Deviant, Deranged, or Damsel-in-Distress?: Missing Women and the American Press, 1900-1920

by

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Abstract

On June 20th, 1917, the *Buffalo Evening News* made the shocking claim that “800 GIRLS DISAPPEAR FROM NEW YORK HOMES." This article, featured on the newspaper's front page, informed readers that more than eight hundred girls had gone missing in the last six months. The article went on to reassure readers that a police inquiry was underway.

By 1917, the “missing girl” problem was well-established in American newspapers. Dozens of articles were published in the first two decades of the twentieth century lamenting the crisis and demanding answers. Although many of these “missing girls” had fallen victim to violence, others disappeared in the pursuit of opportunity, freedom, and passion. These disappearances often served as fodder for a hungry press looking for compelling stories that would sell papers. Scandal and sensation featured prominently on the front pages of newspapers as they competed for larger shares of the reading public. Reports of missing women, especially from among the middle and upper classes, were particularly useful in catching and holding the attention of readers.

Missing women narratives developed into a genre of their own. Progressive Era journalists generally categorized missing women in one of three ways: deviant, deranged, or a damsel-in-distress. The application of these categorizations and the scope of coverage a story received were determined by a woman's class and race. Whereas both upper and middle-class women received significant coverage, the tone of that coverage varied. While suspicion of deviance almost immediately tainted stories about upper-class women, journalists presented middle-class women as vulnerable to danger due to their presumed respectability. In sharp contrast, working-class women, immigrant women, and women of colour generally received little attention when they went missing. When journalists did pick up the story, they generally

portrayed these women as insane or deviant. These stories provide insight into the anxieties of the Progressive Era and demonstrate how journalists used specific missing women narratives to highlight larger social issues of the period.

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Introduction: *The "Missing Girl" Problem*

> It develops that Pittsburgh has a perfectly good "missing girl" problem of its own to solve. Hardly a week passes that the detective bureau does not receive several requests to locate girls who have left their homes mysteriously and name after name goes down on the roster of those never heard from, as time goes on.[1]

Over the last few decades, historians have engaged in discussion about the so-called "girl problem" of the Progressive Era.[2] In essence, the "girl problem" was a "rebellion against Victorian moral conventions"[3] wherein young women sought to take control of their own lives by eschewing the social conventions that they felt held them back. This rebellion could look like staying out late, spending time with young men unchaperoned, participating in the various new amusements available within the city, or engaging in sexual behaviour. These changes, particularly those of a sexual nature, were of significant concern to Progressive Era reformers. Historians such as Nan Enstad, Mary Odem, Kathy Peiss and Regina Kunzel have demonstrated how reformers attempted to police the behaviours of these vulnerable "girls"[4] to protect them from harm.[5]

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[1] "POISON STORY IS SCOFFED AT BY DOCTOR," *The Pittsburgh Press*, December 10, 1913.
[2] Scholars have defined the Progressive Era as the period between 1880 and 1920 in the United States.
[3] For more on the "girl problem," see Ruth M. Alexander, *The Girl Problem: Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 1; Laura S. Abrams, "Guardians of Virtue: The Social Reformers and the 'Girl Problem,a' 1890-1920," *Social Service Review* 74, no. 3 (2000): 436–51.
[4] Although the word "girl" was used commonly in these narratives, I have attempted to predominantly refer to these women as "women" unless citing an article specifically. Articles from this period used the word "girl" strategically, and the context mattered immensely. White women were referred to as "girls" at the same rate as Black women in missing women narratives. In other narratives, this likely was not the case. Journalists, reformers, politicians, and everyday men and women have referred to Black women as "girls" to infantilize and insult them. I would argue this was also the case in stories about missing Black women who were often written about as though they were errant children. For more on this, see chapter three. However, in the case of missing White women, "girl" was used to imply innocence, naivety and often value. These "girls" were presented as sympathetic figures in need of rescue or reform. It was absolutely still an act of infantilization, but as one might baby a beloved child.
[5] These texts, considered foundational to this particular line of study, were published between 1986-1999. For slightly older pieces on this topic, see Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1969); Steven Schlossman and Stephanie Wallach, "The Crime of Precocious Sexuality: Female Juvenile Delinquency in the Progressive Era," *Harvard Educational Review* 48, no. 1 (1978): 65–94.

Historians have paid less attention to the "*missing* girl" problem, which was also a source of anxiety for progressive era reformers, journalists, and the reading public. The "missing girl" problem reflected the severing of familial bonds once thought to provide protection and security to young women. The "missing girl" problem encompassed women who disappeared due to crime as well as young women who left home by choice. This concern was evident in the frequency with which the press wrote about "missing girls". For example, in a search of the online newspaper database *Newspapers.com*, the phrase "missing girl" brings up 49,831 hits, "girl missing" brings up 21,780 results, "girl lost" brings up 44,228 results and "lost girl" brings up 21,269.[6]

The "missing girl" problem was a subgenre of "girl problem" literature, and the two shared significant overlap.[7] Both concerned themselves with the well-being of young women, but the "missing girl" problem was, in many ways, an unhappy conclusion to "girl problem" literature. Wayward and rebellious girls could be tamed through juvenile courts and correctional institutions, which were systems put in place by reformers. Missing girls were lost to their influence and illustrated a breakdown of the system.

"Missing girl" narratives in the Progressive Era generally went hand in hand with crime reporting. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries bore witness to the emergence of two new styles of sensation-driven journalism—"yellow journalism" and "muckraking". Yellow journalism came about as the result of fierce competition between William Randolph Heart's *New York Morning Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *The World* during the 1898 Spanish-American

[6] I limited my search to articles from the United States and the years 1900-1920. For more search results, see Table 1. The purpose of this table is to document the search terms that I used to gather data for this project, to show the scope of articles identified in my research, and to clearly illustrate the stark difference in representation between missing White women and girls as compared to racialized women and girls.

[7] Other subgenres of the "girl problem" generally reflected concern about female mobility, opportunity, and employment. For example, the "servant girl problem," the "hired girl problem," and the "working girl problem," all of which are phrases searchable in newspaper databases.

War. Their competition to sell papers resulted in wild narratives only loosely grounded in facts. Muckraking, on the other hand, was predominantly the product of McClure's magazine and was driven by a desire to expose corruption.[8] Theodore Roosevelt first called these writers "muckrakers" when he compared them "to the man with the muckrake in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, who never sees what is around him because he is forever looking down at the filth he is raking."[9] Muckraking was a successful method for exposing corrupt behaviour, but it also proved incredibly useful in selling magazines and newspapers. It was compelling and story-driven; the reading public devoured it with enthusiasm. However, this writing style did not go without opposition, and papers like *The New York Times* were highly critical of it.[10]

Crime reporting was not limited to muckraking or yellow journalism. Papers such as the *Times* provided commentary on crime, and this reporting reflected social values and interests. Victorian crime narratives often highlighted a perversion of the "natural order". They focused on women who killed children, men who harmed women, and families slaughtered in their homes where they should have been safe. Victorian crimes were often intimate crimes within the home. Progressive Era crime reporting, however, generally focused on the dangers of the city. This reporting reflected anxiety about immigration, mobility, and the mixing of classes and races amid a significant influx of people moving into cities like New York.

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[8] McClure's was a monthly magazine established in 1893, founded by S. S. McClure. For more, see Christopher B. Daly, *Covering America: A Narrative History of a Nation's Journalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012); Stephanie Gorton, *Citizen Reporters: S. S. McClure, Ida Tarbell, and the Magazine That Rewrote America* (New York: Ecco, 2020).

[9] Robert V. Remini, *A Short History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 196.

[10] For more on muckraking and yellow journalism, also see W. Joseph Campbell, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies* (New York: Praeger, 2003); Carroll D. Clark, "Yellow Journalism as a Mode of Urban Behavior," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1933): 238–45; Paul Collins, *The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized A City & Sparked The Tabloid Wars* (New York: Broadway Books, 2011).

Journalists categorized women who went missing during the Progressive Era in one of three ways—"deviant," "deranged," or a "damsel-in-distress.". In the context of this project, I have used "deviant" to describe behaviour that went against the norms or expectations of a woman's social group. "Deviant" behaviour could vary in severity. I have used "deranged" to gesture more broadly to insanity in its various iterations. In chapters two and three, however, I break this term into more nuanced language and look at the different "kinds" of insanity and who they might have applied to. Finally, I have used "damsel-in-distress" to mean, in general, a victim or to indicate implied victimization.

Moral judgements and ideas about class and race coloured these categories. This thesis explores these categorizations to illustrate why and how they occurred. It is by closely examining case studies from the period that I have pursued this line of questioning and analysis.

The first chapter focuses on the story of New York City socialite Dorothy Arnold who went missing on December 12th, 1910. Arnold was twenty-five years old, educated, and relatively independent. She had literary ambitions that her family disapproved of and a boyfriend whom they would not allow her to marry. Arnold's disappearance made international news and was the subject of thousands of articles. In shaping this discussion about Arnold, I have focused on two newspapers that were local to her, *The New York Times* and *The Evening World*.[11] Written with different audiences in mind, the way these papers presented the story differed. Both the *Times* and the *World* demonstrated anxiety about independent women living on their own terms, but the *World* also used the Arnold story to discuss how money could enable deviant behaviour and the inherent untrustworthiness of the rich.

[11] These were not the only papers that wrote about her; there were over 16,000 articles about the case.

The second chapter follows the disappearance of twenty-five-year-old stenographer Eleanor Arlin of Brookline, MA.[12] Journalists throughout Massachusetts utilized Arlin's story to demonstrate young white women's physical and mental vulnerability.[13] The perception of Arlin's middle-class respectability protected her from the speculation about her personal life that drove the narrative about Dorothy Arnold. Although there were hints of possible impropriety, journalists preferred to position Arlin as a victim. Her disappearance served as a tool through which the press could provide commentary on the sexual dangers of the city, the responsibilities of men towards women, and the supposed frailty of the female mind.

The final chapter explores narratives about missing working-class women, immigrant women, and women of colour. As these women were under-represented in "missing girl" articles, I have used cases from various papers nationwide. These women did not receive the same type of coverage that middle-class or upper-class women received. Stories that did make it to the press were short and lacking in detail. These accounts were often influenced by racial stereotypes prevalent in the period. They also reinforced assumptions about specific minority groups, such as the perceived threat of Black men to white women. While most disappearances during this period would likely have been from amongst the working class, they received the least coverage as a group.

In some way, all three chapters address the question of value and worthiness. Journalists wrote articles based on assumptions about what people wanted to read. This was necessary because profitability relied on the highest content consumption possible. The more readers a newspaper had, the more companies wanted to buy ad space in those papers. These ads kept a newspaper profitable. Thus, determining what one's audience wanted to read was crucial.

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[12] There are over 70 articles detailing Arlin's disappearance and the subsequent investigation.
[13] Articles about her disappearance did appear outside of Massachusetts but were most prominent in Boston.

Inherent in this decision was the matter of value. Which missing women could the public be made to care about? For which stories would people be willing to part with their hard-earned money?

Chapter One: *The Peculiar Disappearance of A New York Socialite*

> Miss Dorothy H. C. Arnold, daughter of Francis C. Arnold, a perfumery importer, niece of the late justice Rufus W. Peckham of the United States Supreme Court, and a Bryn Mawr graduate, disappeared from the home of her parents at 108 East Seventy-ninth Street on the morning of Dec. 12, and although a nation-wide search has been made for the young woman no trace has been found. In spite of the fact that Deputy Police Commissioner Flynn and several of his best men have been giving their personal attention to the search, and several private detective agencies have been scouring the country for traces of the missing woman, the news of her disappearance did not come out until late last night, when Miss Arnold's parents and their legal advisors thought it wise to notify the newspapers in the hope that through publicity the young woman might be found.[1]

On December 12th, 1910, Dorothy Arnold left home to shop for a new dress. The twenty-five-year-old New York City socialite declined her mother's offer of company and set off on her own. She stopped at two stores that afternoon. Outside the second, she ran into a college friend and talked for a few minutes before continuing on her walk. Officially, that was the last that anyone saw of Dorothy. For six long weeks, the Arnold family searched for her in secret. They hired private detectives to chase down every possible lead. Mr Arnold spared no expense in the search, but by late January, he was no closer to finding her than he'd been on the day she went missing. Encouraged by family friends whose own daughter had gone missing in a similar way, the Arnold family finally decided to make the story public.[2] They could not have expected the ruthlessness with which the press would pursue the case or the callous way journalists would dig up and print every unsavoury detail they could find about Dorothy. Dorothy's boyfriend, George Griscom Jr., was also drawn into the spotlight. Their relationship, forbidden by Dorothy's family, prompted intense speculation about the places Dorothy had frequented, the people she

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[1] "NIECE OF PECKHAM STRANGELY MISSING," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1911.

[2] The Arnold family did not make the young woman's identity public, but the *World* noted that she had been missing for several years, and the family regretted not going public with the story. "LONG MISSING GIRL READ FOREIGN LETTER, JOINED MAN, VANISHED.," *The Evening World*, January 28, 1911.

had known, and the trips she had taken.

Worldwide, newspapers reprinted many of the articles that came out of New York, even in places where Arnold had no known connections. Newspapers published over 16,000 articles about the missing heiress in the decade following her disappearance. A search for "Dorothy Arnold" in an online newspaper database brought up over 16,400 hits from 1911-1921—nearly 12,000 of them from the five years after Arnold went missing.[3] Most of these articles were from the United States, although newspapers in Canada and England also picked up the story.[4]

Coverage of Arnold's disappearance differed from paper to paper. Journalists who wrote with the working-class public in mind—such as those employed by the *World*—made scandal and intrigue central to the Arnold story. They used this narrative to illustrate the danger of female independence, the way money could enable deviant behaviour, and that the wealthy were inherently untrustworthy. But just as importantly, they reported on this story as heavily as they did because they knew it would sell papers. Arnold's disappearance fit perfectly into the "missing girl problem" genre because it played up the city's danger and highlighted young women's vulnerability. Although Arnold was twenty-five years old and beyond the age at which most would have considered her a "girl," journalists nonetheless used the term repeatedly in headlines and articles to describe her.

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[3] The database in question is Newspapers.com, owned by the genealogy giant Ancestry.com. As of February 2022, it hosted more than 20,000 different newspaper titles. Without going through each article individually—although I have read several thousand of them—it is impossible to say *precisely* how many of these hits refer to Dorothy Arnold, the missing New York City socialite. However, for context, the search term "Dorothy Arnold" only had 249 hits in the five years before her disappearance, indicating a noticeable increase in the usage of the name after her family made her disappearance public.

[4] It is worth noting that this newspaper database only includes English-language papers. American journalists wrote that foreign-language papers, particularly papers in Italy, also covered Arnold's disappearance. This database also lacks several influential regional newspapers, such as William Hearst's *Journal*. Additionally, articles from *The World* are not in this newspaper database, although articles from *The Evening World* are. Articles from *The World* do not appear in *any* online newspaper database. The *Library of Congress* has a record for *The World* but no digitised papers. Like *Newspapers.com*, The *Library of Congress* has digitised copies of *The Evening World*. Therefore, the number of articles printed (and reprinted) about Arnold is likely much higher.

The *World*'s narrative was an almost-gleeful commentary on female deviancy whilst playing up the melodrama for their readers. On the other hand, journalists at the *New York Times* took a more measured approach. Their target audience was predominantly people like the Arnolds, which explains, at least in part, why the narrative style differed so significantly in tone and content from that of the *World*. Unlike the *World*, the *Times* reported less on rumours and more on "facts." These "facts" came from sources like the Arnold family, their lawyers, and the police, along with witnesses the *Times* deemed reputable. Yet, like the *World*, the *Times'* narrative demonstrated anxiety about independent women out in public—particularly those women who pushed against prescribed social norms. Although the two papers frequently pursued different theories, there were six moments that both *Times* and the *World* journalists considered significant enough to focus on. In 1911, this was the announcement of Arnold's disappearance, the discovery of her private post office box, the press conference held by her boyfriend's family, and the revelation that Arnold had "disappeared" on at least two other occasions in the past. In 1914, there was a raid on a Pittsburgh abortion clinic where she might have been a patient and in 1916, a convict claimed a mysterious man had hired him to bury Arnold's body. These moments demonstrated that a story was shaped not merely by its "facts" but also by who was telling it and *why*.

I have based my analysis on coverage from two newspapers—*The New York Times* and *The Evening World*. Although these papers chronicled the same disappearance, there were notable contrasts in how the story was told. These can be attributed to differences in mandates and readership. Adolph Ochs, the owner of *The New York Times,* aimed to keep his paper filled with "all the news that's fit to print"[5] for his upper-class readers like Arnold's family and friends.

[5] The slogan "All the News That's Fit to Print" was first used on October 25, 1896. "Adolph Simon Ochs," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adolph-Simon-Ochs.

In comparison, Joseph Pulitzer, owner of *The World* and *The Evening World*, embraced sensationalism.[6] As a result of this difference, *Times* journalists often appeared sympathetic to the plight of the Arnold family. In comparison, *World* journalists published any information they could get their hands on, however damaging, unlikely or improbable, without considering the family's wishes.

In addition to the primary sources mentioned above, I have drawn upon the scholarship of historians such as Eric Homberger, Mary Cable, and David Hammack in forming my understanding of New York's high society at the turn of the century.[7] In thinking about wealthy women and opportunity, I have relied predominantly on the work of historians Christine Stansell, Joan Marie Johnson, June Sochen and Jean Matthews. Finally, on the topic of the press, much of my framework has come from George Douglas and Mitchell Stephens, who have both written histories of the news during this period.[8]

Gone Without Warning

When Dorothy Arnold's family made her disappearance public on January 26th, 1911, the responses of the *New York Times* and the *Evening World* were notably different. To writers at the *Times*, the significance of the Arnold disappearance was in the uncomfortable realisation that even wealthy families could not protect their daughters from the temptations of the city. This was evident in the way the *Times* made the deliberate decision to repeatedly position Arnold as "one

[6] George Douglas, *The Golden Age of the Newspaper* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 238.
[7] For more on high society, see Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Noam Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism: Frontiers of Wealth and Populism in America's First Gilded Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); David Scobey, "Anatomy of the Promenade: The Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in Nineteenth-Century New York," *Social History* 17, no. 2 (1992): 203–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071029208567835.
[8] Neither Douglas nor Stephens are historians; Douglas is a professor of English, and Stephens is a professor of journalism.

of us," driving home the narrative that one's name, wealth, and position were no guarantee of protection. Writers at the *World*, however, did not share the *Times'* loyalty to the Arnold family. Right from the beginning, *World* writers saw the potential for melodrama and intrigue. They never hesitated to capitalise on it, regardless of the family's wishes. Also evident in *World* articles was a wry amusement at the mess Arnold had gotten herself into and an apparent scepticism of her family and everything they said. Journalists at *The New York Times* wrote for people like the Arnolds; journalists at *The World* wrote for everyone else. This difference in audience accounted for why the narrative was so different between the two papers, even though both were writing about the story as it unfolded in real-time.

Both the *World* and the *Times* immediately established Arnold's physical location within the city. The *Times* established it in relation to her father when a journalist wrote about "Miss Dorothy Arnold, daughter of Francis R. Arnold, the wealthy importer of 108 East Seventy-ninth Street."[9] In comparison, the *World* attributed the address to Arnold herself when a journalist wrote, "Miss Arnold left her home, No. 108 East Seventy-ninth street, about 11:30 in the morning."[10] In this way, the *Times* framed Arnold's disappearance as a *family* tragedy while the *World* isolated Arnold and cast her as the central figure in this narrative.

Arnold's family still played into *World* coverage, but in a different way than it did in the *Times*. For example, the *Times* led with her family's respectability when a journalist wrote, "Francis R. Arnold, head of the wholesale perfumery house of F. R. Arnold & Co. … believes that his daughter has met with foul play."[11] As a man of means, who lived in the "right" part of the city, and who was the head of a reputable business, *Times* journalists presented Mr Arnold as

[9] "DOROTHY ARNOLD MAY BE HOME TO-DAY.," *The New York Times1*, January 28, 1911.
[10] "GIRL SEEKING DISGUISE MAY BE LOST HEIRESS.," *The Evening World*, January 26, 1911.
[11] "FOLLOW NEW CLUE TO MISS ARNOLD," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1911.

a man their readers could trust. The *World* gave him no such respect; instead, they wrote, "Old Mr Arnold, who is failing visibly under the strain, believes his daughter has met with violence."[12] This was just one example of many that demonstrated how the representation of Arnold and the people in her life consistently differed between the two papers.

One's family and connections played a significant role in determining their position within society. May King Van Rensselaer, a prominent member of New York City high society at the turn of the century, wrote that society "knew the history of the families with which they associated for generations, and these histories were vital parts of the record of the city in which they lived."[13] These histories were shaped not only by one's relation to other members of society, but also by one's physical location within the city, the amount of money one had, and how long they'd had it.[14] Wealth in and of itself was not enough to gain one admittance to the most prestigious of circles.[15] Nonetheless, by the early twentieth century, it could often buy at least a measure of acceptance.[16] Attempts to codify who was "one of us" took various forms over the years, the two most notable being Mrs Caroline Astor's "Four Hundred"[17] and the "Social Register."[18] While it is unknown whether any of the Arnold family members appeared on Mrs Astor's list, beginning in 1889, the Arnold family appeared annually in New York City's social

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[12] "GIRL SEEKING DISGUISE MAY BE LOST HEIRESS."
[13] Mrs. John King Rensselaer and Frederic F. Van de Water, *The Social Ladder* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), 3.Rensselaer and Water, 3.
[14] For more on how members of elite society defined themselves, see David C. Hammack, *Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1982).
[15] Eric Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 10.
[16] Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 116.
[17] Mrs Caroline Astor, with the help of society man Ward McAllister, created a list of approximately 400 individuals who were said to make up "society". This list does not still exist in its entirety, nor was there only one version of the list in question. It was said to have changed several times. Additionally, there may have been less than 400 names on it. For more on Mrs Astor's "Four Hundred," see Homberger's *Mrs Astor's New York* and Cable's *Top Drawer*.
[18] The Social Register was created to keep track of the individuals who made up high society. The list was less discerning than Astor's, consisting of under two thousand individuals when it was first published in 1887. By 1910, at the height of its success, approximately twenty-five editions of the register were published annually across the United States. For more on this, see Cable's *Top Drawer*.

register.[19] High society was a "closed" group, and membership in it required a measure of acceptance from those already inside. The Arnold family's inclusion on the Social Register demonstrated that the classification of Arnold as a member of high society was accurate.

Another way that each of the two papers established Arnold's social position was in the commentary on what she had been wearing and where she had been going before she disappeared. Both papers published, in full, the description of her clothing provided to the press by the police. This description stated that Dorothy,

> Left home dressed in a tailor-made plain blue serge coat suit, the coat almost reaching the hips and cut in at the waist, the skirt cut straight. Hat of black velvet, with a small irregular brim and a "baker" crown. Lining of hat of Alice blue, marker's name "Genevieve." Hat trimmed with two blue velvet roses, no feathers. Wore low black shoes, and a waist of dark blue silk with v-neck and white ruching [*sic*] around the throat. Also wore a jabot of white lace. Wore tan walking gloves. Hair dressed in a full pompadour, far down on the forehead. Very little jewelry on person—one right made up of two gold bands twisted together in a heavy lover's knot and a pair of drop earrings of lapis lazuli, blue and plainly set. Hair dressed with imitation tortoiseshell comb, slightly carved, and a fancy barrette, dark brown and deeply carved. One long, very dark blue hatpin of lapis lazuli, rather distinctive and uncommon. Carried large black fox muff, flat shape, fur tripped with white points; no other furs. Carried also black cloth handbag, containing between $20 and $30[20], and some personal cards, etc.[21]

This description was written by Arnold's family and submitted to the local police, who featured it in the circular sent to other departments. The attention to detail is remarkable, considering the family likely wrote it some time after she disappeared. It may have been shaped by a later examination of what was missing from Arnold's room.[22] This description also indicated the family's desire to establish that Arnold had not gone away of her own volition. The mention of "very little jewelry on person" can be read subtly as "very little to pawn". The same could be

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[19] *Social Register, New York* (New York: Social Register Association, 1910).
[20] $20-$30 in 1910 is the equivalent of approximately $640-$960 in 2023. "CPI Inflation Calculator," n.d., https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1910?amount=30.
[21] "LARGE REWARD IS OFFERED FOR THIS MISSING GIRL.," *The Evening World*, January 26, 1911.
[22] Arnold's family argued that she could not have gone away willingly because nothing else was missing from her room that would indicate she had packed for a trip.

said for the 'no other furs" comment. To a reader of the *Times,* Arnold carried the bare minimum required to be fashionable. To a reader of the *World,* however, Arnold had a great deal that she could pawn if she needed money to get away and start a new life somewhere. It was about more than that, though. While both papers published the description as the police had provided it, the *World* also published a sketch of what Arnold's outfit would have looked like. It makes sense that the press published the police's description in full, but the diagram seems unnecessary. Yet, the fact that it appeared in the *World* and not the *Times* is not surprising considering the working-class public's fascination with the upper classes. Enstad has demonstrated how working-class women adopted fast fashion in an attempt to imitate the styles of the wealthy. They also occasionally took on names[23] inspired by rich heroines in romance novels published by authors like Mrs Georgie Sheldon.[24] It is impossible to know whether this diagram inspired working-class women to dress like the missing Arnold. Nonetheless, in the following weeks, garment factories likely produced cheap versions of the pieces she had been wearing and sold them to young women caught up in the melodramatic nature of the case.

Another clear indicator of Arnold's social status was the amount of money she reportedly had on her when she disappeared. Although this would not have seemed like a significant sum to readers of the *Times,* to readers of the *World,* this was a staggering amount to carry as mere pocket money. Most working women in this period earned between $3 and $8 per week, which

[23] Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 50.
[24] Mrs Georgie Sheldon, a prolific fiction writer for women and girls in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, published a novel called "Dorothy Arnold's Escape" over a decade before the *real* Dorothy Arnold went missing. That the lead character was named Dorothy Arnold is pure coincidence, and this story has no connection to Arnold's disappearance—but that doesn't mean the public didn't occasionally conflate the two. In this story, the fictional Dorothy Arnold was knocked unconscious, taken into a car, and kidnapped. A "witness" to the real Dorothy Arnold's supposed kidnapping described the same scene to the police. Unsurprisingly, Mrs Georgie Sheldon's book was re-released only a few months after Arnold's disappearance. Those writing about Dorothy Arnold today often make the mistake of thinking the book was meant as a commentary on the case and don't realise that the book was initially published long before Arnold's disappearance.

meant that for many women, Arnold was carrying somewhere between 3 and 10 weeks' worth of pay.[25] Arnold's trip, and her purchases, received only passing mention in the plainest of terms in the *Times*, in which a journalist wrote, "Miss Dorothy Arnold, who disappeared on Dec. 12, after buying a box of candy and a new novel in Fifth Avenue stores, has not returned to her parents' home."[26] The *World* noted these details with more colour, stating that Arnold "stepped out of the house door on a bright winter forenoon seemingly intent on plans for a new Christmas frock. She bought half a pound of sweets at one place and a light novel at another."[27] According to the articles published by both papers, Arnold charged these purchases to accounts under her father's name at both stores. The difference between these two narratives indicated an obvious understanding of the preferred narrative style of each paper's respective readers. Whereas the *Times* journalist was to the point and interested in passing along the facts to their readers, the *World* journalist was trying to tell a story their readers could get caught up in.

Another way the *Times* and *World* coverage differed was in the "clues" they covered and the speculation they engaged in. The *Times* prioritised the statements from the Arnold family and their legal representation. In contrast, the *World* prioritised statements that could drive the story forward regardless of where they came from. For example, a *Times* journalist wrote, "Mr Keith told the Commissioner that Francis. R. Arnold was firmly convinced that his daughter is dead, and believed that the secret of her death was to be found in Central Park."[28] It was common for *Times* articles to make mention of as many Arnold family members, lawyers, and officials as possible. Undoubtedly, this added credibility to the narrative. The *World*, on the other hand,

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[25] *Census of Manufacturers: Earnings of Wage-Earners* (Washington: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1908).
[26] "SILENCE OF DEATH, SAYS GIRL'S FATHER.," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1911.
[27] "GIRL SEEKING DISGUISE MAY BE LOST HEIRESS."
[28] "MRS. ARNOLD MAY BE SEEKING GIRL ABROAD.," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1911.

didn't care as much about credibility. At the onset of the public investigation, the *World* published the story of a pawnbroker, Harry Modell, who claimed that Dorothy Arnold had been to his pawnshop looking for men's clothing. The journalist wrote,

> Harry Modell, a dealer and broker in the unredeemed pledges of pawnbrokers, said that at 2:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon, a young woman who from his study since of the published photograph he is sure must have been Miss Dorothy Arnold, came into his shop … and wanted to buy a suit of men's clothes, adding that she meant to wear them to a masquerade party.[29]

This story from the *World* painted Arnold as deviant in two ways. First, in the implication that she had left her family willingly and second, in the suggestion that she had been looking to purchase men's clothes. Not merely a disguise to continue to move about unnoticed, but *men*'s clothing specifically. Unsurprisingly, the *Times*' found this "clue" less intriguing than the *World* did. When the *Times* mentioned it, it was only to say that there had been many rumours and "one of them traced to a pawnbroker in West Street, who told of a young woman coming into his place … to purchase a pair of men's trousers. The representatives of the Arnolds took no stock in that story."[30] The *Times* completely dismissed the story; the pawnbroker, Modell, wasn't even referred to by name.

Members of high society had a complicated relationship with the press. Up until the 1830s, journalists generally left the wealthy alone. James Gordon Bennett Sr.[31] changed that when he began to print short notes about "society" in his paper.[32] The printing of society news became more formalised in the 1880s, which triggered the creation of gossip columns and

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[29] "GIRL SEEKING DISGUISE MAY BE LOST HEIRESS."
[30] "FOLLOW NEW CLUE TO MISS ARNOLD."
[31] Owner, founder and editor of the *New York Herald* from 1836 until 1866, when his son took over. For more on Bennett Sr, see "James Gordon Bennett," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d., https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-York-Herald.
[32] Mary Cable, *Top Drawer: American High Society from the Gilded Age to the Roaring Twenties* (New York: Atheneum, 1984), 187.

writers hired specifically to report on society news.[33] Whereas society had once belonged solely to the people within it, it rapidly became a commodity that could be neatly packaged and sold to the curious masses. Thus the rich became celebrities simply for being wealthy. Some tried to avoid the spotlight, but most welcomed it conditionally, happy to show off their money and taste. Ambitious society women admitted journalists to their events, eager for a glowing mention in the paper.[34] Press secretaries became a necessity[35] and careers in public relations took off.[36] Yet courting the press was not without risk; wealthy men and women quickly learned that when they opened the door to the journalists willing to flatter and fawn over them, they also opened the door to those who could do real social damage. Historian Fred Inglis has argued that "publicity is the water which wealth must swim in, but for society to keep itself at a sufficient height, the water … had to be kept clean."[37] This "water" was easily polluted, which the Arnold family knew well. Their anxiety over what the press would eventually uncover was evident in their interviews—but no matter how hard the family tried, there could be no turning back once the story was out.

Seeing & Being Seen

Shortly after news of Arnold's disappearance went public, her family acknowledged that she had a private post office box where she occasionally received mail. The family claimed that she had gotten the box to receive rejected manuscripts. She was, they said, in the habit of writing stories and sending them off to magazines in the hopes of getting published. This news was less

[33] Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age*, 15, 19.
[34] Emily Katherine Bibby, "Making the American Aristocracy: Women, Cultural Capital, and High Society in New York City, 1870-1900" (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009), 8; Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age*, 11.
[35] Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age*, 12.
[36] Stephens, *A History of News*, 252.
[37] Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 116.

important to *Times* journalists than to journalists at the *World*. While *Times* journalists seemed to take the Arnold family's explanation at face value, *World* journalists interpreted the existence of a "private" post office box to mean a "secret" post office box. They did not buy into the idea that she needed a "secret" post office box to receive manuscripts; instead, they suggested that Arnold had been receiving correspondence of a more clandestine nature. This suggestion was bolstered by the family's reluctant admission that a man had shown interest in Dorothy in the past. However, the family claimed that the "relationship" had been over for quite some time. This man was George Griscom Jr., a forty-two-year-old from Pittsburgh. At the time of Dorothy's disappearance, Griscom Jr. had been in Italy with his family.

The family's admission that Dorothy had been receiving private, even secret, correspondence triggered *World* journalists to dig deeper into Dorothy's personal life. A tip stated that a witness had seen Dorothy at the post office with a mysterious man on or before the day she went missing.[38] Another tip stated that Dorothy had been receiving letters with foreign postmarks in the weeks leading up to her disappearance.[39] Today, readers likely wouldn't interpret the post office as an especially sensational or secretive place. Yet as historian David Henkin has shown, the post office has, in the past, been a contested space where men and women mingled, and women exercised independence. It carried connotations of sexual promiscuity, and "post offices figured as well into the sex lives of amateurs … post offices were places where adulterous couples could simply run into each other by concealed prearrangement, or where strangers might initiate and develop relationships."[40] That Dorothy Arnold was rumoured to have

[38] "LONG MISSING GIRL READ FOREIGN LETTER, JOINED MAN, VANISHED."
[39] "LONG MISSING GIRL READ FOREIGN LETTER, JOINED MAN, VANISHED."; "DOROTHY ARNOLD DEAD, RELATIVES NOW DECLARE.," *The Evening World*, January 31, 1911.; "DENY MISS ARNOLD WENT AWAY BY BOAT.," *The New York Times*, February 1, 1911.
[40] David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 79.

been seen at the post office with a man only played into these stereotypes. It served as a reminder that the post office, much like other spaces where men and women mingled freely, could be a site of danger or corruption for a young woman.

This post office box became a significant point of interest for *World* journalists, who used it as a focal point around which to establish "beyond a reasonable doubt"[41] a timeline or overview of Dorothy's movements on the day she went missing. According to this official timeline, around noon Dorothy "bought a small box of candy, such as a woman might carry with her on a railroad journey"[42] and then she stopped to purchase a book at Brentano's bookstore. *World* journalists noted that a tourist agent's office was next to Brentano's and claimed a girl matching Dorothy's description spoke with Herbert Carrol about the sailing time of various steamships.[43] By two o'clock, the article continued, "she was at a general delivery window in the main Post-office downtown receiving a letter bearing a foreign postmark."[44] If this foreign letter triggered Arnold's departure, the journalist continued with wry amusement, "her purchase that same afternoon of a novel and a box of candy might the more readily be understood."[45] The implication was that Arnold's trip was not only of her own free will but deliberately planned. This could not have been further from the story spun by the Arnold family, who insisted at every turn that she would never have gone away willingly.

The Arnold family looked into this theory quietly in the early days of her absence but dismissed it quickly. No "Dorothy Arnold" was listed among the travellers who left New York to go abroad on the day of, or in the days immediately following her disappearance.[46] Of course,

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[41] "DOROTHY ARNOLD DEAD, RELATIVES NOW DECLARE."
[42] "DOROTHY ARNOLD DEAD, RELATIVES NOW DECLARE."
[43] "LONG MISSING GIRL READ FOREIGN LETTER, JOINED MAN, VANISHED."
[44] "LONG MISSING GIRL READ FOREIGN LETTER, JOINED MAN, VANISHED."
[45] "LONG MISSING GIRL READ FOREIGN LETTER, JOINED MAN, VANISHED."
[46] "DENY MISS ARNOLD WENT AWAY BY BOAT."

she could have travelled under an assumed name; in 1910, governments did not require passports for travel abroad.[47] Additionally, the government did not require identification for travelling domestically, and thus she could have left the state even if she had not left the country.

If Dorothy had been receiving foreign correspondence, Griscom was the most likely sender. As her family forbade their relationship, Dorothy would have known she could not have received his letters at home. In the *World*'s telling of this story, the disappearance had begun to take on the feel of a romance novel. The *World* presented a narrative in which Dorothy's desires, whether romantic or artistic, were forbidden by her overbearing family. They cast her as a young woman running from the confines of propriety. The *World* took advantage of the power of this narrative and kept it on the front page, where oversized photos of Arnold often supplemented it. The *Times* took a more measured approach and gave minimal credibility to the story of foreign letters. There was no definitive proof that letters with foreign postmarks had existed, after all. There was merely the memory of the post-office worker, and memory alone was not enough to base a case on.[48]

To upper-class readers of the *Times*, the mere existence of a private post office box may have been less concerning than Arnold's desire to make a career for herself as a writer. Arnold's literary ambition was a source of tension in the family. This may have been because wealthy men and women "who dabbled in various forms of art were not criticised as long as they remained amateurs, but they were suspect if they became good enough to sell their work, or if they seemed to consider their art as more than a pastime."[49] For this reason, the Arnold family was likely

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[47] "Passport Applications," National Archives, accessed April 1, 2023, https://www.archives.gov/research/passport.
[48] These letters, along with other possibly relevant information, likely existed and may have been deliberately destroyed by the Arnold family. In 1921 a journalist at the *Times* wrote, "Charles S. Whitman, then District Attorney, who took a hand in the investigation, asked John Arnold for them [letters], but was told by the latter that they had been destroyed and that their contents were of no importance." See "DOROTHY ARNOLD MYSTERY SOLVED, SAYS CAPT. AYERS.," *The New York Times*, April 9, 1921.
[49] Cable, *Top Drawer: American High Society from the Gilded Age to the Roaring Twenties*, 178.

trying to discourage her writing ambitions, if they really existed. They would have seen no need for her to have a career, particularly in the arts. Additionally, there was speculation that Dorothy desired not merely to write but to live independently in Greenwich Village, which her father would have been firmly against.[50] Greenwich Village's reputation was well-established by 1910.[51] It was a place that offered "individual freedom and privacy along with communal activities of intellectual appeal"[52] and this may have appealed to Arnold. In all likelihood, she would have grown accustomed to such an environment as a student while away at college. The Village was remarkably diverse, and the classes mingled in ways that may have seemed threatening to people like the Arnolds.[53]

The discovery of Dorothy's private post office box was the first real hint to the "secret" life she had been living in the weeks before she went missing. To readers of both the *Times* and the *World*, this post office box indicated Dorothy's desire to be independent of her family. While the *Times* downplayed it, perhaps to avoid encouraging similar behaviour in other society women, the *World* made it central to the story. Thus, while other, more significant discoveries later emerged, the post office box significantly altered the narrative by definitively establishing that Arnold had been engaged in *something* secretive.

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[50] I have struggled to find a direct reference to this specific request. However, it came up in a 1960 article by Allan Churchill called "The Girl Who Never Came Back," which was published by *American Heritage Magazine*, volume 11, no. 5. Churchill's research does seem strong—he quotes other newspaper articles (without citation) that I've been able to locate. However, I have not found a paper from the time of Arnold's disappearance that states this quite so directly.

[51] For more on this, see June Sochen, *The New Woman: Feminism in Greenwich Village, 1910-1920* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972).

[52] Sochen, 3.

[53] Diverse for 1910, although perhaps not how we would use that word today. Stansell acknowledges that nearly everyone in "Greenwich Village"—defined, she argues, more by ideology than geography, much as the upper class was—was white. Therefore the "diversity" was along class lines, not racial lines. For more, see Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000).

The High Society Family

On February 12th, the Griscoms held a small press conference at which they fielded questions from reporters. At this conference, the intensity of the Arnold family's opposition to Griscom Jr. became evident. Before Griscom Jr.'s return, the Arnolds had begrudgingly admitted that Griscom Jr. had shown Dorothy attention but insisted that this attention had ceased months ago. Yet once Griscom Jr. started speaking, it became clear that he believed their relationship to be ongoing. This admission drew the ire of the Arnold family, and both the *Times* and the *World* acknowledged this hostility. Additionally, both papers drew attention to the complicated nature of authority within elite families and the lengths those in power would go to maintain control of the family narrative.

Interestingly, it was not always the family patriarch who was in control. In the Arnold family, John, the eldest son, was the one who tried to shepherd the family through the crisis of Dorothy's disappearance. In the Griscom family, Griscom Sr. regularly spoke for and over Griscom Jr., even though Jr. was forty-two years old.

Griscom Jr. was a peculiar character. Journalists from the *World* pointed out that Griscom was "without means of his own, but for several years his parents have supplied him with money."[54] Despite having no income, he spent carelessly and had debts that were in default.[55] The reason the Arnolds disapproved of the relationship was not explicitly stated, although one journalist did suggest that the Arnolds were opposed to him because he was an "idler".[56] Griscom tried to defend himself against this claim, but it changed nothing about how journalists wrote

[54] "DOROTHY ARNOLD SAILED FOR ITALY IN JANUARY, LATEST CLUE IN SEARCH.," *The Evening World*, February 3, 1911.
[55] "GRISCOM HURRIES OFF TO ATLANTIC CITY.," *The New York Times*, February 11, 1911.
[56] "DOROTHY ARNOLD SENDS WORD TO GRISCOM IN A 'PERSONAL'.," *The Evening World*, February 13, 1911.

about him.[57]

The *Times* did not shy away from acknowledging that the relationship between Griscom Jr. and Arnold was one the family did not support.[58] One journalist quoted Griscom Jr. as saying, "but for the objection of the Arnold family the affair might have gone along further. Last Summer it was understood we were engaged … I expect I will marry her when found."[59] Griscom Jr.'s confidence that she *would* be found led the press to conclude that he knew where she was, although he repeatedly insisted that he did not. Did Griscom Jr. still expect to marry her? Or did he see this as an opportunity to embarrass a family who thought him unworthy of marrying into it? Regardless of whether or not he intended to embarrass them, he did so. In response, the family's lawyers stated that Griscom Jr. must have been misquoted as there was, and had never been, an engagement. When Mrs Arnold was asked the next day if she would ever permit a marriage between Griscom Jr. and her daughter, she replied, "No, decidedly not."[60] Every statement from the Arnold family either denied the existence of any romantic attachment between the pair or reinforced that they would not consent to the match, even if it would bring Dorothy home.

The *World* took advantage of this tension between the Griscoms and the Arnolds. *World* journalists noted that until Griscom's arrival, the family had not acknowledged objections to Griscom.[61] They also showed how quickly the family made their opposition public once Griscom

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[57] "DOROTHY ARNOLD SENDS WORD TO GRISCOM IN A 'PERSONAL'."
[58] Although not in the press, George Griscom Jr. was likely divorced or a widower. He received a marriage license on April 28th, 1902, to marry Caroline S. Hays. I have yet to find any record of what became of her. It seems likely that if she had died there would be an obituary, a death certificate or a headstone available, particularly as she married into a prominent family. This leads me to think that they divorced, contributing to the Arnold family's opposition to Griscom. Even so, it's interesting that this information did not find its way into the articles I've collected. See, "George S Griscom Jr, Marriage License, 28 Apr 1902, Certificate Number 22189, Available in 'Pennsylvania, U.S., Country Marriage Records, 1845-1963,' s.v. 'George S Griscom'," n.d.
[59] "GRISCOM EXPECTS TO WED MISS ARNOLD.," *The New York Times*, February 12, 1911.
[60] "MRS. ARNOLD HOME WITHOUT DAUGHTER.," *The New York Times*, February 13, 1911.
[61] "DOROTHY ARNOLD QUARRELLED WITH FATHER AND FLED," *The Evening World*, February 2, 1911.

arrived in New York. In one instance, Dorothy's brother John reportedly said, "his family would rather see his sister dead than married to George P. Griscom Jr."[62] Mr Arnold promptly insisted that his son had been misquoted.[63]

While the story of Arnold's disappearance might have been perfectly positioned as a melodramatic tale of forbidden love, one element was missing—a gallant love interest with whom Arnold may have wanted to run away. Journalists never portrayed Griscom Jr. in such a manner. They never presented him as manly or heroic. Arnold's disappearance, then, provided commentary on what it did or didn't mean to be a "man". While not the focus of this project, it is worth noting that the way the men in Arnold's life were portrayed demonstrated middle-class, and to some degree working-class, criticisms of wealthy men.[64] For example, Arnold's brother beat up Griscom Jr. shortly after she went missing. As Griscom Jr. lay sprawled out on the floor, he was said to have "clutched at his inside pocket, calling attention to the fact that he had a letter in that pocket. Young Arnold then, as the story is told, took the letter away from the man."[65] If Griscom could not protect the letters in his pocket, letters that Dorothy had sent him, how could he protect Dorothy? The beating and the fact that he had allowed her family's disapproval to prevent him from marrying her indicated weakness that readers would not have interpreted as manly. Griscom Jr. was not the only "unmanly" man in the narrative. Journalists frequently described Mr Arnold as frail and out of touch with reality. A journalist at the *World* wrote, "the inner history of the family is such that acquaintances can easily understand why his children and

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[62] "DOROTHY ARNOLD'S FATHER IS KEEPING UP COSTLY SEARCH." *The Evening World.* February 18, 1911. Pg. 3.
[63] "DOROTHY ARNOLD'S FATHER IS KEEPING UP COSTLY SEARCH." *The Evening World.* February 18, 1911. Pg. 3.
[64] This is a topic that I discuss in far more detail in chapter two. For more on "manhood," see Gail Bederman's *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* and Tom Pendergast's *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950.*
[65] "DOROTHY ARNOLD NOT IN PHILADELPHIA.," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1911.

even his wife have felt it best to carry on their investigations independently of Mr Arnold."[66] Mr Arnold, who should have been the head of his family, was presented as incapable.

The narrative around Griscom Jr.'s arrival in New York, and the press conference held by his family, illustrated to readers the complicated nature of wealthy families. It demonstrated how important it was to these families to control the narrative by any means necessary. The *Times* illustrated this by drawing attention to how Griscom Sr. sought to control the actions and words of his son. A journalist wrote, "Mr Griscom was guided throughout the interview he gave to-day by his father, who … would lift an arm to command silence when certain questions were asked or interject a remark that would prevent Griscom, Jr., from replying to others."[67] The *World* also commented on this when they informed readers that "the elder Griscom to-day had the telephone in his son's room disconnected"[68] to make sure Griscom Jr. could only make statements first approved by himself or his lawyer.

It wasn't merely Griscom Jr. who was kept on a tight leash. The Arnold sons also sought to control the movements and statements of their parents. When journalists approached Mrs Arnold, John insisted on knowing what they intended to ask her. A journalist at the *Times* wrote that "when one said they would ask if she [Mrs Arnold] would consent to marriage between Dorothy and Mr Griscom, John said: "The last question is not proper … I would not consent to it being asked in that form."[69] That John felt he had the right to dictate what could or could not be asked of his mother indicated that he considered himself the head of the Arnold family. Later, when the press published a statement supposedly from Mrs Arnold, Dorothy's younger brother Dan stepped in. He tried to "correct" the statement the paper had attributed to her. A *World*

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[66] "ARNOLD LAWYERS LOSE INTEREST AS SON KEEPS SECRET.," *The Evening World*, February 27, 1911.
[67] "GRISCOM EXPECTS TO WED MISS ARNOLD."
[68] "FATHER PREVENTS GRISCOM JR. FROM USING TELEPHONE.," *The Evening World*, February 15, 1911.
[69] "MRS. ARNOLD HOME WITHOUT DAUGHTER."

journalist quoted him as "severely" saying, "my mother's words yesterday were perverted. She did not use the words credited to her. She did not say that there would certainly be no marriage."[70] However, neither brother could keep journalists from running with this story despite their best attempts.

It would have been evident to readers of either paper that members of the Arnold family weren't all on the same page. The steady stream of shocking statements, promptly followed by corrections and cover-ups, convoluted the story. What was true, and what wasn't? To journalists at the *Times*, that was a question that mattered. To *World* journalists, however, it didn't matter if something *was* true, only if it *could be* true. Furthermore, to *World* journalists, the mess of statements and retractions supported an idea central to their narrative the entire time—the Arnold family could not be trusted.

Independence & Mobility

The private post office box and a forbidden romance were not the only hints of impropriety journalists discovered in the weeks after Arnold's disappearance went public. To the family's frustration, journalists found that Dorothy had spent time in Boston in September of 1910, only three months before she disappeared. While in Boston, she had spent significant time with Griscom Jr., but she had also, supposedly, pawned some jewellery. Then in November, Dorothy visited a college friend in Washington. While there, she was said to have received private correspondence, which prompted her to leave earlier than originally planned. Journalists at the *Times* and the *World* showed great interest in both trips. Until this point, journalists at the *Times* had approached rumours and speculation with a caution not shared by those at the *World*.

[70] "DOROTHY ARNOLD SENDS WORD TO GRISCOM IN A 'PERSONAL'."

Times journalists presented the facts they could confirm, often referencing and simultaneously dismissing rumours in one sentence.[71] Yet when Dorothy's trips were exposed, the *Times'* approach shifted. This may well have been the moment that they lost trust in the Arnold family as a source of factual information.

Newspapers reported that in the weeks after Dorothy's December 1910 disappearance, her family had employed the Pinkertons to search for her.[72] Concerned that she might have eloped, the family sent the detectives to search the Marriage License Bureau to see if she had been issued a license. At least, this was the claim of the clerk in charge of the Marriage License Bureau, Edward Hart. But of more interest to journalists was Hart's claim that the search in December was not the first time the Pinkertons had been there looking for a marriage record. In fact, the December search was said to be the second.[73] The *World* also wrote about these searches. One journalist wrote,

> In November, as in the present instance, the Arnolds employed the Pinkertons to seek for the young woman and searched the marriage bureau for records of a license issued in her name. It would appear that on each occasion Miss Arnold's kinspeople have had reason to fear that she might have slipped away to be married.[74]

Despite this, the family denied that either search had happened. That same journalist also wrote that "these interesting facts had been kept under cover by the members of the Arnold family and by their lawyers, and the truth was only discovered through an accident."[75] Journalists at the

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[71] Such as they did at the beginning with Modell, the pawnbroker, who claimed that Dorothy had visited his shop and tried to buy pants. While the *World* gave Modell space to tell his story, the *Times* dismissed it immediately as baseless.
[72] The Pinkerton National Detective Agency (often colloquially referred to as "The Pinkertons") was an independent police force founded by Allan Pinkerton in 1850. For more, see "Pinkerton National Detective Agency," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d., https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pinkerton-National-Detective-Agency; Stephen Paul O'Hara, *Inventing the Pinkertons; Or, Spies, Sleuths, Mercenaries, and Thugs: Being a Story of the Nation's Most Famous (and Infamous) Detective Agency* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2016).
[73] "SOUGHT MISS ARNOLD LAST THANKSGIVING," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1911.
[74] "DOROTHY ARNOLD VANISHED BEFORE FROM HER HOME.," *The Evening World*, February 1, 1911.
[75] "DOROTHY ARNOLD VANISHED BEFORE FROM HER HOME."

World did not attempt to disguise their distrust of the Arnold family; over and over again, they drew attention to the Arnold family's reluctance to speak openly about Dorothy's private life and to the various times the family was caught lying.

However, the trip that was of most interest to the press was one taken in September of 1910. Arnold was said to have visited a school friend who lived in Maine. From there, the young woman went on to spend a few days in Boston, where she pawned several pieces of jewellery. Coincidentally, Griscom Jr. was also in Boston at the time, and Arnold and Griscom Jr. were seen together on several occasions. One journalist even wrote that Griscom Jr. had been the one to secure the room for Arnold at the Hotel Lenox whilst he stayed at the Essex Hotel.[76] The *Times* wrote that,

> while Dorothy Arnold, the missing daughter of Francis R. Arnold of New York, was registered at the Hotel Lenox during the week of Sept. 23, 1910, she pawned her jewelry for $500. Her gold watch and chain, two diamond rings, and two bracelets were presented at the Collateral Loan Company on Boylston Street in her own name, Dorothy Arnold, and she gave her own home address, 108 East Seventy-ninth Street in New York. At this time George S. Griscom, Jr., was staying at another Boston hotel, the Essex, and the two were much together.[77]

The Arnold family denied that she had pawned any jewellery in Boston.[78] This denial was likely for two reasons. First, it aligned with their general policy of denying everything. Second, the more money Arnold had had on her when she went missing meant a greater chance that she had gone away willingly. She might have used this to fund her departure if she had pawned jewellery a few months before she disappeared. This, of course, was a theory that the family had never been willing to consider publicly.

Of course, it wasn't just the *Times* that wrote about the trip to Boston. Journalists at the

[76] "MISS ARNOLD PAWNED JEWELS IN BOSTON." *The New York Times.* February 16, 1911. Pg. 1.
[77] "MISS ARNOLD PAWNED JEWELS IN BOSTON.," *The New York Times*, February 16, 1911.
[78] "Special to the New York Times.," *The New York Times*, February 16, 1911.

World also wrote about the pawned jewellery and speculated about the time Arnold spent with Griscom Jr. Additionally, journalists at the *World* added that after spending time in Boston, she briefly went to Nantucket before returning home to New York. Most significantly, they noted that when Arnold returned to New York, "she had the key of her room at the Lennox with her, and the lawyers now have the key."[79] This note about the key is of particular interest. It likely led readers to wonder whether she had secured an ongoing reservation with the intent to return to Boston frequently. Perhaps she had planned to meet up regularly with Griscom Jr. in Boston. Why else would she have kept the key, and why else would the family's lawyers still have it so many months later?

Both papers framed Dorothy's trips as secretive and suspicious, yet her family insisted that they had been aware of where she was going on each of those trips. At the time of her disappearance, Dorothy had been twenty-five years old, and it seems likely that she would have been relatively independent in her day-to-day life. That independence may have always been part of her personality, or it may have developed during her time at Bryn Mawr when she lived away from home.[80] Bryn Mawr was a college modelled on some of the best male colleges of the period.[81] It emphasised education in the liberal arts and academic excellence over domestic skills—for which it was occasionally criticised.[82] M. Carey Thomas[83], the president of Bryn Mawr, at the time of Dorothy's attendance there, wrote that "women themselves must be

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[79] "DOROTHY ARNOLD IS HELD PRISONER, FATHER IS TOLD.," *The Evening World*, March 17, 1911.
[80] College attendance for women, particularly middle and upper-class women, was on the rise. According to Joan Marie Johnson, less than one per cent of women had attended college in 1870, but by 1920 that number had increased to nearly eight per cent. Joan Marie Johnson, *Southern Women at the Seven Sisters Colleges: Feminist Values and Social Activism, 1875-1915* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 3.
[81] Andrea Hamilton, *A Vision for Girls: Gender, Education, and the Bryn Mawr School* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 2.
[82] Johnson, *Southern Women*, 27.
[83] President of Bryn Mawr College from 1894 to 1922, M. Carey Thomas was also the Dean of the College and Chair of the English Department from 1884 to 1908. For more on Thomas, see Barbara Sicherman, "Reading and Ambition: M. Carey Thomas and Female Heroism," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1993): 73–103.

permitted to be the judges of what kind of intellectual discipline they find most truly serviceable."[84] To that end, Bryn Mawr offered more than simply education but also an athletic association, a chess club, a glee club and debate teams.[85] Attending a college like Bryn Mawr opened up a whole new world of possibilities for students; they learned how to wield power, act aggressively, work collectively, and generally take on traditionally "male" roles.[86] Colleges had the effect of activating women—often driving them into social reform and suffrage, among other more "public" roles. Colleges, particularly colleges like Bryn Mawr, turned women into "New Women"[87], propelling graduates into the world who threatened to destabilise a crumbling public order.[88] Arnold's time at college would have allowed her the space to develop a sense of independence and form a network of friends and acquaintances all over the country. This network would have been beneficial if she had gone away by choice. Journalists regularly referred to this network, mentioning her school friends at home and abroad.

While the first few weeks of the public investigation were filled with a steady stream of clues and tips, the pace at which new information was discovered eventually slowed. To fill the gaps and keep the story alive, journalists at the *World* picked apart the relationships within the Arnold family. They drew attention to moments of possible tension, disagreement or disunion.

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[84] Martha Carey Thomas, *Education of Women* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1900), 40.
[85] Johnson, *Southern Women*, 146.
[86] Johnson, *Southern Women*, 147.
[87] The "New Woman" was a figure with varying definitions, but was generally independent, often educated, and represented a woman who lived in public on her own terms. See chapter two for more on the "New Woman" in a middle-class context. For more on the new woman and some of her various iterations, see Eva Chen, "Its Prohibitive Cost: The Bicycle, the New Woman and Conspicuous Display," *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 64, no. 1 (2017): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/20512856.2016.1221620; Brigid M. Boyle, "Athleticism and the New Woman," *Winterthur Portfolio* 53, no. 4 (2019): 231–68; Joshua A. Hubbard, "Queering the New Woman: Ideals of Modern Femininity in the Ladies' Journal, 1915-1931," *Nan Nu* 16, no. 2 (2014): 341–62, https://doi.org/10.1163/15685268-00162p05; Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990); Jean V. Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman: The Women's Movement in America, 1875-1930* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003).
[88] Gail Collins, *America's Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates and Heroines* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 292.

The relationship between the Arnolds and their lawyers was also ripe for speculation, and one journalist wrote how they had noticed a "mutual coolness"[89] brewing between the family and their legal representation. That the Arnolds could not be trusted was already well-established, and the fact that even their lawyers were sceptical of them strengthened this narrative.

By the middle of February, even the *Times* began to treat the Arnold family with suspicion. One journalist wrote,

> John W. Arnold, brother of Dorothy Arnold … repeated last night that he had no knowledge of his sister's whereabouts, and admitted that he might deny it even if he did know where she was. "If your sister returned home, would you say so?" he was asked. "That depends," he said, "I might not".[90]

The response might seem peculiar, knowing how desperate the family was to have the story go away. If Dorothy returned home, the easiest way to do that would have been to tell the public that she was back and all was well. Yet it reinforced the idea that the Arnold family's priority was not necessarily finding Dorothy but protecting their reputation. If the police had recovered Dorothy's body from the Hudson River, the family would have made it public because they could have cast her as the blameless victim of some random, tragic crime. If, however, she had been found alive but living in some way that compromised her respectability, the family would not have acknowledged it.

Not long after this admission from John, the *World* drew attention to the disconnect between the Arnolds and their lawyers by noting,

> those who have been in touch with them [the family's lawyers] and with the Arnold family have observed from some time a mutual coolness and, on the side of the lawyers, a growing feeling that John W. Arnold, the older of Miss Arnold's brothers, was not telling the lawyers or his father all that had been learned about the causes of the girl's disappearance or the best of his information about her present whereabouts.[91]

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[89] "ARNOLD LAWYERS LOSE INTEREST AS SON KEEPS SECRET."
[90] "DETECTIVE GUARDS THE GRISCOMS NOW.," *The New York Times*, February 14, 1911.
[91] "ARNOLD LAWYERS LOSE INTEREST AS SON KEEPS SECRET."

This lack of communication between the Arnolds and their lawyers seemed suspicious to journalists and readers alike. Of course, nearly everything the family did seemed suspicious. This distrust of the family, particularly from the *World*, never went away. In July of 1911, a *World* journalist wrote, "acquaintances of the Arnold family were surprised at the marriage of D. Hinckley Arnold and Miss Mildred Culver early in June. No formal announcement of the engagement had been made and last winter Mr Arnold denied its existence."[92] The *Times'* explanation for the family's lack of an announcement was that the wedding had been small "because the family was still in mourning"[93] but *World* reporters viewed this explanation with suspicion. Who could blame them? The Arnold family had a track record of not merely withholding information but outright lying when it served them. Readers may have wondered if this had been yet another relationship unfavourable to the Arnold family, but that this time they had given in rather than risk another of their children going missing.

Deviance & Criminality

No concrete leads emerged between mid-1911 and early 1914. Although journalists mentioned Arnold occasionally during that period, it was often in comparison to other missing women cases. There was something about the Dorothy Arnold disappearance that was simultaneously so remarkable and yet somehow so universal that her disappearance became the standard to which many other "missing girl" cases were compared.[94] Then, in April 1914, there was a raid on the private hospital of Pittsburgh doctor C. C. Meredith. Meredith had been

[92] "DOROTHY ARNOLD'S FAMILY DISCARDS MOURNING FOR HER.," *The Evening World*, July 31, 1911.
[93] "D. HINCKLEY ARNOLD WEDS.," *The New York Times*, June 11, 1911.
[94] See the disappearances of Margaret Damm in February 1911, Louise Swan in July 1911, Violet Buehler in January 1912, Dorcas Iyams Snodgrass in June 1912, Lillian Rickets in October 1912, Jessie Speese in June 1913, and Jessie Evelyn McCann in 1913, among others.

performing abortions in his clinic and reportedly claimed that Arnold had been one of his patients. Lucy Orr, a nurse, Dr H. E. Lutz, and C. C. Meredith were all arrested.[95] Both the *Times* and the *World* reported on this new development. In typical fashion, the *Times'* coverage was direct and to the point. Their journalist wrote,

> In a statement made to District Attorney R. S. Jackson this afternoon, Lutz said that Meredith had told him that a well-known young woman from New York had once been traced to his office, but had disappeared from sight. Later, he said, Meredith admitted the person to whom he referred was Dorothy Arnold, the missing heiress. When asked what had become of the Arnold girl, Meredith, according to Lutz, intimated that she had been taken to the Bellevue house and cremated.[96]

This journalist didn't personally speak with either Lutz or Meredith. Likely, the press wouldn't have had access to either doctor. However, it should be noted that this clue depended upon several levels of narrative, and thus the validity of it is questionable. The journalist at the *Times* reported on what Jackson said. Jackson had repeated what Lutz had told him. Lutz had, supposedly, gotten his information from Meredith. The *World* told the story in the same way. A *World* journalist wrote that "when asked what had become of her, Meredith was said to have motioned skyward with both hands, indicating, Lutz declared, that she had been cremated."[97] It doesn't seem strange that the *World* would tell this story this way, but it does seem odd that the *Times* would. This may have indicated a lingering annoyance with the family, even two several years after Arnold went missing.

The "Arnold died by abortion" theory was topical. In 1873, the U.S. Congress enacted the Comstock Laws, which defined contraceptives as "obscene" and made it illegal to send

[95] "DOROTHY ARNOLD STORY.," *The New York Times*, April 10, 1914.
[96] "DOROTHY ARNOLD STORY," *The New York Times*, April 10, 1914.
[97] "HOUSE OF MYSTERY WHERE WOMEN DIED TOLD OF BY DOCTOR," *The Evening World*, April 10, 1914.

information about abortion or contraception through the mail.[98] Significant pushback against these laws occurred throughout the 1910s, led mainly by feminist Margaret Sanger.[99] In March 1914, Sanger founded the magazine "Woman Rebel" to "give working women information about birth control."[100] Sanger's magazine was controversial, and opposition to it was loud. The raid on Meredith's clinic came amid that noise and alongside an active and on-going discussion about women's right to their own bodies.

The Arnold family responded to the claim that Dorothy had died in Meredith's care by informing the press that their lawyers had visited the clinic shortly after Dorothy had disappeared. At that time, their lawyers had supposedly found no trace of her there.[101] This revelation had to have come as a surprise to journalists and their readers, but very little mention was made of it. If there had been a clue that had led them to that clinic specifically, or if it had been one of many such clinics the Arnold family's lawyers had visited, they did not elaborate. Nor was there any discussion of how seriously that visit factored into their independent investigation. Yet it had to have led to speculation, even if only in the newsroom.

Might Arnold have needed the services of Meredith? It's possible. She and Griscom were together in Boston at the end of September 1910, and she disappeared about eleven weeks later. Additionally, Griscom was from Pittsburgh and might have had connections there who could

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[98] For more on the Comstock Laws, named for Anthony Comstock, see Amy Sohn, *The Man Who Hated Women: Sex, Censorship & Civil Liberties in the Gilded Age* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, n.d.); Brett Gary, *Dirty Works: Obscenity on Trial in America's First Sexual Revolution* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2021); Alicia Puglionesi, "'Your Whole Effort Has Been to Create Desire': Reproducing Knowledge and Evading Censorship in the Nineteenth-Century Subscription Press," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 39, no. 3 (2015): 463–90; Marsha Silberman, "The Perfect Storm: Late Nineteenth Century Chicago Sex Radicals: Moses Harman, Ida Craddock, Alice Stockham and the Comstock Obscenity Laws," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 102, no. 3/4 (2009): 324–67.

[99] Margaret Sanger founded Planned Parenthood and advocated for access to information about family planning, contraception and abortion.

[100] Sochen, *The New Woman: Feminism in Greenwich Village, 1910-1920*, 62.

[101] "NOT MISS ARNOLD, HER FATHER INSISTS.," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1914.; "ARNOLD LAWYER FEELS SURE DOROTHY DIDN'T GO THERE.," *The Evening World*, April 10, 1914.

have made the arrangements for her. Further, Arnold was likely carrying enough money on her for the procedure. Fees for abortions could vary widely, but on average, physicians received approximately $48.[102] This could explain why she charged purchases to her father's account on the day she went missing instead of using the money she had on her. Nonetheless, even if Arnold *had* sought an abortion, this was a procedure she could have done closer to home.[103] Knowledge of contraception methods was "practically universal"[104] among the upper classes, and this likely would have extended to a knowledge of abortion and local doctors who offered the service. Kunzel has argued that by the late nineteenth century, abortion "was probably most widely used by white, married, Protestant, native-born women of the middle and upper classes."[105] Thus, it might seem odd that Arnold would consider travelling so far for a procedure she could have accessed locally. However, Arnold was, to some degree, a public figure. The odds of being recognised within New York City would have been high enough that she may not have wanted to risk it. Going out of State may have seemed preferable.[106]

Rumours of Arnold's supposed abortion shifted her behaviour from merely deviant to criminal and opened up new possibilities for press commentary. In 1916, Edward Glennoris, an

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[102] Leslie J Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997), 72.
[103] For more on abortion in this period, see Eileen V. Wallis, "'The Verdict Created No Great Surprise Upon the Street ': Abortion, Medicine, and the Regulatory State in Progressive-Era Los Angeles," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 34, no. 3 (2013): 48–72.
[104] Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman: The Women's Movement in America, 1875-1930*, 118.
[105] She goes on to say that this demographic shifted and that into the early twentieth century, working-class, unmarried mothers began to seek abortions in greater numbers. However, this further supports the idea that Dorothy would likely have had the connections and the network needed to seek out an abortion should she have decided that she needed one. See Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work 1890-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 68.
[106] That said, New York City to Pittsburgh isn't a short trip. Train routes in 1910 would likely be different than today, but today it would take 11 hours to make the trip. This indicates that *if* Dorothy went to Pittsburgh for the procedure, she likely anticipated being gone for several days. This only makes sense in one of two cases. The first is that she intended to disappear after the procedure. The second is that part of her family's delay in making her disappearance public could have been because they didn't anticipate her back for a few days. When she didn't return, they worried and sought to minimise the reputational damage in whatever ways possible before being forced to make the story public. Neither seems likely.

inmate of Rhode Island State Prison at Cranston, claimed that a man had hired him and a friend to assist in the disposal of Dorothy Arnold's body back in 1910.[107] The *Times* published the story but focused less on Glennoris's claims and more on the family's response. One journalist wrote that "neither the members of the Arnold family nor John S. Keith, the lawyer who has run down hundreds of false clues, believe the story that the convict had helped to bury the body of the missing girl."[108] Yet even the mention of the story, regardless of how the *Times* had prioritised the family's disbelief, was enough to infuriate them.

As expected, the *World's* telling of it was far more colourful. A journalist at the paper wrote that "Glennoris told a grisly story of how he and a friend were hired to guard a wealthy youth and an elderly physician in taking Dorothy Arnold from a New Rochelle house unconscious."[109] Glennoris went on to say that he had helped bury her after she died, although what she had died from, he didn't know. Despite the sensational nature of the story, nothing came of Glennoris' tale, so it did not stay in either paper long. Glennoris was eventually paroled on the promise that he would take the police to Arnold's body. He did take them to the cellar, where he said he had helped bury her, but her body wasn't there.[110] Several years later, fingerprints confirmed that Glennoris could not have been involved in Arnold's disappearance as he was in prison under a different name at the time.[111]

Conclusion

Arnold's story served as a cautionary tale for young women. Not only was there always

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[107] "HIRED BY MAN OF MYSTERY TO HELP BURY ARNOLD GIRL, SAYS CONVICT IN CONFESSION.," *The Evening World*, April 17, 1916.
[108] "ARNOLDS DISCREDIT TALE OF BURIED GIRL," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1916.
[109] "HIRED BY MAN OF MYSTERY TO HELP BURY ARNOLD GIRL, SAYS CONVICT IN CONFESSION."
[110] "ASKS PAROLE TO WORK ON ARNOLD MYSTERY.," *The Evening World*, May 2, 1916; "WANT HIM TO SHOW GRAVE.," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1916.
[111] "LINKED BY FINGERPRINTS WITH DOROTHY ARNOLD YARN.," *The Evening World*, April 10, 1917.

the risk that one's misbehaviour might be uncovered, but there was no time limit on how long society or the press could use it against them. Arnold's story was not the only one to support this idea. For example, in 1883, Zerelda Garrison, a St. Louis society girl, went missing from her home.[112] Had she been gone longer, her disappearance likely would have received comparable coverage to Arnold's, but Zerelda returned to her family within the week.[113] Garrison claimed that three young men had chloroformed her and held her captive in a building not far from her home. Public opinion quickly turned on her, however, when the sister of one of the accused kidnappers argued that Garrison had been there willingly. It didn't matter what Garrison said to defend herself; the mere suggestion that she had gone away with three men of her own free will was enough to ruin her reputation permanently. Garrison moved to another city with her mother, and the pair lived under an alias. Eventually, Garrison married and again changed her name. In 1885, she briefly returned to St. Louis to visit her sister. Although she stayed inside and kept to herself, her sister's neighbours discovered her true identity. These neighbours petitioned the block's owner to make Zerelda leave as they feared her presence would be socially damaging to them.[114] As stories like Garrison's and Arnold's demonstrated, once a woman deviated from societal expectations, little could be done to repair her reputation.

Arnold's disappearance continued to be mentioned by journalists, albeit sporadically, even into the 1920s. In 1921, Police Captain John H. Ayers, head of the New York City Police Department's Missing Persons Bureau[115], gave a public lecture about the Police Department. At

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[112] "A MYSTERY. The Whereabouts of Miss Zerelda Garrison.," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 12, 1883.
[113] Zerelda's disappearance caused such a flurry of excitement in St. Louis that senators discussed what could be done about the situation. Upon her recovery and her story of kidnapping, Senator Walker of Missouri proposed a law that would make the abduction of a young woman punishable by death. Interestingly, the moment public opinion turned on her and her innocence was questioned, Senator Walker withdrew his bill. See "From the State Capital," *The Evening News*, January 13, 1883.
[114] "Untitled," *The Saint Paul Globe*, June 21, 1885.
[115] The Bureau of Missing Persons was established in 1918 and never officially handled or had any role in the Arnold investigation.

this lecture, someone from the audience asked him if there had been any resolution to the Arnold case. A journalist at the *Times* published Ayers' reply, in which he supposedly said, "all I can say is that it has been solved by the department. Dorothy Arnold is no longer listed as a missing person."[116] Ayers' claim that police had solved the case infuriated the Arnold family. They denied the case was closed or that they knew where Dorothy was and demanded an explanation from the Police Commissioner.[117] Ayers was promptly suspended, forcing him to backtrack on his earlier statements. A journalist at the *World* quoted him as saying, "judging from the fact that the activities of those most interested in the case have apparently ceased, the disappearance was no longer a mystery to them. I did not say the Police Department had solved the mystery or knew where Dorothy Arnold was."[118] Ayers stubbornly refused to say more on the subject and was eventually reinstated.

The story of Arnold's disappearance, as told by the *Times,* was a cautionary tale of female independence. To journalists at the *World,* on the other hand, it illustrated the rich could not be trusted. With all its manufactured drama and intrigue, Dorothy's disappearance sold papers. As a result, the story of the missing heiress remained a semi-regular fixture in the news until the mid-1920s.

[116] "DOROTHY ARNOLD MYSTERY SOLVED, SAYS CAPT. AYERS."
[117] "WANTS ENRIGHT TO EXPLAIN.," *The New York Times*, April 12, 1921.
[118] "AYERS DENIES TALE OF DOROTHY ARNOLD.," *The Evening World*, April 9, 1921.

Chapter Two: *The Tragedy of the Missing Stenographer*

> A general alarm was sent out from Police Headquarters this afternoon concerning the disappearance of Eleanor Arlin, 22 years old, who left her lodgings on Marlor st Brookline, two weeks ago yesterday to post some letters and who did not return. Her mother, Mrs Jane Arlin, is prostrated. Dr William J. Rogers of 174 Harvard st, Brookline, a relative by marriage, urged the police of this city today to aid in the search for the young woman … The girl was 5 feet 2 inches tall, weighed 120 pounds, very dark complexion, black hair, hazel eyes, rosy cheeks and had gold filling in front upper tooth. She wore a dark blue dress, a gray coat with the hood lowered down in back; a dark round hat, trimmed with bright blue ribbon and flowers on one side, and a white net veil.[1]

On January 8th, 1914, twenty-five-year-old Eleanor Arlin left her boarding house in Brookline, MA, to run some errands. On her way outside she passed her landlady, Mrs. Ceres Hadcock, who asked her where she was going. When Arlin said that she was going to the post office to send off payment for a few bills, Hadcock gave Arlin a few letters that she also needed to be mailed. Arlin agreed to mail the letters, left the boarding house, and never returned. Word of her absence was sent to her mother in Colebrook, NH, and an investigation into Arlin's disappearance began. However, it was two weeks before the press was notified, and when they *did* receive information about the missing young woman, they immediately took up the story. But the mystery of Arlin's disappearance would have no resolution, and, eventually, her story faded from the news.

The strange and sudden disappearance of Eleanor Arlin shared many similarities with that of Dorothy Arnold. In both cases, the young women went off alone to run errands, each with roughly $30 in their possession. Both narratives featured a trip to the post office, Arlin to send some mail, and Arnold to receive some. Both included early insistences from family and friends that there was no love interest who could have drawn the young woman away, despite both

[1] "MISSING FROM BROOKLINE," *The Boston Globe*, January 23, 1914.

women being twenty-five years old.[2] Finally, in both cases, the family hesitated to go public. The Arnold family waited six weeks, and the Arlin family waited two.[3]

These similarities were evident to journalists at the time. Nearly a month after Arlin's disappearance, a journalist at the *Hunting Press* wrote, "The search for Miss Eleanor Arlin of Brookline … has been spread out all over New England, and the failure of every clue has led the police to believe that her case will be another like Dorothy Arnold's."[4] While journalists often compared Arnold's disappearance to other missing women cases until the 1920s, this was not the only time Arnold and Arlin were discussed alongside each other. Their photos were featured side by side in a 1916 article purporting to scientifically explain "why girls leave home."[5] Both cases remained wedged in the public subconscious long after the trails went cold.

Despite these similarities, journalists' treatment of the two women and their families differed significantly. Whereas Arnold's family was harassed and criticized, Arlin's was pitied and received practical support from the nearby community. Of course, Arlin's case did not explode in the way that Arnold's did. Coverage remained relatively local to the Boston area, although occasionally updates appeared in papers in other states, particularly New Hampshire, where Arlin's mother lived and Michigan, where Arlin's aunt lived.[6] However, the case still received a significant amount of coverage for a missing woman case, demonstrating substantial interest in the fate of the missing Brookline woman. This interest made sense; Arlin's story fit

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[2] "Arlin, Birth Certificate, 2 Jan 1889, FHL Film No. 1000482, Available in 'New Hampshire, U.S., Births and Christenings Index, 1714-1904,' s.v. 'Arlin'," n.d., Ancestry.com.; Despite this, Arlin is frequently "aged down" to twenty-two. This may have made her seem more vulnerable; twenty-two seems more "girlish" than twenty-five, although missing women even into their thirties were often referred to as "girls" in newspaper narratives.
[3] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE.," *The Boston Globe*, January 27, 1914.
[4] "PRETTY YOUNG GIRL VANISHES JUST LIKE DOROTHY ARNOLD DID.," *The Huntington Press*, February 10, 1914.
[5] "Science Shows Why Girls Leave Home," *The Boston Sunday Post*, April 16, 1916.; This specific article is discussed in more detail in chapter three.
[6] "HOPE WANES FOR MISSING GIRL," *The Portsmouth Herald*, February 14, 1914; "Supposed Captive of White Slave Band," *Detroit Free Press*, January 27, 1914.

perfectly with other “missing girl problem” stories American papers published during this period. In fact, Arlin's story was the ultimate “missing girl problem” case because it demonstrated how the city was dangerous not merely to working-class girls but also to young women who tried to live their life by the standards of middle-class respectability.

Nonetheless, despite this coverage and the scope of the investigation, the police never solved Arlin's disappearance. Solving this mystery is not the purpose of this chapter; like with the Arnold disappearance, too much time has passed for any hope of a resolution. However, even without a solution, much can be learned from how the press handled the case. Arlin’s disappearance was a story with incredible potential for social commentary. In this chapter, I illustrate how journalists utilized the tale to demonstrate the physical and mental vulnerability of young, white, middle-class women. Throughout this narrative, journalists cast Arlin in the melodramatic role of damsel-in-distress. Categorized first as a possible victim of white slavery and then later a likely victim of her own mind (i.e. a sudden, unexpected bout of insanity), ideas about middle-class respectability protected Arlin from the worst of public speculation and scrutiny in a way that Dorothy Arnold was not protected, even when the story took a sensational turn. The white slavery narrative was one of the earliest theories presented, but the insanity theory was generally more persuasive. It was a “sensible” alternative to the sensational white slavery narrative and easily aligned with deeply rooted beliefs about the physical and mental frailty of respectable women.

In gathering data for this chapter, I utilized any articles I could find covering the Arlin case, regardless of which newspapers they came from. There were over seventy articles about Arlin's disappearance and the subsequent investigation. The majority of these articles were from the Boston area.

In addition to the historians referenced in chapter one, in this chapter, I have also utilized the works of Anthony Rotundo, Gail Bederman, and Tom Pendergast, who have explored the development of "manhood" or "masculinity," specifically in the American context.[7] In thinking about the white slavery panic, I have drawn on scholars such as Gretchen Soderlund, Amy Lippert and Christopher Diffee. Additionally, I have considered historians such as Elizabeth Lunbeck, Jane Ussher, Wendy Mitchinson and Roy Porter in shaping how I've written about insanity and madness in the middle-class context. My analysis in this chapter brings these concepts together to demonstrate how narratives about missing middle-class women illustrated ideas about gender and respectability.

A "Respectable" Girl

One of the very first tasks undertaken by the police upon being notified of Arlin's disappearance was to get a sense of her character. Detective Sergeant H. A. Rutherford, who led the search for the missing woman, "spent considerable time yesterday in making inquiries relative to the girl's life, companions and character."[8] The detective found nothing unsavoury, or if he did, it didn't make the news. Journalists did their own investigation into Arlin's character and also found nothing untoward. One journalist wrote that "the girl had no lover and never carried on a correspondence with men, although 25 years old."[9] To avoid any misunderstandings, Edmund A. Rogers, a distant relation[10], was quoted as saying that Arlin "was not a man hater in

[7] Whereas Bederman explores manhood through the lens of race and racism throughout the Progressive Era, Pendergast focuses on how "manhood" shaped, and was shaped by, consumer culture and the press in the first half of the twentieth century. Rotundo's narrative is less nuanced but no less informative; he provides an overview of the development of "manhood" over a much larger period and does an excellent job of demonstrating how developing ideas of "manhood" influenced, and were influenced by, simultaneously developing ideas of "womanhood".
[8] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."
[9] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."
[10] Edmund A. Rogers was the brother of Arlin's cousin's husband. Despite the tenuous connection, Rogers took an interest in the case and later seemed to struggle for control over the narrative with Arlin's aunt, Mrs Calvin Gould.

the sense applied to some women, but [had] so many other interests in life that she did not give up her mind as thoroughly to that phase of life."[11] It was essential to friends and family to establish that Arlin had no love interest, as the existence of one might have called into question her virtue. Yet it was also vital that she not be lumped in with *those women*, the ones who hated men. The family wanted it to be known that Arlin was a single woman because she had goals and ambitions; she had not withdrawn permanently from men, marriage or childrearing. Instead, she was temporarily distracted by other interests. She was, according to Rogers, "an intellectual girl, fond of tennis and sports and not a despondent creature who would be expected to do rash things."[12] This, of course, would still have been problematic to those holding tight to older ideas about a women's place being solely within the domestic sphere. Arlin had clearly embraced the ways of the "new woman". Yet by 1914, the new woman could be respectable, and the stories about Arlin deliberately positioned her in a way that allowed her to be both a virtuous maiden and a new woman above reproach.[13]

If journalists were to be believed, no one had anything but good to say of Arlin. A friend at her boarding house reportedly said, "there are no words I can speak of Miss Arlin in truth, except those of praise."[14] She was far from alone in this assessment. Yet we can speculate about what would have happened if Rutherford, or one of the journalists, had discovered something unsavoury. Would the Arlin story have taken the same turn that Arnold's did?

It seems unlikely. There *was* room for speculation, yet journalists intentionally did not

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[11] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."
[12] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."
[13] In mainstream narratives of the day, the "new woman" was regularly portrayed as a White woman. However, non-White women also embraced this label for themselves and actively engaged with what it meant to be "new". For more on this, see Martha H. Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl: Reimagining the American New Woman, 1895-1915* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Charlotte J. Rich, *Transcending the New Woman* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009).
[14] "DAILY LIFE OF MISSING GIRL," *The Boston Globe*, January 27, 1914.

take it up. The *Boston Globe* published a story that said,

> replying to a story circulated today in Brookline that Miss Eleanor Arlin had not been perfectly frank with her closest friends relative to all her movements, the landlady of the house where Miss Arlin lived stoutly affirmed that there was not a particle of truth in it.[15]

Mrs Ceres Hadcock, the landlady of Arlin's boarding house, responded to several rumours about her boarder. When asked about Arlin's interest in the theatre, she reluctantly admitted that Arlin,

> did have stage aspirations *as has been said* [emphasis added], but that was some time ago. She was told by one she believed in that she did not have the requisite talent, and in her sensible way she determined to study with the view to teaching some day, as the bookkeeping she was engaged in was wearing her out.[16]

Despite Hadcock's claim that Arlin had given up on these aspirations, she was enrolled in "a school of expression and was wrapped up in her elocution lessons"[17] at the time of her disappearance. In this, Arlin "showed unmistakable ambition and ability."[18] Mrs Hadcock did admit she believed Arlin could have made it on the stage if she'd wanted to, yet journalists wrote nothing more about these lessons or her aspirations. If Arlin had been a shopgirl or a factory worker, journalists would have assumed she had run away in search of fame and fortune, and the story would have ended there.[19] But because Arlin could be cast as a "respectable" young woman, journalists did not present her possible theatrical ambitions as an explanation for her mysterious absence.

It was not merely her interest in the theatre that could have been, but wasn't, speculated upon. It seemed there was a rumour that Arlin had been going places and seeing people her friends didn't know about. This article was the first and only time a journalist directly mentioned a rumour they overheard. Yet it was clear that the article's point was not to spread stories about

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[15] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY," *The Boston Globe*, January 29, 1914.
[16] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY."
[17] "DAILY LIFE OF MISSING GIRL."
[18] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY."
[19] I provide examples of such stories in chapter three.

Arlin or impugn her character in any way. Instead, it gave those closest to her a public opportunity to discredit the narrative before it could get out of hand. While a journalist summed up the rumour in one sentence, they gave Hadcock *twelve paragraphs* to respond. No one mentioned the story again.

The umbrella of middle-class respectability could not physically protect Eleanor Arlin; her disappearance went unsolved, and she may have been the victim of foul play. However, her perceived public adherence to the social rules and regulations of the middle class bought her a particular type of representation when she went missing. Journalists deliberately cast Arlin as a damsel-in-distress, a "true" victim deserving of sympathy. This narrative remained consistent across various American newspapers. It conflated value or worth with respectability; because Arlin could be perceived as respectable, she was worthy of public concern.

While the way journalists represented Arlin was significant to the structure of this narrative, it was not merely *Arlin's* supposed adherence to the middle-class ideal that shaped the story. Arlin's family also factored into this account.

The Arlin family was no stranger to tragedy. In 1867, Sarah Gould married Alvin Arlin in Colebrook, NH. Both came from large families that were well-established in the area. Their first child, Nellie, was born in 1868, and their second, Bertha, was born in 1875. Both children died that same year. The couple had four more children—Ila in 1878, Elgin in 1881, Carrie in 1885, and Eleanor in 1889. At the time of Eleanor's birth, Sarah was forty years old.[20] By 1893, Eleanor was Sarah and Alvin's only surviving child, and in 1899, Alvin died.

For about thirteen years, Sarah and Eleanor lived alone in Colebrook. In 1911, Eleanor

[20] "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVG7-3L9C : 17 July 2020), Sarah Jane Gould Arlin, 1935; Burial; citing record ID, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

left home, moving first to a boarding house in Roslindale, MA[21] and then later to a boarding house in Brookline, MA, by 1913.[22] At the time of her disappearance, Eleanor Arlin had no father or brother to head up the search efforts and take the public-facing role of family representative. This put her mother, Sarah, in a difficult position as she seemed unwilling and ill-equipped to take on this role herself. Sarah received no criticism for this, however. Instead, journalists drew on tropes about Victorian womanhood that absolved Sarah from an obligation to take public action. Journalists wrote about Mrs Arlin as though she was the quintessential Victorian woman, a true angel of the home. The idealized Victorian woman was "often compared to a flower, a kitten, or a child, she was modest and pure minded, unselfish and meek."[23] Her role in society as a gentle and pious wife, nurturing mother, and guardian of virtue was thought to be determined by her supposed biological limitations.[24]

Described as old, sickly, and frail, one journalist wrote, “Mrs Arlin’s health is poor … it has been arranged to let the grief-stricken mother know at once by telegraph if any new facts are disclosed in the mystery of the missing girl.”[25] Likewise, upon reflecting on Mrs Arlin's demeanour, one journalist noted that "Mrs Arlin is bearing up bravely, although sick and heartbroken by the continued absence of her daughter."[26] On one occasion, a journalist referred to her as “Mrs Arlin, the aged and infirm mother of the missing girl.”[27] Later in the investigation, a journalist wrote, “Mrs Jane Arlin, mother of Eleanor Arlin, the missing Brookline girl, is a frail,

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[21] *The Newton Directory*, XXII (Boston, Massachusetts: Drew Allis Company, Sampson & Murdoch Co., Association of American Directory Publishers, 1911), 225.
[22] *The Newton Directory*, XXIII (Boston, Massachusetts: Drew Allis Company, Sampson & Murdoch Co., Association of American Directory Publishers, 1913), 230.
[23] Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press*, 1.
[24] E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1993), 4; Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 5.
[25] “MISSING GIRL’S MOTHER RETURNS TO HER HOME,” *The Boston Globe*, January 26, 1914.
[26] “Boy Scouts Seek in Vain for Missing Miss Arlin,” *Burlington Daily News*, February 3, 1914.
[27] “REFUSES TO STATE WHERE ELEANOR ARLIN IS,” *The Boston Globe*, February 9, 1914.

gentle, trusting little woman. She is 65 years of age and her disposition is as confiding as that of a child."[28] Throughout, Mrs Arlin was treated like a child by first her sister-in-law, Mrs Calvin Gould, and then Edmund Rogers, the brother of Mrs Arlin's niece's husband, who took an interest in the case. Journalists repeatedly reinforced this narrative of the aged, frail Mrs Arlin, situating her within the framework of female Victorian respectability.

Other individuals consistently spoke on Mrs Arlin's behalf and monitored what she said. The first to try to take control of the situation was "Mrs Calvin Gould,"[29] who was the second wife of Mrs Arlin's brother, Calvin Gould. Surprisingly, Mrs Gould, not *Mr* Gould, took on the task of shepherding Mrs Arlin. Gould was portrayed as the opposite of Mrs Arlin in nearly every way. One journalist wrote, "Mrs. Arlin paled in the presence of Gould, for the latter made it evident that whatever efforts had been made by the family to locate Eleanor were inspired by herself alone, and not by the mother."[30] Born in 1855, Gould was six years younger than Mrs Arlin and fifty-eight years old when her niece went missing. Despite being in her late fifties, Gould was *never* identified as frail, aged, or weak. Instead, journalists portrayed her as stubborn, outspoken, and aggressive. She was said to have gotten into a "rather lively tilt" with a reporter of the *Boston Traveler*, telling him, "your paper in Boston got everything about Eleanor wrong! It isn't like our Detroit papers."[31] In this way, Gould forced her way into the role of family spokesperson, taking on a part typically reserved for male family members.

The second person to try to take the reins was Dr Edmund Rogers. Rogers's brother, William, was married to one of Eleanor's cousins. Yet it was Rogers, not William, who took "a

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[28] "READY TO MEET MRS. GOULD," *The Boston Globe*, February 10, 1914.
[29] Although journalists never identify her by her name, Mrs Calvin Gould was Isabelle A. Gould [nee Bowie], and she married Calvin Gould in 1875, two years after the death of his first wife.
[30] "MISSING ELEANOR ARLIN FOUND, BUT WHERE, IS SECRET," *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1914.
[31] "MISSING ELEANOR ARLIN FOUND, BUT WHERE, IS SECRET."

deeper interest in the case"[32] and who tried to wrestle control of the situation from Gould. Unlike Gould, who never seemed to waver in her belief that Arlin was alive, Rogers maintained from early on that he believed Arlin was dead.[33] Like Arlin, Rogers lived in Brookline. He may have felt that due to his geographical proximity and the fact that he and Arlin were only a couple of years apart in age, he was better suited to take charge of the situation than her elderly aunt from Detroit. Whether Rogers knew Arlin personally is unclear, although they likely moved in the same social circles. Additionally, they lived in a relatively small community; the population of Brookline was only approximately 28,000 people in 1910.[34]

Arlin embodied many of the characteristics of a "new woman". Although she didn't appear to have a college education, at the time of her disappearance she was attending a "school of expression" and taking elocution lessons.[35] According to Hadcock, the landlady of the boarding house where Arlin lived, Arlin wanted to teach.[36] Eleanor's desire for independence was demonstrated by her residence in a boarding house. Instead of staying in rural Colebrook with her mother or taking up residence with her cousins in Brookline, Arlin lodged first in a boarding house in Roslindale and then moved to Brookline sometime in 1913. Peiss has argued that "women who lived outside families trod a fine line between asserting independence and guarding respectability in their everyday lives."[37] Thus, Arlin's decision to seek out a boarding house

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[32] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."
[33] "IDEA OF DRAGGING FOR THE ARLIN GIRL.," *The Boston Globe*, February 6, 1914.
[34] *The Newton Directory*, 1913.; The number of people in Brookline had increased to approximately 38,000 by 1920, according to the 1920 census: "POPULATION: MASSACHUSETTS. Number of Inhabitants, By Counties and Minor Civil Divisiosn," 1920, 2.
[35] Likely the Leland Powers School of Elocution, later known as the Leland Powers School, in Boston. Several young women graduates from the School of Elocution went on to teach local theatre. Others, such as Miss Katherine Patten, went on to perform in regional theatres. Patten spent time playing at the Academy of Music under the stage name Jane Crown and then secured the lead in a show at the Toy Theatre in Boston. See: "Other Shelburne Falls News.," *The Recorder*, January 16, 1915.
[36] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY."
[37] Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 73.

instead of an apartment of her own, as well as the specific boarding house she chose, was interpreted by journalists as a deliberate show of respectability.

In Brookline, Arlin rented a room from Mrs Ceres Hadcock, a thirty-two-year-old widow whose husband had died of an accidental poisoning in 1911.[38] When Arlin moved into the boarding house, Hadcock had three young children to tend to. The situation likely suited both Arlin and Hadcock equally. Arlin provided Hadcock with income, and Hadcock's young children would have kept her busy enough that she would have paid little attention to Arlin's comings and goings.[39] Hadcock reportedly believed that she and Arlin had a close relationship, saying, "if there is any one person in the world she would have confided in it would have been me, for she was virtually a member of my family and was treated as such."[40] The degree of closeness is uncertain, but the fact that Hadcock was only eight years older than Arlin could have allowed for a sisterly camaraderie. However, Hadcock may have also overstated the closeness of their relationship to add credence to her portrayal of the missing young woman.

Of course, living alone didn't mean that Arlin was entirely independent. Privacy was in short supply at a boarding house, and, as Peiss has noted, "privacy could be had only in public."[41] That this was the case here was evident in Hadcock's insistence that Arlin had no love interest, and she was sure of it because she "saw every letter which passed through the mail which was addressed to this house, and her girl friend employed at the Turner Studio saw everything in the

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[38] "Edward W Hadcock, Marriage Record, 24 Jun 1903, Available in 'Massachusetts, U.S., Marriage Records, 1840-1915,' s.v. 'Edward W Hadcock'," *Ancestry.Com*, n.d.; "TAKES POISON BY MISTAKE.," *The Boston Globe*, October 5, 1911; "Deaths," *Boston Evening Transcript*, October 11, 1911.

[39] Arlin may have been the only boarder, or she may have been one of many. Arlin's time with Hadcock didn't overlap with a census year, and the newspaper articles didn't specify whether or not anyone else was boarding with Hadcock. If Arlin was the only one, that would have allowed for a little more supervision, but it seems likely this still would have been minimal.

[40] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY."

[41] Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*, 72.

nature of a communication that passed through her place of business."[42] When a journalist questioned Hadcock about the rumoured burning of Arlin's private correspondence, she seemed to take great offence at the insinuation. She stated, "I want to make it perfectly plain to all in the interest of justice to her memory that no letters relating to private correspondence with men were destroyed, because none existed."[43] Hadcock's defence of Arlin was admirable but probably not selfless. Hadcock had daughters of her own, and as a single woman herself, it would have reflected poorly on her if one of her unmarried tenants had been carrying on a love affair under her roof. It also may have dissuaded future tenants from seeking a room.

Hadcock's description of Arlin implied she wasn't social, stating that Arlin "rarely went out evenings, for her acquaintanceship was not large."[44] Yet Arlin's athletic activities were well known to her friends, who confirmed that outside of her work day, Arlin was a student of the Brookline Swimming School and took trips with the Appalachian Mountain Club.[45] Arlin seemed to enjoy these group activities, although she was also known to enjoy walking alone. As Brigid Boyle has demonstrated, outdoor activities were a popular pastime of the twentieth-century new woman. Boyle has identified the "the so-called "athletic girl," who preferred outdoor hobbies and public competition to a sedentary life inside the home."[46] The "athletic girl" was a subcategory of the "new woman" who expressed her independence primarily through sport as opposed to education or activism. The existence of subcategories of new women, like the "athletic girl," demonstrated that this figure was not penned in by strict and impermeable parameters. Arlin's active participation in groups and associations, along with her studies and job, were strong

[42] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY."
[43] "DENIAL BY THE LANDLADY."
[44] "DAILY LIFE OF MISSING GIRL."
[45] "DAILY LIFE OF MISSING GIRL."
[46] Boyle, "Athleticism and the New Woman," 248.

indications that she likely had an active social life despite her landlady's insistence otherwise. This social life would have exposed Arlin to a wide variety of people, ideas, and opportunities that she wouldn't have had access to if she had stayed with her mother in Colebrook. The fact journalists did not mine these connections for scandal is telling. It once again reflected the power of "respectability."

This framing of Arlin as a respectable young woman was a deliberate construction. It was a narrative carefully crafted by Arlin's friends, family and the journalists writing about the case. Nonetheless, there were little hints that rumours about Arlin's private life might have been circulating. For example, one of Arlin's friends said,

> I feel her strange disappearance so keenly that if I knew other than praiseworthy things of her and the expression of those things would assist in finding her, I would not hesitate to tell them. But the truth of the matter is that there is not one thing that can be said which would in any way serve to clear up the mystery.[47]

This comment was clearly in response to something. Likely, a journalist had asked about an unsavoury rumour, and this was the attempt of Arlin's friend to put it to rest. This is where Arlin's story deviated so drastically from Arnold's. In Arnold's case, journalists did not hesitate to share every rumour they could dig up about the missing heiress. They implied impropriety at every turn, relentlessly chased down leads, and harassed those closest to her until they managed to dig up a scandal. Arlin, on the other hand, was sheltered from that. Would journalists have found traces of impropriety if they had dug deeper? Maybe, maybe not. The point is that they didn't even try.

The Danger to Body & Soul

Arlin's positioning as a respectable young woman meant that there were only two

[47] "DAILY LIFE OF MISSING GIRL."

possible theories to explain her disappearance. Both theories assumed an inherent vulnerability on the grounds of being female. The first line of inquiry revolved around her *physical* vulnerability, which was speculated to have manifested in one of two possible ways. Initially, this was the theory that Arlin may have injured herself on one of her walks. However, Mrs Arlin and Gould had a different idea of what had happened to Arlin. They were convinced that on her walk back from the post office Arlin had been "seized by white slavers".[48] Tying her disappearance into one of the biggest social concerns of the day, Arlin's family consistently presented the "white slavery" theory as the most likely reason for the young woman's disappearance. Journalists took this as an opportunity to write about the physical vulnerability of young women more generally, but also the obligation of men and boys to protect women. This gendered message of female vulnerability, alongside that of male responsibility, was meant to reinforce ideas about the nature of home and family. The white slavery story played into more than just ideas about gender roles, however. It also spoke to concerns about the dangerous nature of the city and the risk to body and soul that white women faced when mingling with non-white men.[49]

When a woman went missing, it was common for her father or brother to lead the search for her. Arlin's case was notable not merely for the community interest but for the involvement of a remarkable subsect of the community—the Boy Scouts of Boston.[50] It is unclear whether the

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[48] "SEARCH FOR ARLIN GIRL," *The Boston Globe*, January 24, 1914; "No Title," *Lincoln Journal Star*, January 26, 1914.

[49] For more on the white slavery panic, see Cecily Devereux, "'The Maiden Tribute' and the Rise of the White Slave in the Nineteenth Century: The Making of an Imperial Construct," *Victorian Review* 26, no. 2 (2000): 1–23; Marion Horan, "Trafficking in Danger: Working-Class Women and Narratives of Sexual Danger in English and United States Anti-Prostitution Campaigns, 1875-1914" (State University of New York, 2006); Eric Olund, "Traffic in Souls: The 'new Woman,' Whiteness and Mobile Self-Possession," *Cultural Geographies* 16, no. 4 (2009): 485–504.

[50] While the "Girl Scouts" did exist in 1914, they did not have a troop in Boston. There were no "Girl Scouts" in Boston until 1916. Would the Girl Scouts have joined in the search for Arlin if a troop had existed nearby? Possibly; Girl Scout training differed from Boy Scout training, but it did include things like emergency preparedness. For

Boy Scouts themselves drove the decision to search or if external forces pushed them in that direction. Journalists mentioned that there had been a request from Arlin's friends for the Scouts to search and that Boston Boy Scout headquarters agreed to mobilize the troops.[51] Yet, some Boy Scouts had been searching for Arlin well before they were officially called upon. One journalist wrote that "at her former lodgings on Marion st, Brookline, it was learned that some of the local Boy Scouts had been searching, and they felt encouraged to learn that a general search will be prosecuted Saturday."[52] Was it the sight of these young men searching around the boarding house that inspired Arlin's friends to call upon the Boy Scouts?

Arlin's disappearance was not the first search the boys had participated in, although it was a rare occurrence.[53] A journalist at the Fall River *Evening Herald* wrote that the boys aided in the search for twenty-nine-year-old Elizabeth Walker in November 1913[54]. Walker was only missing a few days and was quickly located, alive, in New York City. Her family brought her home and immediately had her committed to a sanitarium.[55] In the years following Walker and Arlin's disappearances, it seems there were no other instances of the Boy Scouts mobilizing to search for missing women.[56] If this was not a common occurrence, what prompted these young men to search for Arlin so eagerly? As mentioned earlier, Arlin had no living father or brothers at the

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more on the Girl Scouts, see "Records of the Massachusetts Girl Scouts, 1915-1917; Item Description, Dates. MC 263, Folder #." (Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge Mass., n.d.); Laureen Tedesco, "Making a Girl into a Scout," in *Delinquents & Debutantes: Twentieth-Century American Girls' Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 19–39.

[51] "IN SEARCH FOR MISS ARLIN," *The Boston Globe*, January 28, 1914.

[52] "IN SEARCH FOR MISS ARLIN."

[53] I found no instances of it occurring, in Massachusetts, before 1913. Of course, it may have happened and not been reported on, or articles covering it may not be available online or indexed. However, this was likely an uncommon occurrence.

[54] "MISSING BROOKLINE GIRL FOUND IN NEW YORK," *The Evening Herald*, November 3, 1913.

[55] "MISS ELIZABETH WALKER FOUND.," *Transcript-Telegram*, November 3, 1913.

[56] This is based on a very cursory search of only Massachusetts newspapers; a closer reading of missing women reports, with a specific focus on the involvement of Boy Scouts—particularly extended nationally—might result in additional examples of this happening. However, their involvement made front-page headlines, which was unique to the Arlin case.

time of her disappearance. It seems possible that this Boy Scout involvement reflected a loose, unofficial "adoption" of Arlin. In a sense, the Boy Scouts took her on as an honorary sister, stepping in to fill the role of brothers valiantly rushing to her rescue. These boys and their families possibly felt some connection to Arlin because of their shared social class. While Boy Scouts were not exclusively middle class, most troop members came from middle-class families.[57] This was demonstrated by a survey undertaken in 1910 examining the professions of Chicago Boy Scouts' fathers.[58]

Boy Scout involvement in the Arlin case highlighted how society saw men as the protectors of respectable women. Age was irrelevant; many of the Boy Scouts were literal children, yet they still understood that they had a social duty to search for Arlin based on their gender. At least, this was the message communicated by journalists who repeatedly pointed to the heroic bravery of the Boy Scouts. The boys showed "commendable zeal,"[59] although at some points, "the fences were high and icy and many of the smaller lads had to be helped by the scoutmaster."[60] Troop leaders knowingly sent their young charges out to tramp through the woods in search of a dead body.[61] Another journalist wrote that "the boys stuck manfully to their task and endured hardship and discomfort that few men would volunteer to undertake in such weather conditions."[62] This was simultaneously praise of the Boy Scouts and criticism of the men of Brookline. There is no indication that these men mobilized in any significant way to search for Arlin, making the Boy Scouts' eager involvement that much more significant. If they were compelled by a manly desire to find the missing young woman, why did their fathers not feel that

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[57] David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 212.
[58] Macleod, 218.
[59] "BOY SCOUTS CALLED ON.," *The Boston Globe*, January 30, 1914.
[60] "HARD DAY FOR TROOPS OF BOY SCOUTS.," *The Boston Globe*, January 31, 1914.
[61] "LADS SEARCH BIG AREA FOR GIRL.," *The Boston Globe*, February 1, 1914.
[62] "LADS SEARCH BIG AREA FOR GIRL."

same determination?

Just as the idea of "womanhood" was shifting during this period, so too was the idea of manhood. Like the emergence of the "New Woman," the "New Man" was a largely middle-class conceptualization that trickled into other societal segments in bits and pieces.[63] Boys and boyhood did not go entirely unimpacted by ideological shifts in "manhood," but aggression and competition were not new traits to them. Boys had long lived and played in ways that contrasted sharply with the domestic world controlled by their mothers and sisters. In the "home," boys were exposed to traits viewed as unique to women, such as kindness, gentleness, piety, and love. Out in the world, they were exposed to "energy, self-assertion, noise, and a frequent resort to violence."[64] In this noisy, rough world of boyhood, "traits such as size, strength, speed and endurance earned a boy respect among his peers. More subtle but just as highly valued was the gift of courage."[65] This may explain the real motivation behind the Boy Scouts' involvement in the search. While some of the young men may have been influenced by a desire to find Arlin, the excitement of searching for a body in the woods might have been a bigger draw than honour. In this way, journalistic narratives cannot always be taken at face value. Journalists used Arlin's disappearance to promote middle-class values and ideas about proper womanhood *and* manhood, but this may not have reflected the real attitudes or motivations of the actors in this story.

Two discussions about Arlin's physical vulnerability occurred simultaneously at the onset of the investigation. Appearing alongside information about the Boy Scouts' search for Eleanor's body was a commentary on the dangers of "the city" for respectable young women. This

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[63] Janet Lee, "Miles Franklin on American Manhood and White Slavery: The Case of 'Red Cross Nurse,'" *Australian Literary Studies* 23, no. 1 (2007): 40.
[64] Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*, 37.
[65] Rotundo, 42.

stemmed from Gould's insistence that Eleanor was likely the victim of white slavers.[66] Arlin, who originated from rural New Hampshire, perfectly demonstrated what many writers at the turn of the century were warning young women against. As an influx of young people moved to the city for work or education, reformers saw "the city" as a site of physical and moral danger for women. Conceptualizing it "as a dark, powerful, and seductive labyrinth,"[67] reformers urged parents to keep their daughters safe by keeping them at home. Yet reformers did not merely talk about the dangers of the city. They also worked to make meaningful changes that would make the streets safer for women.[68] Nonetheless, women who strayed from the safety of their homes and the protection of their families to take up residence in urban spaces were often viewed as making themselves vulnerable to harm and temptation.[69]

While danger was thought to lurk everywhere in urban areas, there were specific spaces deemed more dangerous than others. In particular, these were the spaces where white women mingled freely with non-white men. While Black men were viewed as a threat to white women during this period, in the context of white slavery narratives, a more dangerous figure was often the Chinese man. In most representations, the Chinese man was a clever and conniving predator; he "lured" his victims, unlike the Black man who "attacked" them.[70] This difference, as historian Mary Ting Yi Lui has explained, stemmed from "different genealogies of thought"[71] about Black

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[66] "Supposed Captive of White Slave Band."
[67] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 17.
[68] For example, reformers advocated for changes to the age of consent laws, the establishment of juvenile courts, increased wages for working women, and networks of social workers and maternity homes for unwed mothers. See Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work 1890-1945*.
[69] Leslie J. Harris, "Rhetorical Mobilities and the City: The White Slavery Controversy and Racialized Protection of Women in the U.S.," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 104, no. 1 (2018): 37.
[70] Beth Lew-Williams, "'Chinamen' and 'Delinquent Girls': Intimacy, Exclusion, and a Search for California's Color Line," *Journal of American History* 104, no. 3 (2017): 655.
[71] Lew-Williams, 655.

and Chinese men. White Americans held extremely unfavourable opinions about both groups but for different reasons, shaped by distinct histories.[72]

The press was regularly called upon to reinforce these stereotypes and contributed significantly to negative sentiment against Chinese men. In June of 1909, for example, the apartment of Leon Ling was searched by police after Ling's cousin reported him missing. The body of a young White woman, promptly identified as nineteen-year-old Elsie Sigel, was discovered in a trunk in Ling's room.[73] Sigel's death exacerbated anti-Chinese sentiment and triggered conversations about the dangers of female mobility and the risk of immigrants and white women living and working in close proximity.[74]

It should come as no surprise that Boston's Chinatown was featured early in this white slavery theory. A journalist wrote that Gould received an anonymous letter telling her that Arlin was being held captive in a "Chinese dive in Boston."[75] The journalist went on to note that "of late, several missing girls have been found in different Chinese dens here,"[76] reinforcing to their audience the dangers of Chinatown for white women. Several weeks later, this theory was strengthened by a statement from Miss Rose L. Livingston, known to some as the "Angel of Chinatown," who had made it her life's purpose to "rescue" white women from New York City's Chinatown area.[77] Livingston, sponsored by several suffrage organizations, toured the country

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[72] For more on this, see Mary Ting Yi Lui, "Saving Young Girls from Chinatown: White Slavery and Woman Suffrage, 1910-1920," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, no. 3 (2009): 393–417; Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005); Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Race, Law and Society*, no. June (2017): 351–76; Lew-Williams, "'Chinamen' and 'Delinquent Girls': Intimacy, Exclusion, and a Search for California's Color Line."
[73] Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City*, 1.
[74] Lui, 17.
[75] "IN A CHINESE DEN.," *Argus-Leader*, February 3, 1914.
[76] "IN A CHINESE DEN."
[77] Lui, "Saving Young Girls from Chinatown: White Slavery and Woman Suffrage, 1910-1920," 394.

and lectured about the sexual threat of Chinese men.[78] Livingston spoke to the press at the end of February 1914, at which point Arlin had been missing about a month and a half. She announced that some of her friends had recovered Arlin and taken her away to a retreat,

> to recover from the ordeal through which she passed at the hands of the white slavers … one of my girls in New York told me that a young Boston white girl was recently found in this laundry and that she was the girl that everyone was searching for. I … am convinced that it is really Miss Arlin.[79]

The press never publicised this woman's identity, but it wasn't Arlin.

Of course, Chinatown was not the only perceived site of danger within the city. A journalist at the Connecticut *Journal* wrote of two teachers who claimed to have seen a man "staggering across Atlantic avenue, carrying a woman whose face was covered with a shawl."[80] The teachers said they followed the man while looking for a police officer along the way but found none. Eventually, the man reached a waiting automobile, into which he placed the woman he was carrying. A "stout woman" entered the automobile, and the car sped off.[81] Whether the teachers reported this story to the police is unknown.[82] Nevertheless, this is an excellent example of how journalists reinforced ideas about the city's danger. The female teachers were helpless to intervene, and they could not find help in time. Not only was it a gripping story that undoubtedly captivated readers, but it also served as a reminder that danger lurked around every corner—but help did not.

Stories of white slavery fed into the public's love of sensation and melodrama. As a narrative device, white slavery could "offer a convenient cipher by which to remold structural

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[78] Lui, 394, 416.
[79] "CERTAIN ELEANOR ARLIN WAS VICTIM OF WHITE SLAVERS," *Detroit Free Press*, February 26, 1914.
[80] "MISS ARLIN WAS KIDNAPED TEACHERS SAY," *The Journal*, January 18, 1914.
[81] "MISS ARLIN WAS KIDNAPED TEACHERS SAY."
[82] Interestingly enough, a similar "kidnapping"—an unconscious woman carried by a man and deposited into a waiting automobile—was said to have occurred in the Dorothy Arnold case. The dime novel by author Mrs Georgie Sheldon, "Dorothy Arnold's Escape," features a similar scene. I also touched on this briefly in chapter one.

anxieties into melodramatic tales of good and evil, abduction and rescue, while also offering a strong warning for women tempted to taste the pleasures of the public sphere."[83] For this reason, it is not surprising that white slavery was a crucial part of the Arlin narrative. "I can't help thinking that 'Mertie' is a prisoner in some underworld resort in Boston," Gould was quoted as saying at the onset of the investigation, "she was a beautiful girl, and unscrupulous men would be sure to notice her on the street."[84] By 1911, major papers like the *New York Times* were devoting less space to stories about white slavery. Within a few months of Arlin's disappearance, the *New York Times* would declare that there was not, and had never been, any actual organized trafficking of White women.[85] Based on this, one might think that the public had lost interest in the topic, which fueled the decline in articles. However, the Arlin case demonstrated that "white slavery" could still be an exceptionally useful narrative tool when talking about a victim who could be cast as virtuous and honourable.[86]

The term "white slavery" had not always referred to the sexual trafficking of white women. In the 1830s, commentators used the phrase to describe the "socioeconomic inequality of the industrial age … and the poor working conditions of the proletariat."[87] It wasn't until the 1880 publication of Alfred Dyer's "The European Slave Trade in English Girls" that the

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[83] Christopher Diffee, "Sex and the City: The White Slavery Scare and Social Governance in the Progressive Era," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 416.
[84] "FEAR ARLIN GIRL IS HELD PRISONER IN BOSTON RESORT.," *Detroit Free Press*, January 27, 1914.
[85] Diffee, "Sex and the City: The White Slavery Scare and Social Governance in the Progressive Era," 414; "DOES NOT FIT THE CRIME.," *The New York Times*, July 19, 1914.
[86] A more cynical reading of the articles might lead one to wonder if there was another reason Gould was convinced that Arlin was a victim of slavers. Could Arlin's aunt have suspected that Arlin might be recovered in some compromising situation? Was this a pre-emptive attempt to cover her niece, knowing she might be found with a man? It's purely speculation; the articles do not indicate that this might be the case. All the same, Gould comes across as rather strategic. She may have thought the story of white slavery would garner public sympathy and encourage people to watch for the missing Arlin. It might also later serve as a way of justifying whatever unsavoury circumstances Arlin might be discovered in.
[87] Amy Lippert, "The Visual Pedagogy of Reform: Picturing White Slavery in America," *Journal of Urban History* 46, no. 4 (2020): 860.

definition shifted from economic inequality to forced sexual servitude.[88] Another pivotal moment, and one more widely recognized, was the 1885 publication of W. T. Stead's "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. This was arguably "one of the most successful pieces of scandal journalism in the nineteenth century."[89] Stead's melodramatic tale of the sexual slavery of young girls in England triggered protests, activism, and the formation of reform societies across England. This moral outrage eventually spread to the United States, and in 1907, "The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities" by journalist George Kibbe Turner was published in *McClure's* magazine.[90]

Most notable about this "white slavery" scare was how it positioned the white female body as the essence of all that was good and pure. Gretchen Soderlund has noted that "the white female body came to stand in for national identity and served as a trope of the threatened nation."[91] This was evident in how white slavery narratives assumed that white women would never willingly subject themselves to prostitution based on social understandings of their natural purity and morality.[92] It was also evident in how early twentieth-century "abolitionists" compared white slavery to chattel slavery, with some even arguing that white slavery was worse.[93] As abhorrent as we would find that assessment today, it can be understood within the historical context when one considers the deeply held belief that white women were passionless and disinterested in sex. Journalists argued that slavers stripped women of their innocence and

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[88] Lippert, 860.
[89] Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, 81.
[90] Gretchen Soderlund, "Covering Urban Vice: The New York Times, 'White Slavery,' and the Construction of Journalistic Knowledge," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 4 (2002): 438.
[91] Soderlund, *Sex Trafficking*, 115.
[92] Brian Donovan and Tori Barnes-Brus, "Narratives of Sexual Consent and Coercion: Forced Prostitution Trials in Progressive-Era New York City," *Law & Social Inquiry* 36, no. 3 (2011): 605.
[93] Lippert, "The Visual Pedagogy of Reform: Picturing White Slavery in America," 861; Gretchen Soderlund, *Sex Trafficking, Scandal, and the Transformation of Journalism, 1885-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 7.

forced them to go against their very nature by requiring sexual promiscuity. It was an insult to both her physical body and her soul. Alongside this, many white reformers viewed Black women as sexually promiscuous by nature and Black Americans as less evolved than white Americans.[94] This meant that some would have viewed forced labour, like chattel slavery and prostitution, as less of an insult to a Black woman than a White woman. Therefore, while the white slave panic was already reaching its "end" by Arlin's disappearance, it never completely lost its usefulness as a narrative tool.[95]

Women & Madness

While they made for exciting reading, theories about Arlin's physical vulnerability did not result in any leads that could solve the case. There was another theory, however, that quickly took centre stage. Perhaps the danger that Arlin faced was not physical. *Maybe* instead of being the victim of the elements or a depraved slave procurer, Arlin had been the victim of her own delicate, feminine mind. Early on, there were hints that the narrative might go in this direction. William Rogers, the husband of one of Arlin's cousins, claimed that Arlin had complained "of pains in her head" the day before she went missing.[96] Another journalist noted that Arlin had suffered sleepless nights for nearly two months before she disappeared.[97] Yet one of Arlin's female friends was quick to defend her mental state. She was quoted as saying,

It is quite true that Miss Arlin was mentally tired, but this is not strange, for she had been

[94] I discuss this more in chapter three. Also see Estelle B Freedman, "'Crimes Which Startle and Horrify': Gender, Age, and the Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American Newspapers, 1870-1900," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 3 (2014): 497.
[95] We see this even today. When Amy Bradley disappeared from a cruise ship bound for Curacao in 1998, there was speculation that she had been kidnapped and sold into "white slavery". In a 2006 article published by NBC News, former FBI Agent Clint Van Zandt states that "Still the potential, no matter how remote, of a white slave kidnapping is something that the authorities must consider." See, Clint Van Zandt, "Who's Taken Our Daughter?," *NBC News*, June 20, 2006.
[96] "NO NEWS OF MISS ARLIN.," *The Boston Globe*, January 25, 1914.
[97] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."

> studying very hard. Her mind was too clear and sound, in my judgement, for it to have become affected. There never was a moment in all my companionship with her that she seemed the least bit irrational. Her disposition day in and day out was remarkably even. She of course had days when she felt depressed. Who doesn't? This was due entirely to mental tiredness.[98]

Those quickest to claim that Arlin had suffered from a bout of insanity were men, and those most likely to suggest that she had been kidnapped were women. For example, one journalist cited Gould as saying she had come upon Arlin "weeping piteously" but clarified that this "was unusual, as the girl was ordinarily the most sanguine mortal possible."[99] Another journalist mentioned how Arlin had "confided her troubled mental condition to two of her more intimate friends," but these friends wanted it made known that they "were completely convinced that she was not only sound in mind, but of very keen intellectual power."[100] The women in Arlin's life were not opposed to the insanity theory and willingly shared what they knew of Arlin's struggles. However, they wanted to ensure journalists wrote about the other possibilities too. It was important to these women that investigators did not dismiss Arlin as mad and ignore that someone may have harmed her. This demonstrated how different the lived experiences of men and women were. Women were fully aware of how vulnerable they were; they *knew* that the city was dangerous. They knew that *men* were dangerous. But whereas women feared men, men feared women's minds.[101] To that point, historians have written much about women and "madness". Society's understanding of "madness" had undergone a great deal of change by the Progressive Era. Psychiatrists, doctors, lawyers, judges and social workers all played a role in reshaping and redefining it and the public's perception of it. There was an honourable sort of

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[98] "DAILY LIFE OF MISSING GIRL."
[99] "MISSING GIRL HAD DUAL PERSONALITY," *Detroit Free Press*, February 4, 1914.
[100] "NO LOVER IN THE CASE."
[101] In this way, contemporary life is not so unlike life in the past. Going out alone still puts women at risk of violence—and when they suffer violence, it's somehow their fault. Yet why shouldn't women have as much right to the city streets as men? Reformers in the Progressive Era spoke of the dangers of the city for independent, mobile women. But those concerned about women's safety were asking the wrong questions.

insanity which was reserved for respectable women. There was also a wilder, unhinged sort of insanity, which was reserved for the working class and women of colour. A woman afflicted with the "wilder" kind of insanity, typically called "demented" or "deranged," did not receive the same treatment as someone "respectably" insane.[102] In the context of missing women narratives, these women did not receive the same public sympathy or concern. In the case of Eleanor Arlin, the narrative of insanity imposed upon her made her a victim of her gentle mind and, thus, a young woman in need of protection and compassion, not scorn.

The story took an interesting turn on February 6th, nearly a month after Arlin disappeared. There had been no promising leads up until that point, and then, without warning, Mr William E. English sent a letter to Mrs Arlin. The letter said, "your daughter is living and will be restored to you ultimately."[103] English, the executive officer of the Massachusetts Hospital Reform Society, informed Arlin's mother that he had personally seen Arlin in an asylum in or around Boston and that "it was impossible to prophesy when she would be well enough to be restored to her friends."[104] He went on to claim that someone had discovered Arlin the morning after her disappearance "in a hallucinated state of mind" and that she was "a victim of mental collapse, pure and simple, and you may make this fact public with every assurance."[105] Finally, he cautioned, "if the best interests of the girl are to be considered, no further search must be made."[106] English's letter caused quite a sensation. Over the next few days, English passed information along to the press while stubbornly refusing to hand Arlin over into her family's care. He even went so far as to say that if he were to reveal what he knew, "it would result in

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[102] In the next chapter, I discuss this difference in more detail, where I examine how narratives about "wild" and "demented" women were influenced by racial stereotypes and how these stereotypes shaped how journalists wrote about missing women.
[103] "DECLARES ARLIN GIRL IS SAFE.," *The Boston Globe*, February 7, 1914.
[104] "REITERATES HIS STATEMENT," *The Boston Globe*, February 7, 1914.
[105] "REITERATES HIS STATEMENT."
[106] "DECLARES ARLIN GIRL IS SAFE."

grave danger to the girl."[107] To lend credibility to English's claims, the *Boston Globe* published a statement from Dr George W. Galvin, president of the Massachusetts Hospital Reform Society. Dr Galvin called English "thoroughly reliable."[108] Ultimately, this line of inquiry ended abruptly when journalists discovered that English had in the past been an asylum patient himself. When English claimed to have made a "very close study of institutions for diseases of the mind,"[109] he admitted that this "very close study" had been made as a patient. His credibility was immediately gone. Yet in the chaotic days between English's initial, shocking claim, and his subsequent discrediting by the *Boston Globe*, English's story was accepted by almost everyone, including Arlin's friends and family. Why was it so easy to believe this stranger knew where Arlin was?

The willingness of friends and family to so quickly accept this explanation was due to the widespread belief in the inherent predisposition of the female body to madness.[110] This was not new to the Victorians or the Progressives; the female body had always been poorly understood and viewed with suspicion, distrust, and occasionally even fear. Hippocrates and the Greeks understood illness in a woman to be almost entirely connected to her reproductive system. Madness was caused by delayed or sporadic menstruation, and a womb not in regular receipt of male "seed" or anchored down by pregnancy could shift and wander, causing havoc elsewhere in the body.[111] These ideas about women and the dangers of the reproductive system changed very little over the centuries. Even as medical knowledge expanded and new theories emerged, women's physical and mental health remained firmly tied to their reproductive capabilities and,

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[107] "ENGLISH IN DANGER IF HE LISPS WHERE ELEANOR ARLIN IS.," *Detroit Free Press*, February 13, 1914.
[108] "KNOWS WHERE MISS ARLIN IS, HE SAYS," *The Boston Globe*, February 8, 1914.
[109] "REFUSES TO STATE WHERE ELEANOR ARLIN IS."
[110] Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 301.
[111] Elinor Cleghorn, *Unwell Women: Misdiagnosis and Myth in a Man-Made World* (New York, New York: Penguin Random House, 2021), 20.

eventually, their sexuality. Ideas about female sexuality, however, did shift over time. By the end of the eighteenth century, significant segments of society understood women to be passionless and without sexual desire, positioned in sharp contrast to men's passionate sexuality.[112] Consequently, in the nineteenth century, a woman who demonstrated "hypersexuality" was not merely seen as insane but also a serious "threat to the social order".[113] Such a woman required containment because she could not be trusted to make good sexual choices. Interestingly, this was rarely accompanied by *blame*; her body had "denied her the power to choose the good," and thus she could not be trusted to make any choices at all.[114] By the beginning of the twentieth century, the "link between womb and madness became established as scientific 'fact'."[115] Considering the close ties between reproduction and insanity, it isn't surprising that women were overrepresented in diagnoses of madness and that madness was so readily accepted as an explanation for Arlin's strange and sudden disappearance. As Elaine Showalter has so succinctly pointed out, "women were believed to be more vulnerable to insanity than men, to experience it in specifically feminine ways, and to be differently affected by it in the conduct of their lives."[116] For this reason, when English came forward to say he knew that Arlin was in an asylum, it was an easy explanation for journalists to latch on to. It lined up with what they knew and expected of respectable women.

Journalists could also use insanity to explain why women did things thought to go against

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[112] Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 30.
[113] Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 185.
[114] Peter L. Tylor, "'Denied the Power to Choose the Good:' Sexuality and Mental Defect in American Medical Practice, 1850-1920.," *Journal of Social History* 10, no. 4 (1977): 482.
[115] Jane M. Ussher, *The Madness of Women: Myth and Experience* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2011), 18–19.
[116] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 7.

their nature. For example, Elaine Abelson has demonstrated how shoplifting became classified as a medical condition—kleptomania—when middle-class women began to steal goods from department stores in increasingly large numbers.[117] This medical diagnosis was limited to middle-class women, however. Middle-class women who stole were positioned as mentally unwell, whereas working-class women who stole were simply thieves.[118] In legal contexts, sometimes the label "insane" was used by women to avoid the consequences of their actions, such as women caught shoplifting. In other contexts, the label of "insane" was applied to women by those observing her behaviour. One such example was Constance Kent, who, in 1865, confessed to the murder of her young half-brother. She did not claim insanity, but insanity was imposed upon her because "better a hundred times that she should prove a maniac than a murderess."[119] The assumption here was that only insanity could explain such a heinous act.[120]

Men, of course, also experienced insanity, although this has gone less discussed. Men like English were occasionally committed to asylums and hospitals where they were subjected to treatment just like women. Yet male madness was not as easily understood as the female variety. Insanity in a respectable, middle-class female indicated a kind of superiority over "less evolved" or less refined women.[121] In comparison, insanity in the male mind generally indicated that something had gone wrong.[122] The widespread discomfort with male madness was evident in the

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[117] Elaine S Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-Thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 7.
[118] Abelson, 174.
[119] Samantha Pegg, "'Madness Is a Woman': Constance Kent and Victorian Constructions of Female Insanity," *Liverpool Law Review* 30, no. 3 (2009): 222.
[120] For more on insanity as a legal defence in this period, see Jill Newton Ainsley, "'Some Mysterious Agency': Women, Violent Crime, and the Insanity Acquittal in the Victorian Courtroom," *Canadian Journal of History* 35, no. 1 (2000): 37–56; Rachel Elin Nolan, "'A Cool and Deliberate Sort of Madness': Production, Reproduction, and the Provisional Recovery of Progressive-Era Women's Narratives," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 43, no. 2 (2018): 353–77.
[121] Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 86.
[122] It should be noted, however, that in certain circles, particular types of male "madness" were socially acceptable for brief moments. For example, Roy Porter pointed out that hypochondria was common and fashionable for wealthy Victorian men. See Porter, 87.

Arlin case. Readers would have seen this in how English's intimate history with the asylum promptly dissolved his believability. The family's newfound doubt in English's story was "due in a considerable degree, at least, to Mr English's admission that he himself has been a patient in a hospital for the insane."[123] Inspector Lynch, who interviewed English with Rogers, said that English "appears to be honest enough in what he says, but I fear that his mind is not properly balanced. I do not believe that he knows a single thing about the girl, but he may think he does."[124] The revelation that English had once been institutionalized was enough to invalidate him as a source of reliable information to both the Arlin family and journalists alike, even though Galvin, president of the Hospital Reform Society, had spoken very highly of him. The articles written after this twist in the story and the abruptness with which English lost favour with the press reflected journalists' discomfort with the idea of male "madness".

As it turned out, madness or not, English was not to be trusted. Despite his insistence that he had personally spoken with Arlin, when informed that there was talk of putting the case before a Grand Jury, English changed his story. "Of course I never saw her, but I was told that she was there," he said.[125] By February 14th, 1914, those investigating the case declared that they were done with English and that he could provide them with no further information.[126] Remarkably, the story ended abruptly. If any other clues or tips came through, they were not reported on. The English debacle had perhaps been so embarrassing to everyone involved that the journalists most invested in the story washed their hands of the case. Or, perhaps, nothing else of note came in. Either way, that was the end of the Arlin story.

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[123] "ENGLISH CLEW IN ARLIN CASE VAIN," *The Boston Globe*, February 10, 1914.
[124] "REFUSES TO STATE WHERE ELEANOR ARLIN IS."
[125] "ENGLISH CHANGES STORY.," *The Boston Globe*, February 13, 1914.
[126] "CUT INTERVIEW SHORT.," *The Boston Globe*, February 14, 1914.

Conclusion

Regardless of what happened to Eleanor Arlin, her story illustrated how a respectable young woman's disappearance could be useful in disseminating ideas about social values and expectations. Whether Arlin's disappearance resulted from "madness," white slavery, or an unfortunate incident in the forest, the stories journalists wrote about her demonstrated their understanding of middle-class respectability and female vulnerability. These ideals were evident in the deliberate creation of narratives that highlighted her "goodness" while neglecting any speculation about impropriety or deviance. Journalists cast Arlin as the quintessential damsel-in-distress. The public responded positively to this framing, as demonstrated by the involvement of the Boy Scouts in the search.

To this day, Arlin's fate is unknown. Arlin herself has been largely forgotten. The entirety of her immediate family was buried together in Colebrook Village Cemetery, but Eleanor has no grave and was never added to the tombstone dedicated to her siblings. In all likelihood, her family would have preferred that the story was eventually forgotten. They welcomed the publicity when there was the chance it could have assisted in bringing Arlin home, but when it became apparent that no one had information to solve the mystery, they withdrew. Perhaps it was out of respect for the grieving family that journalists allowed the story to fade.

Chapter Three: *The Girls Unaccounted For*

> Sadie Greenwater, a sixteen-year-old Mission Indian girl, who was adopted in 1902 by Mrs. Knowles, of 1732 East Seventh street, disappeared from home last Saturday, and has not been heard from since … The Indian girl was an orphan from San Diego. Mrs. Knowles took a fancy to the child, and brought her home. As she was seemingly satisfied with her home and was attached to the family, her disappearance is all the more explicable … The theory is advanced by friends of the Knowles family that Sadie Greenwater has answered the "call of the wild," and has gone to join her former companions of years ago in the reservation near San Diego, quitting civilization.[1]

That Progressive Era journalists felt they had a "missing girl" problem was evident in articles printed throughout the period. These articles had headlines like "The White Slavers' Toll," "150 Seattle Girls Disappear in a Year," "As To Missing Girls," "The Case of the Missing Girl," "800 Girls Disappear From Home in 6 Months," "Broadway Lights Keep Their Lure," "Missing Girl Question Serious Problem," and "Many Girls Leave Home."[2] Some believed the problem could be solved and eventually "cured" with science.

However, like reformers, journalists did not demonstrate an equal interest in all "missing girls." Whether a woman's story was considered newsworthy was generally determined by her race and social class. Whereas middle- and upper-class women regularly received significant, ongoing coverage of their cases, working-class, Indigenous and Black women were unlikely to receive any coverage. If journalists reported on a story, it generally received only one or two articles. A missing woman's race also influenced how journalists presented her story to their readers. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, wealthy women like Dorothy Arnold were almost

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[1] "CALL TO WILD ATTRACT HER?," *Press-Telegram*, April 7, 1909.

[2] See, "THE WHITE SLAVERS' TOLL.," *The Leavenworth Times*, April 22, 1911; "150 Seattle Girls Disappear in a Year," *The Leavenworth Times*, April 9, 1913; "As to Missing Girls.," *The Leavenworth Post,* April 23, 1914; "The Case of the Missing Girl," *The Salina Evening Journal*, April 9, 1917; "800 Girls Disappear from Home in 6 Months: Probe of Police Conditions Starts," *The Montgomery Advertiser*, June 21, 1917; "BROADWAY LIGHTS KEEP THEIR LURE," *Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1919; "MISSING GIRL QUESTION SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR ALL PARENTS HERE, DECLARES REV. ELMER E. HIGHLEY.," *Des Moines Tribune*, February 9, 1920; "Science Shows Why Girls Leave Home."

immediately stained by the suspicion of deviancy, while middle-class women like Eleanor Arlin were presumed respectable. In comparison, working-class women were subdivided into racialized categories that influenced the type of coverage their cases received. This chapter analyses the press coverage given to three groups of women in this period: Indigenous women, Black women, and working-class White women. Women in these groups were represented in ways that reflected stereotypes prevalent at the time. Indigenous women, for example, were almost exclusively written as “wild” and prone to running away. On the other hand, Black women were represented as either “demented” or as victims of violence perpetrated by Black men. White women were presented as the most likely to run away in search of adventure, but they were also viewed as the most at risk of sexual exploitation. Additionally, journalists often portrayed White women as prone to suicide, most often due to a failed or forbidden love affair. These tropes meant that the stories of many missing working-class women would have gone untold. Undoubtedly there were countless missing women whose stories could not be repackaged to fit into these narrative boxes.

I have compiled a list of nearly one hundred strategic search terms and phrases for this research.[3] I chose these terms and phrases to find the greatest diversity of cases possible. The coverage of working-class White women, Indigenous women and Black women was sparse throughout the period, and there were no significant cases that I could use to form the framework for this chapter like major cases did for chapters one and two.[4] Thus, this chapter brings together a variety of cases from across the period, and the country, to demonstrate the narrative trends I have identified.

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[3] See Table 1.

[4] All cases were "significant" in that they would have upended the lives of the family and friends of the missing woman. I do not use this word here to imply importance or value. By "significant" cases, I mean cases with ten or more articles that cover various points in the disappearance and subsequent search.

These articles have been analysed with an understanding of "whiteness" as the default when journalists did not specify a woman's race. In articles from this period, "whiteness" was only used as an identifier when a person of colour was also present in the story. In these cases, the journalist wished to make it obvious who was white and who was not. For example, Pearl Bollman, who went missing in 1908, was referred to as "the white girl" who may have been "enticed to leave Streator with George Emory, colored."[5] This was also true in the case of Marjorie Delbridge, 14 years old, who went missing in 1917. The "white girl" was said to have been "given by her mother into the care of a negro woman in Chicago," and was later discovered "at the home of Enoch Taylor, a negro."[6] In both these cases, journalists established the young woman's whiteness solely to differentiate her from the Black individuals in the story. The deliberate introduction of her whiteness was meant not merely as a description but as an indicator of value. The reader should care, the journalist was implying, because the missing girl was white. In comparison, descriptors such as "Negro"[7], "Negress,"[8] "squaw"[9], "Indian,"[10] "Italian girl,"[11] "Jewess,"[12] etc., were reliably used when the missing woman was not "white".[13]

In recent years, scholars such as Mary Odem, Nan Enstad and Elizabeth Clement have provided insight into the lives of young women and their relationship with the Progressive Era cities in which they lived. Many of them have focused on the idea of "deviant" behaviour and

[5] "BOLLMAN GIRL AND NEGRO NOT FOUND," *The Times*, June 24, 1908.
[6] "MISSING WHITE GIRL FOUND IN DETROIT NEGRO'S HOME.," *The Indianapolis Star*, February 15, 1917.
[7] "MISSING NEGRO GIRL NOT FOUND," *The Chattanooga News*, January 11, 1907.
[8] "HUNTING HERE FOR MISSING NEGRESS," *The Morning Post*, March 15, 1911.
[9] "SQUAW FOUND DEAD.," *The Wibaux Pioneer*, August 8, 1907.
[10] "INDIAN WOMAN MISSING IN PLEASANT VALLEY," *The Morning Union*, October 19, 1904.
[11] "ITALIAN GIRL MISSING," *New Castle Herald*, October 4, 1919.
[12] "PRETTY JEWESS MISSING.," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 5, 1906.
[13] Of course, approaching the articles this way is not flawless. Nonetheless, white as the "default" within mainstream papers of the period seems to be the norm. This would likely have been different in Black-owned or Indigenous-owned newspapers. Freedman also discusses this white-as-default approach in her article "Crimes that Startle and Horrify."

have examined how women and girls have both complied with and pushed back against, Victorian notions of respectability, womanhood, and morality. Others, such as Estelle Freedman, Grace Hale and Martha Hodes, have considered the issue of race and prejudice in this period and have drawn attention to how racial stereotypes impacted and influenced both the lives of women and their representation in the news. This chapter builds on the work of these authors to demonstrate how racial identities and social class associations shaped narratives about missing working-class women.

Quitting Civilization

To Progressive Era journalists, "wildness" caused Indigenous women to disappear. This so-called "wildness" demonstrated an inability to assimilate into "white" society and could be read as a sort of insanity unique to these women. An easy, often-used explanation for the disappearance of an Indigenous woman was that they had gone "back to the reservation." Of course, this would have been true of some women—particularly those who had family or friends there. However, this "back to the reservation" narrative, like the suggestion of "wildness," implied that Indigenous women could not thrive in the city. Such was the case with fifteen-year-old Louise Bissell, who had been missing for about a week when *The Buffalo Times* finally published a short article commenting on her disappearance. A journalist wrote that she had notified her employer she was "going to her home on the reservation."[14] This suggested a retreat to a "simpler" place and an escape from the demands of the modern world.

One example of the "wildness" trope so often employed by the press was the dramatic disappearance of Mina Costo. A journalist covering the story wrote,

[14] She did not make it home, and her father reached out to the police to help him in the search for her. See "Little Indian Girl Missing from Home," *The Buffalo Times*, November 14, 1919.

> Four Indians in full war paint and feathers dropped into Police Headquarters, on State Street, this morning, in a state of great agitation. Through an interpreter they told Acting Capt. Coughlin, of the Detective Bureau, that the belle of their tribe, a twenty-five-year old squaw, who is pretty, according to the Indian idea of beauty, was missing, and had probably been squaw-napped … The missing squaw goes by the name of Mina Costo. When last seen Mina was wearing her native costume, consisting of a red blanket, moccasins, and doeskin trous-bloomers … Mina was the life of the camp. Her face proved a magnet, and her movements and motions coaxed the shekels from many a New Yorker who happened into the village.[15]

This definition of Costo relied on tropes unique to the "Squaw" stereotype. Historian Rayna Green has argued that the idea of the "Squaw" can be understood only in opposition to that of the "Indian Princess".[16] The "Indian Princess" was a noble figure in American colonization mythology. She was a woman who went against "the wishes and customs of her own 'barbarous' people to make good the rescue, saving the man out of love and often out of 'Christian sympathy'."[17] The "Squaw," on the other hand, was said to "share in the same vices attributed to Indian men—drunkenness, stupidity, thievery, venality of every kind—and they live in shacks on the edge of town rather than in a woodland paradise."[18] Both "Indian Princess" and "Squaw" were defined by their relationship to men, which was clearly at play in this narrative about Costo. Here she was described as attractive, but only "according to the Indian idea of beauty". Nonetheless, she was seductive and alluring to the men of her community and the New York men who "happened into the village". Furthermore, the journalist presented this moment as a performative show of Indigeneity. The emphasis on their war paint and feathers marked them as

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[15] "RED MEN ASK POLICE TO FIND PRETTY GIRL," *Times Union,* July 2, 1910.
[16] This historical figure of Pocahontas is an example of the deliberate shaping of the ideal "Indian Princess" narrative. For more, see Carolyn Sorisio "Playing the Indian Princess? Sarah Winnemucca's Newspaper Career and Performance of American Indian Identities," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 23, no. 1 (2011): 1–37; Dan Blumlo, "Pocahontas, Uleleh, and Hononegah: The Archetype of the American Indian Princess," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 110, no. 2 (2017): 129–53; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004); Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 16 (1975): 698–714.
[17] Sorisio, "Playing the Indian Princess? Sarah Winnemucca's Newspaper Career and Performance of American Indian Identities," 10.
[18] Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," 711.

unquestioning “Indigenous” or “other”. The men were said to have been from her community, but if there was any familial or romantic connection between her and any of them, the journalist did not specify. The appeal of this story was probably less in the details and more in the theatrical nature of chaotic “wildness” on display.

In 1904, an Indigenous woman went missing in California. The journalist covering the story did not provide her name but did make sure to point out that she “wore no hat and was barefoot.”[19] This reference to her lack of a hat and shoes demonstrated her “wildness” to the paper's more “civilized” readers. Similarly, in 1914 Maxine Burn went missing from her employers' home. A journalist wrote that Burn's friends believed she had left to tend to her sick brother, and “she took no baggage and wore no hat.”[20] The lack of baggage and hat may have indicated the haste with which she left, but it also implied that Burn was going home to a less “civilized” place where a change of clothing and a proper hat were not required of her.

In 1909, a young Indigenous woman named Sadie Greenwater disappeared. Her adoptive mother, who in 1902 “took a fancy to the child, and brought her home,”[21] could think of no reason why Sadie might have left. The young woman’s friends suggested that “Sadie Greenwater had answered ‘the call of the wild,’ and has gone to join her former companions of years ago in the reservation near San Diego, quitting civilization.”[22] In “quitting civilization,” young women like Sadie Greenwater removed themselves from “respectable” society. The implication was that these women were not cut out for the modern city.

For many readers in this period, articles about Indigenous people were their only exposure to Indigenous life. These representations were, of course, flawed. Most mainstream

[19] “INDIAN WOMAN MISSING IN PLEASANT VALLEY.”
[20] “Indian Girl Missing From Her Home Here,” *The Minneapolis Journal*, June 16, 1914.
[21] “CALL TO WILD ATTRACT HER?”
[22] “CALL TO WILD ATTRACT HER?”

papers "supported dominant cultural beliefs and effaced or obscured alternative ones,"[23] and, as a result, there existed a significant lack of understanding when it came to Indigenous people and their world. While “wildness” was just one of many ways journalists represented Indigenous women in the press during this period, it was the dominant method used when representing missing women specifically.

The Perception of Danger

It was not merely Indigenous women whose stories were influenced by assumptions about their race. Early twentieth-century journalists were most likely to write about a missing Black woman in one of two ways. She was either “deranged" or a victim of violence perpetrated by a Black man. In the first instance, readers were distanced from the narrative by the unknowable nature of madness. In the second, however, readers were encouraged to see themselves as also vulnerable to danger, particularly in interactions with Black men.

Journalists frequently referred to missing Black women as “deranged”. This type of insanity was seen as unpredictable, wild, and primitive. Additionally, Black women who were presented as having gone insane were often positioned as working within a white household and were frequently being “cared for”[24] by their white employers at the time of their disappearance. Journalists used these stories to reinforce the supposed “inferiority” of Black women. Thomas Leonard has written that “the savage races were [viewed as] children, their development arrested at an evolutionary stage that the superior races had progressed well beyond. And, like children,

[23] Sorisio, “Playing the Indian Princess? Sarah Winnemucca’s Newspaper Career and Performance of American Indian Identities,” 5.
[24] Journalists wrote about this “care” by referring to the goodness, or big-heartedness, of the woman's white employers. Additionally, journalists presented these employers as acting like mothers or fathers to the missing Black woman.

the savage races … [required] the paternalistic protection of their betters."[25] Journalists wrote about missing Black women as though they were feeble children who had wandered off into the unknown. Yet, despite this representation of Black women as children, they did not receive the same coverage an actual missing child would have received.

For example, Martha Rodgers went missing from her sister's home in 1905. The journalist covering the story wrote,

> the fact remains that she went away wearing only her nightgown … all sorts of stories are being told in and about Anacostia about the woman having been seen under conditions which would indicate that she is insane and that she may be hard to capture when discovered.[26]

That Rodgers would go out in only a nightgown demonstrated her lack of awareness of place and time and an inability to adhere to social standards of appropriate dress. This lack of respectability was not the result of defiance or immorality. Yet it was still of note to the journalist writing the story. In fact, journalists regularly used a woman's state of dress to make an argument about her mental state. Much as Maxine Burn's lack of a hat indicated wildness, Martha Rodgers' wandering in only her nightgown indicated insanity.

Similarly, a woman left her employer's home without warning in 1903. The journalist did not give the woman's name; instead, they wrote,

> The colored domestic who has been working for Mrs. Col. Winchester for the past nine months, disappeared this morning and Mrs. Winchester is much alarmed over her unexplained absence. Nine months ago Mrs. Winchester, who is exceptionally big-hearted, found the negress wandering about the prairie apparently demented. She took the woman home with her and had kept her in her employ ever since. The negress is of weak mind, but docile and became so much attached to Mrs. Winchester that the latter did not want to turn the girl off. When she left the girl had about $15 in her possession and it is feared she has fallen into bad hands.[27]

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[25] Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), 128.
[26] "MISSING MARTHA RODGERS.," *Evening Star*, August 13, 1905.
[27] "Search for Missing Negress," *Fort Smith Times*, April 20, 1903.

Journalists rarely portrayed Missing Black women, such as the unnamed woman in this story, as having any real agency. When these women left their homes or the homes of their employers, it was because they were too frail-minded to know any better. Stories like these demonstrated White women's "goodness" and "kindness," particularly in the American South. This story was simultaneously a missing notice and a feel-good piece meant to reinforce the "supremacy" of whiteness and the importance of "Christian charity". Mrs Winchester, not the missing woman, was the main character of this story.

Another example of this was Martha Moore, who disappeared in 1903. There was no immediate urgency when she went missing, and the article announcing her disappearance was published nearly a month after she disappeared. At that point, she had "not been found, notwithstanding the fact that the colored people are putting forth great efforts to locate her."[28] The journalist described Moore as being "partially demented, and it is thought by some of the colored people that she has strayed off and died."[29] This example is significant because it demonstrates that journalists did not view Moore's disappearance as newsworthy. When members of her community gathered together to search for her, a journalist opted to cover the story. Moore's community cared about her absence, even if the press did not.

Repeatedly, journalists used insanity to explain away the disappearances of Black women. In 1911, Jennie Highjam went missing. The journalist covering her story wrote, "it is feared that her mind has become deranged and that she ran away while suffering from some hallucination."[30] Likewise, Myrtle Smith disappeared in 1914. She was employed as a domestic servant by Dr Read Bell, "and has been under treatment for pains in her head. Friends fear that

[28] "Demented Colored Woman Missing.," *Virginian-Pilot*, February 5, 1903.
[29] "Demented Colored Woman Missing."
[30] "POLICE SEARCHING FOR MISSING COLORED WOMAN THOUGHT DEMENTED," *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, August 9, 1911.

she may have become mentally unbalanced."[31] Finally, Stella Manuel, a young Black heiress, went missing in 1917. The "missing negress who has twice been declared incompetent to handle her $150,000 estate"[32] was located with the help of her "sweetheart," Frank Brown, and her brother. Despite being the heiress to a sizeable estate, Manuel's disappearance was of little interest to journalists.[33] At face value, it seems likely this was because Manuel was a Black woman. Beyond that, Manuel was missing from Oklahoma, which was part of the Jim Crow South. Most workers in Oklahoma made less than $4000 annually, and journalists may have suspected their readers wouldn't care to read about a Black heiress.[34]

If journalists portrayed a missing Black woman as a victim, it was only when they could link her victimization to a Black man. This trope was used to reinforce the idea that Black men were dangerous.[35] Journalists described the violence inflicted upon Black women in such a way as to instil disgust, horror, and even fear. Implicit in this was the understanding that if these men could be a danger to the women in their own communities, they were that much more likely to be a danger to white women. Most of these stories told of Black women harmed, or thought to have been harmed, by men close to them. These stories, therefore, cautioned White women against intermingling with Black men, explicitly highlighting the dangerous nature of romantic relationships with them. While mainstream American newspapers rarely covered real news about Black Americans,[36] by the end of the nineteenth century, "the white press had helped to construct

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[31] "COLORED WOMAN MISSING," *Springfield News-Sun*, April 5, 1914.
[32] "RICH STELLA MANUEL LOCATED AT CHANDLER," *Tulsa Morning Times*, August 30, 1917.
[33] There were over one hundred articles about Manuel and her estate, but they were not about her disappearance. Instead, these articles were about the court cases fought over control of her money. These court battles are irrelevant to this project, so I don't get into them here, but it is an interesting story worth further study.
[34] "Statistics of Income" (Washington, District of Columbia, 1919), 115.
[35] Of course, white men could be dangerous too. Reminding the public of this was of less interest to the press. As Estelle Freedman has pointed out, journalists positioned those white men who committed heinous crimes as exceptional and not reflective of white men more generally. On the other hand, journalists portrayed Black men as "natural" predators. See Freedman, "Crimes that Startle and Horrify," 472.
[36] Daly, *Covering America: A Narrative History of a Nation's Journalism*, 151.

the archetypal sexual assault as the rape of a young girl by a brutal black man, an image that would long haunt American discourse on sexual violence."[37] The number of missing Black women cases that made it to Progressive Era newspapers is relatively small compared to the number of White women cases. Those cases that did appear served a strategic purpose. They told compelling, shocking stories that could be counted upon to reinforce the idea that Black men were violent.

One example of this was the story of Lillian Shaw, who went missing in the mountains in 1903. Her body was discovered ten days later.[38] The recovery was a gruesome one. The journalist covering the case wrote

> the young mulatto wife of Melvin Shaw … has been found, but was not alive. Her charred body, burned beyond recognition, except a portion of the face and head, was found under a partially burned log heap in the Johnson county mountains after a search of ten days.[39]

According to the journalist, the likely killer was "Finley Preston, a negro," who had been in love with Shaw and did not want her to return to her husband. As a result of Preston's suspected involvement, the journalist added that there were "threats of lynching Preston."[40] This was a threat that constantly hung over the heads of Black men. In the Southern United States, White men and women lynched more than 3,220 Black men between 1880-1930.[41] These lynchings were generally in response to a charge of rape or attempted rape, and most often when the victim was a White woman. However, this case demonstrated that lynching, or at least the threat of it, could be employed even when the victim was Black. If locals did lynch Preston in response to

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[37] Freedman, "'Crimes Which Startle and Horrify': Gender, Age, and the Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American Newspapers, 1870-1900."
[38] "BODY HAD BEEN BURNED," *The Journal and Tribune*, November 4, 1903.
[39] "BODY HAD BEEN BURNED."
[40] "BODY HAD BEEN BURNED."
[41] Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman: The Women's Movement in America, 1875-1930*, 22.

Shaw's murder, it would have been less about "justice" for Shaw and more about reminding Black men to tread carefully.[42]

That "blackness" had come to mean dangerous, depraved, or lustful was not something that developed accidentally. Martha Hodes has demonstrated that "the construction of white female purity in the post-Reconstruction South was dependant upon images of black men as bestial."[43] This construction served a purpose; "dominant ideas about white women, black women, and purity were part of a larger scheme of ideas that grew out of the transition from black slavery to black freedom … to preserve the racial hierarchy in the absence of slavery."[44] Grace Elizabeth Hale has made a similar argument, stating that the Civil War made "whiteness a more important category, a way to assert a new collectivity, the Confederacy, across lines of class and gender that divided free southerners."[45] This assertion that Black men were inherently dangerous, and the widespread fear that this idea spread, was relatively new. Yet, while an assumption of violence was new, the idea that Black men and women were "oversexed" was not. Clare Lyons has argued that "to Euro-Americans, African-American sexuality was the fundamental manifestation of their "depraved" character, evidenced by especially strong venereal appetites."[46] Thus, in a post-slavery America, boundaries were in flux. Journalists reinforced this narrative by focusing on the supposedly dangerous and lustful nature of Black men in the press.

The disappearance of 15-year-old Mabel Morris in April of 1912 is another example of how journalists positioned Black men as dangerous. About a week after she went missing, an

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[42] This is not to imply that lynching was ever a "just" act; of course, it was not. However, those who did the lynching often conceived of it as an act of justice or vengeance when the victim was white.
[43] Martha Elizabeth Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19th-Century South* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997), 198.
[44] Hodes, 198–99.
[45] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York, New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 5.
[46] Clare A. Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 230.

article in the *Topeka Daily Capital* mentioned her disappearance.[47] Another paper, the *Topeka State Journal*, also published an article noting that "Andrew J. Douglass, a colored porter … was the last person seen with her before her disappearance … Douglass admits that he walked about a block with the girl Sunday night and then left her and went to his home."[48] There were two things worth noting here. First, Morris was walking alone with a man at night, which readers would have interpreted as improper or risky behaviour. Second, this was explicitly a "colored" man with whom she was walking. In Morris's case, such as in many others, journalists did not view her disappearance as noteworthy. The article mentioning her disappearance was only four lines long. The second, which drew attention to a possible suspect, was twenty lines long. The third, which discussed the discovery of her body, was fifty-eight lines long. Morris's disappearance was only useful to the press when it could be used to highlight the danger of Black men to women.

Estelle Williams, the twenty-five-year-old "wife of Thomas Williams, negro, mysteriously disappeared" in April 1910. Both her husband and the police were said to have searched for her. The police eventually located her, and her discovery was likely only "newsworthy" because she told the mayor "that she left home because she feared for her life. She said her husband had a gun and pistol and had frequently threatened her. She took an idea he was going to kill her that night."[49] The article notified readers that Williams intended to charge her husband with threatening her life. While domestic violence was rarely newsworthy in this period, news of a violent Black man with a gun was, if only because it further reinforced the stereotype

[47] One article says fifteen, and one says sixteen. These sorts of discrepancies are common, and not just with minority women. Even Dorothy Arnold, discussed in chapter three, was occasionally referred to as different ages across various papers.
[48] "UNTITLED," *The Topeka State Journal*, April 27, 1912.
[49] "SUPPOSED DEAD WOMAN IS VERY MUCH ALIVE," *Virginian-Pilot*, April 20, 1910.

of the violent Black male.[50]

Of course, there were others, too. In 1920, Bertha Kelly's body was "found buried in ashes in a vault in the rear of the home of William Board, colored … and Board was arrested charged with murder."[51] Kelly had disappeared approximately three weeks before her body was located. She was likely only found because Board's wife had "recently had Board arrested for assault and battery and later told the police she saw him knock the Kelly woman down."[52] Portrayed as both a wife abuser and a murderer, Board was a perfect example of the "violent Black man" the press was eager to warn white women away from.

Horror played into these narratives; the more gruesome a case, the more likely it was to make the news. In September 1920, for example, Lizzie Belle Battle went missing while on a walk with her husband. The journalist writing the story noted that "the next day a Negro boy [was] said to have told a relative of the woman that he saw Battle with a bloody razor, and that Battle had threatened his life if he mentioned it to anyone."[53] This demonstrated that not only was Battle callous enough to kill his wife, but he was not above threatening a child's life. A few weeks later, the journalist continued, Battle's father was cleaning out his cellar and smelled something foul "about a pile of straw in a corner of the cellar. On pulling it apart he found a sack and it was the head of a woman, which he recognized as that of his daughter."[54] It was horrific enough that Battle would kill and dismember his wife, but that he would hide her head in her father's cellar was heinous. Lizzie Battle's husband was arrested in October "when a bloody wig and parts of his wife's clothing were found in a woods about seven miles from Nashville on the

[50] Commentary on the gun may have also stirred up additional fear in readers. The portrayal of Black men as violent predators was bad enough, but adding a gun would have made him more deadly. Additionally, allowing those you've oppressed and mistreated to have weapons could undoubtedly stir up fear of retribution or vengeance.
[51] "BODY OF MISSING NEGRESS IS FOUND BURIED IN ASHES," *The Star Press*, June 22, 1920.
[52] "BODY OF MISSING NEGRESS IS FOUND BURIED IN ASHES."
[53] "FIND HEAD OF MISSING NEGRESS," *Nashville Banner*, October 6, 1920.
[54] "FIND HEAD OF MISSING NEGRESS."

Nolensville pike."[55] Upon his arrest, Battle "assumed a carefree attitude and laughingly said that he brought his wife back to the farm, and he denied all knowledge of her disappearance."[56] Whether or not Battle was actually "carefree" during his arrest is impossible to ascertain. Nonetheless, this description helped reinforce the perceived danger of Black men. In highlighting his jovial nature, journalists drew attention to his "barbaric" nature, painting a haunting picture that would have been sure to linger in readers' minds.

These stories of violence "informed both black men and white women about their vulnerabilities and white men about their entitlements."[57] Stories of violence served a purpose beyond just reporting the news; they also bolstered the narrative of female vulnerability and the need for male protection. These narratives weren't limited to newspapers; women's magazines like *Godey's* reminded their readers that the outside world was dangerous and they would be safest to avoid it entirely.[58] These stories were not published to serve as cautionary tales for Black women; they were meant to inform white readers of the danger posed by Black men and their communities. Thus it should come as no surprise that regardless of where these stories appeared, "press attention to black victims rarely elicited the kind of public outrage reserved for white women."[59] This was due to the pervasive view that Black women "lacked virtue,"[60] which made them less sympathetic victims to many journalists and their readers.

Occasionally, narratives about missing Black women could cross some racial boundaries

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[55] "FIND HEAD OF MISSING NEGRESS."
[56] "FIND HEAD OF MISSING NEGRESS."
[57] Freedman, "'Crimes Which Startle and Horrify': Gender, Age, and the Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American Newspapers, 1870-1900."
[58] Collins, *America's Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates and Heroines*, 90–91.
[59] Freedman, "'Crimes Which Startle and Horrify': Gender, Age, and the Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American Newspapers, 1870-1900."
[60] Terry Lilley, Chrysanthi Leon, and Anne Bowler, "The Same Old Arguments: Tropes of Race and Class in the History of Prostitution from the Progressive Era to the Present," *Social Justice* 46, no. 4 (2020): 34; Kali Gross and Cheryl Hicks, "Introduction—Gendering the Carceral State: African American Women, History, and the Criminal Justice System," *The Journal of African American History* 100, no. 3 (2015): 357–65.

and include subtle claims to "respectability". For example, when Aquilla Riddick went missing in 1911, the journalist covering the story noted that her mother, "who is a respectable trained nurse," was "almost beside herself with suspense and grief when she appealed to Police Sergeant Dennis to find her daughter."[61] In this particular case, the journalist noted both the frailty of Riddick's mother and her respectability, perhaps in an attempt to garner sympathy for the family. This was significant because it aligned closely with themes evident in stories of missing middle- and upper-class women like Arlin and Arnold. Journalists presented the mothers of both women as frail, weak, and unable to bear the weight of their daughters' disappearances.[62] This claim to respectability didn't assist in locating Riddick. Still, it demonstrated that working-class readers were likely aware of the tropes used for middle- and upper-class women and may have tried to use them to their benefit.[63]

When journalists reported stories of missing Black women in this period, these women were almost exclusively portrayed as either "deranged" or the victim of violence at the hand of Black men. These two types of stories played into beliefs held by White Americans that said Black Americans were less evolved, oversexed, and prone to violence. These stories also provided an avenue to celebrate White Christian "goodness" and "charity" and remind White women of the dangers that awaited them if they engaged in romantic relationships with Black men.

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[61] "POLICE SEEKING TWO MISSING NEGRO GIRLS," *Virginian-Pilot*, September 14, 1911.
[62] For more on this, see chapter two specifically, wherein I discuss the portrayal of Eleanor Arlin's mother.
[63] I do not wish to overestimate the control that Indigenous women, Black women, or working-class women had over the articles written by journalists. Still, the stories written about Black women were rarely sympathetic. This leads me to suspect this was, at least in part, an attempt on behalf of Riddick's mother to play a particular role in the hope that it would help in the search for her daughter. This is not to imply that her grief wasn't genuine, only that she was likely aware her portrayal mattered, and she did what she could to be represented in a particular way. For more on how women tried to influence and use existing systems to meet their own needs, see Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1800-1960* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988).

Women on Display

White working-class women were the most likely to feature in stories of ambition or independence, but they were also the most likely to be presented as possible victims of white slavery. Journalists also considered suicide a reasonable explanation for a White woman's disappearance, and these suicides were often woven into melodramatic tales of forbidden love. Journalistic narratives about White women reflected the concerns of reformers during this period. While reformers did not view the new opportunities for women as bad in and of themselves, they expressed "concern about the sexual dangers and temptations that appeared to surround young working-class women in American cities."[64] These "dangers and temptations" consisted of work in factories and shops, dance halls and movie theatres, among other places and activities. Reformers considered these places "dangerous" because they could lead to sexual behaviours outside the purview of what reformers deemed moral.[65]

The film industry had a particular appeal for young women looking for the sort of adventure they found in books. Many working-class girls were avid readers and loved stories of adventure and intrigue. One popular series of books revolved around a heroine named Peg, who left clerical work to become a movie star.[66] Serial magazine stories and dime novels geared towards working-class women offered the fantasy of wealth, success and excitement, following heroines that young women could relate to and aspire to. These heroines were never cast as

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[64] Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*, 1.

[65] This could consist of things like "treating," which was a system of barter that was developed to allow young women who did not have sufficient funds to experience the city's "amusements". Treating was, essentially, the exchange of sexual favours for movie tickets, clothing, dinner, etc. See Peiss, *Cheap Amusements* and Clement, *Love for Sale.* See also Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide Open Town: A History of Queen San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003); Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981).

[66] Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, 18.

victims. Instead, they overcame the obstacles life threw at them and were always triumphant in the end.[67] Following this trend, newspapers often featured tales of young women who ran off to seek their fortune in the movies.

One such young woman was Adelina Carrola, only fourteen years old, from New York City. The journalist covering her story wrote,

> Like the heroines of many great pictures, Adelina Carrola, a pretty 14-year-old Italian girl of New York is said to be "seeking her fortune" here in Los Angeles, having mysteriously left her home February 18 … Adelina is said to be the possessor of a pair of ravishing brown eyes, heavy chestnut colored hair, and to have a well developed figure.[68]

As was the case for most young Italian women who went missing, Carrola's beauty was a crucial feature in the narrative. Journalists often referenced the "well developed figure" of young Italian women, even in cases where the woman in question was quite young. Carrola, for example, was only fourteen-years-old. Still, the journalist covering her story described her as much older. Additionally, like in many other cases of missing Italian girls, the journalist added that Carrola had "mysteriously" left her home. In actuality, the disappearance didn't seem especially mysterious. Nonetheless, the disappearances of Italian girls were often seen as "mysterious," just as the women themselves were often "pretty," "ravishing," or "beautiful."[69]

Alma Bair was another young woman who disappeared in search of fame. She brought her friend, Sadie Grumbler, along for the adventure. The journalist covering the story wrote,

> "You will hear from us when we become famous," wrote pretty Alma Bair to her mother, Mrs. Mary Bair, when she left with her friend Sadie Grumbler, to go to New York to become actresses. Alma is 17. Recently a relative died and left Mrs. Bair and her daughter $40,000, the daughter to get the largest share, which was held in trust by her mother. She talked Sadie Grumbler into selling what furniture she had in the house for $50, promising to repay her from her prospects in the estate or when she earned her

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[67] Enstad, 37.
[68] "SALVATIONISTS SEEK MISSING ITALIAN GIRL," *Los Angeles Evening Post-Record*, June 7, 1920.
[69] I go into more detail about Italian women specifically further into the chapter. There are several ways in which stories about Italian girls were unique compared to stories about "white" women more generally. However, it made more sense to include Carrola in this section on adventure and fame.

> salary as an actress. Sadie's mother died recently and left her nothing but the household goods. She is 18 years old.[70]

Alma and Sadie, the journalist wrote, were so convinced of their impending success that they were willing to risk everything in pursuit of it. At least, Sadie was. This demonstrated the alluring call of fame and the danger it presented to young women regardless of their financial situation. Whereas Sadie was willing to give up everything she had to pursue this dream, Alma didn't need to. She was to inherit a sizeable sum of money. For Alma, the lure wasn't necessarily in possible riches but in the glamour and adventure thought to be part of the life of an actress. This demonstrated to readers that it was not merely working-class girls, or girls with no other options, who were susceptible to the lure of the film industry.

It wasn't just the movies that working-class girls aspired to; "the stage" had an appeal as well. Those who aspired to be chorus girls dreamt of "fancy dinners, expensive gifts, and ultimately marriage to a wealthy admirer."[71] Of course, this was hardly the reality for most chorus girls, who "lived the unglamourous lives of traveling theatre folk, dragging their meager baggage from one small town venue to the next."[72] Still, the possibility of fame was often worth the risk of poverty, particularly for young women living on minuscule wages. Like many others, Lillian Carter left home to pursue a life on stage. The journalist covering the story wrote that "Miss. Lillian Carter had the desire to become a show girl; and while the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" show was here she left her home and now her parents are endeavoring to bring her back."[73] This desire to be a "showgirl" contrasted with her parents' concern about her disappearance and positioned Carter as a flighty girl seeking fame with no thought to how it might impact or hurt

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[70] "GIRLS RUN AWAY TO BECOME ACTRESSES," *Cuming County Democrat*, September 20, 1907.
[71] Collins, *America's Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates and Heroines*, 291.
[72] Collins, 291.
[73] "GIRL RUNS AWAY.," *The Scribner Rustler*, October 19, 1904.

her family. Notices like this served as cautionary tales for parents of young women. They were reminders to watch their daughters, regardless of how happy the family situation may have been. Young women were flight risks, uniquely susceptible to the lure of the stage.

The fear of "white slavery" was also prominent in missing White woman narratives. While it's unlikely that White women made up a significant percentage of victims of sexual exploitation, white "girls" were the ones journalists expressed the greatest concern for. How this panic should be interpreted has been debated among historians for decades.[74] Explanations have run the gamut from religious hysteria to economic stress. However, the white slavery panic was, at least in part, a response to concerns about the city's dangerous nature compared to the country's relative safety.[75] It was also fueled by concern about the sexual purity of White women, a group long viewed as the mothers of the nation and who were responsible for the continuation of "the race". This concern was evident in articles like "The White Slavers' Toll"[76] and "The "White Slave" Awful Evil."[77] Additionally, journalists used white slavery narratives to portray "immigrants and African Americans as a racial and sexual threat"[78] by positioning them as both managers and procurers of white slaves.[79] The white slavery panic didn't mean just one thing to Progressive Era readers, nor did it reflect merely one issue or crisis. Instead, like ideas of womanhood or manhood, the white slavery panic emerged as part of a larger social discussion about what it meant to be a member of a "civilized" society in a rapidly changing world. And, like other discussions at the time, it varied significantly along gender, social, economic, and

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[74] For more on white slavery, see chapter two.
[75] Harris, "Rhetorical Mobilities and the City: The White Slavery Controversy and Racialized Protection of Women in the U.S.," 37.
[76] "THE WHITE SLAVERS' TOLL."
[77] "THE 'WHITE SLAVE' AWFUL EVIL.," *The Wilmington Dispatch*, May 10, 1910.
[78] Donovan and Barnes-Brus, "Narratives of Sexual Consent and Coercion: Forced Prostitution Trials in Progressive-Era New York City," 605.
[79] Donovan and Barnes-Brus, 606.

racial lines.[80]

Young women caught engaged in prostitution may have used "white slavery" as a defence to minimize the legal consequences when caught. However, it didn't always work. In August of 1913, a young woman named Alice White was arrested and jailed for prostitution. At the time of her arrest, a journalist wrote that she told officers "a pitiful tale of how she had been taken … by a young man under the pretenses that he would marry her, but when he got her to New York, she was placed in a house where she was kept for immoral purposes."[81] Nonetheless, the journalist noted that White would be held in prison until the police could identify and arrest the young man in question. The journalist's narrative indicated some scepticism at her story, despite using words like "pitiful" to describe her. At best, the journalist told their readers, White was a naïve young woman who allowed herself to be taken advantage of. However, journalists frequently sympathised with "white slavery" victims when their stories were "believable" enough. The actions of the police likely shaped this believability, and while the police didn't seem inclined to believe White's story, they did seem interested in Elizabeth Mahoney's.

When Elizabeth Mahoney went missing in July of 1913 from her home in New York City, her father immediately notified the police, although her disappearance didn't reach the press. However, she did eventually return home in August of 1913.[82] Upon her return, she made a sensational claim. The journalist covering the story wrote,

> Elizabeth Mahoney, a fifteen-year-old girl, whose father, William Mahoney of 2,616 Third Avenue, sent out an alarm after her disappearance on July 17, returned home yesterday with a story that she had been held as a white slave. She accused James Mahony of 2,487 Second Avenue, whose brother is married to one of her sisters, and Pasquale Sirico of 2,866 Park Avenue with having taken her to Bridgeport, Conn., for improper purposes and later with having kept her a prisoner in a flat in Park Avenue near

[80] I have discussed the "white slavery" panic, particularly what it was and how it originated, in chapter two.
[81] "YOUNG GIRL SAYS SHE IS VICTIM OF WHITE SLAVERS," *The News*, August 16, 1913.
[82] "Says She Was Brought Here As White Slave," *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, August 19, 1913.

> 127th Street. The girl's mother noticed Mahon and Sirico in the vicinity of her home yesterday evening, apparently watching for the girl. She sent her 12-year-old son out to summon the police. Detectives Wyckman and White of the Alexander Avenue Police Station responded and arrested Siricio and Mahon after a struggle. A charge of violating the Mann act was lodged against them.[83]

In contrast to Alice White's story, the journalist covering Mahoney's positioned her within the framework of a large, concerned family who not only searched for her but worked together to protect her from further harm upon her return. Her family's concern made her more sympathetic to readers; it indicated that Mahoney's disappearance was out of character, and thus her claim of being taken away was more likely to be true. Mahoney was cast unquestioningly as the victim in this narrative; journalists reinforced this victimization by noting how Mahoney's abductors lingered near the house upon her return. Likely, the journalist implied, they intended to take her captive again.

Noting that Sirico and Mahon were charged with the Mann Act solidified Mahoney's representation as a victim. That the police arrested Sirico and Mahon would have interested journalists and readers alike. The Mann Act was created to protect women from sex trafficking, and while the act applied equally to everyone in theory, in practice, the law was not consistently enforced. Most individuals charged with "trafficking" were Black men. A famous example of this was the arrest of boxer Jack Johnson in 1912, who was accused of violating the act while travelling with a White woman with whom he was in a consensual relationship.[84] Officials used the law most frequently to punish Black men who engaged in extramarital sexual relationships with White women, so the arrests of Sirico and Mahon would not have been insignificant to readers.

Although white slavery narratives frequently cast men as procurers, women could also

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[83] "HELD AS WHITE SLAVERS.," *The New York Times*, August 19, 1913.
[84] Soderlund, *Sex Trafficking, Scandal, and the Transformation of Journalism, 1885-1917*, 136.

fill that role. For example, when Rose De Pola, twelve years old, and Rosie Virginia, fourteen years old, went missing in 1912, the family suspected that a young woman who worked with De Pola's mother was the one who had lured them away. De Pola's brother, Dominick, feared "that the children might have been abducted as 'white slaves'."[85] The woman suspected of taking the girls had once been invited to visit the family's home, where "she and the children soon became attached to each other."[86] Such as in Mahoney's case, De Pola and Virginia were introduced to danger while within the supposed safety of their own homes. This was significant because most white slave narratives focused on the threat of the city and the amusements within it. Journalists wrote about women lured into sexual exploitation in dance halls, at the theatre, or out on the streets. In contrast, the De Pola and Virginia story illustrated that the dangers outside could slip inside if one wasn't vigilant. Undoubtedly De Pola's mother never would have brought someone into her home that she suspected capable of enticing her daughter away. Nonetheless, she did bring this woman into her home, and both her daughter, and her daughter's friend, went missing as a result. There was a hint of blame in this narrative, but also an indication of sympathy.

White slavery, then, was seen as a pervasive risk to vulnerable young white girls. Of course, it wasn't merely newspaper articles communicating this narrative. Even respected figures like Jane Addams[87] called for the suppression of the white slave trade.[88] It was easier for reformers to believe that White women engaged in prostitution were doing it against their will than it was to contend with the fact that some women chose it willingly.

It was not merely white slavers who posed a risk to working-class White women. They

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[85] "ITALIAN GIRLS MISSING," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 16, 1912.
[86] "ITALIAN GIRLS MISSING."
[87] Jane Addams was an American reformer and the founder of Hull House in Chicago. See "Jane Addams," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d., https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jane-Addams; Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life* (New York City: Basic Books, 2002).
[88] Roy Lubove, "The Progressives and the Prostitute," *The Historian* 24, no. 3 (1962): 308–9.; Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, New York, 1913, 17.

could also be perceived as dangers to themselves. Journalists writing about working-class women did not generally portray suicide as an act of temporary insanity or madness. Instead, suicide was often a deliberately planned act driven by unhappiness over a failed or forbidden love affair or frustration with life more generally. An act that, upon reflection, friends and family felt they should have anticipated. The difference, while subtle, was significant. Whereas middle and upper-class women suspected of suicide were generally thought to have been seized by a fit of melancholy, suicides among working-class women were portrayed as calculated. Many of these narratives centred on Italian women, playing on their beauty and the tragedy that suicide would be.

For example, in 1906, seventeen-year-old Felicia Cappallo disappeared. The journalist covering the case wrote,

> "Little Italy" in Kenosha had an exciting Christmas on account of the disappearance of Felicia Cappallo, a comely Italian girl seventeen years of age, and the mystery is still unsolved … Nearly all day Christmas, Captain Cameron and the members of the life saving crew dragged in the lake off the Park street breakwater in an effort to find the body of the young woman … The police seem to think it possible that the young woman has quietly slipped out of the city, and that she is waiting for her lover to join her.[89]

Cappallo's case received more attention than most, with seven articles covering the story from her disappearance to her discovery. This attention could be attributed to the dramatic, tragic nature of the story. Even in this first article, the journalist noted that while there was speculation she may have committed suicide, the police believed she had gone away willingly and was waiting for her boyfriend to join her. The journalist went on to note that Dominick Tomba, the boyfriend, had to be placed in jail to protect him from Cappallo's zealous family and friends because they suspected he was involved in her disappearance and threatened his safety. Mention of Cappallo's boyfriend allowed journalists to provide commentary on the risk of relationships

[89] "SEEK A MISSING GIRL," *Kenosha News*, December 26, 1906.

that one's family disapproved of. The speculation that Tomba might have been involved in her disappearance pointed to the possibility that her brother had been right to forbid the relationship. Despite the police eventually clearing Tomba of involvement in her disappearance, suspicion remained.[90]

Anna Sancto also went missing in 1906. Her father was said to have "appealed to the police to find his pretty daughter, Anna, aged twenty-one." She left home to run an errand, and "it is feared that she may have committed suicide."[91] Journalists gave no reason for this fear; however, their mention of her attractive appearance likely would have had readers suspecting a forbidden or failed love affair had caused it. Similarly, in 1909 a young woman named Felicia Bellamo went missing.[92] Only fifteen years old, Bellamo was "an attractive appearing brunette"[93] and said to be blessed with "red cheeks and of attractive appearance."[94] Her friends reported that Bellamo had made some comments about being tired of life, and "from remarks that she had made to her companions it is feared that she has committed suicide."[95] These remarks to friends indicated the journalist's belief that Bellamo had likely been considering suicide for some time.[96] *If* she had ended her life, it was not a spur-of-the-moment decision but rather the result of ongoing consideration.

Missing white women were typically presented in one of three ways. They may have disappeared in search of adventure, fallen victim to white slavers, or committed suicide. All three of these possibilities illustrated the vulnerability of women to danger or temptation.

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[90] "GIVES UP ITS DEAD," *Kenosha Evening News*, February 9, 1907.
[91] "Pretty Italian Girl Missing," *The Morning Journal-Courier*, November 6, 1906.
[92] There are two brief articles covering her disappearance. In one, Ballamo was listed as fifteen years old, and in the other, only fourteen. Additionally, in one, her surname is Bellamo, whereas in the other, her surname is Balloma.
[93] "ITALIAN GIRL MISSING," *Pittston Gazette*, August 18, 1909.
[94] "ITALIAN GIRL MISSING FOR A WHOLE WEEK," *Pittston Gazette*, August 23, 1909.
[95] "ITALIAN GIRL MISSING," August 18, 1909.
[96] Of course, these remarks could have been entirely normal comments later taken out of context in the aftermath of her disappearance. The journalist did not elaborate on what these comments were.

Missing Wives & Daughters

There were many similarities between the coverage of a missing Italian woman and a missing "white" woman more generally. However, journalists sexualized Italian women in a way they generally didn't with other white women. Journalists fixated on the physical appearance of young Italian women, and their stories regularly took on a romantic, albeit tragic, tone. Italian women were cast as seductive, and their stories centred primarily on elopements or suicides driven by failed or forbidden love affairs. Additionally, the families of these women were often included in the narratives about them. In cities like New York, Italian parents often permitted their daughters less independence than parents in other groups.[97] Nonetheless, "street life figured considerably into the ways in which many couples first became acquainted"[98] and therefore, families who sought to influence their daughters' marriage prospects also had to control their access to the city's burgeoning amusements. In this, many of them were unsuccessful.

Journalists always pointed out an Italian woman's beauty in disappearance stories. This description generally came in one of the first few sentences of the article, if not in the title of the article itself. Take, for example, the disappearance of seventeen-year-old Ella Hendricks. It wasn't enough to note that she was "extremely pretty"; the journalist covering the story also needed to establish that she was "well formed."[99] Likewise, Carmen Lubreo was said to have been a "beautiful young Italian girl, aged 16 years," who disappeared from her home.[100]

This fixation on the appearance of young Italian women paired well with the fact that

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[97] Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, 52.
[98] Randy D. McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure among Working-Class Immigrants in the United States* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2000), 23.
[99] "MILL GIRL MISSING AND LEAVES NO CLEW," *The Anaconda Standard*, October 30, 1905.
[100] "FAIR ITALIAN GIRL IS MISSING FROM HOME IN LEETONIA," *The Salem News*, November 3, 1917.

journalists often credited their disappearances to elopement or kidnapping. In 1912, sixteen-year-old Mary Joidige was taken from her home. A journalist wrote,

> The police learned of the Joidige kidnapping when the girl's brother, Tony, ran into the street with a revolver shouting that a man named Frank Canile had stolen his sister. According to the story told by the brother, three men threatened the girl's life if she did not accompany them.[101]

This dramatic tale of obsessive love, likely fueled by the girl's Italian beauty, reinforced ideas not merely about the alluring nature of Italian women but also the peculiarities of the Italian family. Joidige's brother "ran into the street with a revolver," for example, demonstrating hotheaded impulsivity. All the while, he was supposedly shouting that a man had "stolen" his sister, indicating ownership under assault. Despite this, there was a brief follow-up to the case a few days later. The couple was found and permitted by the Joidige family to marry.[102]

Marie Rolette was another "a pretty Italian girl" whose "disappearance [was] shrouded in mystery".[103] The journalist said that she "gave her name as Marie Rolette,"[104] and then added that she'd later given her name as Nellie Lapeer to other tenants in the boarding house from which she disappeared. Approximately 20 years old, the missing Rolette was of "dark complexion, medium height and dressed in black."[105] The journalist noted that she had left a note behind "in a gentleman's writing," which said, "will see you at 10 o'clock in the morning."[106] The implication here was that Rolette's disappearance was likely the result of her connection with this mysterious

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[101] Identified as Frank "Canile" in one article, and Frank "Canello" in another; "REJECTED; MAN STEALS GIRL," *Richford Journal and Gazette*, November 8, 1912.
[102] The dates on the articles from this story are peculiar. The *Chicago Tribune* published that they had been found and would wed on October 23, 1912. This article referenced the kidnapping and the fact that the police had spent 24 hours looking for her. However, it was more than two weeks later that the story of her "kidnapping" was published in the other papers, and the articles read as though the kidnapping had *just* happened. "ELOPERS, FOUND, NOW TO WED.," *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1912.
[103] "PRETTY ITALIAN GIRL STRANGELY MISSING," *The Spokane Press*, January 3, 1903.
[104] "PRETTY ITALIAN GIRL STRANGELY MISSING."
[105] "PRETTY ITALIAN GIRL STRANGELY MISSING."
[106] "PRETTY ITALIAN GIRL STRANGELY MISSING."

gentleman. She was also said to have left behind a pink bow on the bed and two bags containing cookies and sandwiches. This was a commentary on the mysterious nature of beautiful Italian women and the danger of unchaperoned correspondence with men.[107] The pink bow and cookies drew attention to her youth, perhaps in an attempt to paint her as naïve and vulnerable. The note in a "gentleman's writing" was in contrast to this, possibly demonstrating that she was engaged in behaviour that she was too young and inexperienced to handle. She was, perhaps, in over her head. It was also an exciting story that would likely prompt readers to discuss and speculate on the mystery. Yet while the journalist fixated on the letters left behind by Rolette, other questions of perhaps more importance did not get the same speculation. Who was Rolette, actually? Was she really a "missing" woman? What happened to her?[108] Was anyone looking for her?

Some young women left home to be with a man their family disapproved of, whether to elope or live together. In 1911, Rosie Carlin's mother suspected her of running away for such a purpose after the young Carlin went out shopping and didn't return. Her mother "stated that she had not the slightest idea of the girl's whereabouts, but suspected that she had been in communication with some young man and that an elopement followed."[109] This mention of "some young man," as opposed to a particular one, indicated that Carlin may have had several suitors to choose from. It may have also been a reference to broader ideas and assumptions about

[107] I have discussed this in more detail in chapter one.
[108] This question is interesting, although it lends little to the analysis of the articles at hand. Still, I often wonder what it means to be "missing" and to whom a person owes information about their whereabouts. If I were to go on a vacation abroad, and my family was aware of where I was and when I would be back, then going on vacation does not make me a missing person. However, if I deviate from a tour guide's schedule on that vacation, I am "missing" to them but not yet "missing" to my family. And if I return to my family at the scheduled time, on the scheduled day, but never check in again with the tour guide, they may report me missing or, if not, may always remember me as the woman who "disappeared" while on their tour. In some ways, I think missing women narratives, particularly in a historical context, are tied into ideas of "ownership" or "obligation". A woman is missing when she isn't where she is "supposed" to be or when she has left the control of the person (generally a man) responsible for her. And thus, in a sort of philosophical sense, I'm inclined to think that many of these "missing" women weren't missing at all; they knew precisely where they were as owners of themselves.
[109] "ITALIAN GIRL MISSING," *Pittston Gazette*, March 3, 1911.

young Italian women. In this period, Italian girls often married young and had a variety of partners to choose from when they did. Elizabeth Clement has argued that "Italians saw courtship as a place to defend the purity of the Italian community against what they saw as an onslaught of inferior and immoral American practices."[110] Thus, as Randy McBee has written, in Italian communities in 1910, "29 percent of women between the ages of fifteen and nineteen were married"[111] and that a "shortage of women meant that all men had to make a proposal and quickly if they intended to wed, and most women … were so overwhelmed by the incredible number of men pursuing them that they eventually consented to marry."[112] Commentary on the marriage practices of Italians was commonplace, particularly among "missing girl" cases. In 1919, for example, a young woman went missing, although her name wasn't published. With a hint of amusement, the journalist wrote,

> evidently the Italians of the city are again having matrimonial troubles, for more complaints are being made to Chief of Police Clarke about missing wives and daughters. The latest includes a 17 year old Italian girl, said to be very pretty, who has eloped with a man considerably older.[113]

This trend of Italian girls marrying young likely contributed to how journalists portrayed them. Italian girls, high in demand within their communities, were cast as beautiful and seductive to explain to readers why so many of them were caught up in scandalous elopements or ended up in marriages to much older men.

In many ways, journalists wrote about missing Italian women in the same way as White working-class women more generally. These stories were more likely to be told than stories about Indigenous or Black women, and they stood a greater chance of receiving two or three

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[110] Elizabeth Alice Clement, *Love for Sale: Courting, Treating and Prostitution in New York, 1900-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 15.
[111] McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure among Working-Class Immigrants in the United States*, 33.
[112] McBee, 33.
[113] "ITALIAN GIRL MISSING," October 4, 1919.

articles covering the case. However, as demonstrated, journalists consistently wrote about the physical appearance of Italian women and romanticised their stories in a way they didn't with other missing White women.

Conclusion

In January of 1912, the *Birmingham Post-Herald* attempted to explain why so many girls were missing from their city. The journalist wrote,

> The desire for a good time is often the cause for girls leaving home more often than anything else, according to Chief of Police Griffin of this city, whose annual report, filed to-day, shows that 180 girls and women reported as missing to the police department here in 1911 have not been accounted for.[114]

This "desire for a good time" was a common explanation among journalists who regularly tried to make sense of the ongoing disappearances. The blame fell on girls' unbridled desire for fun and adventure and their parents for not creating safe environments that would allow girls to have these experiences.[115] At least, this was the most common explanation in articles that spoke to the problem more broadly. However, as I have demonstrated, when journalists wrote about *specific* cases, generally only White women were portrayed as seeking adventure. Journalists rarely gave Indigenous and Black women that same agency and ambition.

Missing Indigenous, Black and White working-class women were less likely to be represented in the news than women in the middle or upper classes. The stories that did receive coverage were the ones journalists could best use to reinforce ideas about race, class or gender. Of course, these stories also needed to be of interest to readers; the primary goal of journalists was to sell papers. Nonetheless, journalists crafted narratives about missing Indigenous, Black,

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[114] "GIRLS RUN AWAY TO ENJOY THEMSELVES.," *Birmingham Post-Herald*, January 4, 1912.
[115] "MISSING GIRL QUESTION SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR ALL PARENTS HERE, DECLARES REV. ELMER E. HIGHLEY."

and working-class White women in ways specific to their understanding of race and social class. Representation fell along predictable patterns that conformed to stereotypes like the “Indian squaw,” the “demented Negress,” and the “beautiful Italian girl”. These stories formed part of the larger genre of “missing girl problem” articles that were so prevalent in the Progressive Era press.

Conclusion: *The Land of Missing Girls*

> Miss McCann, a social worker, is the daughter of a wealthy New York grocer. Her disappearance into the "land of missing girls" resembles that of Dorothy Arnold of a wealthy New York family, who dropped out of sight a few years ago and who was never found.[1]

Dorothy Arnold, Eleanor Arlin and Mina Costo[2] were only three of the thousands of women who went missing at the onset of the twentieth century. All three stories were part of what Progressive Era journalists called the "missing girl" problem. Like so many others, the stories of these women had no resolution. After all this time, it is unlikely that will change. As unfortunate as this is, these women have not been lost to history like so many others. Their stories have survived, if only in fragments, and provide contemporary readers with some insight into the world in which these women lived.

It is, of course, essential that these narratives not be taken at face value. Had Arnold, Arlin, or Costo read the articles about their disappearances, would they have recognised themselves in these stories? Would Dorothy have been puzzled by the articles speculating on her private life? Would Eleanor have been amused at how journalists went to such great lengths to preserve her reputation? Would Costo have been surprised that journalists covered her disappearance at all or annoyed that the coverage was so minimal? Would they have been pleased that people were seeking them or annoyed to have been in the press?

The answers to these questions are as unknowable. Yet they're questions worth asking if only to remind ourselves that these were real women with unique motivations, ambitions and

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[1] "MISS JESSIE EVELYN MCCANN," *The Sacramento Star*, December 15, 1913.
[2] The young Indigenous woman who was "squaw-napped" in 1910. Refer to my third chapter ""The Girls Unaccounted For," for more information about Costo, or see "RED MEN ASK POLICE TO FIND PRETTY GIRL."

desires; women who, not unlike the women in our own lives today, may have struggled with feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and grief. These women lived in a world built not for them but for the men in their lives, and they did what they could with the opportunities available to them.

Part of the public's fascination with stories like those of Arnold, Arlin and Costo was how they were left unfinished. We crave endings and resolutions to the stories that we read. As a species, we are storytellers; anthropological studies have demonstrated this time and time again. Jeffrey Kluger, in 2017 an article for Times magazine, wrote that "storytelling is a powerful means of fostering social cooperation and teaching social norms."[3] This is true of the stories we tell each other face to face, but also the stories that make it to the news. Progressive Era newspaper narratives about missing women reminded readers of society's expectations of them.

There are undeniably more surviving records about women like Arlin and Arnold than women like Costo. Finding stories about missing Indigenous women, Black women, and working-class White women is tricky. Impossible, even if one is searching for cases that came anywhere near the scope of Arnold or Arlin's. Journalists did not view the disappearance of these women as remarkable. They did not consider these stories as newsworthy or of interest to the public. They did not think that these stories would sell papers. And so, except in rare instances, they did not write about them. Unfortunately, this is still the case. The ultimate goal of editors and journalists is still to sell papers, and they make judgements daily on what news they think the public will want to consume. As a result, the most likely missing women to receive media attention are white, middle to upper-class, and young.[4] Today, this extends beyond merely the

[3] Jeffrey Kluger, "How Telling Stories Makes Us Human," Time, December 2017, https://time.com/5043166/storytelling-evolution/.

[4] In some ways, children are an exception. In a contemporary setting, a missing Black or Indigenous child will likely receive more media coverage than a Black or Indigenous adult woman. However, a missing Black or Indigenous

newspaper. News broadcasts, talk shows, documentaries, books and podcasts contribute to this unequal coverage.

Although we know that young, white, middle-class women are not the women most likely to go missing in society, these cases are still most likely to receive ongoing coverage.[5] Ideas about the inherent purity of white women that were so prevalent during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries haven't gone away; instead, they have been repackaged into something more suitable for a contemporary audience. The over-representation of missing white women is now called "Missing White Women Syndrome."[6] While recognising and naming this issue is a step in the right direction, this phrase is more damaging than helpful. A syndrome is "a recognisable complex of symptoms and physical findings which indicate a specific condition for which a direct cause is not necessarily understood."[7] Therefore, calling it a "syndrome" relegates it to the world of the "unknowable," which is problematic for two reasons. First, there is no fixing something that we cannot understand. Second, the cause of "Missing White Woman Syndrome" is not unknowable. The literary phenomenon that would come to be known as "Missing White Women Syndrome" developed unofficially in the nineteenth and twentieth

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child rarely receives coverage comparable to that of missing white children. The Madeleine McCann case, for example, still receives ongoing attention. Her name is immediately recognisable to most, and everyday people fascinated by the mystery hotly contest the story's details. Yet how many of those same people would recognise the name Tamra Keepness? Keepness was a 5-year-old Indigenous child who disappeared from her home in Regina, SK, in 2004.

[5] For more on this, see Zach Sommers, *Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons*, *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, vol. 106, 2016; Lindsey Conlin and William R. Davie, "Missing White Woman Syndrome," *Electronic News* 9, no. 1 (2015): 36–50; Michelle N. Jeanis and Ráchael A. Powers, "Newsworthiness of Missing Persons Cases: An Analysis of Selection Bias, Disparities in Coverage, and the Narrative Framework of News Reports," *Deviant Behavior* 38, no. 6 (2017): 668–83; Carol M. Liebler, "Me(Di)a Culpa?: The 'Missing White Woman Syndrome' and Media Self-Critique," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 3, no. 4 (2010): 549–65.

[6] Late PBS anchor Gwen Ifill coined the phrase in 2004.

[7] Fred Wolf Franz Calvo, Bryant T Karras, Richard Philips, Ann Marie Kimball, "Diagnoses, Syndromes, and Diseases: A Knowledge Representation Problem." (Washington, WA: AMIA 2003 Symposium Proceedings, 2003), 802.

centuries and was solidified in the first two decades of the twentieth.[8] It developed alongside changes in journalism and ideas about opportunities for women. It was evident in stories like Arlin's and Arnold's. These stories, and others like them, came at an opportune moment. For the first time, information could travel internationally in minutes instead of weeks. Additionally, society was in the midst of active conversations about the meanings of gender and race as well as journalistic methods, standards and ethics. There is an explanation for "Missing White Women Syndrome" in the historical record; we only have to look.

However, there is no denying that “Missing White Women Syndrome” causes harm. In North America, Indigenous women face violence at alarming rates. In 2016, the Canadian Royal Mounted Police stated that between 1980 and 2012, over 1,000 Indigenous women were murdered. Indigenous groups argue that the number is much higher, perhaps almost 4,000.[9] These cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are vastly unrepresented in the news due to assumptions and stereotypes about Indigenous people. When the press covers an Indigenous woman's disappearance, it is rarely without judgement. If she has ever struggled with drugs or alcohol, has engaged in sex work, or has had interactions with Child and Family Services, it becomes part of the narrative regardless of its relevance to the case. Even when she hasn’t, there is still speculation that she *may* have. As a result of these stereotypes, the public criticises and blames her for her victimisation, and the press uses this criticism to justify the lack of representation. Thus, the cycle continues.

Ideas about women, worthiness, and respectability established by the Progressive Era

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[8] Two notable cases that shaped the genre of crime writing in the press are the murder of Helen Jewett in 1836, who was a prostitute in New York City, and the murder of Mary Rogers in 1841, who had been, for a time, a popular cigar girl. For more on Helen Jewett, see Patrician Cohen's *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century New York* (1998) and for more on Mary Rogers, see Daniel Stashower's *The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers Edgar Allan Poe, and the Invention of Murder* (2006).

[9] John Paul Tasker, “Confusion Reigns over Number of Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women,” *CBC.Com*, February 16, 2016.

press have continued. The categorisations of missing women utilized by these journalists are still in use today, and they cause actual harm to both individuals and communities. Only in understanding how these categorisations came to be, seeing them for what they are, and acknowledging their implications do we stand a chance of doing better going forward.

Appendix 1: ***Search Terms***

Table 1: Chapter Three Search Terms
Parameters: 1900-1920, United States of America
Search Database: Newspapers.com

Search Term	No. Hits
Black Girl Lost	0
Black Girl Missing	2
Black Girl Still Missing	0
Black Woman Lost	3
Black Woman Missing	0
Black Woman Still Missing	0
Colored Girl Lost	75
Colored Girl Missing	47
Colored Girl Still Missing	0
Colored Woman Lost	209
Colored Woman Missing	9
Colored Woman Still Missing	2
Foreign Girl Lost	68
Foreign Girl Missing	2
Foreign Woman Lost	5
Foreign Woman Missing	1
Girl Lost	44,228
Girl Missing	21,780
Immigrant Girl Lost	208
Immigrant Girl Missing	12
Immigrant Girl Still Missing	1
Immigrant Woman Lost	0
Immigrant Woman Missing	1
Immigrant Woman Still Missing	0
Indian Girl Lost	75
Indian Girl Missing	27
Indian Girl Still Missing	2
Indian Woman Lost	25
Indian Woman Missing	8
Indian Woman Still Missing	1
Italian Girl Lost	70
Italian Girl Missing	41
Italian Girl Still Missing	6
Italian Woman Lost	44
Italian Woman Missing	13
Italian Woman Still Missing	0
Jewess Lost	23
Jewess Missing	6
Jewess Still Missing	0
Lost Black Girl	2
Lost Black Woman	2
Lost Colored Girl	55
Lost Colored Woman	89
Lost Foreign Girl	0
Lost Foreign Woman	1
Lost Girl	21,269

Search Term	No. Hits
Lost Immigrant Girl	11
Lost Immigrant Woman	0
Lost Indian Girl	10
Lost Indian Woman	5
Lost Italian Girl	4
Lost Italian Woman	5
Lost Jewess	2
Lost Negress	37
Lost Shop Girl	8
Lost Squaw	222
Lost Working Girl	845
Missing Black Girl	0
Missing Black Woman	0
Missing Colored Girl	19
Missing Colored Woman	26
Missing Foreign Girl	4
Missing Foreign Woman	1
Missing Girl	49,831
Missing Indian Girl	30
Missing Indian Woman	1
Missing Italian Girl	16
Missing Italian Woman	10
Missing Jewess	1
Missing Negress	33
Missing Negro Girl	9
Missing Negro Woman	19
Missing Shop Girl	4
Missing Squaw	12
Missing White Girl	20
Missing Woman	27,276
Missing Working Girl	5
Negress Lost	114
Negress Missing	27
Negress Still Missing	2
Shop Girl Lost	111
Shop Girl Missing	3
Shop Girl Still Missing	0
Squaw Lost	116
Squaw Missing	5
Squaw Still Missing	0
Woman Lost	43,272
Woman Missing	8,571
Woman Still Missing	355
Working Girl Lost	565
Working Girl Missing	12
Working Girl Still Missing	0

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