

ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: ODD CHARACTERS: QUEER LIVES IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY BALTIMORE

Kathryn S. Schmitt, Master of Arts, 2020

Thesis directed by: Professor Clare Lyons
Department of History

Queer history in Baltimore began long before the twentieth century. People who diverged from societal norms of gender and sexuality were always present in Baltimore's history, and they can be seen through media representations and popular press of the time period. Even when representation of queerness in media was less common, stories of people who diverged from gender and sexual norms were still distributed to the public. Media representations provided inspiration and information to people who did not have access to a group of like-minded people through a distinct subculture. Queer Baltimoreans drew from media representations, early stages of a developing subculture, or their own personal thoughts and feelings to inform their gender and sexual identities. Despite the legal and social measures restricting these people from living their lives as freely as they might wish, they still found individualized ways to live life outside of gender and sexual norms.

ODD CHARACTERS: QUEER LIVES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BALTIMORE

by

Kathryn S. Schmitt

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2020

Advisory Committee:

Professor Clare Lyons, Chair
Professor Robyn Muncy
Professor Holly Brewer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped make this project happen. First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Clare Lyons, for helping me figure everything out and giving me research tips. Dr. Lyons' help has been lifesaving during this project. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Holly Brewer for her guidance regarding how to write academically and do good research, and Dr. Robyn Muncy for helping me achieve all my graduation requirements. Thanks as well to my cohort and my friends for being so supportive and offering hugs, snacks, support, memes, and whatever else I needed to make this happen. As always, I could not have done this without my loving family, who are forever there for me. And special thanks to Judith Butler for changing my life with her work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.....	4
Chapter 2.....	20
Chapter 3.....	44
Conclusion.....	70
Bibliography.....	74

Introduction

On April 30th, 1841, the *Baltimore Sun* published a story about a woman named Almira Nicholson who was arrested for walking in the street wearing men's clothes. She was a Black woman, referred to in the article as "good-looking." In the morning, the magistrate determined that her actions were "a mere frolic of hers," and that her clothing choices did not appear to be a disguise to help her commit crimes.

Her decision to take a stroll through the Baltimore streets one night is a fascinating one. Perhaps she only felt comfortable trying out her new clothing in the dark of the night, when passers-by would be less likely to see her. Perhaps she simply did want to see what it felt like to wear a suit, or perhaps it was a reflection of her inner gender identity. While her motivations may be unclear, her story is a glimpse into how Baltimoreans challenged gender and sexual norms on a regular basis.

In the nineteenth century, the city of Baltimore was a place of great social and political turbulence. The world was changing greatly, and the American people had to adapt with it. Queer life in nineteenth-century Baltimore existed in highly individualistic forms, informed by newspapers, literature, theatre, crime, and more. A distinct, extant subculture, as would come to exist in the twentieth century, was not visible in the documentary record of nineteenth-century Baltimore. In the twentieth century, places would begin to appear where queer people could congregate, such as bars, clubs, and community centers. Prior to the development of these meeting places, however, queer people were relatively isolated. With the exception of some early homosocial

environments, queer individuals in the nineteenth century often lacked the resources and peers necessary to help them understand themselves.

This is not to say that queer people did not exist before a subculture was developed. On the contrary, these people existed independently. They formed their own sense of identity, their own understanding of who they were, on their own. The only role models detectable in the historical record available to these people were found in books, plays, poems, and newspapers. With these media representations, queer Baltimoreans were able to construct an individual and personal identity for themselves.

This work is split into three chapters. The first chapter discusses historiography in the field of queer history, as well as Baltimore's history and laws regulating gender and sexuality. The second chapter is a discussion of media representations of queer life from outside Baltimore that were published and circulated in Baltimore. News stories about queer life and well-known queer celebrities provided a window into a different kind of life for Baltimore readers. The third chapter covers instances of gender and sexual nonconformance making an appearance in Baltimore print media and court cases. The time span covered in this project is 1800 to 1900.

I consulted a variety of primary sources for this work. One of the most significant was the *Baltimore Sun* archives from 1837 to 1900. I utilized a variety of search terms to discover newspaper articles about nineteenth-century queer individuals. Some of these search terms included "sodomy," "buggery," "female husband," and "man in woman's clothes," along with many variations on these. I also searched for names of notable queer individuals such as Charlotte Cushman, Oscar Wilde, and Alice Mitchell to see how they were discussed in the *Sun*. The language used to imply queer activity was very vague and

inconsistent in the nineteenth century, so it is likely that some relevant *Sun* articles were not included in this research.

I also utilized other newspapers besides the *Sun*, most notably the short-lived “flash press” paper entitled *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*, courtesy the American Antiquarian Society. Additionally, I analyzed stories published in literary or scientific journals circulated in nineteenth-century Baltimore. Various city records, including Sanborn fire maps and city directories, were also utilized.

In a 2000 interview, Baltimore’s most prolific queer filmmaker, John Waters, said, “It wasn’t until I started reading and found books they wouldn’t let us read in school that I discovered you could be insane and happy and have a good life without being like everyone else.”¹ This, more than anything else, summarizes what media representations mean to queer life. It is through books, plays, poems, and newspaper articles that people who feel isolated from a queer community can develop a sense of identity. Long before John Waters’ birth, Baltimoreans were creating their own queer identities through what they read and saw.

¹ Stephen Thompson, *The Tenacity of the Cockroach: Conversations with Entertainment’s Most Enduring Outsiders* (Three Rivers Press, 2002), 151.

Chapter I: Historiography and Background

Language in Queer History

It is essential to note that a modern perspective on human sexuality cannot easily be applied to nineteenth century individuals. The first English use of the term “homosexuality” to mean same-gender sexual attraction was seen in 1892.² The term was invented by German writer Karl-Maria Kertbeny in 1869, and it was first translated into English by psychologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in 1892. However, by no means should this suggest that same-gender love did not exist prior to the invention of the word. Cultures throughout history have well-documented evidence of individuals engaging sexually and romantically with others of the same gender, devoting their lives and emotions to same-gender individuals, or otherwise not conforming to societal gender norms.

Another modern creation is using the word “sodomy” to refer solely to sexual intercourse between men. In fact, the term historically referred to any sexual intercourse that does not result in procreation, regardless of the participants’ genders.³ The word was first used in ninth-century Latin, as a reference to the biblical city of Sodom.⁴ In nineteenth century Western society, any sexual relations between men were not considered in the same category as heterosexual reproductive sex, but rather classified as

² David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 34.

³ George Chauncey. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 - 1940*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994.

⁴ “Sodomy, n.,” in *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2020.

“sodomy,” “buggery,” or “sexual inversion.”⁵ Sexual relations between women were even less recognized in scientific literature, thanks to the prevailing male-centered focus of academics and writers throughout the nineteenth century. Therefore, it is difficult to assign a term understood in modern society to historical figures, since these individuals existed in a society quite different from the one that created the terms used today—despite how humans have been resisting gender and sexuality norms since the beginning of time. Often, their very existence was so overlooked by society as a whole that neither the concepts nor the accurate terminology existed to describe these people. Regardless of whether or not the words used today existed at the time, these people existed, and should not be erased or forgotten due to a lack of proper terminology.

Among historians of sexuality, there is a great deal of debate regarding which terminology should be used when referring to gender and sexually nonconforming people from the past. Michel Foucault argues that same-gender sexual desire only began to emerge as an “identity” at the end of the nineteenth century, and that before this, people who engaged in same-sex sexual acts did not feel connected to an “identity” in the way that the modern-day LGBT+ community does.⁶ However, as Jen Manion writes, we are a community in need of a past.⁷ Modern-day queer people often feel isolated from our past as a result of societal erasure of the existence of non-heterosexual or cisgender life throughout history. It is a very understandable impulse for queer historians to superimpose identities on people from the past. However, this is not a very responsible

⁵ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the USA* (New York, New York: Meridian, 1976).

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 12.

⁷ Jen Manion, “Language, Acts, and Identity in LGBT History,” in *The Routledge History of Queer America*, ed. Don Romesburg, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018.), 213–23.

historical practice. For example, historians might refer to a female-bodied person who lived and dressed as a man and had relationships with women as a lesbian, while others may refer to this person as a transgender man, or someone with a non-binary gender identity. If this person were asked to describe themselves, they would not use any of these terms, because these terms refer to complex, socially constructed identities that did not exist at the time.

This, then, raises issues for historians of sexuality. We are situated in a particular social and cultural context that gives us certain understandings of different identities. We should not allow these cultural biases to color our understanding of the lives of people in the past. At the same time, it is not necessarily appropriate to use historical terminology to refer to these people. Some terms, such as “sodomite” or “invert,” are dehumanizing and stigmatic. Other terms have fallen out of use and have been replaced by more appropriate words. For example, the term “hermaphrodite” was historically used to refer to someone with non-binary physical and sexual characteristics.⁸ Today, the term is considered offensive and inappropriate, so in cases where a historical individual was biologically sexually ambiguous, I will use the term “intersex.” The terms “transvestite” and “transsexual” have also decreased in usage and have been replaced by the term “transgender.”

Another term with a very storied past is the word “queer.” The term was originally used, and is sometimes still used, to mean strange, odd, or peculiar. In the 1910s and 1920s, men who were sexually attracted to other men began to identify themselves as “queer.” Many took pride in being different from the norm and did not

⁸ “Hermaphrodite, n.,” in *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2020.

associate negative energy with the word.⁹ However, the word “queer” also began to be used as a derogatory slur against homosexual men. In the 1980s, despite the word’s still-frequent usage as a slur, members of the LGBT+ community began to reclaim the term and use it as a positive, prideful descriptor. This was a deliberate, revolutionary action by members of the community, inspired by the identity reclamation of the Black Power movement. In the 1990s, the term “Queer Theory” began to be used to refer to a new paradigm in social and cultural studies which seeks to deconstruct traditional Western ideas of gender and sexuality. In the twenty-first century, the term “queer” is sometimes used in place of the acronym LGBT+. The acronym refers specifically to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals while encompassing all other non-traditional gender and sexual identities with a plus symbol. “Queer,” however, can describe anyone who strays from societal norms of gender and sexuality. It is, however, still commonly used as a slur against the LGBT+ community by society at large. As a result, some people in the community do not feel comfortable with using or being referred to by this term.

In my work, I have elected to use the term “queer” as an umbrella term to describe all historical people who did not conform to societal standards of gender and sexuality. To use more specific terms, such as “lesbian” or “transgender,” when referring to historical individuals, is too restrictive, and imposes a modern connotation of identity on these people. I also avoid the use of terms that are considered slurs by today’s standards, only using them when quoting sources that use them.

⁹ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 - 1940* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994), 101.

Historiography

Queer history as a subfield is fairly recent, having first emerged in the 1970s. Of the many works born from this field, the following are several of the most relevant to this project. One of the first major works to attempt to understand the historical context behind human sexuality was *History of Sexuality* by Michel Foucault, published in 1976. Foucault argued that human sexuality was not defined into strict identities until the Enlightenment period, during which the ruling classes began to suppress sexuality and make it taboo. Additionally, Foucault posited that homosexuality was not unnatural or “perverse” like nineteenth and twentieth century professionals claimed, but rather that it was treated as perverse because it worked against the structures of capitalism.¹⁰

Gender Trouble, by Judith Butler, was published in 1990. This, along with *History of Sexuality*, is another formative work of queer theory. In this book, Butler argues that there is no innate gender identity that is fundamental to human life. Rather, gender is a constant performance by the individual. Clothing, actions, language, and everything else a person does are all outward manifestations of some sort of gender role ascribed by society. Butler’s work is fundamental to the field of queer theory because it was among the first to recognize that all gender is a societal construction, not a biological human reality.¹¹

Another theory-focused work I analyzed for this project is *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson. Published in 1983, this work argues that nations, or communities, are socially constructed and a result of the collective imagination of the members of that

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

¹¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

community. The media is one of the chief factors in the creation of these communities—nations are created with the rise of mass printing. Vernacular language, morals, traditions, and concepts of identity are circulated among members of a community via the media they consume. Within larger nations, smaller imagined communities often develop. Queer subculture is an example of one such community.¹²

A book entitled *Gay American History: Lesbians & Gay Men in the USA* was written by historian Jonathan Ned Katz in 1976. This book is a compilation of many different stories about queer people in American history, spanning from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century. This project is important and long-lasting in part because of its sheer scope—the work is over 700 pages long and covers hundreds of stories from American history. However, its age does show in several aspects. Katz classifies the people he studies into distinct categories, identifying them specifically as gay men, lesbians, or transgender people. This is not fully accurate when it comes to historical individuals. Categories such as “gay,” “lesbian,” or “transgender” are modern creations. As such, the historian cannot claim that a historical figure had a modern identity, since the modern phrases and definitions would have been completely foreign to them.¹³

William N. Eskridge published a book entitled *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* in 1999. This book does not attempt to investigate individual queer stories through history but rather focuses on the policing and legality of gender and sexuality in American history. Queer life cannot be understood through criminality alone,

¹² Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London New York: Verso, 1983).

¹³ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the USA* (New York, New York: Meridian, 1976).

but the laws against sodomy, cross-dressing, and same-sex love are a very important way to understand how queer life was shaped and understood in the past. Eskridge's work analyzes legal records and documents from the 1860s onward.¹⁴

Clare Sears' 2014 work, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*, is a more recent work that focuses solely on queer life in one city, San Francisco. This book focuses on laws against cross-dressing, cases of people arrested for this crime, and notable individuals who appeared in newspapers or other print sources of the nineteenth century. Sears argues that the nineteenth century was the first time that laws prohibiting cross-dressing were enacted in the city, and that these laws served to create a category of gender deviance that did not exist previously.¹⁵

A work focusing on the construction of queer identity in the nineteenth century is *No Priest but Love: Excerpts from the Diaries of Anne Lister, 1824-1826* by Helena Whitbread, first published in 1992. This book is a collection of diary entries with historical analysis from wealthy Englishwoman Anne Lister, who was famed for wearing men's clothes and having sexual relationships with women. Lister's diaries were written in code, and Whitbread was the first to translate them. While the focus of this paper is on American history and Lister was English, it is still an essential work when it comes to understanding how queer identities were constructed by sapphic women in the nineteenth century.¹⁶

¹⁴ William N. Eskridge, *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁵ Clare Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*, *Perverse Modernities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

¹⁶ Anne Lister and Helena Whitbread, *No Priest but Love: Excerpts from the Diaries of Anne Lister, 1824-1826*, *The Cutting Edge* (Washington Square, N.Y: New York University Press, 1992).

The history of newspapers is another important aspect of this project. *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York* by Patricia Cline Cohen, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, and Helen L. Horowitz, published in 2008, discusses “flash press” papers of the nineteenth century. These papers were short-lived, mass-printed alternatives to mainstream newspapers that covered scandalous topics, including sexuality. This work focuses mainly on New York City, but also discusses “flash press” papers in many East Coast cities, including Baltimore.¹⁷

A recent work, published in early 2020, entitled *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915* by Katie M. Hemphill, is an analysis of prostitution and the rise of the brothel system in nineteenth century Baltimore. Hemphill discusses the social atmosphere surrounding sex work as well as the legal and political realities. The book does not focus on queer history, but it is an important work in understanding nineteenth century Baltimoreans’ attitudes towards sex.¹⁸

All of these works are individually very important and effective when it comes to understanding sexuality, queer life, or Baltimore life in the nineteenth century. However, there is a distinct lack of published work discussing Baltimore’s early queer history, despite the existence of many primary source documents. This research paper will attempt to fill in this gap by analyzing how queer individuals were understood and portrayed in nineteenth-century Baltimore media.

¹⁷ Patricia Cline Cohen, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

¹⁸ Katie M. Hemphill, *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915* (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Baltimore History

The city of Baltimore is located in the center of the state of Maryland. It sits on the banks of the Patapsco River, which feeds into the Chesapeake Bay. The area was occupied by Native Americans as early as 15,000 years ago.¹⁹ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several Native groups utilized the land that would later become the city of Baltimore. To the north, the Susquehannock people sometimes hunted or traded in the northern parts of Maryland. To the south, the Algonquian people of Virginia would frequently travel the rivers of the Chesapeake. The Piscataway, a semi-independent tribe of Algonquians, occupied much of Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay area.²⁰

Maryland was populated by European plantations before the city of Baltimore was officially founded. Tobacco grew well in the Maryland soil, and the many estuaries and inlets of the Chesapeake Bay meant that individual planters did not have a major need for a central port city.²¹ Baltimore was born as a small town named after Cecil Calvert, Second Lord Baltimore. In 1752, the city had only 25 houses, one church, and two taverns.²² The new city found a niche market in the trade of grain. The colony's large plantations focused solely on growing tobacco, so they needed to obtain other plant products from elsewhere. The city of Baltimore was able to help facilitate trade between different areas of Maryland. Clever political maneuvering by Baltimoreans meant that in 1768, Baltimore replaced the city of Joppa as the county seat, granting the city access to

¹⁹ Louise E. Akerson, *American Indians in the Baltimore Area* (Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology, 1988).

²⁰ Alice L.L. Ferguson and Henry G. Ferguson, *The Piscataway Indians of Southern Maryland* (Accokeek, MD: Alice Ferguson Foundation, 1960).

²¹ Matthew A. Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 9.

²² Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 15.

colonial politics in Annapolis. As the county seat, Baltimore began to grow, building new streets, churches, and businesses, and enacting new city laws. The first printing press arrived in Baltimore in 1765. The region was not without printing prior to this date, however—printing presses existed in St. Mary’s City and Annapolis during the seventeenth century.²³

During the American Revolutionary War, Baltimoreans were highly invested in the fight for independence.²⁴ In 1773, a group of rebels beat, tarred, and feathered customs officer Robert Moreton for seizing a ship in possession of contraband goods. The Maryland delegates to the Continental Congress were Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Samuel Chase, William Paca, and Thomas Stone. Initially, the Maryland signers agreed that to fully split from Great Britain would be too extreme, but by July of 1776, they had changed their minds and voted to pass the Declaration of Independence.

Baltimore’s population increased greatly at the start of the nineteenth century. Baltimore was home to 13,503 residents in 1790 and grew to 26,514, double the size, by 1800.²⁵ The city played a large role in the War of 1812 when British troops marched north after burning Washington, D.C. and attacked the city in the Battle of Baltimore. It was during this battle that Francis Scott Key, a Maryland lawyer, was inspired by the sight of the American flag flying victorious over Fort McHenry and composed his famous poem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.”²⁶

²³ L. C. Wroth, *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland, 1686-1776* (Typhothetae of Baltimore, 1922), 111.

²⁴ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 31.

²⁵ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 517.

²⁶ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 83.

The Industrial Revolution arrived in Baltimore during the 1820s and 1830s. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was the first chartered railroad in the United States, and it served as a blueprint for every American rail system built after it. Baltimore was in a unique position when it came to its labor pool. Slavery was legal in Maryland, but not in nearby Pennsylvania or Delaware. Despite this, the majority of the city's nonwhite population were free—in 1820, 70.3% of the city's 14,653 nonwhite residents were free.²⁷ There was a good deal of employment available for unskilled workers, and a system of wage labor was created in the city.²⁸ In some industries, enslaved and free Black workers would work side by side.

Another source of cheap labor in Baltimore came from immigrants, who began to settle in Baltimore in the 1830s. Baltimore did not have as high an immigrant population as areas like New York City, but it did welcome more immigrants than Philadelphia or Boston.²⁹ Many of these immigrants came from Ireland and Germany. Nineteenth-century Baltimore did not have a significant population of immigrants from elsewhere in the world, such as Eastern Asia. Immigrants to Baltimore were often faced with violence by the hands of members of the Know-Nothing Party, who opposed immigration, especially towards Irish Catholics.

Maryland's geography and political atmosphere meant that tensions were high, and the city was divided in the years leading up to the Civil War. Maryland was still very much a slave state, though the majority of the state's Black population was free. Opinions

²⁷ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 517.

²⁸ Seth Rockman, *Scraping by: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore*, Studies in Early American Economy and Society from the Library Company of Philadelphia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 3.

²⁹ Rockman, *Scraping By*, 244.

of major Maryland politicians began to tend towards the Confederacy and secession.³⁰ However, Maryland's location north of Washington, D.C. meant that secession would leave the Union capital surrounded in Confederate territory. President Abraham Lincoln made the controversial decision to suspend the state's constitutional right of *habeas corpus*, meaning that Maryland could not secede from the Union. This decision led to a good deal of anger and resentment among the Maryland public, and the political atmosphere in Baltimore remained tense throughout the war.

In 1877, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad announced that in response to the ongoing national recession, they would be reducing all worker wages by 10 percent.³¹ Baltimore railroad workers decided to strike on July 16th, 1877. The striking went on for several days until July 20th, when violence broke out. Baltimore police and members of the Maryland National Guard sparred with thousands of striking workers, resulting in hundreds of injuries and between 10 and 20 people killed. Similar strikes sprung up in other American cities, all protesting the wage cuts by railroad owners. In the end, the strike was not resolved. Management gave the workers no concessions, and in response, many B&O Railroad workers quit entirely.³²

On February 7nd, 1904, a fire began in a dry goods store in western Baltimore.³³ Firefighters arrived on the scene early, but the building suddenly exploded. Strong winds spread the fire rapidly across the city, and other explosions occurred along the fire's path. The fire was reportedly so hot that firefighters could not get close enough to the flames to effectively spray water on them. However, there were very few injuries and no deaths.

³⁰ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 241.

³¹ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 301.

³² Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 302.

³³ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 332.

The fire had broken out on a Sunday, and as such, very few people were at work downtown. When the fire finally burnt itself out, 140 acres of the city had been destroyed.³⁴

Baltimore in the twentieth century was fraught with social, racial, and economic conflict. The ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1918 led to a huge rise in illegal alcohol production and consumption.³⁵ The Great Depression of the 1930s caused unemployment and financial struggles among Baltimoreans, but Roosevelt's New Deal programs helped combat this. Baltimore served as a major military production center during the Second World War, manufacturing steel for naval vessels.

The era after World War II was characterized by growing strife in the city. Drug use, specifically of heroin, rose exponentially in the 1960s. A series of riots broke out in April 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., which caused hundreds of injuries and thousands of dollars in property damage.³⁶ Almost fifty years later, in 2015, racially motivated riots broke out again in response to the murder of Freddie Gray by Baltimore City police officers.

The long, complex span of Baltimore's history tells the story of a conflicted city, home to a huge variety of people with differing beliefs and opinions. The city's history is marked by violence and destruction, from the many riots to the great fire of 1904. During the city's many ups and downs, one constant has been the existence of queer Baltimoreans. While they are not often noticed or discussed, they did exist. Without a distinct subculture created in queer meeting spaces and social groups, queer people in

³⁴ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 333.

³⁵ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 370.

³⁶ Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History*, 465.

nineteenth-century Baltimore had to turn to media representation to construct an individual form of identity.

Gender & Sexual Regulation in Baltimore

In the colonial period, Maryland did not have laws specifically outlawing cross-dressing or any other sort of gender deviance, though sodomy was outlawed. The colonial charter issued by King Charles I in 1632 established that the Lord Baltimore held complete ruling power over the colony, as long as his actions were “consonant to reason.”³⁷ Maryland was therefore governed by the same laws as Great Britain. According to English law at the time, all sexual interactions besides reproductive sex between a married couple was illegal.

After gaining independence from Great Britain, Maryland elected to adopt a code of laws specifically based on English common law. A new statute was passed in 1793 which defined the penalty for sodomy, which was grouped in a category with manslaughter, petty larceny, assault, murder, rape, and several other crimes. The punishment for these crimes was hard labor “not exceeding seven years.”³⁸ This law was amended in 1809, changing the penalty for sodomy to one to ten years in prison. The 1809 law did not discriminate between enslaved and free people—the punishment was the same for both.

In 1810, Maryland’s first recorded sodomy case, *Davis v. State*, was tried. The defendant was a Baltimore County resident with the surname Davis (no first name is

³⁷ William Kilty, *The Laws of Maryland: 1785-1799* (Frederick Green, printer to the state, 1800), 220.

³⁸ Virgil Maxcy, *The Laws of Maryland: 1786-1800* (Philip H. Nicklin & Company, 1811), 215.

provided). According to the court record, Davis was responsible for assaulting a nineteen-year-old referred to as WC “with an intent that most horrid and detestable crime, (among christians [sic] not to be named,) called Sodomy.”³⁹ Davis pled not guilty, arguing that the court would not give him a fair trial. He was found guilty and sentenced to three months in prison, fifteen minutes in the pillory, and fined \$500.

Another, more specific, definition of sodomy is found in a guidebook published in 1847 meant for Maryland justices of the peace. This text defined sodomy as “carnal knowledge committed against the order of nature by man with man; or in the same unnatural manner with woman; or by man or woman in any manner with beast.”⁴⁰ The recommended sentence for sodomy is listed as one to ten years in prison, consistent with the 1809 law.

Perception of human sexuality in Baltimore and the world at large began to shift in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Authors such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis began to publish scientifically focused works on sexuality and gender. These were among the first texts to provide a distinction between heterosexuality and homosexuality as two sides of the same coin. Previously, homosexuality was not understood as a distinct set of sexual desires and practices, and heterosexuality was assumed to be the natural state of being for all humans. Sexologists, as they came to be known, brought to light a number of “new” sexual practices and established a strict binary of behavior that had not existed previously.⁴¹

³⁹ Davis v. State, 3 H. & J. 154 (Court of Appeals of Maryland December 1810).

⁴⁰ John H.B. Latrobe, *The Justices' Practice Under the Laws of Maryland: Including the Duties of a Constable. With an Appendix, Containing a Collection of Forms Used in Conveyancing: A Synopsis of the Law of Evidence - of Promissory Notes - of the Statute of Limitations, with an Explanation of Law Terms* (F. Lucas, Jr., 1847), 318.

⁴¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 5.

While the scope of the research in this project ends in 1900, Maryland's relationship with the legality of sodomy continued to shift in the twentieth century. Maryland officials commissioned an investigation into vice in the state in 1914 with the goal of evaluating the city's culture surrounding sexuality. The report discovered that "perversion" was highly common, not only in the brothels of Baltimore but also between married couples.⁴² The overwhelming majority of the report was focused on heterosexual perversion, with only occasional mentions of homosexuality. Several male prostitutes who sold sex to other men were reported in the commission, as well as the existence of drag balls and other gay meeting spaces. This survey was ultimately not very effective in stopping sexual deviance in Baltimore, though prostitution was more closely monitored by law enforcement at this point.

Same-sex marriage was legalized by popular vote in 2012—meaning that after many years, Maryland had reached a point where the majority of its residents supported giving equal rights to all people, regardless of sexual identity. The legal journey towards granting queer people equal rights in the eyes of the law is a long-lasting one, but it is not the only aspect of queer existence. Even before it was legal to express one's gender or sexual identity, Baltimoreans were living as themselves throughout the nineteenth century.

⁴² Hemphill, *Bawdy City*, 241.

Chapter II: Stories from Around the World

This chapter explores media representations and news coverage of nonconforming gender and sexuality. Queer life cannot, and should not, be understood solely through its legality and regulation. Even when it was highly stigmatized and punished, stories of people who did not conform to societal standards of gender and sexuality often reached the public eye. Newspaper articles, magazine stories, books, poems, and plays that told stories of queer life all circulated in nineteenth century Baltimore.

The twentieth century brought with it the first places where queer Baltimoreans could truly congregate. Gay bars, drag balls, lesbian community centers, and other social areas became places where queer people could meet and form a coherent group identity.⁴³ One of the oldest gay bars in Baltimore, Leon's, opened in 1957 and is still in operation today. Prior to the creation of these spaces, however, queer life was significantly more isolated. It was not that queer people did not exist before a distinct, defined subculture emerged, but rather that queer people largely existed as individuals without much outside feedback on what it meant to live a certain kind of life. These people turned to classic literature, poetry, theater, and newspaper stories in order to forge an individual identity to give their life meaning and structure.

Stories of courtly intrigue, European politics, and espionage were highly popular among early nineteenth century readers. One of these stories was particularly unique in its portrayal of the French noblewoman and spy the Chevalier d'Eon. D'Eon was not born as a woman but transitioned to live as one for the latter half of her life. Her story

⁴³ Louise Parker Kelley, *LGBT Baltimore* (Arcadia Publishing, 2015).

could have shed light upon a certain type of life and given a new perspective to Baltimore readers.

Baltimore readers learned about d'Eon's life through a letter in a literary journal published in 1811, entitled *The Baltimore Repertory of Papers on Literary and Other Topics, Including a Selection of English Dramas*. One story published in this journal was entitled *Translated from a Paris Paper: To the Conductors of the Gazette de France*.⁴⁴ This letter is written by someone calling himself Falconnet who writes about the life of the Chevalier d'Eon, a French diplomat and spy.

The letter published in the journal was written after d'Eon's death and asserts early on that she was anatomically male. However, the author refers to her with the feminine description "La Chevaliere D'Eon" and uses "she" and "her" pronouns throughout to refer to d'Eon.⁴⁵ This is meaningful because the author was aware of d'Eon's anatomical sex but chose to refer to her as a woman anyway. About d'Eon's decision to live as a woman, the author wrote, "There have been instances of women who felt themselves possessed of sufficient courage to support the characters of men and dress themselves as men; but the masquerades of men assuming the characters of women, without some tincture of madness in the case, are very rare indeed."⁴⁶ He then said that d'Eon was the exception, and that "her morals were always pure and innocent."⁴⁷ The

⁴⁴ Falconnet, "Translated from a Paris Paper: To the Conductors of the Gazette de France," *The Baltimore Repertory of Papers on Literary and Other Topics*, January 1, 1811.

⁴⁵ Falconnet, "Translated from a Paris Paper: To the Conductors of the Gazette de France."

⁴⁶ Falconnet, "Translated from a Paris Paper: To the Conductors of the Gazette de France."

⁴⁷ Falconnet, "Translated from a Paris Paper: To the Conductors of the Gazette de France."

author stated that d'Eon was treated with respect by all those around her. He finished his letter by declaring his friendship and affection for d'Eon.

This letter is generally accurate when compared to what is known from the historical record. The Chevalier d'Eon was very likely intersex, as doctors who examined her body after death reported that she had male sex organs as well as female characteristics.⁴⁸ For almost 50 years after her birth in 1728, she lived as a man, even fighting as a soldier in the Seven Years' War. She served as a spy under King Louis XV who sent her to infiltrate the court of Empress Elizabeth of Russia while disguised as a woman.⁴⁹ After this, she returned to presenting as a man and served as a French government official for several years. In 1777, she petitioned the French government to recognize that she was born female. Her explanation was that her father raised her as a boy in order to ensure that his child would inherit the family's money. It is uncertain whether this is truthful on d'Eon's part, or something she said in order to justify her request. King Louis XVI granted this request, and from that point forward d'Eon dressed and lived as a woman.

The Chevalier d'Eon passed away in 1810, which was when the doctors performed the post-mortem and attested that d'Eon had male and female physical characteristics. In the early twentieth century, sexologist Havelock Ellis coined the term "eonism" as an early description of transgender people, though the word was never widely used.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Simon Burrows, *The Chevalier d'Eon and His Worlds: Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Continuum, 2010). This author elects to use "he/him" pronouns from d'Eon, which differs from what I have chosen (and from what d'Eon herself wanted to be called).

⁴⁹ Burrows, *The Chevalier d'Eon and His Worlds*, 97.

⁵⁰ Burrows, *The Chevalier d'Eon and His Worlds*, 2.

This story is remarkable in that it is one of very few nineteenth-century accounts of transgender people told in an overall positive light. D'Eon's situation was exceptional because she was wealthy and white and lived for many years as a man, which afforded her a good deal more social capital. She was able to ask the King of France directly to be legally considered a woman. People without these social advantages had very different experiences of being transgender. Still, her story could have been very enlightening and inspiring to Baltimore readers, showing them what it could be like to live as a different gender.

A poem entitled *Ode—Sappho* was published in the April 1835 issue of *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine*. No author was listed. The piece is a poetic tribute to Sappho, the Greek poet who lived in the 7th century BCE.⁵¹ Sappho was an author of lyric poetry, much of which focused on her love for other women. The term “sapphic” is derived from her name, and the term “lesbian” is derived from her home island of Lesbos. For centuries, Sappho and her poetry have been cornerstones of identity for queer women, even when the homoeroticism of her poetry was not discussed in mainstream literary analysis.⁵²

Ode—Sappho is composed of three verses of ten non-rhyming lines each. The first verse describes Sappho standing by the edge of a cliff, playing her lyre. The second verse depicts Sappho reminiscing about her youth and her past loves. In the third verse, Sappho becomes agitated by her memories and jumps into the water below the cliff.

⁵¹ Sappho, Diane J. Rayor, and A. P. M. H. Lardinois, *Sappho: A New Translation of the Complete Works* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁵² Sappho, Rayor, and Lardinois, *Sappho*, 10.

The people named in this poem, besides Sappho, are Semus, Cleis (also spelled Cleïs), Athis (also spelled Atthis), and Phaon. The line referencing Semus reads, “She thought of Semus and his silent halls.”⁵³ Semus is one possible name of Sappho’s father, according to the tenth-century encyclopedia the *Suda*.⁵⁴ However, since Sappho never named her father in her own poetry, his name is not officially known. It is generally accepted that Sappho was born to a wealthy family, so this line could be referencing Sappho’s austere childhood.

Cleïs is referenced in the line, “And wretched Cleis maddening with her wo!”⁵⁵ Cleïs could be several people. Two poetry fragments refer to Cleïs, one of which uses a Greek term that can mean “child” or “youthful beloved.”⁵⁶ Some scholars believe that Cleïs was Sappho’s daughter, while others believe she was a young lover to Sappho. Yet others believe that Cleïs could be the name of Sappho’s mother, though this is based only in the assumption that Sappho may have given her daughter her grandmother’s name. Whoever Cleïs was, there is no real content in Sappho’s poetry to suggest that the two had a contentious relationship, though the line could refer to the universal disagreements between mothers and their daughters.

The next lines read, “The form of Athis rose before her view, / Bearing the tenderer joys of her youth, / And all the beauties of her Lesbian bowers.”⁵⁷ The phrase “Lesbian bowers” likely refers to the wooded areas on her home island of Lesbos. Atthis is a woman referenced in a love poem as someone Sappho loved when she was young, in

⁵³ “Ode—Sappho,” *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine*, April 1835.

⁵⁴ Sappho, Rayor, and Lardinois, *Sappho*, 123.

⁵⁵ “Ode—Sappho.”

⁵⁶ Sappho, Rayor, and Lardinois, *Sappho*, 49.

⁵⁷ “Ode—Sappho.”

“Six Fragments for Atthis.”⁵⁸ This is particularly important, as “Six Fragments for Atthis” is one of the most complete Sappho poems which point to her love for women. The author of *Ode—Sappho* would likely have been familiar enough with Sappho’s poems about Atthis to include a reference to her in their work.

In Greek mythology, Phaon was an ugly boatman who was turned beautiful by the goddess Aphrodite. Supposedly, he had a romantic relationship with Sappho, which he ended, causing her to throw herself into the sea. *Ode—Sappho* refers to Phaon in the line, “And faithless Phaon’s well remembered name / Oft caught the ear.”⁵⁹ However, Phaon is never mentioned by name in Sappho’s poetry, and there is no historical evidence that she committed suicide at all. This myth may have come from a fictional play by Plato, possibly in an attempt to make Sappho appear heterosexual.⁶⁰

One compelling aspect of the poem is that the author is not named. Many of the other pieces in *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine* have authors listed, but *Ode—Sappho* does not. It is not far-fetched to consider the possibility that the poem’s author was a woman who did not include her name with her submission to the magazine.

The extent to which the average Baltimorean would have understood the references in the poem undoubtedly varied from reader to reader. As mentioned, Sappho has always been an icon to women who love women, so some readers may have recognized her as such. Further, the poem does distinctly reference Sappho’s love for Atthis. The name “Atthis” was an ancient Greek female name, but it is unsure if nineteenth-century readers would have known this. Regardless, the discerning reader with

⁵⁸ Sappho, Rayor, and Lardinois, *Sappho*, 103.

⁵⁹ “Ode—Sappho.”

⁶⁰ Sappho, Rayor, and Lardinois, *Sappho*, 76.

literary knowledge of Sappho's poetry would likely have been able to see the homoerotic undertones in the poem.

In the nineteenth century, Sappho was recognized among the greatest female poets, and was associated with the literature, femininity, and artistry that well-read women of the period might try to exemplify.⁶¹ Educated women would have understood Sappho's association with lesbian desire and realized the implications of her poetry. Lower-class, less educated women may not have understood the meaning, however.⁶² The aspects of the poem that imply lesbianism, such as Atthis being a female name, would be learned from a specialized literary education, indicating that not every reader may have understood.

Without the existence of a clearly defined, developed subculture, women-loving women in the nineteenth century would have had to turn to literary representations to help them navigate their sexual and gender identity. One such example is seen in the diaries of wealthy Englishwoman Anne Lister. Lister had many sexual relationships with women and dressed and acted in a very masculine manner. She wrote extensively about her life and opinions in her diaries between 1817 and 1824.⁶³ Clare Lyons writes that Lister "sought out classical texts for their descriptions of Sappho and used these as a measure of her sense of herself."⁶⁴ The majority of queer women in the nineteenth century did not have access to other women like them through gay bars or

⁶¹ Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 7.

⁶² Anna Clark, "Anne Lister's Construction of Lesbian Identity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7, no. 1 (1996): 23–50.

⁶³ Anne Lister and Helena Whitbread, *No Priest but Love: Excerpts from the Diaries of Anne Lister, 1824-1826*, The Cutting Edge (Washington Square, N.Y: New York University Press, 1992).

⁶⁴ Clare A. Lyons, "Mapping an Atlantic Sexual Culture: Homoeroticism in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 119.

neighborhoods. Instead, they likely turned to classical literature to help them shape an individual sense of identity.

Another story published for Baltimore readers designed to entertain and fascinate, as well as scandalize, was the tale of Catalina de Erauso. The *Baltimore Monument* was self-described as “A Weekly Journal, Devoted to Polite Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts.” The July 1837 issue contained a story titled *Donna Catilina De Eranso: The Female Ensign*. More commonly spelled Catalina de Erauso, she was a Spanish woman who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century and was often called “La Monja Alférez,” meaning “The Lieutenant Nun.”⁶⁵ This story was also printed about three weeks earlier on June 15th, 1837 in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* published in Washington, D.C.⁶⁶ The titles of the two articles are different, but the body is the same.

The account in the *Baltimore Monument* states Catalina’s birth year, inaccurately, as 1385.⁶⁷ According to the story, her family compelled her to become a nun, but she escaped from the convent and donned male clothing to avoid capture. She joined the Spanish army and rose to the rank of ensign.⁶⁸ She reportedly had a bad temper and was involved in many violent confrontations. In one anecdote, Catalina was gambling in a city she was visiting when the banker disputed the results of the throw. She told him to

⁶⁵ Sherry M. Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire & Catalina de Erauso*, 1st ed (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ “A Female Duellist.,” *Army and Navy Chronicle (1835-1842)*; Washington, June 15, 1837.

⁶⁷ “Donna Catilina De Eranso: The Female Ensign,” *The Baltimore Monument. A Weekly Journal, Devoted to Polite Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts*, July 1, 1837.

⁶⁸ Her military rank is described with the Spanish word “alférez,” which is a junior officer rank in the army. It can be translated as either “ensign” or “lieutenant,” which is why various English accounts refer to her in different ways. For the purposes of this project, the translation to “ensign” will be used.

ignore the issue, and when he did not, she stabbed him in the chest. The climax of the story depicts Catalina serving as a friend's second in a duel. She and the opponent's second got into a disagreement over whether the fight was fair, and she mortally wounded him. However, as he was dying, she recognized him as her own brother, Michael de Erauso. The story ends, "The unhappy woman had killed her brother."⁶⁹

This story contains numerous inaccuracies as compared to what modern historians believe about the life of Catalina de Erauso. For one, the article puts her birth in the 14th century, but she was actually born in either 1585 or 1592.⁷⁰ Given that her birthdate is listed as 1385 in the article, it is possible that this is merely a typographical error. She did, in fact, kill her brother, but contrary to the narrative in the article, she was aware that he was her brother and killed him intentionally during a dispute. Another aspect of Catalina's life that is not discussed in the *Baltimore Monument* article is her romantic life. She had numerous relationships with women throughout her life, and there is evidence to suggest that the majority of these women assumed Catalina was a man.⁷¹

Overall, Catalina de Erauso is not portrayed in a particularly positive light. The author referred to her as "this strange being" and noted that others feared and disliked her hot temper.⁷² Additionally, her accidental slaying of her brother is portrayed as a sort of moral comeuppance—she is struck with guilt and sadness as she realizes that her life choices have led her down this path. The story is not wholly negative, however. She is portrayed as a remarkably brave woman, especially regarding her military service. It is worth noting that this account was copied from the story printed in the *Army and Navy*

⁶⁹ "Donna Catilina De Eranso: The Female Ensign."

⁷⁰ Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun*.

⁷¹ Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun*.

⁷² "Donna Catilina De Eranso: The Female Ensign."

Chronicle, meaning the wording and message were not chosen by the editors of the *Baltimore Monument*.

Readers of the *Baltimore Monument* would have been exposed to a sort of story not often told—the story of a woman who defied cultural expectations by living as a man. Generally, when female cross-dressing was portrayed in popular culture, it was in a story where the woman dresses as a man to fight in a war. The most famous examples have worked their way into the social consciousness, including Joan of Arc and Deborah Sampson. These stories were more common, because this type of gender trouble is not an attempt to subvert the social order but instead maintain it by patriotically defending the country. All the same, Catalina de Erauso’s story is inherently subversive to traditional gender ideologies, and this story in the *Baltimore Monument* would have given Baltimoreans a glimpse into a different type of life.

On November 17th, 1842, the *Baltimore Sun* published an article entitled “An Odd Character.” The short article reads:

On Saturday night last, the police of Albany were engaged in the investigation of an odd case. A woman named McGarshan, was charged with imposing herself upon another woman as a man, and actually marrying her. Other enormities are also laid to her account. The fact of the marriage was clearly proved, and the “female husband” was committed for further examination.⁷³

This article does not contain much information about the case, but the newspaper printed a follow-up piece the next day with more detail and the attention-grabbing title of “The Woman who Married the Woman.” This article did not use the name “McGarshan”

⁷³ “An Odd Character,” *Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 1842.

at all, but instead stated that the cross-dressing woman's chosen name was John Smith.⁷⁴ Besides the discrepancies between the names, the story remains largely similar.

According to the article in the *Sun*, the woman worked as a tinsmith and wore “the trowsers [sic], coat, hat, boots, and all” of a man.⁷⁵ Going by John Smith, she married a woman named Mrs. McDonnell, a widow with a young son. Mrs. McDonnell, now Mrs. Smith, reportedly did not know of her husband's biology because he went to bed with his pants on at night. She reportedly complained about her husband's odd behavior to a male friend, who then confronted John Smith about it. The friend accused Smith of being a woman, which they denied. He tore at Smith's shirt, which revealed Smith's biological sex. The article concludes by saying that there is no law to criminalize the specific offense, so Smith was released from custody.

This event was considered sensational enough to be worth printing in the *Baltimore Sun*, and publishing a follow-up article the next day, though it happened in distant Albany. In this time period, printing stories of crimes or other sensational news events from other cities was common and popular. The “true crime” genre was born in sixteenth-century England, where short pamphlets detailing bloody, lurid murder cases were commonly published.⁷⁶ Stories of sex-related crimes were especially prevalent. Though they depicted things that were objectively immoral by societal standards, the forbidden nature of these stories made them all the more exciting and compelling. Baltimoreans could have gained a different, more diverse understanding of gender and sexuality from this story.

⁷⁴ “The Woman Who Married the Woman,” *Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 1842.

⁷⁵ “The Woman Who Married the Woman.”

⁷⁶ Pamela Burger, “The Bloody History of the True Crime Genre,” *JSTOR Daily* (blog), August 24, 2016.

In addition to newspaper stories and literary references, Baltimoreans also had celebrities and public figures from whom they could draw inspiration. Charlotte Cushman was one of the most respected stage actresses of the nineteenth century, famous for playing male roles and flouting gender norms onstage and off. Cushman performed numerous times in Baltimore and enjoyed immense popularity there. She was born in Boston on July 23, 1816.⁷⁷ She began her career as an opera singer at a young age when her father died, leaving the Cushman family with serious financial troubles. She performed in several operas in Boston to great success and moved to New Orleans to continue her singing career. She shortly thereafter switched to acting when her voice could not sustain singing soprano parts in opera. Cushman's first acting role was as Lady Macbeth in 1835, and it was very well received by critics. She became famous for playing the role of Romeo alongside her younger sister as Juliet in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. This was Cushman's first male role, and she would continue to cross-dress on stage and play male roles along with female roles for the rest of her career.

By 1844, Cushman had begun traveling around Europe and performing there. At this time, she was in a long-term relationship with writer Matilda Hays. About their relationship, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "I understand that she and Miss Hays have made vows of celibacy and of eternal attachment to each other—they live together, dress alike... it is a female marriage."⁷⁸ Cushman retired from the stage, though

⁷⁷ Lisa Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman: Charlotte Cushman and Her Circle of Female Spectators*, Triangulations (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

⁷⁸ Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman*, 160.

temporarily, in 1852, and began living with Hays in Rome with other female artists of the time period.

In 1854, Cushman's relationship with Matilda Hays ended with a great deal of jealousy—both Hays and Cushman became romantically involved with other women. By the time Cushman left her Rome residence with Hays and returned to America, she was romantically involved with sculptor Emma Stebbins, best known for her 1873 *Angel of the Waters* sculpture in New York City. In this period, she performed several times as Hamlet in the play of the same name, which garnered her much critical acclaim.⁷⁹ She continued performing in the United States and in Europe, playing both male and female roles. Later in her life, she also gave performances as a “dramatic reader,” in which she would perform Shakespearean monologues, poetry, and other works for an audience. Cushman passed away from pneumonia at the age of 59 in 1876. Emma Stebbins remained loyal to her until her death.

Charlotte Cushman was known around the United States, and Baltimore was no exception. She performed in Baltimore several times between 1844 and 1874, mostly performing at the Baltimore Museum and Gallery of the Fine Arts or the Holliday Street Theater. The Baltimore Museum and Gallery of the Fine Arts was located on the corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets. The Holliday Street Theater was located on North Holliday Street, across from the City Hall.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman*, 132.

⁸⁰ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Baltimore County, Maryland*. Sanborn Map Company; Vol. 2, 1890. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03573_002/.

Cushman's first performance in Baltimore occurred in 1844, on August 10th. She appeared in the play *The Printer's Apprentice* in the male role of Joseph.⁸¹ The play was a drama in two acts, and her costars were a Mr. Chippendale and a Mr. Fredericks. The play was followed by "a variety of singing, dancing, etc." The play started at 8:00 PM, and admission cost 25 cents.

On June 27th, 1846, the *Sun* posted a review of Cushman's acting written by Sheridan Knowles. The Liverpool writer published his review after attending a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* where Cushman played Romeo. Knowles had nothing but lavish praise for Cushman's performance. He claims that Cushman's acting in the scene between Romeo and the friar was one of the best pieces of acting he had ever seen. Knowles wrote, "My heart and mind are so full of this extraordinary—most extraordinary performance—that I declare I know not where to stop, or how to go on!"⁸² He also writes, "There is no trick in Miss Cushman's performance. No thought, no interest, no feeling, seems to actuate her, except what may be looked for in Romeo himself, were Romeo reality." This is high praise—according to Knowles, Cushman was so passionate and devoted in her portrayal of a man in love with a woman that her performance did not feel like an act at all. This could have resonated deeply with some Baltimore readers who perhaps felt the same way about women.

In May 1850, Cushman again performed at the Baltimore Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts in a six-night run where she played some of her most celebrated characters,

⁸¹ "Amusements. Baltimore Museum and Gallery of the Fine Arts," *Baltimore Sun*, August 10, 1844.

⁸² "Sheridan Knowles' Criticism on Miss Cushman's Romeo," *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1846.

indicating her popularity among Baltimore theatergoers.⁸³ The advertisement in the *Baltimore Sun* calls Cushman “the great tragic actress” and states that her popularity was so great that the museum’s manager entreated her to come back and perform again. Admission for these performances was 75 or 50 cents, depending on the seat’s location.

Her next Baltimore performance was in December of 1851, when she played the role of Mrs. Haller in August von Kotzebue’s play *The Stranger* at the Holliday Street Theater.⁸⁴ Not long after, in April of 1852, Cushman appeared again at the Holliday in a stage adaptation of the 1815 novel *Guy Mannering*. She performed the role of Meg Merrilies, an eccentric and tough Gypsy woman. This was a role she played fairly often in her career, and it was considered one of her signature roles.⁸⁵ The review in the *Sun* says that Cushman’s performance “elicited such enthusiastic admiration as to call for its repetition.”

In 1852, Cushman temporarily retired from her acting career and moved to Europe—however, this did not mean that Baltimoreans stopped hearing about her. A short write-up published on June 17th, 1852 reads, “Miss Charlotte Cushman, it is said, has taken up her residence in England, where she has a sister married, and where her mother and brother also reside. Miss C. has amassed a fortune of \$10,000.”⁸⁶ This is approximately equivalent to \$330,000 in today’s currency. In November of the same year, the *Sun* posted another short article stating that Cushman and Miss Clarke (also identified in the piece as Grace Greenwood) left Paris and traveled to Rome.⁸⁷ Grace

⁸³ “Baltimore Museum Extra Announcement,” *Baltimore Sun*, May 4, 1850.

⁸⁴ “Holiday Street Theatre. Special Notice,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 22, 1851.

⁸⁵ Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman*, 97.

⁸⁶ “Miss Charlotte Cushman,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 17, 1852.

⁸⁷ “Miss Charlotte Cushman and Miss Clarke,” *Baltimore Sun*, November 20, 1852.

Greenwood was the pen name of Sara Jane Clarke, an American author and friend of Cushman's.⁸⁸ Cushman's popularity in Baltimore went beyond her performances—*Sun* readers were also interested in her personal life.

Cushman's stardom in Baltimore meant that even the smallest aspects of her life were reported in the *Sun*. A February 1855 article discussed that Cushman ordered "a magnificent sofa" from Boston, which was sent via steamship to her home in England. The article states, "The sofa is said to be one of the most exquisite workmanship, the covering alone occupying two years in embroidering."⁸⁹ While the purchase of a sofa may not seem particularly newsworthy, it goes to show how invested Baltimoreans were in Cushman's life, in spite of—or perhaps because of—her gender nonconformance.

Cushman's next Baltimore performance happened in February 1861 at the Holliday Street Theater. She performed two nights in a row there, appearing again as Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering* on the first night.⁹⁰ On the second night, she appeared in *Macbeth*. The advertisement does not specify her role in the Shakespeare play, but Lady Macbeth was one of her signature roles, so it is likely she played the title character's wife.⁹¹ Admission cost between 75 and 25 cents. Several nights later, she also performed in *Romeo and Juliet* again, as Romeo.⁹² This production was advertised as having "important restorations of the original text," and Cushman was accompanied by Miss Alice Gray as Juliet.

⁸⁸ Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman*, 171.

⁸⁹ "A Sofa for Charlotte Cushman," *Baltimore Sun*, February 1, 1855.

⁹⁰ "Miss Charlotte Cushman, as Meg Merrilies," *Baltimore Sun*, February 5, 1861.

⁹¹ Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman*, 89.

⁹² "Holliday Street Theatre, Last Shakspearian Night," *Baltimore Sun*, February 7, 1861.

She appeared in a fourth Baltimore production in February 1861, again at the Holliday Street Theater. The production was *Hamlet*, and she played the title role. The advertisement read, “Miss Cushman’s high reputation as a Shakespearian Student will invest her personation of Hamlet with unusual interest. She has devoted many years of intense study to this grand and peculiar character.”⁹³ The day after this performance, Cushman also did a benefit performance where she performed monologues as Cardinal Wolsey from Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII*, another male role. The costume she wore while playing Cardinal Wolsey was particularly masculine—often, nineteenth-century women playing young male roles would portray them in a way that still emphasized the actresses’ femininity and sex appeal. Cushman’s cardinal robe, however, was loose around the bust and covered her legs in an attempt to make her come off as masculine as possible, rather than as a woman pretending to be a man.⁹⁴

In the later years of her career, Cushman’s performances often consisted of dramatic readings of poems or monologues. In 1874, she performed at the Masonic Temple in Baltimore, where she gave an evening of readings from Shakespeare and other authors. The advertisement stated that the readings she would be performing were different ones than she had performed in Baltimore before.⁹⁵ Admission to this event cost \$1.

Charlotte Cushman passed away on February 18th, 1876, and the *Sun* reported her death the following day.⁹⁶ The obituary gives a biography of Cushman’s life, detailing

⁹³ “Holliday Street Theatre. Final Nights of Miss Charlotte Cushman,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 21, 1861.

⁹⁴ Kenneth Cohen, “The Woman Who Would Be Cardinal,” *National Museum of American History* (blog), October 11, 2017.

⁹⁵ “Charlotte Cushman,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 27, 1874.

⁹⁶ “Death of Miss Charlotte Cushman,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 19, 1876.

her start in opera before her switch to theater, her travels in Europe and the United States, and her most notable roles. The article reads, “As an actress, particularly in the higher walks of the serious drama, Miss Cushman ranked with the most eminent, and in her Shakespearian characters she was distinguished for a rigid adherence to the letter as well as the spirit of the text.”⁹⁷ The obituary makes no mention of her relationship with Emma Stebbins, or her relationships at all.

Charlotte Cushman’s decades-long presence in the Baltimore theaters indicates her popularity as an actor and as a celebrity. Baltimoreans of several generations would have had the chance to see her perform for a relatively low cost of admission. Being able to see Cushman perform such noticeable and authentic gender transgression on the stage would have given queer Baltimoreans inspiration on how they might model their own lives.

Baltimore readers learned of women who lived as men in occasional newspaper stories. One account of a cross-dressing woman was published in the *Sun* in 1853. This article relates an account from Boston about a “girl in men’s clothes” named Emma Snodgrass.⁹⁸ According to two men who had seen her around, she never begged, drank, smoked, or otherwise misbehaved. She stated that she wore men’s clothes because she “could not bear women’s clothes,” and she hoped to find work in Boston or New York.⁹⁹ She ran away from her home in New York City because she wanted to see the world and live a more interesting life. After her arrest, she was not charged with any crimes.

⁹⁷ “Death of Miss Charlotte Cushman.”

⁹⁸ “Emma Snodgrass,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 1, 1853.

⁹⁹ “Emma Snodgrass.”

Instead, she was given a “kind lecture” from the court and urged to return home to her father. After the hearing, Snodgrass did not heed their advice and continued to live in Boston, staying in various hotels in the city. The article concludes with the observation that Boston officials were unsure as to how to stop her.

Emma Snodgrass is an interesting case. She lived with confidence and never broke any laws, leaving law enforcement without ideas about how to punish her. While her name does not appear in any Baltimore sources after this, it is not impossible that she continued to live life as she wanted to, wearing male attire and living outside traditional women’s roles. It is very possible that this piece could have informed a young Baltimore reader of a different way they could live.

Yet another story about a cross-dressing young woman came from Toledo and was published in the *Sun* in December 1869. This article, entitled “A Cleveland Girl in Male Attire,” follows the case of a girl named Mary Goldsborough.¹⁰⁰ Goldsborough was arrested and pleaded guilty, and had to pay a small fine and leave the city. She stated that she had been living and passing as a man for the past seven years without detection. According to Goldsborough, her parents had died when she was a child, so she began to fend for herself. She found employment driving streetcars in Cleveland and working as a driver on a canal.

The article describes her appearance as notably feminine in the face, though her voice and bearing made her come off like a teenage boy. Immediately after her trial, she quickly left the courtroom and disappeared. It is not known what happened to Mary

¹⁰⁰ “A Cleveland Girl in Male Attire,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 31, 1869.

Goldsborough after this point. Her brief appearance in the *Sun* would have shed some light on a different type of womanhood for readers.

In January 1892, a 19-year-old woman named Alice Mitchell slit the throat of 17-year-old Freda Ward in Memphis, Tennessee. This highly controversial murder attracted a good deal of press attention across the United States, including in Baltimore. Mitchell and Ward met at school and quickly developed a friendship.¹⁰¹ Reportedly, the two were very close and often kissed and held hands. This on its own would not have been considered homosexual behavior, as this sort of behavior was not uncommon for female friends of the time. However, their relationship was more serious than a simple friendship. Mitchell proposed a plan to Ward in which the two would run away to St. Louis, where Mitchell would dress as a man and the two would marry. Freda Ward accepted this proposal, but her eldest sister found out about the plan and forbade Freda from interacting with Alice.

When Mitchell and Ward were forbidden to see each other, Mitchell became very upset. She followed Ward, as well as Ward's sister and friend, to Memphis, where she attacked Freda Ward with her father's razor, believing that if she could not be with Freda, nobody should. Mitchell cut Freda's face and Jo Ward's collarbone in addition to the fatal slice at Freda's neck.¹⁰² Alice Mitchell was arrested shortly after. During her trial, she was declared insane and was sent to a mental hospital, where she died in 1898.

¹⁰¹ Lisa Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 16.

¹⁰² Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers*, 54.

An article was featured in the *Baltimore Sun* on the 26th of January 1892, several days after the murder. The title of the article is “A Young Lady Slasher,” with the subtitle “She Kills her Former Friend with a Razor on the Street in Memphis.”¹⁰³ This article describes the motivation of the murder as a disagreement between the two young women—the article reads, “It is alleged by several persons that Miss Ward has made remarks of a decidedly un-complimentary nature regarding Miss Mitchell, and this is supposed to have been the cause of the tragedy.”¹⁰⁴ This description does not imply any sort of romantic relationship between the women, but rather some sort of schoolgirl rivalry, which was not an accurate depiction of events.

Another article appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* a few days later, on the first of February. This article is entitled “The Girls Wanted to Marry,” with the subtitle “Unnatural Love Given as the Reason for the Memphis Tragedy.”¹⁰⁵ Contrary to the title, the article itself does not focus much on their relationship, but rather discusses how a Presbyterian minister visited Mitchell in prison, but she declined his offer to pray for her soul. The minister then delivered a sermon about that interaction in which he warned other young women not to follow a similar path to Alice Mitchell. The article concludes by describing her as “an awful example of what false ideas of right and wrong would drive people to do so.”¹⁰⁶

The case of Alice Mitchell contributed greatly to the negative public opinion on lesbianism. The stereotype of the “mannish lesbian,” a scary, violent woman who eschewed traditional femininity and marriage, arose out of this case and has prevailed for

¹⁰³ “A Young Lady Slasher,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 26, 1892.

¹⁰⁴ “A Young Lady Slasher.”

¹⁰⁵ “The Girls Wanted to Marry,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 1, 1892.

¹⁰⁶ “The Girls Wanted to Marry.”

decades.¹⁰⁷ The *Baltimore Sun* helped perpetrate this stereotype by describing how unnatural and dangerous Alice Mitchell was. Because of this, readers of the *Sun* would have had an understanding of lesbianism as a path to disruptive masculinity and violence. Even when representation comes with morals or consequences, the fact remains that stories such as that of Alice Mitchell are exposing a new form of queer life to readers.

Another high-profile public figure who gave Baltimoreans a glimpse at alternate sexual identities was Oscar Wilde, born in Dublin, Ireland in 1854. He rose to fame in the 1880s and was known for his plays and poetry.¹⁰⁸ As a public figure, he was known for his refined fashion sense and his association with the philosophy of aestheticism. Aestheticism can be summarized as “art for art’s sake,” and followers of the philosophy believed that art should not have deep political or social meanings and instead should focus solely on being beautiful.

In 1895, Wilde was involved in a libel case against the Marquess of Queensbury, the father of his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas. During the trial, evidence was revealed that led to Wilde’s arrest for “gross indecency,” which was how they referred to Wilde’s relationships with men. He was sentenced to two years’ hard labor and was in prison from 1895 to 1897. He died of meningitis shortly after his release in 1900.¹⁰⁹

Given Wilde’s worldwide fame and the sensational nature of the case, the trial was reported internationally, including in the *Baltimore Sun*. An article was printed on

¹⁰⁷ Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers*, 28.

¹⁰⁸ Ian Small, *Oscar Wilde: Recent Research: A Supplement to “Oscar Wilde Revalued,”* 1880-1920 British Authors Series, no. 15 (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁹ Small, *Oscar Wilde*.

April 4, 1895 entitled “Oscar Wilde on the Stand.”¹¹⁰ The article describes that Wilde accused the Marquess de Queensbury of libel, but the Marquess responded by saying that the information he revealed was true, and he was releasing it for the public good. The article says, “It made charges of indecency and immorality against Wilde unfit to print.”¹¹¹

The *Sun* article goes on to describe the events of the trial, including how Wilde was acting while being questioned. According to the article, the cross-examination was severe and brought the age gap between Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas to light—Douglas was significantly younger than his lover. Wilde apparently seemed “troubled and confused” by the accusations, and reportedly seemed like he was about to faint. The article concludes by saying that the court had adjourned for the day and that the trial would resume the next day.

Another article was published several days later, on April 8th, 1895. This was titled “Oscar Wilde in Jail” with the subtitle “His Case Decided to Be One that Does Not Admit of Bail.”¹¹² The article states that the prosecution brought in two young men named Parker and Woods, who testified that they visited Wilde at his rooms several times, and that Lord Alfred Douglas was sometimes present as well. They admitted that they had both been guilty of crimes as well.

The *Baltimore Sun* reported on Wilde’s funeral five years later on December 4, 1900 in an article entitled “Oscar Wilde is Buried.”¹¹³ The article reported that only a few people attended Wilde’s funeral, most of whom were close friends of the late writer. He

¹¹⁰ “Oscar Wilde on the Stand,” *Baltimore Sun*, April 4, 1895.

¹¹¹ “Oscar Wilde on the Stand.”

¹¹² “Oscar Wilde in Jail,” *Baltimore Sun*, April 8, 1895.

¹¹³ “Oscar Wilde Is Buried,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 4, 1900.

was given a Catholic funeral and was buried in the Cemetery de Bagneux in Paris. This obituary does not bring up his trial or imprisonment for homosexuality.

Oscar Wilde's work would have been well-known to any educated Baltimorean of the time period. Perhaps the news of his arrest and trial were shocking and upsetting, a slap in the face to the good, law-abiding citizen. Or perhaps the *Sun*'s readers felt sympathy for Wilde. Perhaps they were sorry that his private life and affairs were so scandalously exposed and wished that the media and the courts could simply have let him be.

In the nineteenth century, Baltimore, along with the rest of the United States, underwent a great deal of cultural change. Print media was now being circulated more than ever before, and as the country developed, news could come in from all over the country and the world. Baltimoreans were not limited to only know about events that were happening in their backyard. Newspapers, magazines, books, plays, poems, and theater brought brand-new forms of representation to light in Baltimore. Sensational and provocative stories were all the rage—readers were fascinated by stories of people flaunting societal norms of gender and sexuality. Even if these stories were laden with moralization or ended unhappily for the individuals, they were still groundbreaking. These stories from around the world exposed Baltimoreans to different understandings of gender and sexuality. If people from throughout history and around the world could live outside societal norms, perhaps anyone could.

Chapter III: Stories from Baltimore

Baltimore in the nineteenth century was a distinctive, diverse city home to a wide variety of people. Some of those people were queer. These people diverged from societal standards of gender and sexuality in ways that were individual and self-defined. This chapter will discuss newspaper and court coverage of individuals who diverged from societal gender and sexual norms.

Famous players such as Charlotte Cushman and Oscar Wilde were certainly not the only queer people who lived in the nineteenth century. Baltimoreans of all ages, races, and social groups expressed alternate gender and sexual identities in a wide variety of manners. These stories are reflected in media of the period. While these people are far from uncommon, their experiences are always wildly varied. Rarely did two people experience and live gender and sexual transgression in the same way. Queer individuals in nineteenth century Baltimore had to create identities individually using rare media representations and working towards an understanding on their own. It was not until the twentieth century that a widespread and publicly recognized queer subculture, where groups of people came together to forge a specific identity, arose.

Around the 1840s, a new form of mass-printed media came to exist. A new type of newspaper, bearing names such as the *Flash*, the *Whip*, or the *Rake* began to circulate as an alternative to the mainstream, big-name newspapers published in major East Coast cities which focused on reporting only the news that was considered proper in the public

eye.¹¹⁴ These newspapers were notable for their scandalous contents, including crude and erotic humor and information on goings-on in the city's underground. These papers were printed in large quantities on cheap, thin paper and were sold by newsboys on the streets. "Flash press" newspapers were often short-lived as the competition was difficult in these cities. As a result of their scandalous nature and the fragile paper they were printed on, many of these papers have not survived in the archival record.¹¹⁵

One such paper was published in Baltimore in 1849 and 1850, entitled *Viper's Sting and Paul Pry*. "Paul Pry" was an eponym used in gossip rags in several cities, including Baltimore and Philadelphia. The name was drawn from a British play in which Paul Pry, the title character, spied on and gossiped about everyone around him.¹¹⁶ "Viper's Sting" is also representative of a common theme in the name of these papers—some, such as the *Whip* and the *New York Scorpion*, emphasized how these papers served as a way to "whip" or "sting" readers into proper behavior by threatening to publicize their misdeeds.

One of the most unique features of the *Viper's Sting* was a column named "Wonders." This section of the paper contained reader-submitted blurbs exposing, mostly anonymously, the improper actions of their peers and neighbors. The wording would be deliberately hypothetical, "wondering" whether the subject of the note would enjoy having their secrets exposed. This was used as a way to regulate behavior—readers might stop their "improper" behavior if caught by Paul Pry. One such example reads:

¹¹⁴ Patricia Cline Cohen, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1.

¹¹⁵ Often, information such as the titles, cities, and publishing dates of these papers are known, but physical copies of the papers themselves are scarce.

¹¹⁶ Cohen, Gilfoyle, and Horowitz, *The Flash Press*, 118.

Wonder who those young ladies are that were about having a regular fight at the Point Spring on last Saturday night? Paul's reporter is always about, and unless you behave better in future, he will give Paul your names.¹¹⁷

Other "Wonders" have similar themes. Many accuse people of sexual impropriety, such as shaming someone for having extramarital affairs or interracial relationships. Others shame people for things such as disturbing the peace or being rude to people. According to the February 9th issue, readers of the newspaper could mail in their own Wonders, which cost 12 cents for up to 12 lines.¹¹⁸

Some Wonders do seem to imply sexual and gender impropriety. For example, one reads:

Wonder what young ladies those were who were dressed in gentlemen's apparel and romping through the field not a thousand miles from this place? Now, Paul, these ladies imagine themselves models of virtue and modesty, and I consider it ridiculous to see them performing in this manner in the presence of strangers. Take care, girls, the Viper is about.¹¹⁹

The young women mentioned in this Wonder are not named, but presumably, if they read this, they would recognize that the author was talking about them. While these women were not arrested, the *Viper's Sting* serves as an alternate form of social control. Alternately, the writer behind this Wonder may have been looking out for the women. The odd usage of the phrase "a thousand miles" makes the women seem like they were far away from Baltimore. Perhaps someone simply wanted to warn these women that their actions had been noticed without implicating the women to local authorities.

Another Wonder that could implicate same-sex relationships is seen in the March 23rd issue. This one reads:

¹¹⁷ "Wonders," *Viper's Sting and Paul Pry*, August 11, 1849, 1st edition.

¹¹⁸ "Wonders," *Viper's Sting and Paul Pry*, February 9, 1850, 3rd edition.

¹¹⁹ "Wonders," February 9, 1850.

Wonder why Mr. P. visits Fishtown so often? He must be smitten with some of the hard-looking stock from Baltimore. I don't blame him much, as that is his only place of resort in this world.¹²⁰

This seems to imply that Mr. P. visited the docks of Baltimore to observe the fisherman working there. However, the writer does not seem particularly condemning to Mr. P., and is instead rather sympathetic. Perhaps the writer realized that Mr. P. was not doing anyone any real harm and decided to give him a gentle warning to amend his behavior.

Other Wonders do not specifically mention gender and sexual nonconformity but can be read as such. Several of the Wonders that shame couples for inappropriate relationships do not use specific gender pronouns, instead referring to them as “that loving couple” or just using initials. It is possible that this was a way to refer to same-sex couples in a subtle way. The Wonder about the “loving couple” reads, “It is the opinion of Paul’s reporter they could find some more private place to do such things as they were doing that night.”¹²¹ This could very well be a warning to a same-sex couple to be more careful when spending time together.

The “Wonders” section of the *Viper’s Sting* was but one section of the newspaper. The newspaper also printed listings for upcoming theater events, interesting stories from around the city, jokes, poems, and letters to the editor. One such letter was sent from an anonymous writer calling themselves “A.” The letter is a harsh and violent diatribe against a man in Laurel, Maryland whom the author of the letter accuses of being a cross-dresser. The author of the letter stated that they are exposing this person “in order to save our

¹²⁰ “Wonders,” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*, March 23, 1850, 4th edition.

¹²¹ “Wonders,” March 23, 1850.

country from shame and disgrace.”¹²² The person being accused was supposedly named John but called themselves Mary. The author speculated that this person was born to non-white parents, though nobody in town knew definitively. The author writes that John, or Mary, should hang themselves to avoid punishment by the author and the author’s peers. The final line of the letter reads, “[We] will sting you so hard that it will cause your double-breasted vest to split down the back and leak out your virginity.”¹²³ The outright and angry violence, including threatening rape, is unusual for the *Viper’s Sting*, which generally deals in veiled threats or implications. The implication is that this gender-crossing person of color invoked more fear and rage than adulterers, gamblers, or any other petty criminal.

Throughout history and in the present, queer people have always had to hide due to fear of violence. The story of the person mentioned in this letter is no exception. It is not possible to discover what ultimately happened to the subject of this angry letter. Perhaps they read this article and realized the danger they could be in. Perhaps they took the vitriolic warning to heart and stopped dressing according to their own gender expression and wore men’s clothes instead. It is also very possible that this individual did face violent repercussions for living as themselves. If this person was injured or even murdered, this is the sort of crime that might go unreported. Crimes on people that go against the grain of society are often committed by those who hold power in the community. Perhaps the people who set out to hurt the subject of the letter succeeded and exercised their social and political power by ensuring they weren’t punished.

¹²² “Our Correspondence,” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*, March 23, 1850, 4th edition.

¹²³ “Our Correspondence.”

While this may very well be the case, it is certainly not a guarantee. Plenty of people throughout history have managed to beat the odds and live a full life as a queer individual. Perhaps the letter's subject left Maryland and started a new life somewhere where people did not know their biological sex. Not every queer story has a tragic ending. The life of this particular individual, however, will forever be unresolved.

Viper's Sting and Paul Pry is short-lived, only lasting for two years of the mid-nineteenth century. Many newspapers have been published throughout Baltimore's history, but by far the most prolific is the *Baltimore Sun*. The *Sun* was founded in 1837 by the printer A.S. Abell and is still in print today.¹²⁴ In its early years, the *Sun* soon became famous for its accuracy and timeliness. It was reportedly the favored newspaper of several American Presidents. Some of the *Sun*'s most famous work came in the early twentieth century with H.L. Mencken's coverage of the Scopes "monkey trial" in 1925. The *Sun*'s reports and political cartoons regarding this trial were read across the country.

On April 30th, 1841, the *Sun* posted a summary of the people and events seen during night watch that week. On April 23rd, according to the article, a woman named Almira Nicholson was arrested for walking in the street wearing men's clothes.¹²⁵ She was a Black woman, referred to in the article as "good-looking." In the morning, the magistrate determined that her actions were "a mere frolic of hers," and that her clothing choices did not appear to be a disguise to help her commit crimes. The article adds, "No part of her new dress seemed to annoy her more than the hat. She was continually fixing

¹²⁴ Frederic B. Hill and Stephens Broening, *The Life of Kings: The Baltimore Sun and the Golden Age of the American Newspaper* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), xvi.

¹²⁵ "Watch Returns," *Baltimore Sun*, April 30, 1841.

it, but could never get it right.”¹²⁶ Nicholson was punished with two lashes and then released—a violent yet brief form of punishment.

Almira Nicholson is not mentioned in Baltimore newspapers again. However, the Woods’ Baltimore City Directory from 1870 does list an Almira B. Nicholson, identifying her as a teacher.¹²⁷ She lived on 37 McHenry Street. While this might be a different person with the same name, chances are high that the two are the same woman. If this is the case, it means that Nicholson lived for another thirty years after her 1841 arrest and made a life of her own with an income and a steady job—her gender transgression did not preclude her from succeeding later in life.

Almira Nicholson’s decision to take a stroll through the Baltimore streets one night is a fascinating one. Perhaps she only felt comfortable trying out her new clothing in the dark of the night, when passers-by would be less likely to see her. Perhaps she simply wanted to see what it felt like to wear a suit, or perhaps it was a reflection of her inner gender identity. She may have felt safer, less likely to face the consequences of being a woman, in men’s clothing. No matter the reasoning behind her choices, it is likely that she would not have considered herself transgender, lesbian, or any other modern identity. Her self-understanding and the vocabulary she used to define herself were individual to her, not informed by an existing subculture.

A comparable story to Almira Nicholson’s was reported in the *Sun* on February 2nd, 1881. This story, entitled “A Warning to Masqueraders,” relates the story of two young men who were discovered by police wearing women’s clothing, supposedly as a

¹²⁶ “Watch Returns.”

¹²⁷ *Woods’ Baltimore City Directory (1870)* (Baltimore, Md: John W. Woods).

joke.¹²⁸ According to the article, the two were discovered by an officer around two in the morning. The officer took them in for “acting disorderly,” as the two were playing leapfrog which exposed their stockings. At the station, the police lieutenant reportedly “burst into a laugh” as the wig of one of the young men slipped off and revealed the “grinning features of a boy.” They explained that they were on their way home from a masquerade and decided to have some fun. The two young men were held at the station overnight and were required to pay a fine, but that was their only punishment.

The overall tone of this story is not particularly serious. The police officers seem amused by the antics of the boys, and the boys themselves are portrayed as pranksters rather than people who genuinely diverged from societal gender expectations. There is no “danger” in their antics, other than the consequence of paying a fine. This is a far more lenient sentence than Almira Nicholson received. In addition to the four decades of difference, the cross-dressing individuals in this story were young white men, while Nicholson was a Black woman. It is unsurprising that the punishment for her transgressions would be harsher than that received by the young men. The two crimes reported are different, too. In Nicholson’s case, the police and the reporters automatically assumed that she was cross-dressing in order to commit crime and robbery, while the young men were assumed to be simply having fun. No doubt there were some racial assumptions made by the police and the *Sun*. The age of the boys is an important consideration as well. No specific ages are mentioned in the *Sun*, but given the description of them as young pranksters, and the fact that police officers perceived them as young women at first glance, imply that the boys may have been somewhere between

¹²⁸ “A Warning to Masqueraders,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 2, 1881.

14 and 16 years old. In that time frame, they would have been old enough to wander Baltimore at night and cause mischief, but their younger faces and bodies would have passed for female easier than a full-grown man could have.

One should take caution in accepting the *Sun*'s account at face value. The article seems to depict the light-hearted antics of two friends, but this very well might be an inaccurate depiction of the events. In the early modern period, the game of leapfrog was sometimes used as a metaphor for sex.¹²⁹ While this article was published somewhat later than the early modern period, it is possible that well-read Baltimore readers may still have made a sexual association with the act. This association could have been borne from textual references, literary innuendos, and word of mouth. Understandings may have come from an early subculture in which a vernacular of same-sex sexuality was developing, but clear evidence of this is not reported in the *Sun* or other publications. The story likely did come off as rather sensual to readers—the game of leapfrog involves the players being very physically close and touching each other. Perhaps the boys were doing something that looked like leapfrog to passers-by but was in fact far more intimate. Readers of the *Sun* may have created a mental image of this situation in which the boys were not just being playful but were truly transgressing sexual norms.

Additionally, the young men do not speak for themselves in the article. It is a very real possibility that their choice of clothing was a reflection of their personal gender identity, and that they escaped harsher punishment by passing it off as a joke. Leapfrog certainly seems like an odd choice of game. It is generally a game for children, not

¹²⁹ Ian Frederick Moulton, "Erotic Representation, 1500-1750," in *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present*, ed. Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher (Routledge, 2013), 212.

teenage boys. Often, mischievous behavior from boys is performative, designed to make their friends and peers laugh. However, until the police arrived, there were no observers as the boys played leapfrog. Why, then, did the boys choose to play a children's game in which they placed their hands on each other and moved their bodies together, alone, late at night, while wearing women's dresses? It seems clear to readers of this article that there is something more going on beyond what the *Sun* reports.

Masquerade balls could sometimes be places where partiers could experiment with their sexuality, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century.¹³⁰ They were often known for their encouragement of promiscuity and intermingling of different social classes. Attendees were often disguised, wearing masks and often drag to conceal their identity. Relationships between partygoers of all genders could be witnessed at these parties. It is a definite possibility that the masquerading boys attended the ball to disguise themselves and enjoy a night out together.

An individual named Lizzie Jackson appears in the *Sun* multiple times throughout the 1880s. An eye-catching article was published in August 1886 entitled "A Man in Woman's Clothes."¹³¹ This piece reports that a Black woman named Lizzie Jackson was indicted for sodomy. When physicians examined her, they discovered that Jackson was anatomically male. Jackson had passed as a woman her whole life and recently served ten months in a women's penitentiary for larceny. Jackson's appearance in court is reported

¹³⁰ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 - 1940* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994), 291.

¹³¹ "A Man in Woman's Clothes," *Baltimore Sun*, August 11, 1886.

in the same issue, though in a different section of the paper.¹³² Her case was ruled *nolle prosequi*, meaning it was thrown out by the prosecutor.

This was not Jackson's only appearance in Baltimore courts. Lizzie Jackson's earlier indictment for larceny was also reported in the *Sun* on April 5th, 1883.¹³³ In this case, she pled guilty to larceny and was sentenced to a year in prison. This article does not mention anything about her gender, besides her name. She also appears again in the *Sun* in 1889 for keeping a bawdy house, another name for a brothel.¹³⁴ She was fined \$20 but was committed in default. It is not a guarantee that this is the same Lizzie Jackson, though this article also identifies her as a woman of color.

In the city directories from the 1880s, there are many entries for women named Elizabeth Jackson, though none that specifically list Lizzie as the first name. Census records from the second half of the nineteenth century also list numerous Black women named Elizabeth Jackson, but since Lizzie's age is never mentioned, it is difficult to positively identify one of these as the Lizzie Jackson in question. Searching "Lizzie Jackson" census records specifically classified as male also does not turn up results. It is possible that Lizzie Jackson lived a life outside of the establishment, managing to keep her name out of city records and censuses. Also possible is that she had a different name, possibly her name assigned at birth, that she used sometimes.

Though the historical record is incomplete, the evidence paints a distinct picture of a different kind of life in nineteenth-century Baltimore. Lizzie Jackson defied all the

¹³² "Proceedings of the Courts," *Baltimore Sun*, August 11, 1886.

¹³³ "Proceedings of the Courts," *Baltimore Sun*, April 5, 1883.

¹³⁴ "Proceedings of the Courts," *Baltimore Sun*, February 25, 1889.

odds by living her gender and sexual truth and not letting the white, gender-conforming majority command her life.

A *Sun* article was published on December 13th, 1886 which was titled “A New Pronoun Suggested.”¹³⁵ This article is unique in that it is not about a specific queer individual. Instead, it is an opinion piece that suggests the creation of a gender-neutral pronoun, or a “hermaphrodite” pronoun as it says in the piece. The pronoun, which was “his-her” as one word, would be used as such: “Neither the man nor his wife can write *his-her* name.”¹³⁶ Eventually, when the use of “his-her” caught on, the author speculates that the dash could be removed. The purpose of this new pronoun would be to simplify sentences such as the example above. Even though this pronoun clearly never caught on, it does reflect the fact that someone was willing to work towards a more gender-neutral language.

A story was printed on August 7th, 1890 entitled “Queer Story of a Girl in Boy’s Clothing.”¹³⁷ This article told the story of an 18-year-old named Sadie Lee, who had been living as a man for the past several months. The use of the word “queer” in the story’s title was likely associated with its meaning of “odd” or “unexpected” rather than a reference to gender nonconformity. The word “queer” did not come to be generally associated with LGBT+ individuals until the 1920s.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ “A New Pronoun Suggested,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 13, 1886.

¹³⁶ “A New Pronoun Suggested.”

¹³⁷ “Queer Story of a Girl in Boy’s Clothing,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 7, 1890.

¹³⁸ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 110.

According to the *Sun* article, Sadie Lee's mother had died when Lee was a child, so she was sent to live with her grandmother and later her aunt. She worked making nets for a while but was not receiving enough money to pay her board. She had decided to take her own life until a male friend convinced her otherwise. She cut her hair and borrowed a suit from her friend, who offered that Lee could stay with him until she found a job.

Lee, who went by Ellivas¹³⁹ while living as a man, learned street etiquette of men, including how to smoke cigarettes and speak in slang. She went on several dates with girls in this time. The article states, "She said she also indulged in a little quiet flirtation with other girls, and one evening escorted a girl to the Academy, the girl never suspecting that she was anything but what she appeared."¹⁴⁰ The article does not specify how the police department knew to arrest her, just that she was arrested by one Detective Sebold.

When brought into the police station, she was wearing "short trousers, long, black stockings, low shoes, sack coat, flannel shirt, and an Alpine hat."¹⁴¹ Lee was reportedly not upset at her discovery and was willing to go home to her father. Since she was 18 years of age, the police marshal was not able to actually command her to do anything, but she was delivered to her father's house wearing female clothing.

Sadie Lee herself does not appear again in the *Sun*. However, it is possible to trace her father's presence. According to the *Sun* article, her father was living on South Fulton Avenue at the time. A search of R.L. Polk & Co.'s Baltimore City Directory from

¹³⁹ The name printed in the story is blurred and obscured but appears to be "Ellivas," though that does not appear as a name in any other nineteenth century documents. It is possibly a misprint on the part of the paper, maybe for a more common name such as "Ellias." In my work, I have decided to use the spelling "Ellivas."

¹⁴⁰ "Queer Story of a Girl in Boy's Clothing."

¹⁴¹ "Queer Story of a Girl in Boy's Clothing."

the year 1890 lists a large number of men and women with the surname Lee. Only one, however, is listed as residing on South Fulton Street, a brick molder named William T. Lee.¹⁴² The combination of the matching street address and last name mean that William T. Lee was definitively the father of Sadie Lee. Additionally, the 1880 census documents list an 8-year-old girl named Sarah Lee living in Baltimore at the time. The head of the household was also named Sarah Lee, a 69-year-old woman.¹⁴³ The *Sun* article does report that Sadie Lee lived with her grandmother for a time, and Sadie is sometimes a nickname for Sarah. Given these circumstances, it is very likely that this census record is for the same person discussed in the article.

Beyond this point, it is difficult, if not impossible, to continue to track Sadie Lee's life. It is possible that she married a man and changed her last name, or that some other fate befell her. In any case, she does not appear in the historical records after her encounter with the police in 1890.

One thing that makes Sadie Lee's account distinct is the statement that she took other girls out on dates. Very rarely does the *Sun* mention romantic relationships between women. As the article claims, it is certainly likely that the young women did not know that Lee was biologically female—but it is not a guarantee. There is a possibility that the two young women were able to use Lee's choice of clothing as a rare opportunity to have a romantic night without fear of repercussions. Alternately, there is a good chance that Lee was using male clothing to express an innate gender identity she did not have the vocabulary to describe. Classifying her into one of the opposing modern categories of

¹⁴² R.L. Polk & Co, *R.L. Polk & Co. 's Baltimore City Directory for 1890* (Baltimore: R.L. Polk & Co.).

¹⁴³ 1890 U.S. Census, Baltimore, MD, s.v. "Sarah Lee," available at Ancestry.com

“lesbian” or “transgender man” is too reductive and not accurate to how Lee would have thought of herself. She may not even have had any alternate gender or sexual identities and merely dressed as a man for a few months of rent money. It is impossible for modern historians to understand the deep intricacies of how someone like Sadie Lee would have psychologically and emotionally understood their gender and sexual identity.

A dispatch from Frederick, Maryland to the *Sun* was published in the newspaper on June 12th, 1894.¹⁴⁴ This article summarizes the current state of things at the Frederick Woman’s College, which was founded in 1893. Nobody graduated in the school’s first year, and the school was run by a Professor Apple as the principal. The end of the school year was celebrated by various clubs and activities, including an art show and a music concert. Also in the lineup was the “Lesbian Literary Society,” which delivered an address. The name of the club is certainly a reference to Sappho’s home island of Lesbos, and it is likely that the members of the club understood the association with lesbian love as well.

The latter half of the nineteenth century was essential to the association of Sappho with lesbian love. At the end of the century, Prins writes, “[Sappho] is invoked by decadent writers, sexologists, and classical scholars as ‘historical’ evidence for the practice of lesbian sexuality at the moment of, and in response to, the regulatory heterosexual construction of male homosexuality.”¹⁴⁵ Many poets of the period invoked Sappho in their writing, so it is certain that the well-read young women in the Lesbian

¹⁴⁴ “Frederick Woman’s College,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 12, 1894.

¹⁴⁵ Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 94.

Literary Society would be familiar with the current literary trends surrounding their club's namesake.

While many nineteenth-century queer women were left without a group of like-minded friends to help them navigate their identity, the women of the Lesbian Literary Society at Frederick Woman's College managed to bond together and forge a community, a trend that would continue in the next century.

Another form of early subculture among students in Baltimore, though quite different than at the Frederick Woman's College, was seen in a medical journal, published in New York City between 1882 and 1905, entitled *Medical News*. One of the articles from August 1886, "Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition," was written by Baltimorean Randolph Winslow, M.A., M.D.¹⁴⁶ In this article, he discussed a number of cases of gonorrhea¹⁴⁷ among the students at a boarding school in Baltimore. The boys at this institution, the name of which is not identified, range in age from nine to twenty-one. The boys were closely monitored at all times, and there were no women at the school, with the exception of two middle-aged women employed as domestic workers, whom the author states could not have been the source of the infection. The author of the article does not specify how this is so certain.

Winslow conducted research and determined that the original cause of the spread was a teenage boy who contracted gonorrhea from an unknown girl while on a break from the institution. At the institution, it was reported that sodomy had been practiced

¹⁴⁶ Randolph Winslow, M.A., M.D., "Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition," *Medical News*, August 14, 1886.

¹⁴⁷ The 1886 article uses the spelling "gonorrhoea," but I will use the modern spelling "gonorrhea" in my work.

“for a long time,”¹⁴⁸ with younger boys often serving as the “woman” in exchange for small rewards like candy. While some likely contracted gonorrhoea through anal sex, the author posits that others may have contracted it through frottage, the act of rubbing their genitals together.¹⁴⁹ Several boys denied sexual interactions as the cause of their gonorrhoea. One sixteen-year-old boy claimed to have contracted it from masturbation, and another said he had contracted it by wearing a shirt belonging to one of the infected boys.

Winslow wrote that the epidemic ended around January 1885, thanks to the medicine he administered to the boys, as well as increased surveillance of the boys. He mentioned that “severe corporeal punishment” was used against anyone found having sexual relationships with their fellow students, and that these instances decreased significantly.¹⁵⁰

Winslow concluded his article by comparing several other medical reports about the transmission and symptoms of gonorrhoea, all of which support his research. However, Winslow also observed urethral inflammation as a symptom, which had not been significantly discussed in previous research. He also passes moral judgement against the boys, referring to the homosexual behavior he studied as an “unnatural and filthy practice.”¹⁵¹ Winslow also worked as a professor and lecturer at the Women’s Medical

¹⁴⁸ Winslow, M.A., M.D., “Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition.”

¹⁴⁹ Winslow, M.A., M.D., “Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition.”

¹⁵⁰ Winslow, M.A., M.D., “Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition.”

¹⁵¹ Winslow, M.A., M.D., “Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition.”

College of Baltimore and the University of Maryland, so there is a good chance he would have reported his findings to his students as well.

The tone of the *Medical News* article is markedly different from newspaper articles published about queer life. This piece is first and foremost a medical, scientific text. Unlike newspaper stories, its goal is not to entertain or shock readers.

Gender-isolated schools were often among the earliest places where a developing queer subculture developed in the nineteenth century. Girls' schools had a reputation in erotic literature as being places where women forged emotional bonds, exchanged stories about sex, and learned how to pleasure themselves and other women.¹⁵² While some of this may have grown from the fantasies of male writers, much of it was borne from the truth. It was common to the point of being expected that young women would form unusually close bonds with their fellow students. In the case of Alice Mitchell and Freda Ward, it was considered very typical that the two young women held hands, hugged, kissed, and spent all their time together. The homosociality of schools in the nineteenth century allowed for sexual and emotional intimacy between same-gendered individuals to flourish in a relatively safe environment.

Most of the stories discussed thus far were published in the *Sun* or other newspapers simply because they were interesting. Stories of queer characters were unique and not often seen, so they were printed as short standalone stories. However, many cases of same-sex love in nineteenth century Baltimore were not reported in a dramatic,

¹⁵² Rachel Hope Cleves, *Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America*, Oxford University Press paperback (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 17.

gossipy way, but instead were announced in legal terms through the *Baltimore Sun*'s court records.

Given its relatively late founding in 1837, the *Baltimore Sun* does not provide insight into the Baltimore landscape in the early years of the nineteenth century. However, the *Sun*'s coverage of court proceedings beginning in 1852 are an invaluable insight into the criminalization of same-sex acts in nineteenth century Baltimore. These stories were usually titled "Court Proceedings" or "Proceedings of the Courts." They provide the name of the presiding judge, the list of convictions from the previous day, the list of cases to be tried the upcoming day, and other miscellaneous information about the courts. In the majority of instances, the information provided about a specific person would be limited to the individual's name, crime, and sentence.

The *Sun* published an article on January 1st, 1858 detailing the police statistics from 1857.¹⁵³ The article lists all the crimes for which arrests were made, totaling about 9,000 arrests. The most common crime was "breach of peace," for which 3,000 people were arrested. Other common crimes included "breach of ordinances," assault and battery, abusing, and fighting in the street. One unnamed person was arrested for sodomy in 1857. This was the first time the term "sodomy" is used in the *Sun*, and the first time homosexual sex was mentioned outright instead of implied.

It is uncertain why the *Baltimore Sun* shied away from discussing controversial topics such as sodomy for the first fifteen years of its existence. Possibly, A.S. Abell and the other founders of the paper were anxious to maintain a good reputation as the

¹⁵³ "Local Matters," *Baltimore Sun*, January 1, 1858.

newspaper gained its footing. Flash press papers of the time were not reputable sources of news, and the *Sun* wanted to be a serious paper and distinguish itself.

It is worth noting that often, reported sodomy cases are instances of assault and rape. It is not very common to see cases where one member of a consensual sexual relationship reports their partner. This does happen occasionally, often in the case where one person wanted to save their reputation and future and thus betrayed their lover and used them as a scapegoat. However, in many cases, sodomy is used to mean rape in cases where one person, usually male, reports a sexual assault against them by a man. It is also occasionally used to refer to sexual assault against a woman in the form of anal or oral rape. As a result, when analyzing cases of sodomy reported in the *Baltimore Sun*, it is important to remember that many of the reports are focused on non-consensual same-sex sexual activity.

The next report of sodomy in the *Sun* does not occur until 1873. Two men, named Francis Dugan and James Devinney, were mentioned in the *Sun* in 1873 and 1874. The first article referencing them is in the section reporting crimes in Baltimore, which was published on April 11, 1873.¹⁵⁴ The article states that the two men were found guilty of the crime of sodomy with George Turner. Both Dugan and Devinney were sentenced to ten years in prison. During the trial, the courtroom was closed to the public. The short piece does not elaborate on who any of the men were, or details of the crime. It is possible that this is a case of sexual assault against George Turner. Alternatively, it might have been originally consensual, but Turner gave Dugan and Devinney up to avoid legal trouble for himself or for some other reason.

¹⁵⁴ “Marital Punishments,” *Baltimore Sun*, April 11, 1873.

A follow-up article reporting on Dugan and Devinney was published about a year later on March 5, 1874, entitled “The Pardon of Two More Convicts.”¹⁵⁵ The article recaps that the two men were convicted of sodomy and sentenced to ten years in prison, and then states that they were pardoned after about a year by Maryland Governor William Pinkney Whyte. Neither Dugan nor Devinney appear in the city directory from 1875.¹⁵⁶ One possibility is that following their release from prison, Dugan and Devinney left town, finding it too difficult to remain in a city where everyone knew they had been imprisoned for sodomy.

On January 18th, 1878, the *Sun* reported that a man named Thomas Brown was on trial for sodomy.¹⁵⁷ Several days later, on January 21st, the *Sun* reported the results of Brown’s trial.¹⁵⁸ Brown was sentenced on two counts of sodomy, and was jailed for two years, one year for each charge. Due to the commonness of Brown’s name, it is very difficult to trace his life further in the records. He may have been released from prison after his sentence was up and lived the rest of his life quietly and without incident. It is very likely that his friends and neighbors would have known about his conviction given the *Sun*’s citywide readership and would treat him differently for the rest of his life.

The *Sun* published an article on October 15th, 1879 which detailed the fates of six vagrants, referred to as “tramps” in the article, who were brought to court.¹⁵⁹ Four were committed to the House of Correction for two months. The other two were sent to jail for being involved in a sodomy case. One was indicted by a grand jury for sodomy, and the

¹⁵⁵ “The Pardon of Two More Convicts,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 5, 1874.

¹⁵⁶ “*Woods’ Baltimore City Directory (1875)* (Baltimore, Md: John W. Woods).

¹⁵⁷ “Proceedings of the Courts,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 18, 1878.

¹⁵⁸ “Proceedings of the Courts,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 1878.

¹⁵⁹ “Letter from Westminster,” *Baltimore Sun*, October 15, 1879.

other was indicted as a witness. None of these men are named, and there is no follow-up in the *Sun* about their futures.

In some cases, police officers throughout America would arrest gender transgressors for “vagrancy” if they had no other legitimate reason to bring them in.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, nineteenth-century “hobo camps” were more often than not inhabited solely by men, creating an environment where these men could forge emotional and sexual connections.¹⁶¹ Hobo camps and other similar environments, such as prisons and mining camps, were places where a queer subculture was able to develop earlier than the twentieth century, given the homosociality and isolation of these groups.

Readers of the *Sun* would have understood several assumptions about “tramps” as a group. Vagrants were perceived as fully outside of society. They were perceived as not having families, jobs, and homes—therefore, they were not considered functional, proper members of society. Along with these assumptions comes the assumption of sexual transgression. They did not have traditional relationships, instead choosing to spend their lives among other men. Baltimoreans would have had a mental image, reinforced by this *Sun* article, of transients as dangerous oddities who resisted cultural expectations of sexuality.

Arthur Waters appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* in July 1881 in the newspaper’s account of the week’s court cases.¹⁶² He was brought in on an account of sodomy, but the case was dismissed. The article does not state the reason for the dismissal of the case. It is

¹⁶⁰ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the North American West* (University of California Press, 2012), 124.

¹⁶¹ Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), 13.

¹⁶² “Criminal Court,” *Baltimore Sun*, July 11, 1881.

unknown what became of Waters. He does not appear in city directories between 1880 and 1885. In 1893, the *Sun* reported that Arthur Waters pled guilty to grand larceny, though it is difficult to say with certainty that this is the same person.¹⁶³ Possibly the dismissal of the case gave Waters the chance to lead a normal life again, or possibly he was associated with the controversy of the trial all the same.

John Toole and William Penn appeared in the *Sun* on June 25th, 1889.¹⁶⁴ The two men were both convicted of sodomy and assault by Judge Phelps, though their sentence is not listed. The specific inclusion of “assault” with the charge of sodomy is noteworthy. In many cases, the act of sodomy was itself considered a form of assault. However, in this case the court specifically identified Toole and Penn as attackers, implying that the understandings of sodomy and assault were beginning to split.

William Gillen appeared in the “Assignment for today” section of the criminal court summary on September 11th, 1890.¹⁶⁵ The following day, on September 12th, the *Sun* reported that he had been found not guilty. With the little information provided by the *Sun*, it is not possible to understand much about William Gillen’s life, but the information published can be a window into his life. He was found not guilty, meaning that he had the opportunity to proceed with life in Baltimore as he was prior to his trial.

One nontypical report was published on October 21st, 1891.¹⁶⁶ This article reported on the day’s criminal trials as usual, but one man, George W. Dunn, Jr., was on trial for “buggery.” This is the only time the *Sun* uses the term “buggery” to identify a sexual crime. The phrase is used elsewhere in the newspaper, but only in a non-sexual

¹⁶³ “District Courts,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 2, 1893.

¹⁶⁴ “Criminal Court-Judge Phelps,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 25, 1889.

¹⁶⁵ “Criminal Court-Judge Stewart,” *Baltimore Sun*, September 11, 1890.

¹⁶⁶ “Proceedings of the Courts,” *Baltimore Sun*, October 21, 1891.

context (such as a substitute for “humpbugery”). Historically, “buggery” was often used synonymously with sodomy, referring broadly to any non-reproductive sex, but understood mostly to refer to sex between men.¹⁶⁷ In other cases, the phrase “buggery” can be used as a synonym for bestiality.¹⁶⁸ However, the *Sun* used the term “sodomy” exclusively except in this article. “Bestiality” as a legal term appears very rarely in the *Sun*. It is not clear if Dunn’s crime was considered a different type than the other men convicted of sodomy, or if the wording change was merely arbitrary. It is worth noting that a man named Charles Lee was convicted on the same day of sodomy, and his crime is specifically listed as such, meaning that Dunn’s crime was considered different than Lee’s.

Anton Wecks’ name appeared in the *Sun*’s summary of court activities on March 16th, 1894.¹⁶⁹ He was tried on two cases of sodomy. The results of Wecks’ trial were reported almost two weeks later, on March 29th. He was not found guilty of sodomy but was found guilty on one charge of common assault.¹⁷⁰ The paper reported that there was a motion for a new trial, but the results of this trial were not reported. Both his first and last name are of Eastern European origin, implying the possibility that Wecks was an immigrant. It is possible that he was judged more harshly because he was not American by birth. However, this is not possible to claim definitively.

¹⁶⁷ William N. Eskridge, *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), 157.

¹⁶⁸ Robert F. Oaks, “‘Things Fearful to Name’: Sodomy and Buggery in Seventeenth-Century New England,” in *History of Homosexuality in Europe and America* (United Kingdom: Garland Publishing, 1992).

¹⁶⁹ “Criminal Court-Judge Harlan,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 16, 1894.

¹⁷⁰ “Criminal Court-Judge Harlan,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 29, 1894.

According to the *Sun*'s account of the court proceedings on May 24, 1895, a man named Oscar Ross was convicted and found guilty of sodomy.¹⁷¹ The presiding judge was Judge Dennis. Ross was sentenced to five years in the House of Correction. Case details are not included in these Court Proceedings articles, so it is uncertain what factors influenced the judge to sentence the defendant to a harsher or more lenient punishment. More cases end with the defendant being acquitted than with a guilty verdict. There is no distinct legal reasoning as to why this is the case. It is likely that the courts lacked convincing evidence to convict someone. These cases were decided by a jury of Baltimoreans—it is likely that some jurors tended to be more forgiving towards the defendants in these trials.

The *Sun* reported on July 15th, 1896 that a man named Hammond Marshall was on trial for sodomy.¹⁷² The following day, the follow-up article was published.¹⁷³ Marshall was found not guilty by the court.

Some of the court proceedings articles did not have follow-up pieces about the men's sentences. The names of some of these men are Samuel Jolly who appeared in the paper on September 19th, 1879,¹⁷⁴ Frank Curran on November 1st, 1888,¹⁷⁵ Richard C. Dixon on December 18th, 1895,¹⁷⁶ and Andrew Pugh on August 2nd, 1898.¹⁷⁷ While the *Sun* often published the results of the trials, these men did not appear in the newspaper in

¹⁷¹ "Criminal Court-Judge Dennis," *Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1895.

¹⁷² "Criminal Court-Judge Ritchie," *Baltimore Sun*, July 15, 1896.

¹⁷³ "Court Proceedings," *Baltimore Sun*, July 16, 1896.

¹⁷⁴ "Proceedings of the Court," *Baltimore Sun*, September 9, 1879.

¹⁷⁵ "Proceedings of the Courts," *Baltimore Sun*, November 1, 1888.

¹⁷⁶ "Court Proceedings," *Baltimore Sun*, December 18, 1895.

¹⁷⁷ "Court Proceedings," *Baltimore Sun*, August 2, 1898.

the following days. It is uncertain why this is the case. Perhaps the *Sun* reporters were simply inconsistent when following up on these stories.

Baltimore is a major East Coast port city, which would have affected the social and sexual environment in the nineteenth century. Many sailors for the Navy or for merchant ships would have landed in Baltimore for several days before moving on. As a result, when these sailors committed sexual or gender transgressions, they would have likely remained unidentified and left the city without facing legal persecution.

Overall, these stories show that queer Baltimoreans in the nineteenth century had an enormously diverse set of experiences, with no two people living life the same way. Many people, such as Sadie Lee or the two boys playing leapfrog, were able to escape serious punishments for their actions. They were reprimanded or forced to pay a small fine, but otherwise they were free to continue living life as they pleased—at least, when it came to legal repercussions. Others, such as Almira Nicholson, may have had to face a punishment, but later were able to move forward from their past encounters with the law. Yet others, such as some of the men arrested for sodomy in the late nineteenth century, likely had their entire lives upturned when their sexual deviance was discovered.

In almost every case, it is not possible to discover the intimate details of these people's lives. The *Sun* might report their names and their story, but their opinions, feelings, and innate gender identity are unknown to modern readers. All the same, their stories in the Baltimore press provide a window into understanding how queer people in nineteenth century Baltimore lived their lives.

Conclusion

Queer history in Baltimore began long before the twentieth century. People who diverged from societal norms of gender and sexuality were always present in Baltimore's history, and they can be seen through media representations and popular press of the time period. Sodomy was outlawed in nineteenth-century Baltimore, and these laws were enforced, as seen in cases such as that of *Davis v. State* in 1810. Court cases published in the *Baltimore Sun* often included convictions for sodomy, in which the names of people who diverged from sexual norms were published for all Baltimore readers to see. These laws stayed firmly in place throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

Baltimoreans continued to live their gender and sexual truths despite the laws against it. Even when representation of queerness in media was less common, stories of people who diverged from gender and sexual norms were still distributed to the public. Stories of gender transgressing historical figures such as the Chevalier d'Eon, Catalina de Erauso, and Sappho gave Baltimoreans glimpses into alternate lifestyles and the people who lived them. Stories from other cities of women disguised as men shocked and fascinated Baltimore readers, forcing them to reconceptualize how they could understand gender. Famous artists such as Charlotte Cushman and Oscar Wilde, who were well known to Baltimoreans, provided models of behavior—for better or worse—to those who followed their lives and careers in the *Baltimore Sun*. Media representations provided inspiration and information to people who did not have access to a group of like-minded people through a distinct subculture.

Queer Baltimoreans drew from media representations, early stages of a developing subculture, or their own personal thoughts and feelings to inform their gender and sexual identities. People such as Almira Nicholson, Sadie Lee, and Lizzie Jackson rejected the gender they were assigned at birth and dressed in the clothing they felt most comfortable in, even if it resulted in punishment by the law. Others found ways to justify their behavior to the public eye, such as the boys playing leapfrog, in order to escape harsher punishment. Readers across the city eagerly learned about their fellow Baltimoreans who transgressed gender norms from stories in the *Sun* or in *Viper's Sting and Paul Pry*. Baltimore schools provided homosocial environments where students could forge same-gender bonds and experiment sexually. Despite the legal and social measures restricting these people from living their lives as freely as they might wish, they still found individualized ways to live life outside of gender and sexual norms.

As with any history project, there are some questions unable to be answered by my research. My work was inherently limited by the wide variety of language used to refer to queer people historically—while I searched a large number of terms and phrases that were used to imply queer behavior, there are undoubtedly relevant newspaper articles that I missed. Additionally, my research draws only on published work. It is highly likely that sources such as personal letters or diaries would shed more light onto the topic, though they were not consulted for this work.

Several new avenues of research are made possible by this work. One such topic would be a deeper investigation into the homosocial environment in nineteenth-century schools. My work analyzed sources discussing the Frederick Woman's College and the report on the unnamed boy's school written by Winslow, but these were far from

Baltimore's only schools in this time period. Some scholarship exists on the development of same-sex intimacy in single-gender schools, and an analysis of schools in the Baltimore area would be a compelling avenue of research.

Another opportunity for research not covered in the scope of this project is further study into early twentieth century queer history in Baltimore. While this project does not analyze Baltimore history after 1900, there is a great wealth of information on queer culture in Baltimore in the first half of the twentieth century. The Maryland Vice Commission, for example, published their findings on prostitution, homosexuality, and attitudes towards sex in 1914. In this time period, Baltimore was also home to several drag clubs and early gay bars. This topic would benefit from further research.

Baltimore continued to develop an ever-growing queer subculture in the twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s, drag balls and vaudeville theatre were places where queer people began to congregate and celebrate their uniqueness. The oldest still-running gay bar in Baltimore, Leon's, opened in 1957. The 31st Street Bookstore, a lesbian-feminist bookshop, was founded in 1973. Gay bars including The Hippo, Club Bunnys, Paradise Inn, and others flourished in the 1970s. The city's first Pride rally was hosted in 1975.¹⁷⁸ John Waters and *Divine* scandalized and fascinated the public with transgressive cult films such as *Pink Flamingos*.

With the 1980s came several defeats for the queer community. The Baltimore City Council voted against a landmark gay rights bill in 1985. The HIV/AIDS epidemic tore through the community. However, with these defeats came victories as well. By the end of the 1980s, over a dozen local organizations and agencies were devoted to fighting

¹⁷⁸ Louise Parker Kelley, *LGBT Baltimore* (Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 8.

HIV/AIDS.¹⁷⁹ The previously vetoed gay rights bill finally passed in 1988, and Maryland governor William Schaefer passed an executive order banning workplace discrimination against LGBT+ people in 1993. Same-sex marriage was legalized in Maryland in 2012 after a historic victory in which the bill was passed by a majority of the popular vote.

It is easy to recognize the roots of Baltimore's queer community in the twentieth century. The gay bars, lesbian bookstores, drag balls, and more were places where queer people could come together and navigate their gender and sexual identities. However, the origins of queer life in Baltimore stretch back further than the mid-twentieth century. Queer people have always existed in Baltimore, and their presence was not always hidden. Their stories and voices appear throughout the historical record. They were largely on their own, without much if any support or friendship from a community of like-minded individuals, but they bravely forged their own life anyway.

¹⁷⁹ Kelley, *LGBT Baltimore*, 9.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- “A Cleveland Girl in Male Attire.” *Baltimore Sun*, December 31, 1869.
- “A Female Duellist.” *Army and Navy Chronicle (1835-1842); Washington*. Washington, United States, Washington: B. Homans, June 15, 1837.
- “A Man in Woman’s Clothes.” *Baltimore Sun*, August 11, 1886.
- “A New Pronoun Suggested.” *Baltimore Sun*. December 13, 1886.
- “A Sofa for Charlotte Cushman.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 1, 1855.
- “A Warning to Masqueraders.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 2, 1881.
- “A Young Lady Slasher.” *Baltimore Sun*. January 26, 1892.
- “Amusements. Baltimore Museum and Gallery of the Fine Arts.” *Baltimore Sun*. August 10, 1844.
- “An Odd Character.” *Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 1842.
- “Baltimore Museum Extra Announcement.” *Baltimore Sun*, May 4, 1850.
- “Charge of the Chief Justice.” *Federal Gazette*, December 6, 1797.
- “Charlotte Cushman.” *Baltimore Sun*, January 27, 1874.
- “Court Proceedings.” *Baltimore Sun*, December 18, 1895.
- “Court Proceedings.” *Baltimore Sun*, July 16, 1896.
- “Court Proceedings.” *Baltimore Sun*, August 2, 1898.
- “Criminal Court.” *Baltimore Sun*, July 11, 1881.
- “Criminal Court-Judge Dennis.” *Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1895.
- “Criminal Court-Judge Harlan.” *Baltimore Sun*, March 16, 1894.
- “Criminal Court-Judge Harlan.” *Baltimore Sun*, March 29, 1894.
- “Criminal Court-Judge Phelps.” *Baltimore Sun*, June 25, 1889.

- “Criminal Court-Judge Ritchie.” *Baltimore Sun*, July 15, 1896.
- “Criminal Court-Judge Stewart.” *Baltimore Sun*, September 11, 1890.
- Davis v. State, 3 H. & J. 154 (Court of Appeals of Maryland December 1810).
- “Death of Miss Charlotte Cushman.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 19, 1876.
- “District Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, August 2, 1893.
- “Donna Catilina De Eranso: The Female Ensign.” *The Baltimore Monument. A Weekly Journal, Devoted to Polite Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts*, July 1, 1837.
- “Emma Snodgrass.” *Baltimore Sun*, January 1, 1853.
- Falconnet. “Translated from a Paris Paper: To the Conductors of the Gazette de France.” *The Baltimore Repertory of Papers on Literary and Other Topics*, January 1, 1811.
- “Frederick Woman’s College.” *Baltimore Sun*, June 12, 1894.
- “Holiday Street Theatre. Special Notice.” *Baltimore Sun*, December 22, 1851.
- “Holliday Street Theatre. Final Nights of Miss Charlotte Cushman.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 21, 1861.
- “Holliday Street Theatre, Last Shakspearian Night.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 7, 1861.
- Kilty, William. *The Laws of Maryland: 1785-1799*. Frederick Green, printer to the state, 1800.
- Latrobe, John Hazlehurst Boneval. *The Justices’ Practice Under the Laws of Maryland: Including the Duties of a Constable. With an Appendix, Containing a Collection of Forms Used in Conveyancing: A Synopsis of the Law of Evidence - of Promissory Notes - of the Statute of Limitations, with an Explanation of Law Terms*. F. Lucas, Jr., 1847.
- “Letter from Westminster.” *Baltimore Sun*, October 15, 1879.
- “Local Matters.” *Baltimore Sun*, January 1, 1858.
- “Marital Punishments.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 11, 1873.
- Maxcy, Virgil. *The Laws of Maryland: 1786-1800*. Philip H. Nicklin & Company, 1811.
- “Miss Charlotte Cushman.” *Baltimore Sun*, June 17, 1852.

“Miss Charlotte Cushman and Miss Clarke.” *Baltimore Sun*, November 20, 1852.

“Miss Charlotte Cushman, as Meg Merrilies.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 5, 1861.

“Ode-Sapho.” *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine*, April 1835.

“Oscar Wilde in Jail.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 8, 1895.

“Oscar Wilde Is Buried.” *Baltimore Sun*, December 4, 1900.

“Oscar Wilde on the Stand.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 4, 1895.

“Our Correspondence.” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*, March 23, 1850, 4th edition.

“People’s Theatre, Front Street.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 15, 1852.

“Proceedings of the Court.” *Baltimore Sun*, September 9, 1879.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, January 18, 1878.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 1878.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 5, 1883.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, August 11, 1886.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, November 1, 1888.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 21, 1889.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 25, 1889.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, September 12, 1890.

“Proceedings of the Courts.” *Baltimore Sun*, October 21, 1891.

“Queer Story of a Girl in Boy’s Clothing.” *Baltimore Sun*, August 7, 1890.

R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.’s Baltimore City Directory for 1890*. [Baltimore]: R.L. Polk & Co. Accessed March 5, 2020.
<http://archive.org/details/rlpolkcosbaltimo1890rlpo>.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Baltimore County, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 2, 1890. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03573_002/.

“Sheridan Knowles’ Criticism on Miss Cushman’s Romeo.” *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1846.

“The Female Husband.” *Baltimore Patriot*, March 28, 1829.

“The Girls Wanted to Marry.” *Baltimore Sun*, February 1, 1892.

“The Pardon of Two More Convicts.” *Baltimore Sun*, March 5, 1874.

“The Six O’clock Session.” *Baltimore Sun*, May 9, 1884.

“The Woman Who Married the Woman.” *Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 1842.

“Watch Returns.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 30, 1841.

Winslow, M.A., M.D., Randolph. “Report of an Epidemic of Gonorrhoea Contracted from Rectal Coition.” *Medical News*, August 14, 1886.

“Wonders.” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*. August 11, 1849, 1st edition.

“Wonders.” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*. August 18, 1849, 2nd edition.

“Wonders.” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*. February 9, 1850, 3rd edition.

“Wonders.” *Viper’s Sting and Paul Pry*. March 23, 1850, 4th edition.

Woods’ Baltimore City Directory (1870). Baltimore, Md: John W. Woods. Accessed March 5, 2020. <http://archive.org/details/woodsbaltimeci1870balt>.

Woods’ Baltimore City Directory (1875). Baltimore, Md: John W. Woods. Accessed March 7, 2020. <http://archive.org/details/woodsbaltimeci1875balt>.

Secondary Sources

Akerson, Louise E. *American Indians in the Baltimore Area*. Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology, 1988.

Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London New York: Verso, 1983.

Brown, Leslie, Jacqueline Castledine, and Anne Valk, eds. *U.S. Women’s History: Untangling the Threads of Sisterhood*. Rutgers University Press, 2017.

- Burger, Pamela. "The Bloody History of the True Crime Genre." *JSTOR Daily* (blog), August 24, 2016. <https://daily.jstor.org/bloody-history-of-true-crime-genre/>.
- Burrows, Simon. *The Chevalier d'Eon and His Worlds: Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Continuum, 2010.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 - 1940*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994.
- Clark, Anna. "Anne Lister's Construction of Lesbian Identity." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7, no. 1 (1996): 23–50.
- Cleves, Rachel Hope. *Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America*. Oxford University Press paperback. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Cohen, Kenneth. "The Woman Who Would Be Cardinal." *National Museum of American History* (blog), October 11, 2017. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/woman-be-cardinal>.
- Cohen, Patricia Cline, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz. *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York*. Historical Studies of Urban America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Crenson, Matthew A. *Baltimore: A Political History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017.
- DePastino, Todd. *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Duberman, Martin B., Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, eds. *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*. New York: Meridian, 1990.
- Duggan, Lisa. *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Eskridge, William N. *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: Quill, 1998.

- Ferguson, Alice L.L., and Henry G. Ferguson. *The Piscataway Indians of Southern Maryland*. Accokeek, MD: Alice Ferguson Foundation, 1960.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1976.
- Halperin, David M. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Hemphill, Katie M. *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915*. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- . “Selling Sex and Intimacy in the City: The Changing Business of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore.” In *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of Nineteenth-Century America*, edited by Brian Luskey and Wendy A. Woloson. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- “Hermaphrodite, n.” In *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2020.
- Hill, Frederic B., and Stephens Broening. *The Life of Kings: The Baltimore Sun and the Golden Age of the American Newspaper*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Katz, Jonathan Ned. *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the USA*. New York, New York: Meridian, 1976.
- Kelley, Louise Parker. *LGBT Baltimore*. Arcadia Publishing, 2015.
- Lister, Anne, and Helena Whitbread. *No Priest but Love: Excerpts from the Diaries of Anne Lister, 1824-1826*. The Cutting Edge. Washington Square, N.Y: New York University Press, 1992.
- Lyons, Clare A. “Mapping an Atlantic Sexual Culture: Homoeroticism in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 119.
- . *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Manion, Jen. “Language, Acts, and Identity in LGBT History.” In *The Routledge History of Queer America*, edited by Don Romesburg, 1st ed., 213–23. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. Routledge, 2018.

- Merrill, Lisa. *When Romeo Was a Woman: Charlotte Cushman and Her Circle of Female Spectators*. Triangulations. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- Moulton, Ian Frederick. "Erotic Representation, 1500-1750." In *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present*, edited by Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher. Routledge, 2013.
- Oaks, Robert F. "'Things Fearful to Name': Sodomy and Buggery in Seventeenth-Century New England." In *History of Homosexuality in Europe and America*. United Kingdom: Garland Publishing, 1992.
- Prins, Yopie. *Victorian Sappho*. Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Rockman, Seth. *Scraping by: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore*. Studies in Early American Economy and Society from the Library Company of Philadelphia. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.
- Sappho, Diane J. Rayor, and A. P. M. H. Lardinois. *Sappho: A New Translation of the Complete Works*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Sears, Clare. *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*. Perverse Modernities. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Shah, Nayan. *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the North American West*. University of California Press, 2012.
- Small, Ian. *Oscar Wilde: Recent Research: A Supplement to "Oscar Wilde Revalued."* 1880-1920 British Authors Series, no. 15. Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 2000.
- "Sodomy, n." In *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2020.
- Thompson, Stephen. *The Tenacity of the Cockroach: Conversations with Entertainment's Most Enduring Outsiders*. Three Rivers Press, 2002.
- Traub, Valerie. *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns*. Reprint. Haney Foundation Series. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Velasco, Sherry M. *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire & Catalina de Erauso*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.
- Wroth, L. C. *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland, 1686-1776*. Typothetae of Baltimore, 1922.