local excitement about the boat-load of young white women. As the *Tynemouth* neared, local journalists kept track of her movements, noting her path, the cargo she carried, and her staff.¹³⁸ When news reached Victoria that the *Tynemouth* was near, "a great rush was made to the store of a gentleman to whom the ship was consigned."¹³⁹ The local press worked hard to build anticipation about the arrival of sixty eligible women. The British Colonist wrote: "There are any members of young and old bachelors in the two Colonies whose forlorn appearance seems like a standing advertisement in a daily newspaper of 'a wife wanted.' Such persons, if they don't embrace the opportunity that will be held out to them when the *Tynemouth* gets in should themselves be taxed heavily for the luxury of leading a life of single blessedness."¹⁴⁰ "Sixty single ladies -- think of it, ye single, bald-headed, and a-little-on-the-grey order, and build your habitations larger!" the Victoria Press later wrote.¹⁴¹ The arrival of the *Tynemouth* should be a cause for real celebration: "bachelors both young and old must prepare to

¹³⁸"Emigration" Victoria Press, 20 07 1862; "Female Emigration" Victoria Press, 23 07 1862; "Letter from London" Victoria Press, 05 08 1862; "Prospects Brightening," Victoria Press, 06 08 1862; "More Female Immigration," Victoria Press, 24 08 1862; "The *Tynemouth*," Victoria Press, 16 08 1862; "Tynemouth," British Colonist, 01 08 1862; "Hope for Bachelors," British Columbian, 10 05 1862.

¹³⁹One of the Disappointed, Untitled, British Columbian, 07 06 1862.

¹⁴⁰"Wives for our Bachelors," British Colonist, 04 06 1862.

¹⁴¹"Prospects Brightening," Victoria Press, 06 08 1862.

give a fitting reception," wrote the British Colonist. "A general holiday should be proclaimed; all the bunting wave from the flagstaffs; salutes fired from Beacon Hill; clean shirts and suits of good clothes brought into requisition."¹⁴²

The *Tynemouth* finally rolled into James Bay on 19 September 1862, bringing scandal, excitement, and disappointment. During the three month passage around the Cape, the coal-passers had struck¹⁴³ and some twenty sailors had deserted at San Francisco.¹⁴⁴ In the days following the *Tynemouth's* arrival, the Police Court was filled with sailors charged by the ship's captain with "refusing to do duty."¹⁴⁵ Stories escalated until it acknowledged that "the crew broke into open mutiny twice,"¹⁴⁶ and that between the Falkland Island and San Francisco passengers had served as sailors.¹⁴⁷ Eventually, four sailors' were given one months hard labour and a fine for their participation in the strike, in part because their captain apparently again required their service.¹⁴⁸ The ship carried paying passengers as well as the sixty assisted immigrants. A few months later, some paying passengers sued the *Tynemouth* for leaving them

¹⁴²"The 'Tynemouth's' Invoice of Young Ladies," British Colonist, 11 09 1862

¹⁴³Charles E. Redfern, "Reminiscences of a Long Sea Voyage in 1862", [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss E/E/R24, p1-2. Also see *Tynemouth (Ship)*, "Miscellaneous papers related to Passengers contract ticket, 1862," BCARS, Add Mss J/G/T97.

¹⁴⁴"Arrival of the *Tynemouth*," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

¹⁴⁵"Police Court - Yesterday," Victoria Press, 21 09 1862.

¹⁴⁶"Arrival of the *Tynemouth*," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

¹⁴⁷"Amateur Sailors," Victoria Press, 21 09 1862.

¹⁴⁸"Police Court," Victoria Press, 24 09 1862.

behind in San Francisco.¹⁴⁹

The conditions of the white female immigrants, who were kept separate on the long voyage, were also something of a scandal. A "portion of the vessel amidship was set apart for their exclusive use and occupation, into which other passengers were not permitted to enter," wrote *Tynemouth* passenger and future Victoria mayor Charles Redfern.¹⁵⁰ While this shielded them from male attention, it did not protect them from wretched conditions or boredom. "The accommodations for the emigrants are represented to be very defective, the place apportioned to the single females being dark and much in want of ventilation," noted the Victoria Press.¹⁵¹ Another passenger, artist Frederick Whympers, remarked that "they must have passed the dreariest three months of their existence on board, for they were isolated from the rest of the passengers and could only look on at the fun and amusement in which everyone else could take a part."¹⁵² Not surprisingly, the women did not appreciate being restrained.¹⁵³ But even the men appointed to monitor the women's morals could not agree on how to accomplish their goal. The chaplain, Mr. Scott, reportedly did not speak to the Captain for much of the voyage, and "unsatisfactory accounts of the

¹⁴⁹"Another Prosecution Under the Passenger Act," Victoria Press, 15 10 1862;
 "Another Prosecution Under the Passenger Act," Victoria Press, 16 10 1862.

¹⁵⁰Redfern, "Reminiscences," p1.

¹⁵¹"Arrival of the Tynemouth," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

¹⁵² Fredrick Whympers, Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1966 [London, John Murray, 1868]) p2.

¹⁵³ George Hills, "Journal 1 January- 10 June 1863," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p30.

cleanliness and discipline of his ship" were widely rumoured.¹⁵⁴

Troubled voyage or not, the arrival of all these white female bodies was transformed into a spectacle unlike any seen before in Victoria. When the *Tynemouth* was in harbour, five men tried, without success, to board the ship to "catch a glimpse of the rosy-cheeked English beauties."¹⁵⁵ The women were eventually brought from the *Tynemouth* to James Bay on that ultimate symbol of colonial authority, the gunboat *Forward*, watched, as one paper noted, "before the admiring gaze of some 300 residents."¹⁵⁶ So thick was the crowd watching the women move from the gunboat to their accommodations at the Marine Barracks that "it required the united exertions of four policemen and the same number of stalwart marines to obtain a passage for the fair immigrants."¹⁵⁷ "[E]very available inch of ground from which a view could be obtained," wrote the British Columbian, was "occupied by men of all ages and colors, eagerly looking for a sight of the long looked for and much talked about cargo."¹⁵⁸ In his official report, Anglican minister Edward Cridge called this "a large but orderly concourse of people."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 20 09 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p90. Also see Hills, "Journal 1 January- 10 June 1863," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p30.

¹⁵⁵"Wouldn't Let them Aboard," British Colonist, 19 09 1862.

¹⁵⁶"Landed," Victoria Press, 19 09 1862

¹⁵⁷"The Female Immigrants," Victoria Press, 21 09 1862.

¹⁵⁸"The Tynemouth and her Cargo," British Columbian, 24 09 1862.

¹⁵⁹Rev. Cridge to James Douglas, 14 07 1863, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1322, File 396/3.

The spectacle did not end when the women came ashore. The crowd followed the women to the Marine Barracks and continued their surveillance project. The press dubbed the motley but vigilant male observers "A large and anxious crowd of breeches-wearing bipeds."¹⁶⁰ However anxious, the crowd did open a passage large enough for the women to march two-by-two to their temporary quarters.¹⁶¹ A few days later, journalists remarked that the constant presence of young male eyes restricted the women's movements. The "young women," they wrote, "were unable to enjoy a walk in the enclosure without being subjected to the gaze of a rabble of some forty persons, who hung about the premises, and leaning on the fence, scanned the inmates in a manner that was disgraceful."¹⁶²

This spectacle was organized primarily around the right of white men to access the migrant women as the cargo that they were. And judge them they did. The British Colonist's journalists managed to get aboard the steamer and took "a good look at the lady passengers." They found them acceptable and remarked on their suitability as wives. "They are mostly cleanly, well built, pretty looking young women – ages ranging from fourteen to an uncertain figure; a few are young widows who have seen better days," they noted. "Most appear to have been well raised and generally they seem a superior lot to the women usually met with on emigrant vessels. Taken

¹⁶⁰"The 'Tynemouth's' Females," British Colonist, 20 09 1862.

¹⁶¹"The Tynemouth and her Cargo," British Columbian, 24 09 1862.

¹⁶²"The Female Immigrants," Victoria Press, 22 09 1862.

altogether, we are highly pleased with the appearance of the 'invoice.'"¹⁶³ Competing journalists of the British Columbian were less positive in their judgement. "Altho' in the lot there are perhaps few that might be called good-looking," one wrote, "as a whole, they were neat and tidy, and presented a very creditable appearance." "There are a few stout looking women amongst them," he continued, "but the majority are slender, having the appearance of girls of from 12 to 15 years of age." In future, they added, the Committee should take more care in selected suitable migrants.¹⁶⁴

Even those who did not personally peruse the immigrants in person heard of their arrival. Victoria was abuzz with the ship's arrival. In his diary, Charles Hayward noted "Excitement in town owing to girls' arrival" on 19 September.¹⁶⁵ In a similar vein, Emmerson wrote that "The arrival of those girls was anticipated several months, and formed the main topic of conversation: and on the first intimation of the approach of the vessel with its fair freight the inhabitants were at once on the tip-toe of expectation, and turned out *en masse* to witness the disembarkation."¹⁶⁶ But this hype extended well beyond the city limits. On the road between the Cariboo and Yale, missionaries "heard of the arrival of the Tynemouth steamer from England"¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³"Arrival of the 'Tynemouth,'" British Colonist, 19 09 1862.

¹⁶⁴"The Tynemouth and her Cargo," British Columbian, 24 09 1862.

¹⁶⁵Charles Hayward, "Diary 1862," BCARS, Mflm A-741, np.

¹⁶⁶Emmerson, Travels, Voyages, and Adventures, p139.

¹⁶⁷"Mission Work in British Columbia, Chiefly From the Journals of Rev. R.J. Dundas," in J.J. Halcombe, The Emigrant and the Heathen, or, Sketches of Missionary Life (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, nd [1870?])p226-7.

and in New Westminster, Mary Moody wrote to her mother about the anticipated arrival of the servant women.¹⁶⁸

The spectacle and controversy did not cease with disembarkment. After negotiating the crowds of men, the women were sequestered at the Marine Barracks, while the Committee worked to place them as domestic servants.¹⁶⁹ As Bishop Hills was away visiting the interior, this task fell on a disorganized group of local elites. The colonial government provided no support beyond authorizing the temporary use of the barracks.¹⁷⁰ Verney enumerated the many ills and disadvantages that plagued the Committee's efforts:

Until three days before she came in, no preparations had been made for the reception of the females beyond plenty of discussion at committee meetings: we concluded that we could do nothing because, as a committee, we had received no information that such a ship as the 'Tynemouth' was on her way out, nor did we know, as a committee, on what terms she was bringing out female emigrants: so when ladies came to us to engage servants we could not answer what wages they would expect, nor whether they had made any agreement to accept such situations as the committee should procure from them: in addition to this, we could procure no official recognition of our existence as a committee from the governor or any one else...an official recognition of our existence as a committee, was sent to us by the Colonial Secretary *after* the women were landed: add to this that the Bishop is at Cariboo, the Governor in British Columbia, and the Archdeacon at New Westminster, and you will divine how aghast the Committee looked, when they

¹⁶⁸Mary Moody to Mother, 20 05 1862, Mary Moody, "Outward Correspondence," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 60, Volume 1 & 2, p91.

¹⁶⁹"The Female Immigrants" Victoria Press, 21 09 1862.

¹⁷⁰Richard Courtney, to W.A.G Young, 30 07 1862, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1320, File 369/2. Also see draft reply on verso.

were told that their sixty young ladies might be expected in two days or less.¹⁷¹ In a defensive and detailed report, the Committee explained how they borrowed food, supplies, and labour to transform the Marine Barracks into accommodations considered suitable for the young white women.¹⁷² While Cridge defended their actions as adequate and worthy,¹⁷³ others disagreed. For months to follow, members of the committee struggled over who should pay for the reception of the young women.¹⁷⁴

The Ladies Committee, who seem to have performed much of the work involved in despatching the young women, was not exempt from these difficulties and controversies. Despite initially praise, the Ladies Committee was later criticized for confining their work to "keeping down the price of wages by combination than to doing the best in their power for the benefit of their charges."¹⁷⁵ Such charges, interestingly, suggest that the bourgeois ladies' class interests overwhelmed their gender-solidarity. Others called attention to the wider failure of white women to assist the immigrants. One letter-writer wrote that "the ladies of this City, hitherto most liberal and patriotic, have been so remiss in coming forward to sustain our efficient

¹⁷¹ Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 20 09 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p89.

¹⁷² Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Robert Burnaby, and W.M. Davie to Governor, 29 09 1862, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1366, File 1638.

¹⁷³ Cridge to Douglas, 14 07 1863.

¹⁷⁴ Gilbert Sproat to Governor, 11 06 1863, BCARS, GR 1372, "Colonial Correspondence," File 1368, Mflm B-1366; Gilbert Sproat to W.A.G. Young, 14 01 1863, BCARS, GR 1372, "Colonial Correspondence," File 1368, Mflm B-1366.

¹⁷⁵ "The Immigration Committee," Victoria Press, 22 09 1862.

Immigration Board, who are doing their utmost to meet the requirements of our Immigrants, particularly the 'tender sex.'"¹⁷⁶

These committees were also controversial because of their responsibility for the task of protecting the women from that very thing that justified their importation -- male attention and desire. A fence around the barracks ensured that the women could not leave, although "a few straggled away, but were brought back by the vigilant police," Verney told his father.¹⁷⁷ When a young woman staying at the barracks "engaged in an animated conversation with a young man on the outside of the enclosure," two clergymen and a naval officer quickly intervened. The British Colonist mocked their prudishness by suggesting that a guard of marines be placed around the barracks and that interloping men be bayoneted.¹⁷⁸ Instead, clergy as well as police were enlisted in the effort to shape the women's contact with the community around them. A week after their landing, Reverend Scott gave a highly publicized sermon to the women, bidding them to remember their role as colonizers and representatives of English womanhood. He told them "always and under any circumstances to shape their conduct so that they might prove a credit to their English mothers, from whom many were now departed forever."¹⁷⁹ If this message was lost on

¹⁷⁶Thomasina, "Help to Immigrants," Victoria Press, 28 09 1862.

¹⁷⁷Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 20 09 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p90.

¹⁷⁸"Shocking Depravity," British Colonist, 29 09 1862.

¹⁷⁹"Impressive Sermon," British Colonist, 22 09 1862.

the young workhouse girls, it was keenly appreciated by at least one self-improving young British man. Hayward attended the event, calling it in his diary a "most impressive sermon," and noting that Scott "gave the Ladies first class characters and gave his blessing hoping they would soon be comfortable as English wives and mothers."¹⁸⁰ These efforts aimed to ensure that the brideships would produce respectable heterosexuality, and not easy, expressive, working-class sexual contact.

The excitement, confusion, spectacle, and challenge of the *Tynemouth* was replicated in the voyage of the *Robert Lowe*. This ship reached Victoria four months later in January 1863 with another batch of white women endorsed by the mission, but again co-ordinated by Rye,¹⁸¹ who referred to them as "My 40 women."¹⁸² Like its predecessor, the *Robert Lowe* was made an object of careful attention in British Columbia, its progress across the seas monitored.¹⁸³ Such interest was probably increased by of the *Robert Lowe's* long, one hundred and fourteen day voyage.¹⁸⁴ She carried thirty-six or thirty-eight women, mostly from Manchester and Lancashire.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰Hayward, "Diary 1862," np.

¹⁸¹The press argued that the women "have been sent out by the philanthropic Miss Rye. See "Arrival of the Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 12 01 1863.

¹⁸²"Female Middle-Class Emigration Society," London Times, 12 09 1862.

¹⁸³"Emigration Direct," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

¹⁸⁴"Arrival of the Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 12 01 1863. Hayward made careful note of the ship, which carried his wife Sally. See Hayward, "Diary 1862," np.

¹⁸⁵The press claimed thirty-eight. See "Arrival of the Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 12 01 1863; B.R.P., "XXVIII.- The Last News of the Emigrants" The English Woman's Journal 11:63 (01 05 1863) p185. Cridge later put the number at thirty-six. See Rev. Cridge to James Douglas, 14 07 1863, "Colonial Correspondence,"

When the *Robert Lowe* finally arrived on 12 January, Victoria's crowd put on another spectacular performance. The Emigration Committee was better prepared this time, and requested government money as soon as the women landed.¹⁸⁶ The British Colonist took care to dampen fears about poor or amoral shipboard conditions: "Everything, in fact, that a tender parent could do for his daughters' house and welfare," was performed by the captain and chaplain.¹⁸⁷ They also admonished the receiving Committee, bidding them to more effectively protect the women from the diabolical attentions of aimless young working-class men than the last time. "There is not the slightest necessity for any parade about so simple a matter as the landing of a few passengers, and we cannot conceive anything more heartless or ill considered than to have these poor young strangers, we don't care of what sex, but jeered to the rude gaze of a motley crowd of roughs who, instead of running about idle, should be engaged with the shovel or the axe earning an honest living."¹⁸⁸

Despite such warnings, a "vast crowd" assembled to watch the women land. While the *Robert Lowe's* regular passengers were brought to shore by civilian steamboat, the assisted female migrants were again given official colonial status and

BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1322, File 396/3. Hills claimed they were from Lancashire. See George Hills, "Journal 1 January-10 June 1863," p5.

¹⁸⁶Robert Burnaby to A.G. Young, 12 01 1863, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1312, File 234/3.

¹⁸⁷"Arrival of the Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 12 01 1863.

¹⁸⁸"Arrival of the Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 12 01 1863.

protection by the gunboat *Grappler*.¹⁸⁹ A special footpath between James Bay and the Immigration Barracks was created and lined by prominent bourgeois women, including the Mayor's wife, Mrs. Harris, and Mrs. Cridge, wife of Anglican minister and Immigration Committee member Edward Cridge. Despite the attempt to imbue the landing with civility and gentility, represented most notably by the conspicuous presence of elite white women, the rough, homosocial culture of colonial British Columbia again prevailed. By the time of landing, the crowd reportedly numbered one thousand. "The girls," according to the British Colonist, "had to run the gamut through the utterance of coarse jokes and personalities."¹⁹⁰ A significant police presence did not, the newspaper thought, make sufficient use of their authority to control this rough and disorderly male crowd.¹⁹¹ Despite efforts to sanitize the process, the white women's arrival again tested colonial British Columbians' claim to respectable status instead of, as was expected, ensuring it.

The women of the *Robert Lowe* were judged as their predecessors had been. Verney wrote that they were "evidently of a lower class than those who came in the 'Tynemouth'; and perhaps better suited for the colony as a whole."¹⁹² Hills deemed them "Plain simple young women," mainly factory workers.¹⁹³ Such cautious and

¹⁸⁹"The Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 13 01 1863.

¹⁹⁰"The Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 13 01 1863.

¹⁹¹"The Robert Lowe," British Colonist, 13 01 1863.

¹⁹² Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 06 01 1863, in Pritchard, Vancouver Island Letters, ed., p114.

¹⁹³Hills, "Journal 1 January-10 June 1863," p5.

class-bound optimism was further blunted by the discovery of wide-spread illness among the women. The voyage was long and at least two women arrived "almost in a dying state."¹⁹⁴ They were so ill, thought Hills, that they should never have been sent.¹⁹⁵ The need to care for these women led a group of elite white women, most notably Harris and Cridge, to form an organization dedicated to relieving indigent white women. "Two unfortunate cases of females per the 'Robert Lowe,'" wrote Edward Cridge, "landed here in an advanced stage of consumption were the immediate cause of the formation of this society."¹⁹⁶ In late 1864, the ladies succeeded in building and opening the Pandora Street's Female Infirmary.¹⁹⁷

After the *Tynemouth* and the *Robert Lowe*, interest in assisted white female immigration waned but never ceased in British Columbia. The local press kept close track of assisted female migration elsewhere, including to Washington Territory¹⁹⁸ and

¹⁹⁴Cridge to Douglas, 14 07 1863.

¹⁹⁵Hills, "Journal 1 January-10 June 1863,"p5.

¹⁹⁶Cridge to Douglas, 14 07 1863.

¹⁹⁷"The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 21 11 1864; "The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 24 11 1864;Female Aid Association: Report for the Year Ending February, 1864 (Victoria, NP, ND [1864]); Female Infirmary for the Sick and Destitute of All Denominations (Victoria, NP, ND [1866]); Female Infirmary for the Sick and Destitute of all Denominations (Victoria, NP, ND [1867])

¹⁹⁸"Female Immigration to Puget Sound," Vancouver Times, 19 09 1865; "Female Emigration," Vancouver Times, 28 09 1865; "Female Immigration to Puget Sound," Vancouver Times, 10 11 1865; "The Female Immigration to Puget Sound," Vancouver Times, 31 12 1865; "The Female Immigration to the Sound," Vancouver Times, 02 01 1866; "The Mercer Immigration," Vancouver Times, 06 03 1866; "Wives for the Puget Sounders,"[rpnt. from Oregonian] British Colonist, 14 09 1865; "Female Immigration to Puget Sound," British Colonist, 20 09 1865; "Telegraphic: Female Emigration to Puget Sound," British Colonist, 28 09 1865; "The Mercer

Canada.¹⁹⁹ Immigration advocates also regularly called for a renewed effort. At an 1864 mass meeting, for instance, Macfie called for another white female immigration:

Last but not least, he would refer to a subject now rather hackneyed, both in the House and out of it – ‘Female Immigration’ – (laughter). He (the speaker) had talked with many families here, and he was sure that 500 respectable girls, brought out in small detachments, would be immediately absorbed. He would not lead these girls to believe that husbands were waiting for them on the wharves, and that proposals of marriage would be made to each of them in a few hours, but that they might get respectable places at a high rate of wages. He knew of many well-to-do mechanics who were obliged to go to California to secure partners for life because they could not find them here. (laughter) He attached the utmost importance – not to talking about this subject, as had been done for the last two years, but to active energetic movement in the matter.²⁰⁰

Macfie’s vision of white female immigration combined an older belief in the political instrumentality of white women with a new scepticism about its practicality. Such ambivalence also informed the mainland government’s ultimately unexecuted decision to fund female immigration in 1865 which one member declined to support because “He understood it was to be a repetition of the *Robert Lowe* affair.”²⁰¹

Female Immigration Bubble,” [rpnt. from *Oregonian*] *British Colonist*, 28 03 1866; “Arrival of the Mercer’s Female Emigrants,” *British Colonist*, 09 05 1866; “Bachelors Beware!” *British Colonist*, 09 05 1866; “The Mercer Females,” *British Colonist*, 24 05 1866; “The Condition of the Colony,” *British Colonist*, 05 06 1866; “Mercer at Seattle,” *British Colonist*, 13 06 1866; “Female Immigration,” *British Columbian*, 30 09 1865.

¹⁹⁹“Female Immigration,” *British Colonist*, 26 04 1864; Untitled, *British Colonist*, 16 10 1868; “Miss Rye,” *British Colonist*, 15 12 1868; Untitled, *British Colonist*, 28 01 1869; “Female Emigration,” *British Columbian*, 20 06 1868.

²⁰⁰“Immigration Mass Meeting,” *British Colonist*, 14 03 1864.

²⁰¹“Legislative Council,” *British Columbian*, 25 01 1865; “Legislative Council,” *British Columbian*, 09 03 1865; “British Columbia,” *Vancouver Times*, 28 02 1865.

By 1868, memories of earlier, scandal-ridden efforts had faded sufficiently for another female immigration movement to begin anew. The British Columbian suggested that the Governor ask Maria Rye to again turn her attentions to British Columbia, where "a large number of respectable young women would be certain to obtain either good situations or good husbands."²⁰² The British Colonist agreed, commenting early in 1869 that with "an assisted system of immigration, we should import not only able household servants, but thrifty wives for our settlers, and secure the means of rapidly filling the country with a permanent population."²⁰³

While the assisted female immigration efforts of 1862 and 1863 were conducted with minimal state involvement, the movement of 1869 was, from its onset, a government affair. In March 1868, Governor Fredrick Seymour agreed to the Legislature's proposal of appointing "a Local Board for the furtherance of Female Immigration."²⁰⁴ Yet the state was not substantially more efficient than the representatives of civil society who had superintended earlier efforts. It was not until early 1869 that a Select Committee of the House was struck to consider female immigration.²⁰⁵ The Committee recommended a limited scheme targeting no more than

²⁰²"Female Emigration," British Columbian, 20 06 1868.

²⁰³Untitled, British Colonist, 28 01 1869.

²⁰⁴Frederick Seymour to Earl of Granville, 17 03 1868, in CO 60/35, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1445.

²⁰⁵The members were Robson, Drake, Ball, Bushby, and Alston. See James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871 Volume IV, "Journals of the Legislative Council of British Columbia, 1866-1871" (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British

forty immigrants, all "Female Servants, from the age of 18 to 30 years." The government should pay \$75 toward their passage, and prospective employers should contribute another \$50. Servants would also be responsible for \$50, which would be deducted from their monthly wages over the two year period they were bound to service. A local committee should be struck both to co-ordinate the emigration and report to the Governor.²⁰⁶ The local press thought this Committee, "though small in itself and necessarily limited in its immediate results, a step in the right direction"²⁰⁷ and their report "one of the most progressive steps taken since Union."²⁰⁸ When Anthony Musgrave was appointed Governor, he, like his predecessor,²⁰⁹ easily assented to this plan and allocated an impressive \$5000 to it.²¹⁰

Constituted by Bishop Hills, H.P.P Crease, John Robson, Henry Rhodes, W.J. McDonald, and Henry S. Mason, this Board of Female Immigration was a more

Columbia, 1980) p212-3; "Legislative Council," British Columbian, 13 02 1869; "The Legislative Council," British Columbian, 16 03 1869.

²⁰⁶Hendrickson, ed., Volume IV, p218; "Legislative Council," British Colonist, 11 02 1869; "Legislative Council," British Colonist, 12 02 1869

²⁰⁷"Immigration," British Columbian, 19 03 1869.

²⁰⁸ Untitled, British Colonist, 17 02 1869; Untitled, British Colonist, 23 02 1869.

²⁰⁹ See "Speech of his Excellency the Governor, at the Proration of the Legislative Council," British Columbia Government Gazette, 15 03 1869, CO 63/4, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490.

²¹⁰Hendrickson, ed., Volume IV, p249-253, p271; "Opening of the Legislative Council" British Columbia Government Gazette, 19 02 1870, CO 63/4, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490.

professional affair than its haphazard predecessors.²¹¹ They met regularly and their business was efficiently summarized by their zealous secretary, Mason.²¹² They quickly developed a detailed application form which asked prospective employers to specify their occupation, size of family, religion, and other information. They advertised their work, widely publishing the application form in the local press.²¹³ The Female Immigration Board's intention was clearly to implicate white families in the scheme by having them commit to a servant and take responsibility for part of her passage. Yet this approach proved problematic, as members of the local middle-class were frequently unwilling to pledge money on the immigration effort.²¹⁴ The Board, in response, quickly modified their intentions, telling Hills that "just now people seen rather disposed to see how the scheme works on a small scale first." They would,

²¹¹See notice, British Columbia Government Gazette, 03 04 1869, CO 63/4, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490; "Assisted Female Immigration," British Columbian, 14 04 1869; "Female Immigration," British Columbian, 18 04 1869. Later, B.W. Pearse was appointed to replace Hills while in Britain. See "Female Immigration," British Colonist, 10 06 1870.

²¹²See Henry Mason to Private Secretary, 13 04 1869, p4; Henry Mason to A.J. Bushby, 15 04 1869, p5; Henry Mason to Private Secretary, 01 05 1869, p5, in "Assisted Female Immigration Letter Book," British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents", BCARS, GR 419, Box 10, File 1872/1.

²¹³Minutes of 13 04 1869, in Henry Mason to the Colonial Secretary, 18 09 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1345, File 1117. For ad, see "Immigration Board," British Colonist, 14 04 1869; "Assisted Female Immigration," British Columbia Government Gazette, 24 04 1869, CO 63/4, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490. Some people were confused about how families would be selected. See Pater Familias, "Female Immigration," British Columbian, 25 03 1869.

²¹⁴A Subscriber, "The Female Immigration Scheme," British Colonist, 15 05 1869; Family Man, "Immigration," British Colonist, 26 04 1869.

then, only seek twenty women.²¹⁵ In response to the unexpected windfall of government money and the modified scope of their programme, they reduced the amount of money both servant and employer would be compelled to contribute²¹⁶ and later decided to allow servants to submit promissory notes in lieu of cash.²¹⁷

From the outset, the Board worked to guarantee the women's sufficient and proper regulation after landing. They recommended that their wages be no less than ten or twelve dollars a month, and that they be bound to two years service. More radically, the Board suggested that the women's employment contract be governed by a specially-enacted labour law: "It is proposed to enforce these Agreements for hiring by special Legislation at the next Session providing a summary penalty for breach of covenant before a Magistrate enforceable if necessary by Imprisonment," they wrote.²¹⁸ The local press was more concerned with morals, arguing that there should a matron appointed for every forty emigrants and a local committee dedicated to "the comfort of

²¹⁵Elsewhere they wrote that "Although the Immigration Board have every Confidence in the successful working of the proposed plan for Assisted Female Immigration, Yet as it is untried they find some hesitation on the part of the public in availing themselves of the facilities offered." See Minutes for 20 05 1869, in Henry Mason to the Colonial Secretary, 18 09 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1345, File 1117; "The Immigration Scheme," British Columbian, 21 05 1869; "The Female Emigration Scheme," British Columbian, 19 06 1869.

²¹⁶Henry Mason to The Bishop, 09 07 1869, in "Female Immigration Letter Book," p6-9. They wrote that servants should pay L15 of the passage money and the employer pay L10 and additional monies needed for travel expenses.

²¹⁷"Female Immigration," British Columbian, 21 04 1869.

²¹⁸Henry Mason to The Bishop, 09 07 1869, in "Female Immigration Letter Book," p6-9.

the young women on their arrival."²¹⁹

While this emigration effort was intended as a government effort, the Board relied heavily, as had earlier movements, on the established local elite and British emigration organizations. Their list of prospective employers read something like a who's who of the Victoria elite, and was especially heavy in colonial officials.²²⁰ At some point, they wrote to Maria Rye regarding advice on how to conduct their immigration.²²¹ Eventually, the Female Immigration Board's officiousness crumbled, and they effectively transferred their authority to the existing missionary elite. They empowered Bishop Hills, who was visiting England, to seek servants there and gave him L400.²²² The Female Immigration Board also encouraged local bourgeois families to select their own servants or have British friends do so.²²³

²¹⁹Untitled, British Colonist, 23 02 1869

²²⁰It listed the following as prospective employers: H.P. Crease, E.G. Alston, H. Rhodes, H.W. Mist, J.W. Powell, J.W. Williams, Fras. Garesche, Edgar Marvin, J. Krieuler, Redson Young, Jos. Needham, M.W.J. Drake, J.H. Turner, W.R. Spalding, J.W. Trutch. See H.S. Mason to Acting Colonial Secretary, 18 06 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1345, File 1116.

²²¹Minutes for 20 04 1869, in Henry Mason to the Colonial Secretary, 18 09 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1345, File 1117. This was suggested by the press. See Untitled, British Colonist, 23 02 1869.

²²²Henry Mason to Officer Administering the Government, 18 06 1869, p10 and Henry Mason to The Bishop, 26 06 1869, p11, in "Female Immigration Letter Book." George Hills, "Hills Journal 1869," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p6.

²²³Minutes for 20 04 1869, in Henry Mason to the Colonial Secretary, 18 09 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1345, File 1117. The British Columbian wrote "We learn also, that the applicant can, if he prefers, have his servant specially selected for him by his own friends instead of by the Committee in England." See "Female Immigration," British Columbian, 21 04 1869; "Immigration Board," British Colonist, 21 04 1869.

The Female Immigration Board worked not only to rationalize their efforts and perfect their regulatory apparatus, but to minimize the extent to which assisted immigration was seen as an elaborate match-making affair by emphasizing the women's roles as servants, and not potential wives. In large part, this was accomplished by ensuring that each immigrant had a prospective employer. Yet despite these efforts, white men in British Columbia seem to have interpreted this effort primarily as a way to procure white spouses. In the Cariboo Sentinel, one wrote about waiting for the female immigrants, comparing his solitary life to the female-filled days of Mormon leader Brigham Young:

Would I were a Mormon,
 With four-and-twenty wives,
 With twice a hundred children,
 And twice ten human lives!
 I'd raise me up a kingdom
 All of my kith and kin,
 And make me a little paradise
 For all that dwelt therein,
 And is it well, Oh, Brigham Young,
 Or is it rightly done,
 That you have over forty wives,
 And I have nary one?
 And is it well your children
 Count above five score and three,
 And not a single child can trace
 His virtues down to me?...
 No sewing buttons on for you,
 No rents are wanting stitches,
 You have a spouse for everything.
 One for each pair of breeches
 And then, when weary day is over,
 Each evening of your life
 You have a home to visit,

And a new and blooming wife;
 My love is boundless as the sea,
 As certain to endure,
 Enough for four young loving wives
 I'm feeling very sure.
 Then what a shame. Oh, Brigham Young,
 You've one for every day,
 While I, in lonely cabin,
 Must mine my life away.²²⁴

Whatever the intentions of the Female Immigration Board, the poet Slum Gullion saw the arrival of white women as a way to get partners for poor white men, not servants for their wealthier counterparts.

The poet was not alone in his assumptions. The British Colonist worked hard to present the women's supposed role as servants as compatible with their destiny as the wives of working men. "Let them be plainly told," it insisted, "that if our families want servants our settlers want wives; and that the manner in which they may fulfil their agreements as servants shall be the best test of their fitness to enter woman's highest and holiest sphere of action."²²⁵ Service was thus little more than a prelude to marriage. "Fidelity and capability in service should for these girls be understood tests of fitness for matrimony – the great end and aim of all their exertions," the British Colonist later explained.²²⁶ Despite the newly professional Female Immigration Board, the popular discourse of servants as wives-to-be again prevailed.

²²⁴Slum Gullion, "Hurry Up With the Girls (Rhymes Suggested by the Female Immigration Movement)" Cariboo Sentinel, 01 04 1869.

²²⁵Untitled, British Colonist, 04 02 1869.

²²⁶Untitled, British Colonist, 26 03 1869.

If this immigration scheme brought out conflicts over the assisted migrants' role similar to those in the *Tynemouth*, it also produced similar administrative debacles and communication problems. While the local Female Immigration Board had, in part, been empowered because of fears of the inevitable delays involved in London-Victoria correspondence,²²⁷ it did not save them from these troubles. Most notably, a drunken, ill and unhappy Governor Seymour neglected to inform the Colonial Office about British Columbia's immigration plan,²²⁸ an oversight apparently revealed when Hills asked them for money.²²⁹ "Called at Colonial Office," wrote Hills in England. "Asked if they had heard from the Colony as to the Immigration of Females & the grant of the Legislature. He said this was the first time he had heard of it."²³⁰ Administrative bumbles, it seems, was a permanent component of British Columbia's colonial state.

Excitement and spectacle, like confusion and conflict, again marked the arrival of 1870's assisted immigrants. The local press again kept track of the female

²²⁷"Legislative Council," British Colonist, 13 03 1869.

²²⁸ See, for a long litany of complaints, Frederick Seymour to Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 17 03 1868, in CO 60/32, BCARS, Mflm B-1442. The Colonial Office, upon reading the tale of woe, commented confidentially that "it does not give an encouraging idea of the writers energy & determination to overcome difficulties." See note en verso from B.C. [Duke of Buckingham and Chandos], p121. On Seymour's drinking problem which eventually caused his death, see Akrigg and Akrigg, British Columbia Chronicle, p375-6.

²²⁹ See A. Musgrave to Earl of Granville, 18 10 1869, CO 60/36, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1446, p383. Also see W.I. Sergeant to F.R. Sandford, 22 07 1869, CO 60/37, BCARS, GR 1486, Mflm B-1447, p116-117.

²³⁰Hills, "Journal 1869," p43-44.

immigration effort, especially noting Hill's progress in Britain.²³¹ The British Colonist announced in December 1869 that twenty women were sailing from Liverpool on the bark *Alpha*. "No difficulty was found in securing the required number -- the trouble, indeed, being to select from the large number offering to come out girls possessing all the requirements," they commented.²³²

The arrival of the *Alpha* on 15 June 1870 was greeted with a dampened and cautious enthusiasm. Twenty-two women, including the matron, were on board.²³³ The local press took care to portray the voyage as safe and well-regulated, writing that it was "gratifying to know that, although the passage was not a quick one, it was remarkably free from any disagreeable features. Not an accident; not a storm; not a case of sickness. The immigrants were all cleanly, healthy, and well behaved, and are unanimous in their praise of Captain Neilson."²³⁴ They urged the community to care for the women, adopting the language of cross-class female benevolence and suggesting how colonial contexts could sometimes blur class boundaries. "Need we ask those in this community to whose charge these girls have been confided to think of their lonely and trying position, and, as far as circumstances may permit, act as a

²³¹"Female Immigration," British Colonist, 17 08 1869; Alfred Waddington, "Letter from the Great Overlander -- Interesting Items of Intelligence," British Colonist, 17 08 1869; Untitled, British Colonist, 03 06 1870.

²³²"The Servant Girls," British Colonist, 30 12 1869; "Female Servants for Vancouver Island" [rpnt. from European Times] British Colonist, 11 02 1870.

²³³"Arrival of the Alpha," British Colonist, 15 06 1870.

²³⁴"Arrival of Female Immigrants," British Colonist, 15 06 1870.

maternal part towards them? Do not quite lose sight of the sister in the servant."²³⁵

While the Female Immigration Board and some observers expressed happiness with this efforts, their alleged satisfaction rung hollow. Indeed, the suggestion that the government shift its monies and attentions to the "assisted passages of Families, and relatives of Farmers, Mechanics, and others settled in this Colony" suggests a profound dissatisfaction with this female immigration scheme.²³⁶ In pledging their support for the importation of *families*, and not *women*, they endorsed the approach long supported by John Helmcken and others, which saw the immigration of entire families as the only feasible means of introducing white women to the colony.²³⁷ The British Colonist argued that "By importing families especially where the heads are likely to seek agriculture as an occupation, we should best be achieving the object sought by the Female Immigration scheme."²³⁸ Receiving the governor's support for this revised goal, they placed advertisements in the Government Gazette and British Colonist between August and December 1870.²³⁹ Apparently they again received a limited

²³⁵"Arrival of Female Immigrants," British Colonist, 15 06 1870.

²³⁶Wm. Pearse, John Robson, W.J. MacDonald to Colonial Secretary, 12 07 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS , GR 1372, Mflm B-1314, File 955/23; E.G.A., "The Immigration Board," British Colonist, 24 06 1870. See "Assisted Immigration," British Columbia Government Gazette, 18 08 1870, CO 63/4, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1490. This advertisement ran runs weekly until 24 12 1870.

²³⁷"Legislative Council," British Colonist, 13 03 1869. He was not alone in this view. See also Family Man, "Immigration," British Colonist, 26 04 1869.

²³⁸Untitled, British Colonist, 17 04 1869.

²³⁹"Legislative Council," British Colonist, 13 04 1870; "Immigration," British Colonist, 09 07 1870; "Assisted Immigration," British Colonist, 20 09 1870.

response, and this and the imminence of Canadian confederation led them to recommend that further plans not be undertaken.²⁴⁰ Like earlier efforts in 1860, 1862, and 1863, this immigration left its supporters more ambivalent than assured.

V: Conclusion

White women held a significant place in the fraught relationships between gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia. Colonial discourse carved a special role for them in the local colonial project, promising that they would encourage white men to conform to normative standards of whiteness and masculinity, symbolized most potently by permanent settlement. White women would meet the needs of the local labour market for servants and help resolve demographic distortion in Britain. Lastly, they would compel white men to reject mixed-race relationships and in doing so, help to save British Columbia from imminent moral peril and colonial disgrace. It was the power and prevalence of this discourse in both Britain and British Columbia that motivated the four white female immigration efforts between 1858 and 1871. While these schemes differed in their organization, intentions, and scale, all were informed by the conviction that white women would transform British Columbia from a transient, racially-plural resource frontier to a stable white settler colony. The *Marcella*, *Tynemouth*, *Robert Lowe*, and *Alpha*, moreover, were each marked by disorganization and conflict between competing

²⁴⁰Wm. Pearse to Colonial Secretary, 29 12 1870, GR 1372, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, Mflm B-1341, File 956/18.

visions of colonialism, most notably between metropolitan feminists, missionaries, and local whites. More significantly, these assisted immigration schemes were each regarded as failures by the local elite, in large part because the working-class white women they produced failed to behave in ways consistent with colonial discourse.

Chapter Eight:
An 'an unspeakable benefit':
White Women in Colonial Society

I: Introduction

In 1862, Anglican missionary John Garret read a letter urging a well-heeled London audience, once again, to support a mass movement of white women to British Columbia. It argued that an "emigration to this Colony of some good respectable young women" would "confer an unspeakable benefit upon British Columbia."¹ Yet the experience of white women in British Columbia again demonstrates the sharp disjuncture between colonial discourse and colonial practice. This chapter argues that while white women did not challenge the prevailing politics of racism, their experiences do hint at some of the limits on the representations of white women as an unmitigated "unspeakable benefit" to the colonial project. White women's lives both confirmed and disputed their location in the relationships between gender, race, and the making of colonial society.

II: Historiography

The history of white women in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871 suggests two ways historians need to re-access prevailing analyses of race and gender in colonial contexts. First, we need a better analysis of working-class white women in colonial enterprises. As Sara Mills points out, "although the memsahib is the archetypal 'figure' of British womanhood," colonialism in fact implicated "many other

¹ Third Report of the Columbia Mission with List of Contributions, 1861 (London, Rivingtons [1862]) p43.

women from different classes."² This was perhaps especially true in British North American and other settler societies. Class, like gender, was a significant axis of colonial organization, a social division inscribed deeply in the imperial process. Second, this examination suggests a honing of analyses of white women's role in maintaining structures of white supremacy in colonial contexts and elsewhere. White women were not, as historians have so persuasively argued, the "ruin of empire."³ But neither were they hapless, misunderstood latent anti-racists. Rather, they were ordinary women imbued by others with a specific racial and social mission. Few white women in colonial British Columbia explicitly challenged this mission, but few dutifully fulfilled it. Much like their male counterparts in the backwoods who tormented reformers by living a vision of white manhood that departed significantly from that promoted in mainstream nineteenth-century Anglo-American culture, white women in colonial British Columbia frequently failed to live up to the roles colonial discourse accorded them. This failure exposed important contradictions and revealed the fragile and insecure character of British Columbia's colonial project.

²Sara Mills, "Gender and Colonial Space," Gender, Place, and Culture 3:2 (1996) p140.

³See Claudia Knapman, White Women in Fiji, 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire? (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986); Helen Callaway, Gender, Culture, and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1987); Beverly Gartrell, "Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?," in Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardner, eds., The Incorporated Wife (London, Croom Helm, 1984); Margaret Strobel, European Women and the Second British Empire (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991) Chapter 1.

As Chapter Seven argued, colonial discourse assigned white women a crucial role in the remaking of British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. But what did this mean for the actual white women who came to British Columbia? What do the lives of white, largely working-class women tell us about the both the power and the limits of this colonial discourse? The grandiose promises of imperial rhetoric did not, after all, adequately reflect their experience. This chapter first examines work and dependency for white women before analyzing their role in the local colonial project, their relationship to race and respectability, the moral regulation of white women and, lastly, observers' evaluations of white women's colonial performance.

III: White Women, Work, and Dependency

Despite the prominence of images of genteel colonial womanhood in discussions of nineteenth-century British Columbia, life for many white women was characterized primarily by labour and dependence. White women's opportunities for wage work were sharply limited between 1858 and 1871. The colony's economy was anchored in resource extraction, which, by the mid-nineteenth-century, was gendered male throughout the Anglo-American world.⁴ First Nations women were partially exempted from this division, participating in coal mining and later extensively in

⁴See Harriet Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989) Part A.

British Columbia's canneries,⁵ but white women were expected to follow, represent, and maintain this division. When American feminist Susan B. Anthony visited Victoria on an 1871 speaking tour, she was struck by the limited employment opportunities for women: "Go and look at your Victoria dry goods stores where great, big six-foot men are measuring off tape," she said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves for crowding women out of work."⁶

White women's paid labour was largely confined to teaching, small business, the sex trades, and domestic service. Middle-class white women were employed as teachers, especially in private "dame schools," the female departments of urban public schools, and backwoods, one-room school-houses.⁷ Apparently working conditions were less than ideal in the public schools, and in 1869, female teachers complained of their poor salaries to the Governor.⁸ For one widow, though, their ability to combine

⁵Charles Bayley remembered that at Fort Rupert, "Hundreds of Natives, mostly women, being employed who conveyed the coal alongside the ships in canoes..." See Charles Bayley, "Early life on Vancouver Island" [1878?] [Transcript], BCARS, E/B/B34.2, p6. On canneries, see Alicja Muszynski, Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) especially Chapter 4.

⁶"Womens' Rights," British Colonist, 27 10 1871.

⁷See Jean Barman, "British Columbia's Pioneer Teachers," in Jean Barman et al, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary, Detselig, 1995); Elsie Ina Watts, "Attitudes of Parents Toward the Development of Public Schooling in Victoria, B.C. During the Colonial Period," M.A. Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1986. Also see "Opening of the New School," British Columbian, 22 11 1865; "Common Schools," British Columbian, 13 02 1864.

⁸Elizabeth Fisher and Louisa Macdonald to Governor Seymour, 01 05 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," British Columbia Archives and Records Service [hereafter BCARS], GR 1372, File 562/1.

teaching with mothering likely compensated for low pay.⁹

If they had access to capital, white women could carve a niche in British Columbia's commercial economy by operating small businesses. A handful of white women became players in male dominated trades like gold mining, photography, or "Indian trading." In 1863, gold-miner Robert Stevenson did business with the New Richfield Company owned by Lizzy Roddy.¹⁰ A year later, Roddy became a partner in another company, and sued successfully when she felt her co-owner and prospective husband failed to fulfil his promises.¹¹ Hannah Maynard ran a successful photography studio,¹² and Amelia Cooperman operated an Indian trading depot in Victoria and was one of the few women to be taxed for a trades license.¹³ But, after her husband absconded, Cooperman's competence was thrown into doubt. The British Colonist commented "Mrs Cooperman ought to have a husband or guardian to look after her

⁹ Philip Henry Nind to Mrs. Lipset, 18 01 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1351, File 1259/5. While concerned that her child would interfere with her teaching job in Douglas, the local board offered Lipset the post.

¹⁰Robert Stevenson, "Partial Diary 1863," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss 315 pt.2, p6.

¹¹"Letter from Cariboo," British Columbian, 18 06 1864. A year later, Roddy married someone else. See "Letter from the Interior," British Columbian, 29 04 1865.

¹²Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Second Issue, and British Columbia Guide (Victoria, Higgins and Long, 1868) p38; Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third Issue, and British Columbia Guide... (Victoria, E. Mallandaine, 1869) p37; Edwd. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third [Fourth] Issue, And British Columbia Guide (Victoria, E. Mallandaine, 1871) p25.

¹³"Daring Burglaries," British Colonist, 11 02 1867; "Trades Licences Assessment Roll," British Columbia Government Gazette, 16 03 1867, CO 63/3, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-1489. Her business was assessed at \$600, and her tax payable \$3.

affairs, as she is utterly incapable of doing it herself."¹⁴

Usually, however, white women's businesses parleyed traditional female tasks into small-scale enterprises. Some, like the two dressmakers and one milliner listed in Victoria's directory of 1860¹⁵ or Hannah Wall's midwife mother,¹⁶ served other white women. Yet, as Sylvia Van Kirk points out in her study of the Cariboo, most businesses-women catered to white men. "[I]f the mining frontier did not provide an opportunity for women to step out of traditional sex roles," she writes, "it did occasion rather exceptional opportunities to commercialize these by providing a range of services for a large male population."¹⁷ Arriving in Hope "flat broke and amongst strangers," Mrs. Landvoight "put up the tent and stove and baked tarts and pies with the jam" until she had earned enough to open a store.¹⁸ Catherine Holmes received the

¹⁴"Poor Mrs Cooperman," British Colonist, 12 04 1867. See, for her later trials for Sunday trading, assault, and forgery, "Sunday Trading," Vancouver Times, 16 06 1865; "Assault," Vancouver Times, 30 06 1865; "Mrs Amelia Cooperman," British Colonist, 12 01 1871; "Return of Mrs Cooperman," British Colonist, 21 01 1871; "Committed," British Colonist, 04 02 1871; "Court of Assize," British Colonist, 17 05 1871.

¹⁵Edw. Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory: Comprising a General Directory for Citizens... (Victoria, Edw. Mallandaine & Co., 1860) p34. p35. p37.

¹⁶Hannah Wall to Mr. Lamb, 19 11 1936, "Reminiscences", [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss E/E/W15, p4.

¹⁷Sylvia Van Kirk, "A Vital Presence: Women in the Cariboo Gold Rush, 1862-1875," in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag eds., British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women (Vancouver, Press Gang, 1992) p22.

¹⁸Margaret A. Ormsby, ed., A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia: The Recollections of Susan Allison (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1976) p16.

tender for the Royal Engineer's washing,¹⁹ and Rebecca Gibbs' laundry, operated from Barkerville her cabin, subsidized her poetry.²⁰ Sometimes she combined the two vocations, as with a poem discussed accepting a miners' wash:

A miner came to my cabin door,
 His clothes they were covered in dirt;
 He held out a piece he desired me to wash,
 Which I found was an old red shirt....

O! miners with good paying claims,
 O! traders who wish to do good,
 Have pity on men who earn your wealth,
 And grudge not the poor miner his food.

Far from these mountains a poor mother mourns
 The darling that hung by her skirt,
 When contentment and plenty surrounded the home
 Of the miner that brought me that shirt.²¹

Gibbs' poem turns her own labour into a vehicle for female benevolence, utilizing the miners' worn shirt as an symbol of men's exploitation and isolation from kin.

Combining traditional female tasks with the local penchant for drink, white women ran saloons, way-side houses, and pubs. When Barkerville burnt down in 1868, at least five women, among them Fanny Bendixen, lost saloons or hotels.²²

¹⁹Catherine Holmes to Anonymous, 09 05 1862, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1334, File 781b.

²⁰Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third Issue, p57; Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third [Fourth] Issue, p75.

²¹Rebecca Gibbs, "The Old Red Shirt," Cariboo Sentinel, 09 09 1868.

²²Miss Wilson lost a saloon valued at \$500; Miss Hickman lost a saloon valued at \$2000; Madame Bendixen lost a saloon valued at \$5000; Mrs. Nathan [Mary Boyle] lost a saloon valued at \$600; Mrs. Brooks lost a hotel valued at \$10,000. See "Burning of Barkerville," Cariboo Sentinel, 23 09 1868. On Bendixen, see

White backwoods female publicans were supported because communities recognized their limited opportunities for self-support and, perhaps, felt that their race and gender merited patronage. When Mrs. Cameron advertised a ball, the Cariboo Sentinel argued that "She is a poor hard working woman, with a large family of helpless children to support, and is deserving of the patronage of the community."²³ They offered Mrs. Clunes similar support, promoting her efforts on the grounds that "Her husband being one of that numerous class called unfortunate miners, has been quite unable to support his family by his own earnings for some time; and it has only been by the greatest exertions of the part of Mrs. Clunes that they have been kept from abject poverty."²⁴

Other white women sold sex and sociability instead of washing or food. Some prostitutes, like the white woman observed by Walter Cheadle in 1862, went to the Cariboo for a season and "made fortunes."²⁵ But more white women worked in

Advertisement, Cariboo Sentinel, 10 06 1866; "Police Court," British Colonist, 05 12 1865; "Bound Over," British Colonist, 06 12 1865; "Police Court," Vancouver Times, 03 12 1865; "Bound Over," Vancouver Times, 04 12 1865; Sylvia Van Kirk, "Bendixen, Fanny," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XII, p92-3. On other female Cariboo publicans, see Advertisement, "Occidental Hotel and Restaurant," Cariboo Sentinel, 14 05 1866; Advertisement, "Lunch House and Saloon," Cariboo Sentinel, 19 07 1868; Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Second Issue, p60; Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third Issue, p56-7; Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third [Fourth] Issue, p52-6, p75.

²³"Queen's Birthday Ball," Cariboo Sentinel, 07 05 1866.

²⁴"Miners Ball," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 09 1866. On Mrs. Clunes, see "Letter From Cariboo," British Colonist, 06 01 1865; Advertisement, Cariboo Sentinel, 14 05 1866. See, for others, "Ball" Cariboo Sentinel, 27 06 1867; "Ball" Cariboo Sentinel, 16 09 1868; "Ball," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 05 1866; "Ball" Cariboo Sentinel, 25 06 1866.

²⁵Walter B. Cheadle, Cheadle's Journey of Trip Across Canada 1862-1863 (Edmonton, Hurtig, 1971) p240.

occupations best characterized as para-sexual, most notably as "Hurdy-gurdies." These professional dancers usually worked in mainland mining towns, where hurdies were a subject of bawdy dogrell, a focus of public attention, and ultimately an icon of regional identity.²⁶ When a dance-hall opened in a forty-house "town" near Hell's Gate in 1866, the press commented that "No mining town with money about it on this coast seems complete without a 'hurdy-mill.'"²⁷ Of course, as Van Kirk points out, their small numbers belie their massive presence in lore: the 1871 directory, for instance, listed only three women – Elizabeth Ebert, Kate Swaitzer, and Emma Swaitzer – as employees or proprietors of dancing houses.²⁸

More than selling sex, hurdies sold sociability. One observer wrote "they are unsophisticated maidens of Dutch extraction, from 'poor but honest parents' and morally speaking, they really are not what they are generally put down for."²⁹ Hurdies specialized in the highly physical "mazy dance," where, to the tune of a fiddle, the man threw his partner "up a foot or two from the floor at the end of every figure."

²⁶ See Dixie, "To De Editor Ob De 'Cariboo Sental,' Cariboo Sentinel, 12 06 1865; "A Cariboo Miner's Letter to a Friend in Scotland," Cariboo Sentinel, 19 06 1865; "Chronicles of Cariboo," Cariboo Sentinel, 31 05 1866; "Second Letter To My Freend Sawney," Cariboo Sentinel, 23 07 1866; "Our Cariboo Letter," British Colonist, 06 10 1865.

²⁷"The Blackfoot Country," British Colonist, 07 02 1866.

²⁸Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, Third [Fourth] Issue, p76; Van Kirk, "A Vital Presence." While women may have been excluded from the directory, that three were listed suggests that the directory tried to include hurdies.

²⁹C. Sharp, "A Glimpse of Cariboo," British Colonist, 24 08 1866. This was reprinted in "A Glimpse of Cariboo," Cariboo Sentinel, 06 09 1866.

Mazy dances were also something of a spectacle, with men "crowded around in a circle, and applauded their efforts in a most demonstrative matter."³⁰ Hurdies were hired out of San Francisco for the duration of a mining season,³¹ and seem to have charged a dollar per dance.³² At this rate one observer was correct to argue that "the poor girls as a general thing earn their money very hardly."³³ Images of hurdy-gurdies were deeply contradictory. Sometimes, they were represented as the appropriate object of genuine white male attention. "Strange, isn't it," wrote the up-country press, "how many get infatuated with women and 'hurdies gurdies!' old men as well as young, married and single."³⁴ Yet observers also complained that hurdies exploited male affection. James Anderson wrote: "The Dollar was their only love\And that they lo'ed fu' dearly, O\They dinda care a flea for men\Let them coort hooe'er sincerely, O!"³⁵ White male susceptibility to hurdies was naturalized more often than problematized. The Cariboo Sentinel wrote that they "smpathised [sic] deeply with the votaries

³⁰"Opening Night," Cariboo Sentinel, 20 05 1867.

³¹"Hurdy Gurdies," Cariboo Sentinel, 16 05 1867. Also see "Terpsichorean," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 10 1868; "Terpsichorean Decadence," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 07 1869.

³²"Terpsichorean" Cariboo Sentinel, 13 11 1869; "Dancing in Cariboo," British Colonist, 27 07 1865.

³³C. Sharp, "A Glimpse of Cariboo," British Colonist, 24 08 1866. Some men spent a considerable amount: when James Barry was charged with murder, witnesses testified that he had spent all of his money with the Camerontown hurdies and gave one of them a pin. See "The Blessing Murder Case," Cariboo Sentinel, 18 10 1866; "Further Evidence Against the Prisoner Barry," Cariboo Sentinel, 30 11 1866.

³⁴"The 24th in Camerontown," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 05 1866.

³⁵"Second Letter To My Freend Sawney," Cariboo Sentinel, 23 07 1866. Also see "Departures," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 09 1866.

afflicted by that common disease of manhood situated somewhere in the region of their vest watch-pockets."³⁶ The popular press represented hurdie as a rare vehicle for white miners to participate in "normal," or same-race heterosexual sociability. As such, their sexual deviance was tolerable. Hurdies, wrote the British Colonist, meant "miners have a chance of indulging in that rarest of mining luxuries -- a dance, with a *real* female for a partner," suggesting how same-sex sociability was seen as illegitimate and how First Nations women could be constructed out of the category "woman" altogether.³⁷

Despite the prominence of hurdie, publicans, and prostitutes, most women who worked for wages in British Columbia, as elsewhere in nineteenth-century British North America, were probably domestic servants. As Chapter Seven argued, extensive efforts were made to procure domestics through assisted immigration schemes. It is difficult to trace the experiences of the women who migrated on the *Tynemouth*,³⁸

³⁶"The Cariboo Sentinel," Cariboo Sentinel, 15 04 1867.

³⁷"Dancing in Cariboo," British Colonist, 27 07 1865.

³⁸The women who sailed on the *Tynemouth* were M. King, S.M. Duren, F.M.B. Wilson, J.R.V. Ogilvie, E.H. Cooper, M. Cooper, H. Holmes, G.J. Holmes, M. Faussett, T.T. Hirsch, L. Townsend, C. Townsend, J. Macdonald, M. Macdonald, L. Macdonald, G. McDonald, S. Macdonald, J. Macdonald, A.J. Morris, E.A. Morris, E.B. Abington, C.A. Abington, S. Picken, C.A. Kendrick, M. Dwilly, M. Crawle, E. Quinn, S. Gowing, M. Hales, A. Egginton, E. Evans, E.J. Evans, E.H. Tammage, B.R. Wilson, E. Reynolds, J.A. Saunders, F. Curtis, I. Curtis, E. Berry, H. Barnett, M.L. Chase, S. Shaw, J. Sentzenich, J.L. Hurst, E. McGowan, K. McGowan, S. Baylis, M. Gillan, J. Fisher, A. Joyce, S. Lovegrove, M. Hodges, M.A. Hack, M.T. Coates, J. Robb, M. Robb, J. Robb, J. Robb, M. Renen. See "Arrival of the *Tynemouth*," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

Robert Lowe, and *Alpha*. The papers of the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (FMCES), which have formed the basis for in-depth studies of white women and emigration elsewhere, curiously include no letters from women sent to British Columbia.³⁹ Maria Rye and her associates sometimes reprinted letters from immigrants in British Columbia. In keeping with nineteenth-century philanthropic discourse, these almost inevitably told of happy experiences and sincere gratitude toward their betters.⁴⁰

Fragmentary evidence suggests that the experience of domestic servants was considerably less positive than such publications would suggest. The FMCES kept track of a handful of women in their annual reports. Of 158 emigrants discussed in the 1862-1872 report, eight went to British Columbia or Vancouver Island, but the committee knew nothing or very little about half of them. One became a school-teacher and married in two years; another, dubbed "Not very successful," found employment as a needle-woman; a third "Left situation rashly, and afterwards found

³⁹See Female Middle Class Emigration Society, "Letter Book," Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University [hereafter Fawcett], 1/FME, Vol.1, 1862-1876, Box 1 File 2; Female Middle Class Emigration Society, "Letter Book," Fawcett, 1/FME, Vol. 1., 1877-1882, Box 1, File 3. For studies that extensively utilize this source, see A. James Hammerton, Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1914 (London, Croom Helm, 1979); Patricia Clark, The Governesses: Letters From the Colonies, 1862-1882 (London, Hutchinson, 1985)

⁴⁰See, for instance, W., "Female Middle-Class Emigration to British Columbia," London Times, 02 08 1862. This letter was re-printed in "Our London Letter," British Colonist, 22 09 1862. Also see "Female Middle-Class Emigration Society" London Times, 12 09 1862.

difficulty in obtaining employment," while the fourth was described as having gone to her sister.⁴¹ Local officials in British Columbia were similarly ambivalent in their evaluation of the servant women. In 1863, Governor James Douglas told the Colonial Office that "with very few exceptions," the women of the *Tynemouth* and *Robert Lowe* have "been comfortably provided for."⁴² The same year, Anglican Bishop George Hills wrote that "All find places at once - 40L. a year the lowest wages."⁴³ Others felt compelled to distinguish between the middle and working class women, noting that the "servants were instantly provided with situations," while the "governess class, for which the Bishop did not apply, are a difficulty."⁴⁴ Some middle-class migrants concurred on this class distinction, with Louisa and Charlotte Townsend making it clear until their death that "they were not among the brides, 'the cargo of crinoline.'"⁴⁵

⁴¹"Female Middle Class Emigration Society Annual Report, 1861" Fawcett Library, 1/FME, Box 1, File 1, p7-14. Seven of the eight went to Vancouver Island in 1862, presumably on the *Tynemouth*.

⁴²James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 14 07 1863, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867, CO 305/20 [hereafter CO 305], Public Archives of Canada, [hereafter PAC], MG 11, Mfilm B-244.

⁴³George Hills, 14 01 1863, cited in B.R.P., "XXVIII.- The Last News of the Emigrants" The English Woman's Journal 11: 63 (01 05 1863) p185.

⁴⁴W. Driscoll Gosset, "Female Emigration," London Times, 06 12 1862. Also see "Victoria and British Columbia," London Times, 19 03 1863. See George Hills, "Journal 1 January-21 July 1862" [Transcript], Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster/Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, [hereafter ADNW/EPBC].

⁴⁵James K. Nesbitt, "Temperamental Padre of the Bride Ship," The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine, 07 01 1962, Vancouver Public Library Northwest Collection Clippings File. These seem to be the Mrs. Mallandaine and Mrs. Townsend interviewed in N. de Bertrand Lugin, The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island, 1843-1866 (Victoria, The Women's Canadian Club, 1928) p149-155.

Even if quickly placed in service, the emigrants did not necessarily gain stable employment. Sarah Marsden of the *Robert Lowe* was quickly rejected from her post, Hills wrote, because "she was religious" and had "stipulated for Sunday Church going & this the American family refused."⁴⁶ Others proved a disappointment to their mistresses for more conventional reasons, a judgement they no doubt reciprocated. Mary Moody originally said "I sh:d prefer a young girl both on account of her being less likely to marry and also as she w:d require less wages than an old girl." Yet Moody was outraged with the young woman she received: she was "only 14 & very small for her age, neither fit for Nursery Maid or housemaid & can't sew at all." "I am disgusted! & w:d much prefer being without her," raged the first lady of the mainland, demanding that this shoddy merchandise be returned. Moody was not much impressed with her neighbours' servants either, commenting that "M:rs Grant's Nurse is a dirty looking girl."⁴⁷ Sarah Crease, daughter of the Attorney General, argued that dreams of dutiful servants were "Vain hope!" Some of the assistant migrants, she remembered, were "carried off and married a few days after arrival," and only two laboured for the duration of their indentures.⁴⁸

The traces of these women's experiences suggest that few white women earned

⁴⁶George Hills, "Journal 1 January-10 June 1863," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p6-7.

⁴⁷Mary Moody to Mother, 20 05 1862, Mary Moody, "Outward Correspondence," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 60, Volume 1 & 2, p92-93.

⁴⁸S.R. Crease, "The Bride Ships," "Crease Family Papers", BCARS, Add Mss 55, Vol 13, File 3, p83-5.

an independent living, whether from small business, teaching, sex trades, or service. Most, not surprisingly, depended on men for support. Even in Victoria, where opportunities for white women's wage work were undoubtedly higher than elsewhere, female-headed households were uncommon. Of 1025 households canvassed in 1871, only thirty-two were identified as headed by white women. Another 404 white women lived with white men, and a tiny minority lived in less racially-conventional households – four with Black men, and another with an Aboriginal man.⁴⁹ However it is measured, it seems that only a small minority of white women in colonial British Columbia did not cohabit with a man.

Marriage and white womanhood were generally constructed as synonymous. Observers routinely remarked that white women's demographic status meant that they could have their pick of husbands. The "disproportion of males is so great, that an unmarried woman who has reached the age of 20 is, it is believed, not to be found in the colony," said one immigrant pamphlet.⁵⁰ Another commented "no sooner do they arrive than they receive substantial offers of matrimony and future happiness."⁵¹ The dynamic, wrote the British Colonist, was akin to nineteenth-century political economics: "where there is a scarcity of an article in the market it always commands

⁴⁹Vancouver Island, Police and Prisons Department, Esquimalt, "Charge Book 1862-1866," BCARS, GR 0428.

⁵⁰Anonymous, The Handbook of British Columbia and Emigrant's Guide to the Gold Fields (London, W. Oliver, nd [1862])p5.

⁵¹Anonymous, The New Gold Fields of British Columbia and Vancouver's Island (London, Plummer's Library, 1862) p15.

high rates, and some invariably refuse to sell till they get the highest prices."⁵²

Tales of white women's upward mobility through marriage certainly circulated throughout colonial British Columbia. Hills privately described "A very funny thing" he deemed "illustrative of that early stage in a Colony where ladies are few & in great demand." A respectable young woman asked if he would like to wed her, saying that "I should have been unhappy if I thought you would like to marry me & I had not given you the opportunity of saying so!!"⁵³ Assisted female migrants were especially famed for their "good matches." In 1864, the London Times commented that "Nearly all the girls sent out by the steamers Tynemouth and Robert Lowe are now married and settled in life."⁵⁴ In 1863, Sophia Shaw of the *Tynemouth* married a wealthy Cariboo miner, Mr. Pioneer. Their wedding, according to naval officer and reformer Edmund Hope Verney, was a pinnacle of backwoods excess. Everything was "carried out in tip-top style" and everyone was drunk.⁵⁵ Jane Ann Saunders, another *Tynemouth* emigrant, married Samuel Nesbitt, "a well-to-do baker" in the spring of 1863. Verney "was quite charmed with her simple, modest, happy appearance, and

⁵²"Inducements to Families to Settle in Victoria," British Colonist, 30 11 1861.

⁵³George Hills, "Journal 1861" [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p132.

⁵⁴"British Columbia," London Times, 04 02 1864. Also see Hills, 14 01 1863, cited in B.R.P., "XXVIII.- The Last News of the Emigrants," The English Woman's Journal 11: 63 (01 05 1863) p185.

⁵⁵Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 06 01 1863, in Allan Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-1865 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1996) p115. Also see Hills, "Journal 1 January-10 June 1863," p6.

also amused with the little matronly air she put on." Ship-mate Emily Berry had a difficult first winter, but was soon engaged to Nanaimo's catechist Mr. Cave.⁵⁶

Such tales of colonial marriage were more a staple in immigration propaganda than a reflection of female experience. Susan Nagle's diary provides vivid testimony of the failure of British Columbia's lauded marriage market to work for at least one middle-class white woman. Nagle was the daughter of a proverbially impoverished bourgeois family, her father having been disgraced from his position as harbour-master.⁵⁷ She worked as a teacher, did charity work, and obsessed about her unmarried state. On her twenty-fifth birthday in 1865, she wrote "I suppose people will soon begin to call me an old maid. Dear me. How dreadful!!! A few years later, Nagle began a long engagement to a naval officer, during which time two of her younger sisters married, much to her anguish.⁵⁸ When it became clear that her engagement might never end in marriage, Susan broke it off and opened a school in

⁵⁶Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 20 04 1863, in Pritchard ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p131. Also see J.S. Matthews, "Brideships," City of Vancouver Archives [hereafter CVA], J.S. Matthews Collection, Add Mss 54, Vol. 13, File 07020. Also see Nesbitt, "Temperamental Padre"; J.K. Nesbitt, "Historians are Vague About Second Bride Ship...Welcome Was Warm," The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine 20 03 1960; James K. Nesbitt, "Dr. Chipp Came on Brideship", The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine, 16 07 1967, Vancouver Public Library Northwest Collection, for popular histories written by the grandson.

⁵⁷James Douglas to Duke of Newcastle, 25 10 1861, CO 305/17, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-242. Later her father Jeremiah would lead the effort to create a Sailors' Home.

⁵⁸Susan Abercrombie Holmes [nee Nagle], "Diaries 1865-1911", Volume I, BCARS, Add Mss 2576, Mflm A-1628, p11. Emphasis Original; Susan Abercrombie Holmes [nee Nagle], "Diaries 1865-1911," [Transcript] Volume II, BCARS, Add Mss 2576, p84.

Yale where David Holmes, an earnest Anglican missionary, began to woo her. In January 1871, she promised "to try for the next two months to like him;" by mid-February, she had reluctantly accepted David's offer.⁵⁹ It is hard to reconcile Susan Nagle's sad marital history with boosterism about white women's choice spot in the marriage market. Commonly held assumptions about the local marriage market ultimately belied the real power of heterosexual coupling.

Nonetheless, most white women in British Columbia did marry, and some limited evidence culled from church registers suggests that they married young. In the sixty-six marriages identified in five Anglican church registers for the 1858 to 1871 period, grooms averaged 30.4 years old and brides 22.6. Almost half the grooms were between 28 and 32, while over forty percent of the brides were still in their teens and another fifty percent were between 19 and 23.⁶⁰ Such an age gap is consistent with white marriage patterns in Jamaica and early New France, but is considerably larger than that generally associated the western European marriage pattern which, by

⁵⁹Nagle, "Diaries 1865," Volume II; Susan Abercrombie Holmes [nee Nagle], "Diaries 1865-1911," [Transcript] Volume III, BCARS, Add Mss 2576, p10.

⁶⁰Christ Church Hope, "Marriage Register 1862-1872," ADNW/EPBC, RG4.0.34; St. John the Divine Yale, "Marriage Register 1861-1895," ADNW/EPBC; St. John's Victoria, "Parochial Register of Baptisms and Marriages 1860-1871," ADNW/EPBC, Text 202, Box 6; Holy Trinity Cathedral New Westminster, "Volume 1: Marriage Register," City of Vancouver Archives, Add Mss 603, Mflm m-21; St. Paul's Nanaimo, "Register of Baptisms and Marriages, 1860-1881," Anglican Church of Canada, Diocesan Archives of British Columbia, Text 330, Box 8. Marriages between two partners not readily identified as non-white and with full ages given were considered. This might result in the inclusion of some non-white, especially Black, people.

mid-century, was evident in the Canadas.⁶¹ Such significant age differences between men and women tended to reinforce broader patterns of gendered power relations. David Peterson del Mar points out in his study of Oregon, where the pattern was similar, that women entered marriages to older men "long before they had the emotional or physical resources to assert themselves."⁶²

For most women marriage meant relative financial dependence, a fact that was widely recognized. Women received pensions when their men were slain, especially in government service.⁶³ Communities raised money for the widows of men killed in military endeavours, in boating or mining accidents, and sometimes for women who had been simply abandoned.⁶⁴ Legislation that was designed to protect women's wages, investment in homesteads or other property from their husbands' also affirmed

⁶¹Trever Burnard, "A Failed Settler Society: Marriage and Demographic Failure in Early Jamaica," Journal of Social History 28:1 (Fall 1994) p74; Ellen Gee, "Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Canada," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 9:3, (August 1982) p311-325.

⁶²David Peterson del Mar, What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence Against Wives (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996)p16; Burnard, "A Failed Settler Society," p74.

⁶³See Sophia McLean to Frederick Seymour, 01 06 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1344, File 1063; Mary C. Ogilvy, A. Musgrave, 06 12 1869, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1351, File 1268.

⁶⁴See "Complimentary Ball and Soiree," British Columbian, 18 11 1865; "A Subscription," British Columbian, 11 04 1861; Untitled, Cariboo Sentinel, 16 07 1867; "Generous," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 08 1869; "A Just Call for Charity," British Colonist, 06 05 1863; "A Distressing Case," British Colonist, 17 03 1866; "Subscriptions," British Colonist, 11 04 1866; "A Deserving Object," British Colonist, 28 02 1867; "The Relief of Mrs Davis," British Colonist, 02 03 1867; Untitled, British Colonist, 31 07 1867. Some raised money for Black families. See "A Skedaddler," Nanaimo Gazette 13 11 1865.

women's fundamental reliance on male wages and tried to protect them from some of the worst excesses of male power.⁶⁵

Tales of piteous female dependence were paraded in the colony's police courts. In 1866, Ann Porteous, who was beaten a few months before by her husband Sam, his employer and a police officer,⁶⁶ was later charged with attacking her husband while he worked at a saloon.⁶⁷ When a weeping Porteous, holding her young child, was unable to raise sureties, the Magistrate asked if no provision was made for her support. She replied, "Not a cent! My husband comes to me sometimes and throws down half-a-dollar, as if I were a dog." Unable to pawn her off on either the Catholic church or friends, the Magistrate brokered a deal between Porteous and her husband, who, he said, must support his wife.⁶⁸ Porteous' sorry self-presentation suggests some of the ways white women could also utilize the rhetoric of female dependence and male responsibility for their own ends. Sarah Wheeler certainly did, arguing that her

⁶⁵See discussion of Homestead Act in Chapter Six; "Protection to the Ladies" British Colonist, 25 05 1862. Some women, like Adele Jackson, Mrs. Jackson, and Marion Davis, successfully had their wages protected. See "Protection," British Colonist, 19 08 1865; "Matrimonial," Vancouver Times, 18 08 1865; "Police Court," British Colonist, 24 11 1868; "Domestic Differences," Vancouver Times, 22 05 1865. Also see Constance B. Backhouse, "Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada," in Bettina Bradbury, ed., Canadian Family History: Selected Readings (Toronto, Copp Clark Pitman, 1992) p326-7.

⁶⁶"Police Court," Vancouver Times, 01 02 1866.

⁶⁷"An Amazon," British Colonist, 17 05 1866; "Incurable," British Colonist, 29 05 1866.

⁶⁸"Ann Porteous," British Colonist, 30 05 1866. A few months later, Porteous charged another man with striking her. See "The Eureka," British Colonist, 01 12 1866.

gambler husband should be released from gaol because "your petitioner is depending upon him for the support of herself & three children."⁶⁹ Catherine Edwards too appropriated the language of female vulnerability when she complained about the government shifting a planned wagon-road away from her house, protesting that "even a woman is liable to lose her whole investment and go away in want through their Agency."⁷⁰ Referring to herself as "even a woman," Edwards evoked the colonial government's chivalric responsibility to protect its weakest subjects.

Male violence also suggests some of the parameters and shape of white female dependency. When Susan B. Anthony spoke in Victoria in 1871, she reported that "there was no town in America in which wives got so many floggings as in Victoria."⁷¹ While white Victorians took exception to many of Anthony's claims,⁷² violence was an everyday feature of life in British Columbia. That one of the most famed white women of the Cariboo, Joanna Maguire, was beaten to death by her

⁶⁹Sarah A. Wheeler, to Governor, nd [24 11 1865?] "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1373, File 1856. For a similar, although more public case, see "Melancholy" British Colonist, 08 10 1866; "The Case of Maurice Carey," British Colonist, 15 10 1866.

⁷⁰Catherine Edwards to Joseph Trutch, 16 09 1865, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B-1326, File 508a.

⁷¹"Female Suffrage: The Spiciest Evening of the Series. Victoria a City of Woman-Whippers," British Colonist, 26 10 1871. Also see "Susan B. Anthony," British Colonist, 20 10 1871; "Lecture," British Colonist, 24 10 1871; "Female Suffrage," British Colonist, 25 10 1871.

⁷²A Male Biped, "Woman as Nature has (not) Designed Her," British Colonist, 26 10 1871; Minnie, "Female Suffrage," British Colonist, 26 10 1871; An Insulted Husband, "A Quack Apostle in Petticoats," British Colonist, 27 10 1871; Untitled British Colonist, 29 12 1871.

common-law partner in 1864 is a sad comment on the relationship between violence and the white female experience of the backwoods.⁷³ Gruesome testimony described how Edward Witney, Joanna's mate of two years, beat her severely over a prolonged period, only occasionally punctuated by community intervention.⁷⁴ Less dramatically, white men were often convicted in colony's police for beating their partners, usually receiving a fine of L1, L5, and \$10 and being bound over to be of good behaviour.⁷⁵ Such violence was sometimes tolerated or naturalized as a male prerogative or, more commonly, dismissed as a private matter. One Victoria man declined to intercede when he saw another man choke his wife in front of their children because of "the principle that it is not right to interfere between man and wife."⁷⁶ At other times, the Magistrate dismissed the charges of male violence on the grounds that the family

⁷³On Maguire, see "Seeing the Elephant," in D.W. Higgins, 'The Mystic Spring' and Other Tales of Western Life (Toronto, William Briggs, 1904) p69-70. "Savage Inhumanity," British Colonist, 03 12 1864; "Death at the Hospital," British Colonist, 05 12 1864; "The Coroner's Inquest: Death of Joanna Maguire," British Colonist, 06 12 1864; "The Death of Joanna Maguire...", British Colonist, 09 12 1864; "British Columbia," Vancouver Times, 03 10 1864. The charges against Whitney were dismissed when the coroner testified that Maguire had injured herself.

⁷⁴"The Coroner's Inquest," Vancouver Times, 05 12 1864; "The Death of Joanna Maguire," Vancouver Times, 07 12 1864; "The Late Johanna Maguire," Vancouver Times, 10 12 1864.

⁷⁵See, for examples, "Wife Whipping," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 27 09 1859; "A Woman Whipper" British Colonist, 13 12 1860; "The 'Assault on a Woman,'" British Colonist, 26 06 1862; "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 13 08 1866; "Police Court," Cariboo Sentinel, 01 07 1867; "Police Court," Victoria Press, 05 05 1862; "Wife Beating," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 05 10 1864; "Police Court," Vancouver Times, 10 09 1864. Sometimes, no fine was given. See "Police Court," Victoria Press, 17 08 1861.

⁷⁶"Shameful," Victoria Press, 20 10 1861.

should not have "their prospects blasted by having any scandal."⁷⁷

The white community did publicly condemn male violence with some regularity. "The practice of woman beating, we are sorry to say, is becoming very common in this town," wrote the Victoria Press in 1861. "Some brutal man will attack their wives on the very slightest provocation, and abuse them shamefully. We only wish that those so treated would lodge complaints against these characters, and then publicly expose them."⁷⁸ Sometimes, observers harnessed the language of respectable masculinity examined in Chapter Four to construct violence against women as inimical to true manliness. When Harry Keithly stabbed Jane Ashmore after she left him for another man, the press put the word man in inverted quotes.⁷⁹ At other times, officials informally provided women with the practical assistance they needed to rid themselves of violent partners. When Mrs. Gullion told the court "that her husband always treated her well when sober, but that he knocked her and the children about time after time, and she could stand it no longer -- her desire was to be separated from him, as she could support herself and children very well" the Magistrate remanded her husband "to give him a chance to leave the country."⁸⁰

⁷⁷"Assaulting an Ex-Wife," British Colonist, 10 03 1870; "The Assault Upon the Ex-Wife," British Colonist, 11 03 1870.

⁷⁸"Wife Whipping," Victoria Press, 13 12 1861.

⁷⁹"A Woman Stabbed by a 'Man,'" British Colonist, 11 09 1862; "Murderous Assault," Victoria Press, 12 09 1862; "Not Dead" Victoria Press, 14 09 1862. Also see "Domestic Jars," British Colonist, 17 06 1867.

⁸⁰"Wife Beating," British Colonist, 11 09 1866

Later, the British Colonist recounted tales of violent relationships in Victoria, suggesting that these couples separate or litigate rather than expose their children to abuse.⁸¹ Such condemnations of male violence, as Peterson del Mar argues, often served to stigmatize marginal men rather than to address the systematic character of men's violence against women.⁸² Thus the British Colonist argued that "A severe penalty should be imposed" on batterers when a "colored man" stood before the courts.⁸³

Whatever the politics of condemnation, male violence suggests how white women were dependent upon and thus vulnerable to their men. White women's opportunities for paid work, limited largely to teaching, small business, sex trades, and domestic service, were certainly slim, and marriage was by far the most viable option. In these ways, British Columbia's racial and gender organization seems to have exacerbated, rather than disrupted, prevailing nineteenth-century gender segregation.

IV: White Women in the Colonial Project

⁸¹"Domestic Jars," British Colonist, 17 06 1867.

⁸²See Peterson del Mar, What Trouble I have Seen, Chapter Three. He argues elsewhere that "Respectable western men, to be sure, have been condemning wife beating for well over a century. But the causes and consequences of that discourse have not necessarily served women well.... They have commonly acted as rhetorical devices to castigate marginal men for being inherently brutal and, less explicitly, women more generally for being inherently weak." David Peterson del Mar, "Male Dominance and Spousal Violence: A Historical Perspective," unpublished paper, p20. Also see Katherine Harvey, "To Love, Honour and Obey: Wife-Battering in Working-Class Montreal, 1968-79," Urban History Review 19:2 (October 1990) p128-140.

⁸³"Another Assault on a Woman," British Colonist, 24 05 1867.

White women were invoked both as symbols of imperial progress and as evidence of British Columbia's transition from savage to civilized. John Helmcken remembered the arrival of "English ladies - *rara avis*" in Victoria, deeming them "very pleasing and nice" but adding that with them, "life became more extended, more artificial and more expensive."⁸⁴ His comments suggest how white women were assumed to be symbolic of the colonial project, whether approvingly or not. Most white observers were less equivocal and clearly celebrated white women's role as symbols of colonial progress. This was especially clear in discussions of backwoods travel. Mrs. Schubert, who travelled overland with her three children, was said to have brought a positive feminine influence to the otherwise masculine enterprise of pioneering.⁸⁵ Emigration writers waxed romantic about the value placed on a white female face in the backwoods. "Especially at the gold fields, men stand up to look at a woman go past, and I have known the arrival of a fresh female face in a gold digging district create such a stir that the miners have knocked off work for the day," one argued.⁸⁶ Surveyor Charles Wilson was both thrilled and shocked to see a white

⁸⁴"Appendix 2: *In the Early Fifties*", Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1975) p293.

⁸⁵See "The Overland Route," Victoria Press, 02 10 1862; "A Lady Pioneer" Victoria Press, 02 10 1862; "An Account of a Journey Overland From Canada..." British Columbian, 24 01 1863; Joanne Leduc, ed., Thomas McMicking, Overland From Canada to British Columbia (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1981)

⁸⁶Anonymous, The Handbook of British Columbia, p72. Also see A Successful Digger, Guide Book for British Columbia (London, Dean and Sons, 1862) p24.

woman in the bush:

we saw something we could not make out. 'It is,' 'no, it can't be', such were the expressions; we put our horses to the gallop & yes, there it was as large as life, in all the grandeur of the most expensive crinoline, a 'petticoat in the wilderness'! we could scarcely believe our eyes, but it was true. This enterprising woman (English by the bye) had travelled on horseback over the mountains, through forest & plain, fording the mountain torrents & exposed to all the changes of the weather, & was on her way to set up an inn at Rock Creek, the first white woman who had ever penetrated into these wilds.⁸⁷

This "petticoat in the wilderness," then, demonstrated not only the inherent pluck and fortitude of the English race, but the cheering reach of imperialism.

In town as on the road, white women were constructed as evidence of the successful construction of a white society in British Columbia. "Some of these shifts for better homes are cheered by the presence of Woman, and in a few even children are visible," the press optimistically commented about Victoria's tent city in 1858.⁸⁸ A resident of Alberni remarked on "the presence of the ladies softening this rough phase of civilization, and imparting to our town an air of anything but a deserted village."⁸⁹ A Lytton correspondent agreed, remarking that "It is a pleasant sight to see so many of the fair sex arrive in one day, and shows strong indications that this upper country

⁸⁷George F.G. Stanley, ed., Mapping the Frontier: Charles Wilson's Diary of the Survey of the 49th Parallel, 1858-1862, while Secretary of the British Boundary Commissions (Toronto, Macmillan, 1870) p127-8. For a similar story, see Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., "Henry Guilloid's Journal of a Trip to Cariboo, 1862", in British Columbia Historical Quarterly Volume XIX [July-October 1955] p204-205.

⁸⁸"Camp Life Around Victoria," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 10 07 1858.

⁸⁹M, "From Alberni," Victoria Press, 05 11 1861.

is going ahead fast, and about to be populated."⁹⁰

White women's child-bearing was closely watched and celebrated as additional evidence of the march of white supremacy. The birth of the "the first perfectly white child" on the Fraser was proudly announced in 1858.⁹¹ When Mrs. Colston bore twins in 1862, the New Westminster press recorded the fact,⁹² as did the Victoria press when Comox's Mrs. Masters bore a son, "the second white child born in the settlement."⁹³ The slippage fundamental to racially-bound definitions of gender and reproduction was sometimes clear in these comments, as when Mrs. Martin's daughter was dubbed "The first...of her sex born in Cariboo," erasing the very fact of First Nations existence.⁹⁴

The construction of white women as symbols of colonial progress shaped as well as reflected colonial politics. White women motivated the construction of European-style housing. "Will men bring their wives and families to a town where there are no accommodations for domestic privacy – not even an apology for the comforts of a home?" asked the Weekly Victoria Gazette in 1858.⁹⁵ Visiting the Green's Comox shanty in 1862, Hills explained that a new house was in order since

⁹⁰"Letter from Lytton City," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 12 03 1864. Also see R.C. Lundin Brown, British Columbia: An Essay (New Westminster, Royal Engineer Press, 1863) p53.

⁹¹"Later From Fraser River," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 30 07 1858.

⁹²"First British Columbian Twins," British Columbian, 07 06 1862.

⁹³J.J.H., "Letter from Comox," Vancouver Times, 21 03 1865.

⁹⁴"Letter From the Cariboo," British Colonist, 18 04 1865.

⁹⁵"Our Future," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 07 07 1858. Also see "Demand for Private Residences," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 28 01 1859.

"for a lady their present residence was lately insufficient." This project of domestic conversion, Hills wrote, was successful: "They thanked me & I hope the poor lady will soon have a more comfortable abode."⁹⁶

White women were expected not merely to shore up white society, but also to serve as what Anne McClintock calls "boundary markers of empire" between the white and the majority Aboriginal population.⁹⁷ Following the broader logic that white women "were weak and so pure that contact with black people was morally and physically repugnant,"⁹⁸ white women were constructed as uniquely offended by the presence of First Nations bodies. Their very "appearance in the midst of civilised society" was "little short of an insult offered to female modesty."⁹⁹ Critics seized on the use of gender norms as a justification for white supremacy by arguing that First Nations people would have to be removed from the city of Victoria before widespread white family migration could occur.¹⁰⁰ A New Westminster observer agreed: "It is with considerable squeezing and elbowing that ladies, with their daughters, can make their way through the crowd of lousy 'bucks' and hooped prostitution, to a place of

⁹⁶George Hills, "Journal 22 July to 31 December 1862," [Transcript], ADNW/EPBC, p172.

⁹⁷ Here, McClintock refers to the feminization of colonized land. But her analysis can be also be applied, in an almost opposite way, to the construction of white women as symbols of imperial conquest. See Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexual in the Colonial Conquest (London, Routledge, 1996) 24-25.

⁹⁸Knapman, White Women in Fiji, p136.

⁹⁹Economy, "Public Improvements," British Colonist, 08 01 1859. Also see P., Untitled, British Colonist, 26 02 1859.

¹⁰⁰"Inducements to Families to Settle in Victoria," Victoria Press, 02 12 1861.

worship! Is this such an atmosphere as respectable people would chose in which to bring up a family?"¹⁰¹

Such ideas were occasionally reinforced by images of sexually threatening First Nations men. One prominent captivity narrative described the young wife of the *John Bright's* captain being murdered on Vancouver Island's west coast.¹⁰² Later, it was his daughter who had been captured, and was "anxiously awaiting deliverance from a fate WORSE THAN DEATH."¹⁰³ This threat of racialized sexual violence, it seems, was sufficient to merit the dispatch of the gunboat *Sparrowhawk*, which found, much to the disappointment of the British Colonist, that "the girl is a half-breed"¹⁰⁴ or, as another paper tellingly put it, "Not Our Child."¹⁰⁵ At least one First Nations man was given an unusually punitive sentence for a crime against a white woman. In 1865, Yak, a First Nations domestic servant in Nanaimo was given six months hard labour for forcing "an entrance into the bedroom" of his mistress, Mrs. Wignell, even though he normally slept in her kitchen.¹⁰⁶ This sentence is reminiscent of the draconian legal measures taken against Papuan men¹⁰⁷ and suggests that fear of First Nations' men

¹⁰¹"The Indian Question Again," British Columbian, 03 05 1862.

¹⁰²Untitled, British Colonist, 29 05 1869.

¹⁰³"A Captive Girl Among the Mitinahts: Thrilling Incidents," British Colonist, 24 02 1871. Emphasis original.

¹⁰⁴"The Captive Girl," British Colonist, 01 03 1871.

¹⁰⁵"Not Our Child," British Colonist, 02 03 1871. Reprinted from the Standard.

¹⁰⁶"Police Court," Nanaimo Gazette 06 11 1865.

¹⁰⁷See Amirah Inglis, The White Women's Protection Ordinance: Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Papua (London, Sussex University Press, 1975)

sexual brutishness lurked quietly but persistently in the minds of white British Columbia.

More often, the notion that white women were boundary-markers between races meant that sex of any sort between white women and First Nations men was constructed as literally impossible. Thus when Matthew Macfie devised a list of twenty-three racial crosses, none involved white women.¹⁰⁸ Making a similar point from a much different vantage point, lady's companion and travel-writer M. Stannard went to great lengths to argue that Aboriginal men were not a menace to white women, arguing that "In visiting them, they showed me every kindness, never molesting me, although I went alone."¹⁰⁹

Some white women seem to have relished, or at least enjoyed, the power they reaped from being icons of racial separation and hierarchy. "Mary E." a *Tynemouth* emigrant and Yale school-teacher, wrote that "I am quite surrounded by Chinese and Indians." She also spoke of the racially liminal figures of backwoods miners, telling her family that "They are the most uncivilized-looking beings when they first come down; you would be quite frightened to be accosted by one at Brighton." In the end,

¹⁰⁸Matthew Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia: Their History, Resources, and Prospects (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865)p379. This assumption was later codified in Canada's Indian Act, which did not acknowledge the possibility of conjugal relations between white women and First Nations men. See Paul Tennant, Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1859-1989 (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1990) p9.

¹⁰⁹M. Stannard, Memoirs of a Professional Lady Nurse (London, Simpkin, Marshall, 1873)p192.

Mary found the "others" less threatening than anticipated. She also enjoyed the status this racial context afforded white women. "There are very few white women here, so they are treated with politeness by all," she explained, adding that this status guaranteed them an audience with the luminaries of colonial society, including the "Governor, the Bishop, the Judge, and all the great folks."¹¹⁰

Other white women, though, despaired that their gender limited the extent to which they could participate in the ongoing effort to assert white supremacy. Jane Fawcett, a Victoria housewife, complained bitterly about the presence of First Nations people "permitted by our wretched imbecile government, to be in or about the city thieving, and drinking whiskey...and public prostitution." She also doubted the pedigree of the Douglas administration: "A more ignorant self interested, crawling administration could not be anywhere...that I think we might as well have no government as the present one; and the Governor with his Squa[w] wife, and half breed daughters, and those under him." It was her gender, she told her sister, that kept her from putting things to right: "If I were a man, I could not sit tamely by, and see what I do; for I feel strongly...I want to see those abuses altered, and I should like this country better than I now do."¹¹¹ Other white women found informal ways to assert

¹¹⁰Mary E. to Aunt, 06 11 1862, in B.R.P., "XXVIII.- The Last News of the Emigrants," The English Woman's Journal 11: 63 (01 05 1863) p185. This woman seems to have worked at the Yale school for some time afterwards. See "Common Schools," British Columbian, 13 02 1864.

¹¹¹Jane Fawcett to Emma, 24 06 1860, Jane Fawcett, "Extracts from Letters and Diary," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss 1963, p90-91, p91-92. Emphasis original.

their imperial politics, such as the "respectable attendant of our church" who complained to Hills about common-law, mixed-race couples living around her, arguing that such lassitude was not tolerated in California or Oregon.¹¹²

Both these women justified their blatant anger and racism toward First Nations people with reference to mixed-race sexual relationships. How did other white women respond to the fact of unions between Aboriginal women and white men? The lack of revealing personal sources left from white women, let alone First Nations ones, makes it impossible to answer this question. Certainly Susan Moir Allison seems to have harboured no particular resentment towards Suzanne, her husband's former partner, or to Suzanne's children. Susan and Suzanne's lives in the Similkameen were profoundly enmeshed. Yet Margaret Ormsby's edition of Susan's memoirs makes no explicit mention of Suzanne's relationship to the Allisons, suggesting that Susan Allison's perspective may have been buried alongside the story of her husband's multiple families.¹¹³ Susan's opinions may have also been blunted by the thirty years separating her marriage from its retelling. Perhaps, though, Susan was not resentful because she did not need to be, so sure was she in her role as the white woman and legitimate wife. As in the southern households analyzed by Nell Painter, a troubling brew of silence, racism, and female community marks the case of Susan and Suzanne and

¹¹²Hills, "Journal 1861," p126.

¹¹³Ormsby, ed., A Pioneer Gentlewoman. See, on the multiple Allison families, Jean Barman, "Lost Okanagan: In Search of the First Settler Families," Okanagan History 60 (1996) p14-15.

suggests how the politics of gender, race, and colonialism not only carved out roles for white and First Nations women, but shaped their relationship to each other.¹¹⁴

For these reasons, white women's overt racism sometimes struck metropolitan observers as ironic. Scientist Robert Brown described visiting with Isabella Robb at her Comox farm in the summer of 1864. Robb, the former matron of the *Tynemouth*, apparently "prided herself on being the 'first white woman' in the settlement."¹¹⁵ Yet, to Brown's eyes, Robb did not seem particularly white. "The old lady," he wrote, "apologized to me for having nothing better to offer. 'Mowich' (deer), she said, was scarce just now. Formerly there was 'hyou' (plenty) but now the 'Siwashes' (Indians) brought in little and wanted for that little *hyou chickaman* (plenty money)." He found the juxtaposition of Robb's racism and cultural hybridity a peculiar one. "Mrs. Robb is an Englishwoman and of course with all a Britisher's contempt for savages, but like all others out here mixed in her conversation Indian Jargon."¹¹⁶

However much women like Robb, Fawcett, and Allison reaped power from their role in the colonial project, white women's power was, overwhelmingly, informal.

¹¹⁴Nell Irving Painter, "Three Southern Women and Freud: A Non-Exceptionalist Approach to Race, Class, and Gender in the Slave South," in Ann-Louise Shapiro, ed., *Feminists Revision History* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1994)

¹¹⁵Richard Somerset Mackie, *The Wilderness Profound: Victorian Life on the Gulf of Georgia* (Victoria, Sono Nis, 1995) p65. Also see Lugin, *Pioneer Women*, p155-160.

¹¹⁶Robert Brown, "Journal of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition," in John Hayman, ed., *Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1989) p111. Translations his.

Martha Harris, Douglas' youngest daughter, remembered nineteenth-century Victoria as a place where politics and women did not meet. "We had no Clubs or Leagues and never dreamed of having a vote, that was left for the men to settle."¹¹⁷ Yet, while lacking formal power, white women sometimes took informal action, as when Florence Wilson lent her Barkerville saloon for a meeting of miners working to break monopolies, especially in flour.¹¹⁸ As in other imperial contexts, a significant vehicle for white women's independent action was missionary service. White women regularly volunteered for missionary agencies,¹¹⁹ Sunday schools,¹²⁰ and other church activities.¹²¹ The Quebec-based Sisters of St. Ann, said to "exercise a world-wide, powerful moral influence in support of their Church," operated girls' schools and an orphanage.¹²² The most prominent Protestant female missionaries were Catherine and Anna Penrice, two

¹¹⁷Martha (Douglas) Harris Collection, "Diaries, etc.," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss 2789, p4.

¹¹⁸"Miners Meeting," Cariboo Sentinel, 28 10 1867.

¹¹⁹"Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary," British Columbian, 26 12 1863; "Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary Services," British Columbian, 07 12 1864.

¹²⁰"Sabbath School Picnic," British Columbian, 29 08 1863; Thomas Crosby, Among the An-ko-me-nums of the Pacific Coast (Toronto, William Briggs, 1907)p44-5; "From Nanaimo," British Colonist, 29 06 1865; "The Presbyterian Tea Meeting," British Colonist, 17 11 1865; "The Bazaar," British Colonist, 21 05 1870.

¹²¹"Fair," British Colonist, 13 12 1861; "Journal, Proceedings of the Ladies' Committee re the restoration of the Parish Church and Cathedral, 1869-71, 1876-85," Christ Church Cathedral Collection," BCARS, Add Mss 520, Box 1, Folder 7.

¹²²"The Entertainment in Aid of the Thirty-Two Orphans of the St. Ann's Convent," British Colonist, 17 04 1867; "St. Ann's School," British Columbian, 24 06 1865. On the order, see Marta Danylewicz, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920 (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1987) p47.

"orphan daughters of an aged widowed mother," who taught white and First Nations women from 1860 to 1865.¹²³ In official publications and private memoirs, Anglicans worked hard to portray these women as selfless and obedient rather than authoritative. One fellow missionary wrote that "whatever I say *they try to do*, as they are under my ORDERS!"¹²⁴ As Chapter Five discussed, missionary wives played significant roles in Protestant efforts. Methodist Ephraim Evans recognized their importance when he wrote that "the wives should be of the highest stamp. Not nervous timid creatures who dare not let their husbands go from home - nor ladies unaccustomed to practical housekeeping."¹²⁵

As well as serving as support workers and functionaries, white women superintended a fair chunk of the symbolic work of empire in British Columbia, particularly lending legitimacy to the military and legislature. New Westminster women, addressing each other as "*sister colonists*," raised funds and created regalia for

¹²³Report of the Columbia Mission, With List of Contributions, 1860 (London, Rivingtons, [1861]) p94-5; Eighth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1866 (London, Rivingtons, 1867) p67. They remained in contact with Victoria society after 1865. See Catherine Penrice to Mrs Blinkhorn, 12 01 1866, Ann Blinkhorn (Beaton), "Correspondence Inward" 1840-1866, BCARS, Add Mss 595.

¹²⁴John Garret, Columbia Mission: A Sermon Preached in St. Stephen's, Westminster, (London, Rivingtons, 1869) p4, p13. Also see John Booth Good, "The Utmost Bounds of the West: Pioneer jottings of forty years missionary reminiscences of the Out West Pacific Coast A.D. 1861 - A.D. 1900," ADNW/EPBC, PSA 52, File 9 [Transcript from original held at BCARS] pagination added, p10, p33.

¹²⁵Ephraim Evans to E. Wood, 11 04 1859, Wesleyan Methodist Church (Great Britain) "Foreign Missions: America, The British Dominions in North America, 1851-1893," Central Archives of United Church of Canada, Mic. D 8.1-2.

volunteer rifle and artillery corps.¹²⁶ When white women in Victoria presented the rifle corps with a banner, a member claimed that "the interest always manifested by the ladies" kept the corps alive.¹²⁷ While Douglas' mixed-blood wife Amelia made few official public appearances, the white wives and daughters of subsequent administrations were key to the construction of public authority in colonial British Columbia. Their characters, appearances, and activities were widely reported, and their presence was conspicuous at the openings of legislative council.¹²⁸ This was more than incidental: the "private" virtues of Governor Arthur Kennedy were considered sufficient to compensate for his public failings.¹²⁹ White women also legitimated the colony's more plebian imperial spectacles. At New Westminster's annual May Day, a "queen," alongside "attendant sylphs,"¹³⁰ was elected and paraded about. Yet in 1866, the British Columbian advanced that white women needed a

¹²⁶Advertisement, "To the Ladies of British Columbia, British Columbian, 20 06 1866. Emphasis original; "Flags for the Volunteer Corps," British Columbian, 23 06 1866; "The Celebration," British Columbian, 29 05 1867. For arguments about firemen being similarly deserving, see A Fireman's Wife, "Fair Play and No Favor," British Columbian, 27 06 1866; "A Banner for the Hyacks," British Columbian, 30 06 1866.

¹²⁷"Presentation of Colours to the Pioneer Rifle Corps," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 15 03 1864. They also presented banners to fire companies. See "Silk Banner for the Hook and Ladder Company," Weekly Victoria Gazette, 27 06 1860.

¹²⁸"The Governor's Lady" British Colonist, 21 03 1864; "The Ball at the Government House," British Colonist, 13 12 1866; "Arrival of the Governor and Mrs Musgrave," British Colonist, 03 07 1870; "Opening of the Legislative Council," British Colonist, 28 01 1867.

¹²⁹"The Departure of Governor Kennedy" British Colonist, 24 10 1866; "Departure of Governor Kennedy and Family" British Colonist, 24 10 1866.

¹³⁰"May Day," Mainland Guardian, 05 03 1871.

larger role in celebrations of the Queen's Birthday. "Provided the weather be propitious the ladies can be on-lookers' but they cannot be active participants in the races, sports, and games," they wrote, arguing that a ball would "afford the ladies an opportunity of taking an active part in the celebration."¹³¹

Symbolic, informal, or real, white women were accorded authority by their role as colonizers. For some white women, however, the environment of colonial British Columbia was more isolating than empowering. The scarcity of other white women and the socially imposed but individually perpetuated barriers between white and First Nations women meant that establishing female bonds was difficult. When the *Tynemouth* landed, the Victoria Press commented that women were deeply distressed to leave each other: "Some of the young ladies' feelings were so lacerated by the parting," they wrote, "that they indulged in hysterics, two going so far as to faint in the agony of separation."¹³² In 1861, Hills visited a young Irish woman in her backwoods tent, commenting that "She was very lonely, and had no female society."¹³³ A Cowichan settler remarked that "His own wife came out from her friends in Glasgow, and feels painfully the seclusion in a forest, where it is impossible often for her to see another female,"¹³⁴ suggesting both the depths of racially-exclusive

¹³¹"The Queen's Birthday," British Columbian, 19 05 1866.

¹³²"The Female Immigrants," Victoria Press, 21 09 1862.

¹³³"Another Letter From Bishop Hills," British Colonist, 14 03 1861. For the original, see George Hills, "Transcript of the Diaries of The Rev. George Hills," MS 65a, PSA 57, ADNWE/EPBC, p385-6.

¹³⁴"The Cowichan District," Vancouver Times, 09 09 1864.

definitions of gender and white female loneliness.

For other white women, fear rather than loneliness was the keynote. When Stannard spent the night in New Westminster's Grand Hotel with her mistress, she was so nervous about staying where "There were no females in the house except for ourselves" that a simple knock on their door made her "suspect foul play."¹³⁵ Louisa Townsend, a middle-class *Tynemouth* migrant, remembered being virtually cloistered when she first arrived on the mainland. "I know there were a lot of soldiers and I was never allowed to go out on the street alone," she recalled, speaking volumes to the centrality of fear to white women's experience in colonial British Columbia.¹³⁶ Whether the soldiers – read working-class men – were the source of her fear or symbols of a different threat remains unclear.

Occasionally it was publicly acknowledged that British Columbia might be an uncomfortable environment for white women. "A Returned Digger," who otherwise claimed that there was "no better colony to which women can emigrate than British Columbia," felt compelled to acknowledge that "some women are not treated well at gold digging districts," though he felt it was usually their own fault.¹³⁷ Remarks about one in five white women in the Cariboo going insane in 1861 suggest that these

¹³⁵Stannard, Memoirs, p161-3.

¹³⁶Mrs. Mallandaine, quoted in Lugin, Pioneer Women, p150.

¹³⁷A Returned Digger, The Newly Discovered Gold Fields of British Columbia (London, Darton and Hodge, 1862) eighth edition, p7, p20.

environs imperiled white women's mental health.¹³⁸ Some admitted that even Victoria could present a misogynist air, dubbing it an "anti-petticoat town."¹³⁹ During her tour, Susan B. Anthony declared that "Not a woman in Victoria is satisfied with her lot. If they say they are, don't believe them. The women are not satisfied."¹⁴⁰

The extent to which commentary about white women's loneliness, unhappiness, and fear reflects legitimate white female sentiment or simply assumptions about white women's weak and delicate character is unclear. It is surely important not to overestimate the bonds between white women, who were divided by class from each other as they were separated by race from First Nations women. For bourgeois white women, the absence of an adequate supply of domestic labour was clearly more disturbing than any lack of female community. Crease remembered the absence of servants as a major problem,¹⁴¹ Adelaide Ash spent a substantial amount of energy recording her servant's wages and comings and goings,¹⁴² and Moody was also preoccupied with her inability to manage and retain female household help in a colonial context. Such concerns coloured their social relations as well. When Moody told her sister that a dinner with "4 ladies & 1 gentlemen" was "An event in the

¹³⁸"A Crazy Woman," British Colonist, 19 09 1861.

¹³⁹"Elopement," British Colonist, 04 08 1862.

¹⁴⁰"Womens' Rights," British Colonist, 27 10 1871.

¹⁴¹S.R. Crease, "Crease Family Papers", BCARS, Add Mss 55, Vol 13, "The Bride Ships", File 3, 83-5.

¹⁴²Adelaide Annie Amelia (De Veulle) Ash, "Diary August 28, 1871 to March 21 1872," [Transcript] BCARS, Add Mss E/C/As31A c.2, p1, p36-7, p45.

history of the place, where female[s] are so scarce," she deployed a definition of "female" which was profoundly exclusive, speaking as much about class and race as it did about gender.¹⁴³

Paradoxically, other white women pre-figured the turn-of-the-century discourse around motherhood and imperialism by arguing that colonial contexts allowed white women to attain higher planes of female satisfaction.¹⁴⁴ "Colonista," the letter-writer who claimed "five years' residence on the Pacific coast of British North America," contended that the absence of servants made for more satisfying family relations. "In the colonies women, like men, must work," she wrote, turning the usual comments about the absence of servants on its head. As a partial result, "the tie between mother and children is a very strong one in colonial life." In general, Colonista constructed white colonial gender relations as representative of "natural" gender. "The wife may become truly the housewife; the husband may pursue any occupation without -- as long as it is an honest and respectable one -- losing estate."¹⁴⁵ Her choice of "Colonista" as a nom-de-plume suggests that this author was labouring to represent herself as colonialism both personified and feminized. In doing so, she demonstrates one of the ways that white women located themselves within colonial discourse, and

¹⁴³Mary Moody to Em, 15 03 1861, Mary Moody, "Outward Correspondence," Transcript, BCARS, Add Mss 60, Volume 1 & 2, p56.

¹⁴⁴See Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," History Workshop 5 (Spring 1978) p9-66.

¹⁴⁵"Marriage or Celibacy?" British Colonist, 02 09 1868.

utilized the language of imperialism to argue for white women's power. While other white women would have doubtlessly disagreed with her, all were shaped by the perception that white women had a special role in the maintenance of British Columbia's colonial project.

IV: Gender, Race and Respectability

Great emphasis was thus placed on white women's central role in signifying colonial authority and serving as boundary markers between white and First Nations society. Examining a handful of illustrative court cases illustrates these connections between race, respectability, and gender. Read for broadly social rather than narrowly legal evidence, these cases show how white women were expected to personify the respectability of the white community and, perhaps more significantly, how they could rebel against this expectation.

When Teresa Wade, a sailors' wife, charged Thomas O'Connor with rape in 1862, much of the trial hinged on Wade's status as a respectable white woman. She had been in Vancouver Island two weeks when O'Connor gave her a wagon-ride from Esquimalt to Victoria. On the road, they stopped to drink at two way-side houses, and O'Connor allegedly raped Wade. Witnesses concentrated on the weighty question of whether Wade was drunk, and repeatedly mentioned her status as a married women.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶R. vs O'Connor, British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents, 1857-1966," [hereafter "Attorney General Documents,"] BCARS, GR 419, Box 2, File 1862/10; "Alluded Rape Near Esquimalt," British Colonist, 11 12 1862. It is not clear if he was convicted on reduced charges of Indecent Assault.

That a trial was held at all suggests some of the ways that definitions of race, gender, and respectability collided in colonial British Columbia. Unlike First Nations women whose complaints of sexual assault by white men seem to have often been dismissed, nobody challenged Wade's basic right to name coercion or seek redress for it. At heart, white women were not assumed to be sexually available: when a married mother of three children was "seduced" and made pregnant by a local doctor, the press pilloried his manhood and community standards, but not her femininity.¹⁴⁷

However much white women like Wade were accorded a special status, their right to claim it was not assured. Indeed, the extent to which they were protected by the privileges of white womanhood could be, as in the case of Wade, challenged by their participation in dis-respectable behaviour like drinking. Certainly Wade's attacker, O'Connor, justified his assault with the claim that though "Mrs Wade had conducted herself as a lady but where parties were drunk there must be allowances made for circumstance."¹⁴⁸ A similar argument could be made, perhaps, for the social assumptions about white women in colonial British Columbia.

Assumptions of white women's purity were shaken, but not entirely dislodged, when white women engaged in mixed-race relationships. Irish-born Margaret Robinson was married to one of Salt Spring Island's prominent African-American

¹⁴⁷"Victoria Letter," British Columbian, 11 04 1865.

¹⁴⁸Testimony of John Crowley, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 2, File 1862/10.

settlers, William Robinson.¹⁴⁹ Margaret seems to have spent a good deal of energy defending herself and her children against unwanted sexual attention or rumour. In 1862, Methodist missionary Ebenezer Robson reported that "Mrs Robinson has been chastising a neighbour by beating him about the head with a club" because he "had circulated some false reports concerning her and she resorted to this extreme mode of punishment in the absence of her liege lord who would doubtless have avenged her worry had he been at home."¹⁵⁰ In 1864, the Robinson's farmhand was charged with raping their daughters, who the press took care to describe as "three mulatto girls," specifying that their mother was "a white woman."¹⁵¹ But two years later, when Robinson charged Henry Lester with sexually assaulting her, race was not raised as an issue. Salt Spring's black settlers rallied around Margaret, and only the accused challenged the veracity of her claim and nobody publicly doubted her right to make it.¹⁵² While Margaret's implicit refusal to serve as boundary-marker for racial purity seems to have put her respectable status into doubt, her pride coupled with the support of the Black community ultimately preserved her respectability.

¹⁴⁹Crawford Killian, Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1978) p102; Ruth Sandwell, personal communication, 23 August 1997.

¹⁵⁰Ebenezer Robson, "Diary", BCARS, Mflm 17A, np. Emphasis original.

¹⁵¹"The Rape Case," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 29 07 1864; "A [illegible] Case," British Colonist, 28 07 1864; "The Violation Case," British Colonist, 29 07 1864. This case does not appear to have gone to trial.

¹⁵²R. vs. Henry Lester, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 6, File 1866/25.

In different circumstances, the axes of race, respectability, and gender could cut in odd directions. First Nations and Black women could ironically benefit from racist views of their attackers. When a "Chinese cook" was arrested for assaulting Marie Gognoux, a mixed-blood child, the press portrayed him as an unfeeling, "beastly assailant." The racialization of her assailant perhaps ensured that she, unlike some other First Nations women, would receive at least the promise of legal intervention.¹⁵³ In 1866, Henry Williams, a Black deserted sailor, was charged with brutally beating a "colored" woman, Elizabeth Freddison, and raping her thirteen-year old daughter Josephine, at whose Saanich farm he was working. Williams claimed that Mrs. Freddison had made sexual overtures to him, but neither the court nor the press cast aspersions on either Freddison woman's morality, and Williams was given a tough sentence of "penal servitude for life."¹⁵⁴ The press was overtly racist in their condemnation, invoking the terrifying spectacle of lynching with the remark that "We hope, if caught, that he will be sent to survey the Saanich district from the topmost branches of one of the tallest trees on the Island."¹⁵⁵

White women's right to claim the privileges of race were more often

¹⁵³"Outrage" British Colonist, 26 07 1866. It seems that this case never went to trial.

¹⁵⁴"The Saanich Outrage," British Colonist, 17 11 1866; R. vs. Henry Williams, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 6, File 1866/28; "The Saanich Case" British Colonist, 02 10 1866; "Again Remanded," British Colonist, 19 10 1866.

¹⁵⁵"Outrage and Attempt at Murder," British Colonist, 27 09 1866. On the gendered politics of lynching, see Hazel V. Carby, "'On the Threshold of Woman's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," in Henry Louis Gates, ed., 'Race,' Writing and Difference (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985)

compromised by drinking and expressive working-class heterosexuality than by mixed-race attachments. An 1864 trial involving a *Tynemouth* immigrant suggests some of the common ways white working-class women challenged prevailing images of white women and respectability. Shopkeepers Herman Schultz and Jasper Newton Trickey were charged with raping Esther Meiss, who had immigrated on the *Tynemouth* two years before. "Both Mr Shultz and Mr Trickey had connection with me while I was under the influence of the drink which Mr Shultz had given me," she testified.¹⁵⁶ The defense lawyer challenged Meiss' story by questioning her initial silence about the assault and suggesting that she had a continuing and consensual sexual relationship with various men, including Trickey.¹⁵⁷ The court documents reveal much about the unstable world of one *Tynemouth* immigrant. Meiss seems to have been around the sexual block, admitting that "I was intimate with Mr Jacob before I was married" and to patronizing a "dancing room."¹⁵⁸ Her marriage was not a happy one. Defence witnesses testified that Meiss said her "husband had gone away and left nothing but bread in the house" and that he would not give her "a 'bit' to buy cheese with." In response, she reportedly threatened to leave her husband, telling him that she "was going to make a living for myself," and that "'You have driven it so far that I will

¹⁵⁶"Deposition" of Esther Meiss, R. vs. Schultz and Trickey, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 4, File 1864/38

¹⁵⁷See "Court of Assizes: Rape," *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, 01 08 1864.

¹⁵⁸"Police Court, Victoria VI, 31st May 1864," R. vs. Schultz and Trickey, "Attorney General Documents," BCARS, GR 419, Box 4, File 1864/38.

have to turn bad.'" She looked to Trickey, saying that her husband "' feeds me on nothing but dry bread and fish, but I've got a key to Mr. Trickey's room where I can get anything I want.'" While Meiss denied all of this, she admitted to stealing money from her husband. Meiss lacked female community as well as a stable heterosexual relationship, claiming that "I have no female friends with the exception of Mrs Shirpsen" and that she had quarrelled with her as well as with Dora and Lizzie Freedman.¹⁵⁹ "I have not kept up any acquaintance with my fellow passengers," she told the court, confirming her relative isolation.¹⁶⁰

Meiss also suggested some of the ways that working-class women manipulated the female migration movement to their own ends. In court, she revealed that she arrived under a false name, probably in an effort to hide her Jewishness. She described her machinations thus: "came to this country in my stepfather's name, my maiden name is Hurst; I came out in the Tynemouth as Mary Hodges; I was married as Esther Hurst; my sister wrote me my name, she said I was not born a christian, and I changed the name of Mary Hodges to Esther Hurst."¹⁶¹ Yet on arrival in Victoria, Meiss seems to have joined the local Jewish community; her husband was attending Synagogue when the alleged rape occurred.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹Court of Assizes: Rape," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 01 08 1864

¹⁶⁰"Police Court, Victoria VI."

¹⁶¹"Police Court, Victoria VI." An "M. Hodges" was listed as arriving on the *Tynemouth*. See "Arrival of the Tynemouth," Victoria Press, 18 09 1862.

¹⁶²"Police Court, Victoria VI."

Given Meiss's difficulty in marshalling the image of respectable white woman, it is not surprising the accused were found not guilty. The judge, who earlier banned her husband from the court room for prompting her, instructed the jury to find the men not guilty because of contradictory evidence.¹⁶³ Meiss was outraged, claiming that the defence lawyer "was a d--nation liar," and that she'd "like to get hold of him."¹⁶⁴ This case certainly reveals some of the profound ways that white working-class women's behaviour and identity in British Columbia departed from formal colonial discourse. Esther Meiss or Mary Hodges or Ester Hurst was not the imperial subject the FMCES had intended her to be. She does not seem to have worked as a domestic servant. Rather than reforming the disorderly, easy sociability of working-class white men in the colony, she seems to have participated in it, changing partners and attending dance halls, and, if some witnesses against her are to be believed, taking cash and goods in exchange for sex. Instead of serving as a beacon for Britishness, she adopted a Jewish identity, and in doing so, revealed how she hoodwinked the do-gooders who subsidized her passage. She did not take up the role of the subservient, managing working-class housewife. Meiss embezzled the housekeeping money, and complained bitterly and publicly when her husband failed to support her in a manner she deemed appropriate. She was not content with the company of the working-class white women the court assumed she had community with: Meiss avoided her ship-

¹⁶³"Police Court, Victoria VI."

¹⁶⁴"Profane, But Forcible," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 01 08 1864.

mates and alienated her few female friends. While a spectacular example, Meiss was not the only assisted emigrant who clearly defied the role accorded to her. Soon after the arrival of the *Robert Lowe*, a group was charged with thieving at the Immigration Barracks.¹⁶⁵ In 1864, five of the *Robert Lowe's* passengers – Charlotte Anne Eaton *nee* Bates, Bessie Lyons, Jane Smith, Ann Fish and Jane Atkinson – were charged with having failed to pay the balance of their passages.¹⁶⁶

These were not the only working-class white women who flouted definitions of appropriate femininity. Fanny Clarke, described as "a woman of gay character" in 1863,¹⁶⁷ was famed both for prostitution and cross-dressing. Her disorderly behaviour came to the attention of the colonial government when her companion, Richard Gollenge, was dismissed from his post of Gold Commissioner for Sooke mines in 1864 on the grounds that he was "leading an intemperate and disreputable life."¹⁶⁸ Gollenge was a long-term colonist and another casualty of Governor Arthur Kennedy's attempt to reformulate sexual practice on Vancouver Island. At a bizarre, trial-like special meeting of the executive council, Kennedy made two charges: that Gollenge

¹⁶⁵"The Alleged Larceny," British Colonist, 06 03 1863. This included women who, presumably, had travelled on the *Robert Lowe*.

¹⁶⁶The Magistrate reserved decision in the case of Bates and dismissed cases against the others. See "Female Immigrants," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 28 06 1864; "C.J. H., 'The 'Female Immigration' Suits in the Summary Court,'" Victoria Daily Chronicle, 29 06 1864; "Tynemouth Immigrants," British Colonist, 26 06 1864.

¹⁶⁷"Brutal Treatment of a Woman," British Colonist, 31 01 1863.

¹⁶⁸Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 30 11 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-246.

was "seen in a state of intoxication in open day" and "seen at the immediate scene of your duties, associating and playing Cards with a Common Prostitute in a Public drinking tent."¹⁶⁹ That prostitute was Fanny Clarke, and witnesses spoke of her notorious reputation. One testified that she was "known I should imagine to the whole community as a Prostitute." Worse, witnesses like publican Henry Kibblewhite testified that she cross-dressed:

Q. How was the woman dressed at that time?

A. She had on a pair of my trousers.

Q. Partly in Male attire?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know anything of the Character of that woman by repute, or otherwise

A. I believe she is well known as a Common Prostitute, I do not think she makes any secret of it.

Christian Ochsner, a road contractor, supplied similar evidence, although emphasising Gollenge and Clarke's gender-inappropriate behaviour vis-a-vis their horse:

Q. What kind of saddle had he upon that horse

A. A Lady's saddle, a side saddle

Q. Was there any body with him on that occasion

A. There was a female called Fanny Clarke walking behind

Q. How was she dressed on that occasion

A. In man's attire, In man's Clothing.

Q. Do you know what is the Character of this woman, Fanny Clarke

A. She bears a very bad Character

Q. She is by repute, a notorious Prostitute.

A. Yes.

Despite this evidence, it was Gollenge's drunkenness at the hearing that finally resulted

¹⁶⁹Henry Wakeford to Richard Gollenge, 21 01 1864, in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 30 11 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-246.

in his dismissal.¹⁷⁰ He later died in the Lekwammen settlement at Victoria.¹⁷¹ These proceedings apparently had little reformatory effect on Clarke, who was charged a few months later with assaulting another woman.¹⁷² Clarke's overt, and ongoing refusal to live as white ladies were supposed to shows again how working-class white women's behaviour could profoundly depart from their construction in colonial discourse.

V: Moral Regulation and White Women

While Meiss, Clarke, and other white women, especially working-class ones, suggested the profound limits of colonial discourse's veracity and applicability, they did not overtly or systematically challenge it. Still their individual divergence was enough of a problem to lead British Columbia's colonial society to develop a series of institutions designed to manage and regulate white women. Funding girls' schools, female charities, and campaigns against "immoral" wage work shared much in common with regulatory efforts elsewhere. That white women were thought to require these regulatory apparatus in the particular colonial context of British Columbia suggests the deep ambivalence that lay behind the faith in white women's colonial

¹⁷⁰"Vancouver's Island, Extract from Minutes of Executive Council, 29th November 1864," in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 30 11 1864, CO 305/23, PAC, MG 11, Mfilm B-246. Also see "Journals of the Executive Council of the Colony of Vancouver Island," in James E. Hendrickson, ed., Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 1851-1871, Volume I, "Journals of the Council, Executive Council, and Legislative Council of Vancouver Island, 1851-1866" (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) p159-164.

¹⁷¹William John Macdonald, A Pioneer 1851 (Victoria, the author, [?]) p4.

¹⁷²"Police Court," Vancouver Times, 22 02 1865.

proWess. White women were proclaimed a natural imperial force, yet careful regulation and specific intervention was required for them to be so.

Girls' educational facilities aimed to foster and shape white female morality in class-specific terms. In 1859, the Sisters of St. Ann opened a Victoria school that quickly dominated the field of female middle-class education.¹⁷³ Anglicans, disturbed that "the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy are the only persons here engaged in the education of girls of the better classes"¹⁷⁴ opened the Female Collegiate School a year later. The school stressed "English habits, and feelings, and refinement, and above all, the pure, and sober, and evangelical religion of England's church."¹⁷⁵ In representing itself as an paragon of imperial rectitude, this school implicitly attacked the Sisters association with the colony's mixed-blood bourgeois. That Black girls attended the school, though, became a point of Anglican pride.¹⁷⁶ By the late 1860s, the school's popularity was suffering,¹⁷⁷ although the colony's middle-class girls remembered it

¹⁷³See British Colonist, 01 01 1859; Advertisement, British Colonist, 08 01 1859.

¹⁷⁴"An Occasional Paper--Letters from the Bishop of Columbia to Commissary Garret, Pemsanoe," British Colonist, 13 10 1860.

¹⁷⁵See John Downwall, A Sermon Preached in St. James' Church Piccadilly at the Annual Service of the Columbia Mission (London, Rivingtons, 1862) p8.

¹⁷⁶Sophia Craycroft, in Lady Franklin Visits the Pacific Northwest: Being Extracts from the Letters of Miss Sophia Craycroft, Sir John Franklin's Niece, February to April 1861 and April to July 1870 (Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1974) p10.

¹⁷⁷See "Minute of the Board of Management," 23 08 1869, "Crease Family Papers", Add Mss 55, BCARS, Box 3, File 26, "H.P.P Crease, ecclesiastical matters"; "Angela College," British Colonist, 23 12 1868

fondly.¹⁷⁸

Catholics and Anglicans agreed on the imperative of emphasizing morality, religion, and domesticity in female education, as did smaller private schools. In 1865, Governor Kennedy greeted the moving and renaming of the Anglican school with nation-building glee. "No race of useful people could descend from any but good and virtuous mothers," he argued.¹⁷⁹ Hills agreed, commenting that "if you let your girls grow up into frivolous, vain and pleasure-loving womanhood, you have a generation of effeminate, selfish, shallow and unstable manhood."¹⁸⁰ Father Seghers offered analogous remarks when the sisters opened a new building in 1871, commenting that an education of the mind alone was incomplete and possibly "a weapon more dangerous for the welfare of society." Thus the convent school would provide an education that "renders women both a useful member of society by her learning and acquirements and a virtuous mother of family, a blessing in the household, a source of joy and happiness in domestic life."¹⁸¹ School-mistress

¹⁷⁸See S.R. Crease, "School Life in Victoria", BCARS, Add Mss 55, Vol 13, File 3, 89-90; Hannah Wall to Mr. Lamb, 16 04 1936, "Reminiscences", BCARS, Add Mss E/E/W15, p1-3.

¹⁷⁹"Collegiate School for Girls," British Colonist, 13 10 1865. Around the same time, the Anglicans were involved in the creation of a girls' school in New Westminster which had folded by 1969. See advertisement, "Education. Girls' Collegiate School, New Westminster," British Columbian, 16 12 1865; "Female Education," British Columbian, 09 01 1869.

¹⁸⁰Eighth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1866 (London, Rivingtons, 1867) p56-57.

¹⁸¹"Laying the Corner-Stone of St Ann's Convent School," British Colonist, 13 09 1871.

Madame Pettibea's was defended by Anglican supporters as having overcome the limits of her French heritage to achieve high manners and sensibility.¹⁸² When Mrs. Moresby opened a boarding school in New Westminster, the press pointed out that "We need not point out to parents the advantages of having their daughters entrusted to a lady who has moved in the best circles."¹⁸³

Separate female schooling was also promoted for working-class girls. A female public-school teacher was urged for New Westminster because girls were kept home otherwise.¹⁸⁴ In the Nanaimo Gazette, one author testified that without separate public education, girls were "forced into contact with our sturdy youngsters, many of whom are neither very refined in their habits nor choice in their modes of expression."¹⁸⁵ Not everyone concurred on the necessity of separate schooling for plebian girls and boys, suggesting another way that white women's roles as colonizers were class-specific.¹⁸⁶ Others cautioned that female public schooling should not test the boundaries of gendered expectations. "The imagination can hardly conceive the horror of a

¹⁸²E. Cridge to Sir, 02 03 1859, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mflm B1345, File 1341a.

¹⁸³"Ladies School," British Columbian, 11 11 1863; "School Examination," Mainland Guardian, 12 24 1870.

¹⁸⁴"Popular Education," British Columbian, 16 02 1867; "Municipal Council," Mainland Guardian, 09 07 1870.

¹⁸⁵J.B.C., "Wanted Immediately - A School-mistress for Nanaimo," Nanaimo Gazette 20 11 1865.

¹⁸⁶"Report of the Grand Jury" British Colonist, 21 01 1860; "Grand Jury Report," British Colonist, 26 01 1860; "House of Assembly," British Colonist, 18 01 1866; "Our School Matters," Nanaimo Gazette, 20 11 1865; "House of Assembly," Vancouver Times, 12 10 1864; "House of Assembly," Vancouver Times, 19 10 1864.

condition of social affairs in which everything that wore wreath and crinoline harassed us perpetually respecting the solution of problems in Euclid, or troubled our minds with difficult quotations from Euripides," they wrote. "We infinitely prefer a good pudding or a plenitude of shirt buttons."¹⁸⁷

Charities, as well as schools, sought to regulate white women. Charities were not the product of uncomplicated altruism, but were set up in part because white female poverty was seen as an overt insult to colonial prestige. In 1865, the British Colonist argued that "above all the melancholy sights in a new country is a number of indigent women who cannot obtain employment."¹⁸⁸ As in the Asian contexts studied by Ann Stoler, "The threat posed by large numbers of European paupers gave rise to a profusion of relief agencies and community efforts to feed, board, and maintain the unemployed at some semblance of a European standard."¹⁸⁹ In British Columbia, these charities were usually operated by bourgeois white women, and thus provided for white, middle-class female self-definition as well the regulation of poor white women.

Organizations dedicated to relieving poor white women, like girls' schools, were founded from the late 1850s onward. In 1859, "a number of the ladies of

¹⁸⁷"A Social Necessity," Vancouver Times, 08 06 1865.

¹⁸⁸"Mr. Macife on Immigration," British Colonist, 28 11 1865.

¹⁸⁹Ann Laura Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," Comparative Studies in Society and History 31:1 (January 1989) p152.

Victoria" formed "a Society for relieving the sick and clothing the naked."¹⁹⁰ In 1864, the Female Aid Association began to offer indoor and outdoor relief specifically to indigent white women, who were apparently thought worthy of special philanthropy.¹⁹¹ This body, moreover, seems to have formed the nucleus of the group responsible for opening Victoria's Female Infirmary. The press earlier commented that no facility would accept ill, poor women,¹⁹² but the arrival of two terminally ill, indigent women on the *Robert Lowe* provided the necessary motivation to create a special institution.¹⁹³ "The efforts which had been made in England with some success, to less the disproportion between the sexes in this country, made it the more necessary that we should not leave those who might fall sick upon their arrival friendless and homeless," Edward Cridge noted.¹⁹⁴ From the outset, the Infirmary twinned the philanthropic and assisted female migration effort.

The Female Infirmary opened in November of 1864, with a sick ward, a

¹⁹⁰Philanthropist, "Society for the Relief of the Poor," British Colonist, 22 07 1859. Mallandaine referred to this as the "Ladies' Benevolent Society." See First Victoria Directory, p21.

¹⁹¹See Female Aid Association: Report for the Year Ending February, 1864 (NP, ND [1864]); "Female Aid Association" British Colonist, 17 06 1865; "Female Aid Association," British Colonist, 04 07 1865.

¹⁹²"Royal Hospital," British Colonist, 31 12 1862; "Female Ward at the Royal Hospital," British Colonist, 14 01 1863; "Female Hospital," British Colonist, 21 10 1864.

¹⁹³"The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 24 11 1864; "Hospital for Females," British Colonist, 17 06 1863; "Female Hospital," British Colonist, 15 09 1864; "Royal Female Hospital," Vancouver Times, 22 11 1864.

¹⁹⁴"The Hospital for Females," Vancouver Times, 23 11 1864.

receiving ward, a lying-in ward, a demonstration room, a matron's room, two private rooms, and dining hall, kitchen and bath room.¹⁹⁵ Women seem to have entered the Infirmary for a variety of reasons, and sometimes stayed a long time.¹⁹⁶ It was managed by a committee peopled by the usual cast of upstanding, do-gooding wives of local politicians, clergy, and businessmen, led by Mrs. Harris, the Mayor's wife, and aided by the ever-present Cridge.¹⁹⁷ The Infirmary was supported through limited government support and fund-raising efforts like bazaars and benefit concerts.¹⁹⁸ In 1868, the Female Infirmary amalgamated with the Royal Hospital, although "the ladies" continued to pay for "their" patients.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵See "The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 25 04 1865.

¹⁹⁶See, for instance, "Death at the Hospital," British Colonist, 22 04 1865; "Death at the Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 13 04 1866.

¹⁹⁷Female Infirmary, "Papers relating to Ladies Committee, 1863-1868," BCARS, N/A/F34.1; Edward Cridge, "Diary, 1868," [Transcript], "Cridge Papers," BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box 7; Female Infirmary for the Sick and Destitute of All Denominations (Victoria, NP, ND [1866]); Female Infirmary for the Sick and Destitute of All Denominations (Victoria, NP, ND [1867]); "Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 15 04 1867.

¹⁹⁸"Bazaar," British Colonist, 07 02 1865; "Bazaar for the Infirmary," British Colonist, 07 03 1865; "The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 16 03 1865; "Bazaar," British Colonist, 21 03 1865; "The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 25 03 1865; "The Ladies Bazaar," British Colonist, 03 04 1865; "The Bazaar," British Colonist, 05 04 1865; "The Bazaar," British Colonist, 08 04 1865; "Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 15 09 1865; "The Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 19 10 1865; "Female Infirmary Concert," British Colonist, 23 10 1865; "Infirmary Concert," British Colonist, 03 11 1865; "Afternoon Concert," British Colonist, 06 11 1865; "Female Infirmary," British Colonist, 22 01 1867; "The Female Hospital," Vancouver Times, 27 03 1865;

¹⁹⁹Cridge, "Diary, 1868," [Transcript], BCARS, Add Mss 320, Box 7, p48; "The Royal Hospital," British Colonist, 15 03 1865; Untitled, British Colonist, 20 03 1868; Untitled, British Colonist, 14 04 1868.

The Female Infirmary and the Female Aid Association, like girls' schools, worked to produce a certain model of colonial womanhood in two separate but related ways. By giving gender and race specific relief, the Infirmary and the Association ensured that white women had access to a minimum standard of living, and would thus not humiliate the community with their inappropriate poverty. With placing socially marginal women in one central space, the Infirmary also limited poor, sick women's contact with the larger society. In doing so, the Infirmary and the Aid Association also shaped white middle-class womanhood by providing bourgeois women a legitimate and non-threatening public role in the colonial project.

White British Columbians also worked to regulate female employment in saloons. Like poverty, female bar-room work was thought to be degrading for women and the community as a whole. A campaign demanding that saloons hiring women be denied licences was launched in 1863 on the grounds that "Women can be employed in those places for no other purpose than to serve as lures to attract men." More seriously, perhaps, the employment of women in saloons stood out as yet another possible embarrassment to the striving white community:

Besides all this it is an absolute reproach to society here that so many girls should be induced by high wages to enter an employment which has every tendency to blast their reputation and render them outcasts from the world. There is an absolute and great disproportion between the sexes in this country. There is a want of good steady industrious girls to furnish virtuous wives for our men and make them something else than the reckless restless mortals so numerous on this coast. To supply this want must be one of the objects of any measure for the encouragement of emigration, and any thing that will interfere with this

end should be tabooed.²⁰⁰

For a week in the spring of 1864, an anonymous citizen took out a long advertisement in the Victoria press, enumerating the many reasons why women should be kept from working in saloons:

FIRST – Because the employment of young women in rooms where nothing but Spirits and Malt Liquors are served to the public (as bitter experience has proved) is calculated to demoralize and blast their reputation for life.

SECOND – Because during the time their services are most required, viz: from 11 o'clock at night til 3 o'clock the following morning, it necessarily follows that they often come into contact with a class of men who, when under the influence of liquor, place little value on the virtue of the poor 'waitress.'

THIRD – Because it is a notorious fact that of late it is almost impossible for families to keep PRETTY female servants in their employ, in consequence of the many inducements held out to them, such as higher wages; and many FINE PRESENTS THEY ARE SURE TO RECEIVE FROM THE GENTLEMEN, with nothing to do but hand around (with the most approving smile) the PAIN at the moderate price of five dollars per bottle.

FOURTH – Because it would be a reproach to the moral reputations of the citizens of Victoria to suffer the continuance of a system that inevitably leads to immorality and the worst of crimes.²⁰¹

Despite the work of this partisan – undoubtedly also behind an eighty-page petition and much more propaganda – saloons hiring women were licensed.²⁰² Perhaps for

²⁰⁰"The Police Magistrate and Concert Saloons," British Colonist, 14 08 1863.

²⁰¹Advertisement, "Notice to Whom It May Concern," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 31 03 1864.

²⁰²"The Waitress Question," British Colonist, 12 07 1864. For the opposition, see Patrefamilias, "The Parlors," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 06 07 1864; Advertisement, "Special Notice: Appeal to the Honorable Bench of Magistrate of Victoria," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 06 07 1864. The latter was a variation on the earlier ad, which added an argument about male wage labour, namely that "It is well known that the hiring of females in this city...does not proceed from a scarcity of honest and competent young men."

this reason, female waiters in Victoria saloons remained a licensing issue throughout the 1860s.²⁰³ Sometimes it was working women themselves rather than concerned citizens who opposed waitressing and its moral and sexual liminality. Mrs. Phillips, a widow with one child, sued her employer, Mrs. Lush, for having imported her "under false pretences, to act as a waitress at the Park Hotel." Phillips, formerly in private service, refused to drink with male guests, and quickly left the job, taking her co-worker with her. Lush tried to defend the respectability of her establishment, but the court found for her insulted ex-employees.²⁰⁴ Phillips was not alone: other white women, it seems, were procured from San Francisco with promises of easy work and high wages as barmaids. This path, at any rate, was rejected by Emily Wood, who later successfully sued Mrs. Turgoose of the Commercial Hotel for inveigling her.²⁰⁵

The failure of the anti-waitress campaigns suggests that much of the white community did not share this enthusiasm for regulating white women. Indeed, colonial officials sometimes came into open conflict with local white men who, apparently, had different notions of appropriate white womanhood. When the Royal Engineer's school-teacher was dismissed for "misconduct of a nature proving her entire unfitness for the charge of children," Colonel Richard Moody noted that there was "An unfortunate misplaced sympathy on the part of many of the Detachment" with the

²⁰³"Licensing Court," British Colonist, 07 12 1866

²⁰⁴"County Court," British Colonist, 11 11 1868.

²⁰⁵"Victoria Letter, No.4," Cariboo Sentinel, 01 08 1867.

erring woman, which led them to withdraw their children and financial support from the school.²⁰⁶ Hills was similarly shocked by what he saw as male tolerance for white female lassitude. In 1862, he raged to his diary about miners' respect for a rough woman, probably Joanna Maguire:

The fact is these men, worthy men as miners, are so accustomed to live in the transits of vice, & to hear blasphemy & evil discourse of immorality, that they have sunk to a lower level, their moral task is depraved & forgetting to take into account & in an estimate of character piety & moral could pronounce excellent & praise to the skies a keeper of a house of ill fame, a drunkard & blasphemer & a prostitute a wretched woman who happened to show a kind disposition to the sick. Her name was Joanna.²⁰⁷

Hills' outrage was renewed a few years later when the *Brother Jonathan* sank, killing a landlord's wife and six women she was procuring. When Victoria's white community showed the widower respect, Hills was repulsed: "Such, alas! is the tone of morality among a large number in this country."²⁰⁸

This evidence suggests how white female morality and respectability was a crucial yet contested element of white self-definition in British Columbia. As symbols of the separateness and superiority of the white race, white women needed to be kept at elevated standards. Sometimes, creating charitable groups designed to aid indigent

²⁰⁶Colonel Moody to Colonial Secretary, 19 03 1861, in James Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, 14 11 1861, Great Britain Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, British Columbia, 1858-1871, CO 60/11 [hereafter CO 60] PAC, MG 11, Mflm B-85.

²⁰⁷Hills, "Journal 22 July to 31 December 1862," p116.

²⁰⁸Eighth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1866, p19. See, for original, George Hills, "Hills Journal 1865," [Transcript] ADNW/EPBC, p78.

white women, labouring to keep white women from certain trades, or monitoring white women's morality was sufficient. At other times, more spectacular intervention was required to prop up this important colonial index. The case of Victoria's Mills sisters suggests how far the colonial state and some members of the white community were willing to go to preserve the image of white women.

The three Mills sisters were respectable white women, who, unlike Esther Meiss and Fanny Clarke, did not defraud missionaries, bear their Jewishness proudly, cross-dress, or embrace the image of the fast-living prostitute. Rather, they lived by their own labour and attended church regularly in Victoria. Two kept a private school, and the other laboured as a dressmaker.²⁰⁹ Dr. Ash, their physician, described them as "industrious worthy people of excellent character."²¹⁰ While unmarried, the Mills sisters were otherwise exemplars of imperial womanhood: pious, respectable, and holding up their end of the racial bargain. Yet something went deeply wrong for the Mills sisters in the autumn of 1869. Margaret, who had been ill for sometime, cracked: she became "furiously maniacal," wrote Ash, "and ran screaming into the street in a state of nudity followed by her sister."²¹¹ The two women, by now "raving

²⁰⁹ Margaret Mills was listed as a dressmaker in Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory, p38. Ash claimed that two of the sisters "had been engaged keeping a little school." See Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 19 05 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS GR 1372, Mflm B-1301, File 37/4. Elsie Watts writes that "Miss Mills gave over 20 pupils tuition in reading, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and drawing at the corner of View and Douglas streets." Watts, p143.

²¹⁰Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 19 05 1870.

²¹¹Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 19 05 1870.

mad," were taken to the Victoria police station where Jane recovered, but Margaret "subsided into a state of dementia." Given the impropriety of keeping white women in gaol, they were sent home, where they were nursed by their sister Catherine.²¹²

The white community was deeply and publicly concerned about the Mills sisters from the onset of their overt deviance. St. John's Church offered to have the women "taken to a private residence," an offer they firmly declined.²¹³ The British Colonist kept track of their case. "The idiosyncrasy of the unfortunate women," they explained, "is that they have been poisoned and that Christ Jesus has sent for them." One refused to wear clothes, and both, at times, were violent and convinced the world was coming to an end.²¹⁴ This public concern was rooted firmly in the conviction that the Mills women were respectable white women and thus bell weathers for the white community as a whole. It was, the press worried, "the saddest that has ever come under our notice, as they are women of education and highly reputable character and supported themselves by teaching. They worshipped at St. John's Church."²¹⁵ The British Colonist forcefully argued that their case necessitated special treatment and indeed a special facility. Goal might have been an acceptable place for errant First Nations women, but not for white ones. While "the utmost solicitude has been evicted

²¹²Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 19 05 1870.

²¹³One of the Subscribers, "Lunacy at the Police Barracks," British Colonist, 10 12 1869.

²¹⁴"The Insane Ladies," British Colonist, 09 12 1869; also Untitled, British Colonist, 08 12 1869; Untitled, British Colonist, 12 12 1869.

²¹⁵ "The Insane Ladies," British Colonist, 09 12 1869.

on the part of the authorities for the comfort of the unfortunate subjects of the above correspondence, and they have succeeded in giving the place a wonderful air of comfort," it was not enough. "Unquestionably the Police Barracks is, in many respects, ill suited for the reception and proper treatment of insane persons, more especially where, as in the present instance, the patients happen to be females," they argued.²¹⁶

This concern intensified when the informal home-care programme adopted as an alternative to gaol collapsed. Margaret did not improve, and, when Ash was called to examine her, she "had a paroxysm of manic screaming, tearing her clothes, and trying to get away from the house to the waterside (where she would probably have tried to drown herself)." Her sisters' fragile mental health, Ash thought, was imperiled by the necessity of caring for the self-destructive Margaret. Ash recommended that Margaret be removed from the family home and that the colonial government maintain her at the nearest asylum, in Stockton, California.²¹⁷ After a brief search for relatives willing to support Margaret, the government agreed to pay her travelling costs and half of her maintenance fees.²¹⁸ By any estimation, this offer was an generous one in a colony with very meagre social services. There was no public asylum, and hospitals and schools were supported only with great reluctance. But the prospect of

²¹⁶One of the Subscribers, "Lunacy at the Police Barracks," British Colonist, 10 12 1869. Also see "The Insane Ladies," British Colonist, 09 12 1869.

²¹⁷Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 19 05 1870.

²¹⁸See notes from P.J. Hankin, 26 05 1870; A.F. Pemberton 26 05 1870: A.M., 28 05 1870; C.S.O. to Dr. Ash, 30 05 1870, in Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 19 05 1870.

respectable white women in gaol or screaming naked in the streets was enough to send the most tight-fisted state into generous action. Not only did they agree to Ash's initial proposal, but they proved remarkably willing to meet the Mills' needs as they defined them. The Mills, unwilling to entrust Margaret to strangers, rejected the original plan. "They cannot be made to believe that the removal of their sister to a place where they could not visit her, and where she would be in the charge of strangers could be more beneficial to her than their own constant and devoted care," wrote an irritated Ash. One had given up her job, the other proposed to sell her furniture and sewing machine, and they planned to support themselves by washing. Ash suggested that the government support the women directly.²¹⁹ In keeping with their generosity, the colonial government agreed, allocating one-hundred dollars, or a remarkable one-fifth of the annual colonial budget for charitable expenses, to the Mills' household.²²⁰

This generosity did not solve the problem. A few months later, the British Colonist reported that "the hallucinations have returned," and the two sisters were "impressed with the one ruling idea that everybody with whom they came in contact is trying to poison them." Worse, Catherine succumbed to the family malady, becoming "violently insane" and accusing "the wives of many respectable citizens with poisoning

²¹⁹Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 03 06 1870, "Colonial Correspondence," BCARS, GR 1372, Mfilm B-1301, File 37/5.

²²⁰Note from P.J.H., 06 06 1870; C.S.O to Dr Ash, 09 06 1870, in Dr. Ash to Colonial Secretary, 03 06 1870.

her."²²¹ The final collapse of Margaret, Jane, and Catherine proved troubling enough to the fragile identity of colonial Victoria that it led to institutional action. The press had earlier pressed the need for an asylum in the colony and used the example of insane white women to support their position.²²² Yet the Mills sisters sealed the case. "Strong men and delicate women must share one common fate, must be doomed to treatment which can scarcely be regarded as favorable to the return of reason," warned the British Colonist.²²³ "There are now *nine* lunatics confined at the Police Barracks. Four of the number are women!" they complained a few months later.²²⁴ In response, local officials created a facility designed especially to cope with the Mills and women like them. In June of 1871, they proudly proclaimed that "a temporary lunatic Asylum for Females has been fitted up in the Victoria Prison, under the charge of a Female Keeper."²²⁵ Flora Ross, a mixed-blood woman, was hired as their keeper, a post she would maintain after a separate asylum was built.²²⁶

Like Esther Meiss and Fanny Clarke, Catherine, Margaret, and Jane Mills tell us much about the history of white women in colonial British Columbia, about the

²²¹"Melancholy Case of Lunacy," British Colonist, 20 10 1870.

²²²"A Public Want," British Colonist, 02 06 1865.

²²³"Our Lunatics" British Colonist, 28 10 1870.

²²⁴"Horrible," British Colonist, 31 12 1870.

²²⁵Anthony Musgrave to Earl of Kimberley, 21 06 1871, CO 60/44, BCARS, GR 1486, Mfilm B-1452, p132.

²²⁶See Mary Ellen Kelm, "Ross, Flora Amelia (Hubbs)," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XII, p929-930.

power of colonial discourse and its profound limits. The white community's extensive, vigilant, and generous efforts to create an solution as respectable as the "insane ladies" shows how white women served as a beacon for racial pride, and suggests the lengths to which the beleaguered colonial community of British Columbia was willing to go to protect it. Yet the sad lives of the Mills' also suggests the very real hollowness of the rhetoric that surrounded white women in colonial contexts. Despite images of merry backwoods heterosexuality, all three Mills women supported themselves through wage labour, apparently untouched by the famously favourable marriage-market. Ironically, it was the Mills' independence and relative poverty that rendered them so needful of colonial protection and largesse. The Mills sisters, so much a part of colonial visions of white womanhood and so far from them, expose some of the profound tensions that surrounded white women in British Columbia.

VI: The "unspeakable benefit" Reconsidered

Despite the efforts to manage white women through schools, charities, and informal regulation, white women's behaviour in colonial settings departed significantly from representations of white women in imperial discourse. It is thus not surprising that local observers frequently expressed disappointment with white women's performance. Certainly some critics had always doubted whether assisted female migration was a useful way of building the colony, constructing it as generative of more, rather than less, immorality. As early as 1859, the Weekly Victoria Gazette critiqued supporters of white female immigration, arguing that "we know not whether

to weep most at its ignorance, or rejoice at its innocence." The only women the colony would attract, they thought, be "the outcast and degraded."²²⁷ The Victoria Press took umbrage at immigration-promoters' hyperbole around the local marriage market. "To bring down matrimony to a commercial speculation," they wrote, "is a scheme of philosophy that will not be long in destroying the 'venerable' nature of the 'institution,' or sapping the foundation of a healthy society."²²⁸

The experience of white female migration in the 1860s added fuel to such doubters. Especially when discussing the *Tynemouth* and *Robert Lowe*, writers were profoundly dismayed with women's failure to live up to the standards white women were supposed to represent. The British Columbian commented that a number of women could "fairly attribute their ruin" to the *Tynemouth*.²²⁹ The moral failures of the assisted white female migrants became famed, pieces of popular lore. Failed miner John Emmerson, for instance, wrote that "A publican in Victoria took unto himself one of them for a wife, when three weeks after their marriage, to his utter astonishment and dismay, his spouse presented him with *a fine healthy boy*."²³⁰

Observers disagreed on why the white female immigration effort had gone so very wrong. Some thought that the failure of these working-class women to meet the

²²⁷Untitled, Weekly Victoria Gazette, 28 12 1859.

²²⁸"Inducements to Families to Settle in Victoria," Victoria Press, 02 12 1861.

²²⁹"Female Emigration," British Columbian, 03 02 1863.

²³⁰John Emmerson, Voyages, Travels, & Adventures by John Emmerson of Wolsingham (Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1865) p140.

standards of colonial discourse could be blamed largely on emigration agencies' selection process. Tal. O Eifion, constant letter-writer, claimed that patron Angela Burdett Coutts lacked judgement in "her consignment of girls for miners' wives."²³¹ Macfie concurred, remarking that "There was too little care exercised in the selection of them, by those directing the movement, and some, in consequence, turned out badly."²³² Others blamed the flawed character of immigration schemes, arguing that the women were "treated on passage out with as much consideration as a drove of swine," and hoped that future migrants would be "religiously guarded from the officious 'meddling and muddling' of the pseudo-philanthropic semi-religious immigration societies, and their committees, agents, or friends, who busied themselves in the dispatch of the emigrant steamships Robert Lowe and Tynemouth."²³³

Some thought it was British Columbian social life, not the emigration process, that ruined the young white women. "Of course in such a place as Victoria, crammed as it then was with perhaps the most dissipated and reckless set of men on earth, there was no lack of temptation to the new comers," commented one critic.²³⁴ In 1864, one letter-writer wrote that the immigrants had gone awry simply because "the temptations

²³¹Tal. O Eifion, "A Missionary for Cariboo," Cariboo Sentinel, 15 07 1867.

²³²Macfie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, p497.

²³³C.J.H., "The 'Female Immigration' Suits in the Summary Court," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 29 06 1864.

²³⁴Aylmer, ed., A Cruise in the Pacific, p295-6. Also see Frederick Whymper, Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1966 [London, John Murray, 1868]) p2.

of gold, rich trinkets and fine dresses...is too great to be long resisted by those who have been brought up in penury and have no one man to constantly remind them how much more precious than gold and precious stones is a virtuous woman."²³⁵ Maria Rye would probably have agreed. In 1865, visiting Australia, she wrote to her colleague Barbara Leigh Bodichon that Britons underestimated the moral perils of colonies. Emigrants, she argued, needed to be firm, labour-loving women if they were to survive intact:

I think it very hard for you who are at a distance from the colonies to understand them – they are so intensely good, & so intensely bad, according to the life made of them...I still think to the full as strongly as when I left home that women – educated or not, may come here with the very greatest possible advantages to themselves – but I see even clearer than ever that they must be broken of a certain stamp. – women who dislike work, or who are not really steady in their principles are a thousand fold better off at home – there are scores of such women in Scotland, they are not exactly idlers – not at all immoral – but they work because they must – & are virtuous because they are surrounded by scores of good homes & by inducements of strong every kind to go right – all this vanishes, or you waste all vanishes here – & the colonies like the testing fire of the apostle.²³⁶

Even Rye, who was so key in promoting white women as able to save the colonies from themselves, privately worried that women were more often corrupted by them.

While the *Alpha* occasioned less attention and thus less regret, this immigration effort, like its predecessors, was also regarded as a disaster. It "proved extremely

²³⁵Monitor, "The Vote of \$3,000 in Aid of Immigration," Victoria Daily Chronicle, 01 03 1864.

²³⁶Maria Rye to Madame L.S. Bodichon, 20 09 1865, Autograph Letter Collection, Fawcett Library.

unsatisfactory in its results," argued the British Colonist, and indeed its failure had such a "chilling influence" that subsequent schemes to import farm labourers and relatives of colonists withered along with it.²³⁷ While the reasons for the *Alpha's* lack of success were never detailed, it, like the others, clearly disappointed the elite who supported it.

Even those who sponsored white female migration were cautious in their evaluation of its success. The Columbia Mission, once obsessed with their role as emigration-masters, ceased discussing the matter after 1862. Edmund Verney wrote to his father that the women were too materialist to be of much good, too obsessed with speedy marriages, easy labour, and high wages. As evidence for his claims, he recorded "two answers given to the committee, selected from others equally extraordinary: 'I dont care where I goes or what I does so long as I gets plenty of money'" then, 'I really cannot undertake anything like hard work: I should like an American family where I can get on a footing of equality.'"²³⁸ He preferred the young, guileless ones among the *Tynemouth's* women, who, it seems, had no personal agendas to conflict with his own.²³⁹ While Verney thought the committee had coped admirably

²³⁷"Immigration," British Colonist, 04 01 1870.

²³⁸Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 20 09 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p91. Also see Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 22 09 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p91-2.

²³⁹He wrote "I think the little orphans from East Grinshead took my fancy most: perhaps that is because, being only twelve, they do not expect to get married at once." Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 14 09 1862, in Pritchard ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p88.

with difficult circumstance, he wrote that the entire affair was "anything but a cause for self-congratulation and pride."²⁴⁰ Bringing white women, those political panaceas, to colonial British Columbia proved, it seems, a much more difficult task than colonial discourse would suggest.

By the close of the colonial period, reformers' faith in the political usefulness of white female migration was profoundly shaken. In 1872, Gilbert Sproat looked back on his experience with three separate female immigration efforts, commenting that "How to send single women to Victoria safely across the continent, and through San Francisco, is a problem which I cheerfully hand over for solution to those who are more experienced in the management of that sex than I am."²⁴¹ Sproat thought that the fundamental problem with white female migration was that *single* women were inherently immoral. "The very delicate and difficult question of introducing single unmarried women into British Columbia might be partly solved by sending out a few, in charge of the heads of families - the women being from the same district as the families, and thus having an addition guard for their self-respect," he argued.²⁴² In general, Sproat thought, "Unmarried female emigration does not lead to good results."

²⁴⁰See Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 22 09 1862, p91-2; Edmund Hope Verney to Harry Verney, 14 09 1862, in Pritchard, ed., Vancouver Island Letters, p88.

²⁴¹G.M.S., "Memorandum on Immigration, Oct 1872," British Columbia, Attorney General, "Documents," GR 419, Box 10, File 1872/1, p95-6.

²⁴²G.M. Sproat, "Memorandum of a few Suggestions for opening the business of emigration to British Colombia, referred to as Memo C, in a letter of G.M. Sproat to the Honourable the Provincial Secretary, dated 29th August 1872," "Attorney General Documents," GR 419, Box 10, File 1872/1, p4-5.

He continued that "No right thinking observant person will advocate female immigration by sea voyage from Europe to British Columbia. It is unjust to the women, and upon the whole, is disadvantageous to the province," unless the women were very young or in family groups.²⁴³

For Sproat and his ilk, assisted white female migration was problematic in large part because it suggested the possibility, and sometimes delivered the disturbing presence, of working-class female independence. Family migration, on the other hand, ensured that young women would not be allowed to run amok without adequate supervision. "They would never leave the proper surveillance of their natural guardians," wrote the British Colonist in 1869.²⁴⁴ This argument was premised on a belief not only in male authority, but also on the assumption that the nuclear family was the natural unit of social organization. Indeed, anything other than family groups, wrote one fan of family-migration, produced an "ARTIFICIAL ASSORTMENT of human beings."²⁴⁵ Such an immoral, unruly, and artificial population was difficult to reconcile with the "unspeakable benefit" promised by Garret.

VI: Conclusion

In reconsidering the "unspeakable benefit" of white women, commentators

²⁴³Gilbert Sproat to Lieutenant Governor, 03 11 1871, Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, "Memo re European Immigration into B.C.", BCARS, Add Mss 257, File 3. Emphasis original.

²⁴⁴Untitled, British Colonist, 17 04 1869.

²⁴⁵Family Man, "Immigration," British Colonist, 26 04 1869. Emphasis original.

suggested some of the ways that white women's experience was shaped by, departed from, and challenged imperial discourse. In colonial British Columbia, white women's experience was defined by limited employment opportunities and financial dependence. Rather than subverting prevailing gender divisions and distinctions, the colonial social context seems to have intensified them. That white women were routinely expected to serve as boundary-markers between races and as symbols of imperial authority further entrenched these connections between white women, race, and respectability. While white women reaped power from these connections, they were also isolated by them. Perhaps more significantly, white women, like their male counterparts, frequently failed to live up to this discourse, and in doing so, exposed some of the salient limits of colonial representations. Indeed, the tendency of white women to depart from definitions of colonial womanhood led to regulatory schemes dedicated to fostering normative standards of whiteness and femininity. Even with such efforts, commentators were usually disappointed with the performance of white women who, despite promises, did not succeed in creating an orderly white settler society.

White women, then, were hardly an "unspeakable benefit" to British Columbia's colonial project, yet neither were they wholly outside of it. This examination of white women in colonial British Columbia suggests that historians need, firstly, to more closely examine the history of working-class white women in colonial contexts. Secondly, it suggests that we reconsider the texture and tenure of white women's relationship to the imperial project. In doing so, we may forge

analyses of white women and colonialism which are both more complete and better able to adequately account for the fraught relationships between gender, race, and the making of colonial society.

Conclusion:
Colonial Society and the Making of Gender and Race

I began this dissertation with large goals. I wanted to reconcile what I was learning from anti-racist critiques of feminist scholarship and the history of gender and colonialism with what I knew about the social history of western Canada in the nineteenth-century. As much as I thought that these new, critical scholarships had much to offer to the study of British Columbia, I also hoped that this small colony would simultaneously provide a new perspective on imperial experiences. Armed with insights garnered from feminist, Marxist, post-colonial and post-structuralist theory, I set out to examine the connections between gender, race, and the making of colonial society in British Columbia in the eventful years between 1858 and 1871.

This thesis has travelled a long and disjointed road, and in doing so, reached a number of conclusions about the history of gender and colonialism, Canadian gender history, and the social history of British Columbia. At heart, what underlies all these points is the dual truth that gender has been key to colonialism and that race, in turn, is central to gender. In colonial British Columbia, normative Anglo-American patterns of racial and gender organization were substantially disrupted. As Chapter One demonstrated, the colonial community was very small and overwhelmingly dominated by men. In white women's virtual absence, white men constructed a rough, homosocial culture that offered an alternative, but not oppositional, practice of white masculinity, the topic of Chapter Two. They also, as Chapter Three argued, frequently forged sexual, domestic, and emotional bonds with First Nations women, a fact which

deeply challenged cherished notions of racial separation and hierarchy.

For many critics, mixed-race relationships and rough, homosocial culture became the primary signs that British Columbia was a poor excuse for a proper white settler colony. Chapter Four traced the emergence of a reform discourse and practice in newspapers, travel and immigration literature, missionary and organization records, and government documents that argued for the regulation of white men through temperance organizations, missions and the creation of alternative sites of masculinity. Chapter Five analyzed how reformers also laboured to reconstruct white-Aboriginal unions either by trying to crush mixed-race relationships or reformulating them along the lines of white, Christian marriage. The politicians and reformers examined in Chapter Six promoted liberal land policies and large-scale white immigration in the hopes of increasing the white population and encouraging it to adopt nuclear families and permanent, agricultural settlement.

Yet others thought that fiddling with the colony's existing gender organization was clearly inadequate. As Chapter Seven demonstrated, some reformers argued that a mass migration of white women was needed to put the colony to right. Working-class British women would not only relieve an overstocked home population and help meet the needs of the local labour market, but would perform three crucial political tasks: they would encourage men to adopt normative standards of manliness and whiteness, discourage inter-marriage, and transform white men into responsible and permanent colonists. This discourse thus accorded white women a causal colonial

role, albeit as lesser partners whose chief utility lay in their ability to shape the behaviour and identity of white men. This extravagant discourse about white women and imperialism led to four controversial assisted emigration efforts in the 1858 to 1871 period which succeeded in bringing white women to the colony. Yet, as Chapter Eight argued, observers were ultimately disappointed with white women's colonial performance. The actual behaviour of white women in British Columbia, especially working-class ones, sharply demonstrates their failure to fit the model of white womanhood at the heart of colonial discourse.

This dissertation has thus demonstrated how central gender was to both the making and remaking of colonial society. British Columbia's gender organization was repeatedly construed as one of the colony's most persistent problems, indicative of the continued power of First Nations people and the unwillingness of local whites to behave in ways consistent with imperial discourse. In this way, the colonial project created the symbols of its own frailty, symbols which were often explicitly gendered. Nicholas Thomas writes that "colonizing constantly generated obstacles to neat boundaries and hierarchies between populations, exemplified by 'degenerate' half-castes and frontier whites who were anything but civilized."¹ The efforts to regulate white men, reformulate mixed-race relationships and reconfigure land law and immigration policies further suggest how gender was key not merely to British

¹Nicholas Thomas, Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994) p2.

Columbia's making, but to its attempted re-making.

As much as this study has suggested the centrality of gender to colonialism, it has affirmed the significance of race and imperialism to gender. Colonial social organization and discourse ensured that what it meant to be a white woman or a First Nations woman was profoundly different. Gender was racialized and indeed cannot be adequately comprehended otherwise. In British Columbia, gender was racialized in such a way that often explicitly benefitted white women who were accorded a prestige and authority by virtue of their unique position within the colonial project.

Recognizing the specificity of white womanhood, in British Columbia or elsewhere, is a small step in the larger effort to interrogate the salient limits on universalizing analyses of gender and patriarchy. False and ultimately dangerous notions of universal womanhood have informed Canadian gender history as much as they have underpinned other literatures. In response, this study has attempted to provide what Ruth Frankenberg calls "the reciprocal specification of *white* womanhood" demanded by women of colour's rigorous examination of gender's refraction through race.² By subjecting white men to this critical gaze, this study has also shown how masculinity as well as femininity was racialized.

In demonstrating the centrality of race to gender, this dissertation confirms the necessity of examining the history of whiteness. As Catherine Hall notes, because

²Ruth Frankenberg, White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p10.

whiteness is a signifier of dominance and "the dominant rarely reflect on their dominance in the ways that the subjected reflect on their subjection,"³ it has rarely been the subject of serious investigation. If nothing else, this study has shown that whiteness was far from given, normative, or salient in colonial British Columbia: it was constructed, problematic, and fragile, a contested and shaky identity that required constant attention and reinforcement.

The significance of race and whiteness is especially germane for Canadian historiography. While British Columbia was certainly a particular society, it was not an entirely anomalous one. British Columbia shared important commonalities of history, society and demography with other white settler societies, including those elsewhere in British North America. In probing the social, cultural, and institutional history of these societies in the nineteenth-century, recent analyses have profoundly challenged the hegemony of the "colony-to-nation" framework that once dominated national historiography. That Canada was a colonial society, however, is rarely adequately acknowledged. The erasure, denial, or eliding of race fundamentally misrepresents Canada's history. Himani Bannerji's comment about analyses of the Canadian economy could easily be extended to the nation's history: "When delinked from its history as a white settler colony and its present as an imperialist capitalist state which continues to import labour on the basis of ethnicity, race, and class -

³Catherine Hall, White Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History (London, Routledge, 1992) p21.

creating class in its own terrain – the Canadian economy becomes an abstraction.”⁴

So too Canadian history becomes an abstraction or mystification when its racial politics are either assumed or ignored. In British Columbia particularly, white supremacy was more a constant but elusive goal than an absolute achievement in the nineteenth-century, and analyses suggesting otherwise obscure both the significance and fragility of its imperial project.

Recognizing the centrality of race and gender to the making of colonial society in British Columbia has also allowed me to explore the significance of class in new and important ways. All white British Columbians, after all, were not created equal, and the persistent unwillingness of white working-class people to behave according to imperialist dictates generated one of the central tensions in the colonial project. In British Columbia between 1858 and 1871, backwoods gold-miners and urban waitresses profoundly challenged white claims to inherent racial superiority and superiority by suggesting the existence of an a different, explicitly working-class practice of colonialism. In doing so, they demonstrate how white supremacy was classed as well as gendered.

The importance of class suggests how the social history of British Columbia profoundly challenged the foundational fictions of imperial societies. Ann Stoler argues that colonial authority was premised upon two powerful but false premises:

⁴ Himani Bannerji, “But Who Speaks For Us? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms,” in Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism, and Anti-Racism (Toronto, The Women’s Press, 1995) p77.

The first was the notion that Europeans in the colonies made up an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity; a 'natural' community of common class interests, racial attributes, political affinities and superior culture. The second was the related notion that the boundaries separating colonizer from colonized were thus self-evident and easily drawn.⁵

In British Columbia, both mixed-race relationships and disrespectable white behaviour cast doubt upon the premise that racial division and hierarchy were obvious.

Simultaneously, divisions of class *within* the settler society profoundly challenged the idea that white colonists were a coherent and consistent community. In these ways, ordinary white people simultaneously reinforced and contested imperial politics.

The significance of plebian white people, both male and female, to the colonial project is highlighted by the specific imperial history of British Columbia. The historiography of gender and colonialism has especially focused on Asia and, to a much lesser extent, Africa and Australasia. The particularities of rule and economy in these contexts encourages historians to highlight the role of travellers, missionaries, and imperial functionaries in constructing and contesting gender politics. These colonial subjects were present and important in mid-nineteenth century British Columbia, but altogether ordinary white people were ultimately at the heart of local efforts to assert white supremacy. The commencement of widespread white settlement in the 1850s and 60s coincided with a world-wide upsurge in nationalism and a watershed in the dissemination of scientific theories of racism. This potent

⁵Ann L. Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," American Ethnologist 16:3 (1989) p635.

combination ensured that race as well as gender were deeply inscribed in the settlement process. As much this colony needs the insights of international analyses of gender and colonialism, this rich body of literature can benefit from an examination of British Columbia.

Gender and race were key to the construction of a colonial society in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. In following these issues through the mining camps, mixed-race households, temperance meetings, missionary campaigns, land laws, immigration schemes, and white female experience of colonial British Columbia, this thesis has also shown how race was crucial to gender. While this may be a small point about a small colony, it has significant implications for the history of gender and colonialism, Canadian gender history, and the social history of British Columbia.

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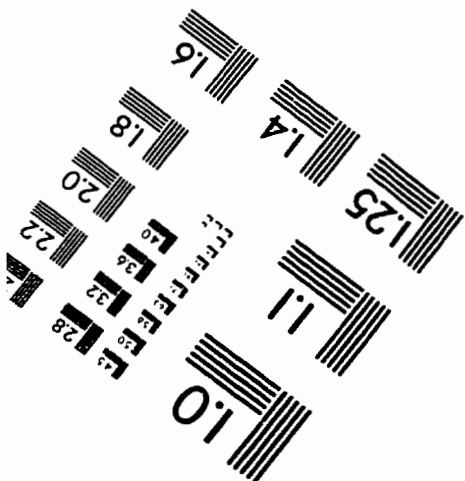
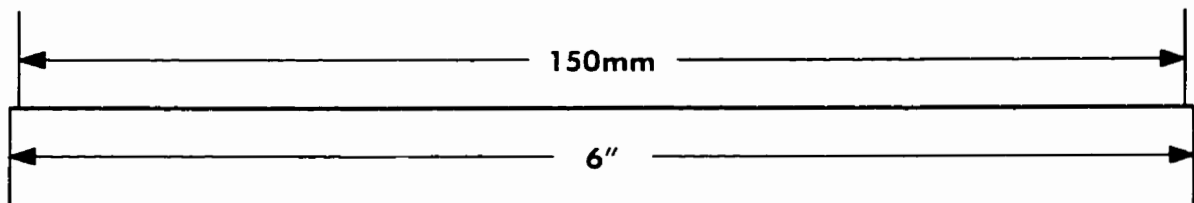
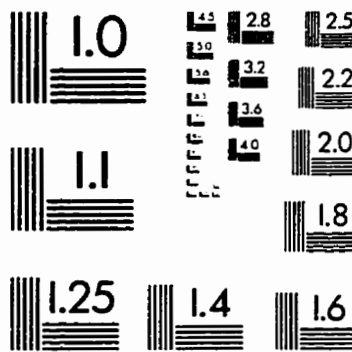
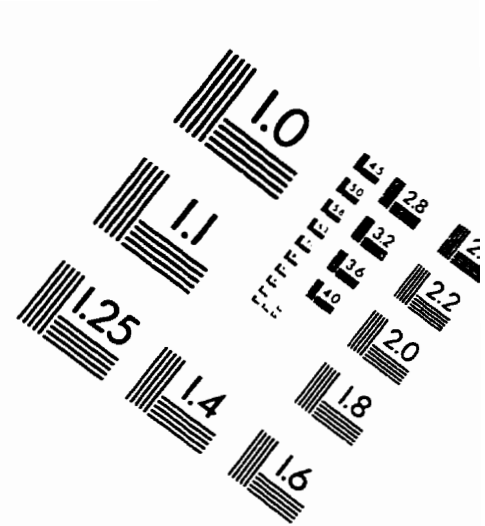
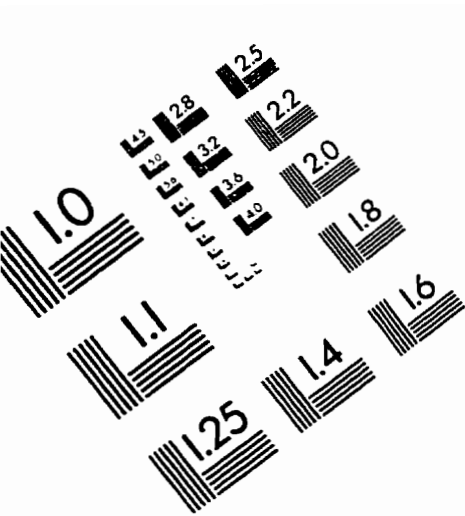
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