

SPECIAL FEATURE

# A “Promise to Preserve Proper Decorum”: Organized Dancers, Filipino Patrons, and the Politics of Night Work in 1920s Seattle

Sarah Pollnow 

University of Notre Dame, IN, USA

Email: [spollnow@nd.edu](mailto:spollnow@nd.edu)

## Abstract

In 1920s Seattle, dance halls charging ten cents per dance became the focus of debate. Tracing the dance workers’ self-representations and labor organizing in a city increasingly hostile to interracial social spaces, this paper evaluates how gender, race, labor organizing, and politics intersected in unprecedented ways in Seattle’s nightlife. In a decade of tepid labor organizing and in a sexual labor sector where unions were extremely rare, female dancers in Seattle unionized. Moreover, they did so in what became under Mayor Betha Knight Landes (1926–1928) the first major American city to have a female mayor. The Women Dancing Entertainers’ Union’s (WDEU) tactics of emphasizing the respectability of their profession enjoyed initial successes, yet faltered when dance hall critics increasingly constructed the presence of interracial couples as a sign of immorality. The closure in 1929 of numerous ten-cent halls south of Yesler Way reflects how Anti-Asian prejudice entered into regulation of the city’s nightlife, adversely impacting dance hall workers, women in politics, and minoritized men. The WDEU’s insistence that they were upstanding workers and economic providers nonetheless provides a powerful corrective to contemporaries’ and, until recently, historians’ tendency to overlook sexual sector night labor.

**Keywords:** night work; dance; racism; gender

In 1920s Seattle, Yesler Way marked a dividing line in the public imagination. Below the line, a “Skid Row” had emerged by turn of the twentieth century with a honky-tonk scene, saloons featuring box-house theaters, and enough prostitution and gambling to earn Seattle a “wide-open” reputation for profiting from vice.<sup>1</sup> With Canada proximate and graft institutionalized, Washington State prohibition in 1916 hardly curbed the flow of alcohol. Amidst a social dancing craze, this section of the city became a natural home for “taxi”-style dance halls. There, white paid women dancers, often referred to as instructors, sold entertainment to lonely men at ten cents per dance.

These halls catered to the neighborhood’s constantly shifting population. Demographic churn reflected Seattle’s orientation toward Pacific Ocean networks.<sup>2</sup>

Situated on expropriated Indigenous lands, Seattle was frequented by sailors, loggers, agricultural workers, and the Alaska-bound. Short-term housing abounded south of Yesler, as did overlapping yet distinctive Japanese, Black, Chinese, and Filipina/o communities. While the Chinese Exclusion Act and “Gentleman’s Agreement” had curtailed Chinese and Japanese immigration, respectively, the 1920s and 1930s featured a new wave of predominately bachelor men. As colonized subjects defined as U.S. “nationals,” Filipina/os were unaffected by the xenophobic Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924. The city’s “Chinatown” soon doubled as “Mecca of the Pinoy,” in the recollections of one Filipino who made Seattle his home base in the twenties.<sup>3</sup>

The combination of demographic diversity and working-class after-hours amusements lent Seattle “below the line” the racially suspect, liminal qualities of a nocturnal landscape. South of Yesler was “an ill-lighted world, peopled with soap-box orators who shout of the Utopia promised by the Industrial Workers of the World, and opium-dreamy-eyed Orientals,” per one journalist.<sup>4</sup> Paid dancers co-created working-class culture in leisure venues that doubled as sites of employment.<sup>5</sup> The nighttime setting raised the stakes for burgeoning debates over the appropriateness of dance. Night gave an edge to amusements.<sup>6</sup> One music store appealed to parents’ fears in an advertisement: “Is it HOME where they find their good times,” or “are you turning that jurisdiction over to the movie, the theatre, the dance hall, the cafe?”<sup>7</sup>

A vision of nighttime perils animated Progressive reformers. In an effort to contain commercial amusements, dance regulations proliferated throughout the early twentieth century U.S., especially after 1918.<sup>8</sup> A dance hall ordinance passed in Seattle in 1914.<sup>9</sup> Enforcement lagged, though one police chief attempted to enforce gendered standards of propriety by ordering dance workers to await a “paid ‘introducer’” and not “sit in boxes and spoon with patrons.”<sup>10</sup> An overriding Progressive aim, via persuasion and regulatory coercion, was to protect white working-class girls and women. To reformers, the figure of the “working mother” posed a severe moral threat to girls.<sup>11</sup> Night work amplified this peril. The Women’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor warned ominously of the “double burden” faced by women night workers with family responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> Taxi dance halls, where a woman’s touch cost just ten cents, seemingly intermingled threats of sexual sector labor and night work.<sup>13</sup>

When a resurgent anti-vice movement attacked Seattle’s taxi dance halls, the dancers organized. Anti-vice impulses had manifested in Washington State in 1910, when newly enfranchised Seattle women participated in a successful recall campaign against a mayor who failed to contain vice south of Yesler.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1920s, Seattle’s “open town” atmosphere again galvanized middle-class reformers. Clubwoman, city councilmember, and later mayor Bertha Knight Landes led the charge against dance halls. To protect their line of night work, white dance workers associated and then unionized.

The dancers’ unionization drive came at an unpropitious time in Seattle labor history. Though a pathbreaking women’s waitress union had formed in Seattle in 1900, women’s participation in unions remained low in most professions.<sup>15</sup> In Seattle during World War I, an estimated 22,000 women wage earners lacked union options. 1920s Seattle featured energetic consumer organizing.<sup>16</sup> However, the city lacked the radicalism of the 1919 General Strike that reportedly mobilized 65,000 union affiliates.<sup>17</sup>

The working women of Seattle's dance halls left a faint paper trail. Cross-referencing between newspapers, municipal ordinances, court cases, police records, Landes' papers, and transcribed Filipino oral histories, I trace these dancers' organizing from 1922–1929. Historians have analyzed dance halls as sites of employment, racial conflict, cheap amusement, exploitation, and Progressive reform.<sup>18</sup> Yet gender, race, labor organizing, and politics intersected in unprecedented ways in Seattle's nightlife. In a decade of tepid labor organizing and in a sexual labor sector where unions were extremely rare, women dancers unionized.<sup>19</sup> They did so in what became under Mayor Bertha Knight Landes (1926–1928) the first American city with a population over 150,000 to have a woman mayor.<sup>20</sup> Centering the labor organizing successes and limitations of dance-hall workers, this paper builds on histories of race and labor. It traces the process through which anti-Asian prejudice entered into regulation of Seattle's nightlife, and the costly fallout of the dance hall battles for women in politics, women workers, and minoritized men.

I argue that the dancers successfully neutralized the gendered anti-vice campaign coinciding with Landes' years as city councilmember and then mayor, yet faltered when the next mayor weaponized racial anxieties. Decentering personal travails as workers who faced the occasional unruly patron and weathered a dispiriting midnight commute, the dancers emphasized economic necessity, professionalism, and propriety. They characterized their activities as well-remunerated work, not recreation. Yet the ground shifted under their feet. Formerly “places of entertainment principally for loggers and seafaring men,” dance halls by the close of the twenties were “infested” with “intruders,” in the screech of one American Federation of Labor (AFL) organizer.<sup>21</sup> Public debate congealed into a racialized conflict over Filipino men dancing with white women. Landes' successor as mayor vilified interracial couples, undermining dancers' discursive strategies grounded in Progressive-era language of morality.

### The birth of an association: Preserving decorum in Mayor Brown's “open” town

Dance lurched into Seattle headlines in 1922, during the administration of Mayor Edwin “Doc” Brown (1922–1926). The number of dance hall and cabaret inspections conducted by the Women's Division of the Seattle Police Department more than doubled from 1922, reaching 987 in 1923. These inspections give a glimpse at who danced. A reported 271 “Dancing Entertainers” worked in Seattle as of 1923, of whom 126 were married. The average age was twenty, and forty-five were “formerly trained workers.”<sup>22</sup> The religious breakdown hints at some recent immigrant origins, with 119 recorded Protestant dancers, 65 Catholics, and 3 Jews.<sup>23</sup> Though inspectors' accounts betray concerns about interracial sexuality in the halls, the whites-only Liberty Dance Hall stood at the heart of dance hall debates and labor organizing during Brown's tenure.

Seattle's dance halls featured a spectrum from racial exclusion to tense integration. A minister and Landes ally fretted that halls featured dancing “more suggestive than that found in public dance halls of San Francisco and Portland.”<sup>24</sup> Given that San Francisco brothels had inaugurated the “tough” style of dancing popularized after 1905, this was a strong indictment indeed.<sup>25</sup> The minister was particularly alarmed by Dreamland Hall, which was frequented by “males of all colors.”<sup>26</sup> Taxi dance halls are often considered to have been, by definition, closed to Black customers.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear whether

Seattle followed this trend. Typically the city's segregated venues excluded multiple minoritized groups rather than singling out Black people.<sup>28</sup> At least two local taxi dance halls employed Black musicians, and Black performers primarily played south of Yesler due to exclusion from downtown venues by the white musicians' union.<sup>29</sup> The taxi dance-hall women appear to have been white.<sup>30</sup> Women of color worked in the Black-managed Alhambra Café, founded in 1922 and renamed the "Black and Tan" a decade later. The furor over dance halls, however, centered on the ten-cent halls rather than the Alhambra, which was located several blocks to the east in the heart of Seattle's jazz scene. This reflects white middle-class reformers' broader inattention to sexual threats faced by Black women.<sup>31</sup>

With the multid denominational Seattle Council of Churches determined to close all establishments in the "lower end of town," including the segregated and "more aristocratic" Liberty, dancers mobilized.<sup>32</sup> In October 1922, Mrs. May Stanford and two other dance hall "girls" formed a delegation to represent the thirty-one Liberty Dance Hall workers. They visited councilmember Bertha Knight Landes' home to dissuade her from attacking the halls. They emphasized economic need and family obligations. Explaining that she had previously made \$13.85 weekly sanding chairs, Stanford asked: "What girl can live on that amount of money – much less support a family of three children and a sick husband?"<sup>33</sup>

Stanford's gendered critique of the bleak economic prospects for women in Seattle was not exaggerated. Some shopworkers made just \$9 weekly as "apprentices," the local International Workers of the World newspaper reported, before being laid off when they worked long enough to qualify for the minimum wage of \$13.20.<sup>34</sup> For women with dependents, the prospect of earning \$25 per week selling dances and drinks on commission represented a potential lifeline.<sup>35</sup> Some dancers reportedly made \$50 per week.<sup>36</sup>

The dancers' woman-to-woman stakeholder engagement initially appeared to find a sympathetic ear. Landes was a college graduate and seasoned clubwoman, yet styled herself a "woman of the people" and ally of workers.<sup>37</sup> Earlier in 1922, she had become, along with simultaneously elected Kathryn Miracle, the first woman on Seattle's City Council. Landes tackled the nonpartisan role with brisk professionalism. She insisted on being called "councilman," later joking that she would "shoot on sight" any who dared to call her "mayoress instead of the mayor."<sup>38</sup> Landes shunned feminized labels while remaining committed to what she called the "highest ideals of womanhood."<sup>39</sup> A mother of two grown children, Landes understood the dancers' perspectives yet remained tight-lipped on their conversation. Her visitors were less circumspect: Gladys Nelson, one of the three delegates, leaked to the press that Landes agreed not to seek the halls' closure for the time.<sup>40</sup> Landes' Progressive sensibilities nevertheless soon took precedence over cross-class gender solidarities.

Having failed to win Landes over, the dancers found their strongest supporter in Mayor Brown. He undermined reform by encouraging dance halls to remain open late on the fourth of July in 1923 and allegedly pressuring halls to operate on Sundays.<sup>41</sup> Hardly a perfect champion for dancers aspiring to respectability, Brown was cozy with the notorious proprietor of the Liberty. Brown's son was the Liberty's lawyer and supposedly owned a one-third stake.<sup>42</sup> Amid rumors of campaign contributions from the Liberty and other below-the-line establishments, Brown rationalized his

support for the entertainment district.<sup>43</sup> He emphasized the city's revenues from visitors and insisted that if "white-collar" Seattleites have access to dance, then so too should the "working man."<sup>44</sup> Given the whiteness of Seattle's AFL, Brown likely coded the "working man" as white.<sup>45</sup> Brown backed dancers' plans for a union, explaining: "Entertaining is their profession and they are able to make a good, honest, decent living at it."<sup>46</sup>

Brown might have added that dance was hard work. Halls could optimize earnings by keeping songs short, charging ten-cent tickets per minute rather than every three.<sup>47</sup> Musicians might play three-hundred songs nightly.<sup>48</sup> Charleston dances, fox-trots, waltzes, polka, ragtime, and jazz strains—the latter at times repackaged by white musicians playing in orchestral style—kept the rooms moving.<sup>49</sup> Toward closing time, dance labor was "a matter of physical endurance," in the observation of one sociologist.<sup>50</sup> Dance exertions could compromise daytime productivity.<sup>51</sup> Many dancers nonetheless held second jobs, or used dance as a means to an end.<sup>52</sup> As one dancer weary of her workplace explained: "I don't intend to stay here many months longer. Forty bucks a week piled up pretty fast, and in February I leave for a university."<sup>53</sup>

The name the dancers chose hints at a subjectivity resistant to labeling as "girls." The "Women Dancing Entertainers' Association" (WDEA) formed in 1923 with over fifty members. Their constitution pledged to "preserve proper decorum." They sought economic security, and social standing comparable to dancers in more respectable halls "uptown."<sup>54</sup> Historians have pointed to "New Women" who frequented dance halls as consumers, enjoying the sensuality of commercial amusements.<sup>55</sup> Dance hall labor, like other forms of sexual labor, was not necessarily incompatible with sexual self-expression or community involvement.<sup>56</sup> WDEA self-representations hardly acknowledged this. They seem to have eschewed, or lacked access to, the social trappings of the "New Woman."<sup>57</sup>

The new association convened dancers, supervisory "matrons," and Elizabeth Harris, the Superintendent of the Women's Division of the Seattle Police Department. Employers, too, attended the inaugural meeting.<sup>58</sup> Harris functioned as an informal ambassador, explaining to a Seattle club that dancers were often "misunderstood and misquoted." She added, "we are planning to build a clubhouse." This slip into the first-person, accompanied by her condescending belief that the dancers needed to be "taught thrift," suggests a Progressive impulse to promote uplift through institutions.<sup>59</sup> Initial WDEA members worked at both segregated and integrated halls, specifically the Liberty, Dreamland, Strand, and Columbus halls.

The specter of prostitution dogged WDEA efforts toward respectability. Newspapers had long decried the sexualized nature of dance. One inspector from 1917 lamented how "scantly clad" women "openly solicited the men to dance."<sup>60</sup> Renewed rumors of prostitution in the halls had prompted Landes' revival of the issue.<sup>61</sup> Reformers' frequent use of the word "soliciting" reflected the concern that women monetized sexuality to earn their fifty-percent share of each dance ticket.<sup>62</sup> A Seattle newspaper read sexual commoditization into some women's "hard" expressions. To avoid reputational damage, certain dancers hid their work life from their hometowns.<sup>63</sup> Concerns about women's sexuality filtered into social science theorizing, notably in the 1932 study by Chicago-based sociologist and Juvenile Protective Association investigator Paul Cressey. He drew on vice reports, interviews, and even a letter sent by Elizabeth Harris.

Cressey found that “older, more sophisticated women” sometimes resorted to “sensual dancing” to maintain incomes. A dancer’s “overnight date” could veer toward “clandestine prostitution.”<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, taxi dance earnings could enable cash-strapped white women to avoid prostitution.<sup>65</sup>

Upon formation, the WDEA faced a controversy about working days. Hall proprietors reported that dancers wanted to work Sundays, though the WDEA’s stance is unknown.<sup>66</sup> Representative Maude Sweetman, a pro-dance hall Republican party hopeful soon elected to the district south of Yesler, labeled Sunday benefit dance proceeds “blood money.” She urged dancers to be “treated like other working girls.”<sup>67</sup> Sweetman’s call for a rest day coincided with nationwide trends among advocates for women’s labor protection. Proliferating state-level regulations, especially after 1911, capped women’s working hours.<sup>68</sup> A concurrent campaign to limit women’s nighttime employment, if slower to translate into law, emphasized the moral and physical perils of night work.<sup>69</sup>

The popularity of dance impeded regulation of this form of nightlife, indirectly helping the dancers. Hall operators worried that councilmember Landes’ proposal for a dance ordinance, though directed at below-the-line establishments, might “deliver a heavy blow to this universally popular diversion.”<sup>70</sup> Fraternities and veterans’ associations campaigned successfully to water down the proposed ordinance lest supervisory matrons be foisted on their events, or limits imposed on fundraising dances.<sup>71</sup> The argument that dance was too physically taxing likely would have met resistance from dance enthusiasts across social classes. Instead of emphasizing the risk of overstrain from this variety of night work, dance hall reformers stressed moral hazards of working-class neighborhoods’ halls.

The WDEA had pledged “proper decorum,” but the city left nothing to chance. Hiring and policing measures sought to curb perceived excesses. Dancers reputed to have an “immoral character” risked being fired, which incentivized discretion.<sup>72</sup> Taxi dance hall attendees reportedly adhered to bans on the “shimmie,” a hip-yrating move popular in more affluent uptown neighborhoods.<sup>73</sup> The Landes-backed dance ordinance that passed in March 1923 empowered the Chief of Police to cancel permits of establishments convening “lewd or dissolute persons” such as prostitutes. The ordinance barred unchaperoned minors, banned pass checks allowing free re-entry (aiming to curb illegal drinking), and established a 12:30 AM closing time.<sup>74</sup>

Regulations on illumination and closing hours targeted the very premise of night work. The 1923 ordinance mandated the lighting required per square foot and barred dim “moonlight dances.”<sup>75</sup> Dance hall defenders, too, focused on lighting. Maude Sweetman pointed to the “bright lights and police protection” as a sign of halls’ benign nature.<sup>76</sup> This reveals an implicit consensus that vice thrived in darkness. Night itself operated on a spectrum in mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century American cities. Later hours witnessed more explicit sexuality and signaled danger, despite widespread electrification of cities by the 1920s.<sup>77</sup> Policing offered insufficient protection—not least because, dancers alleged, officers sometimes threatened them on their commute.<sup>78</sup> Early closing times could allow workers to catch the last bus and guarded against women being offered rides home only to be taken to roadhouses.<sup>79</sup>



A mixture of dance hall noncompliance, police corruption, and Brown's support for the status quo undermined enforcement. During a stint as Acting Mayor from June 11–30, 1924, while Brown was traveling, Landes fired the Chief of Police and appointed herself to the post.<sup>80</sup> She took this emergency measure in response to bootlegging, lawlessness, and graft.<sup>81</sup> Brown reversed the appointment, yet soon faced a concerted attack from Landes and likeminded city councilmembers. In ensuing hearings, Superintendent Harris denied having expressed doubts about the feasibility of enforcing liquor laws.<sup>82</sup> Within two months, Harris was relieved of her dance hall duties.<sup>83</sup> Brown's electoral downfall followed, after headlines revealed his friendly relations to Seattle's bootleggers.<sup>84</sup>

### Women in unions, women in politics: Dancer resistance to Mayor Bertha Landes (1926–1928)

The 1926 protest vote that brought Landes into the mayor's office bespoke the challenges Seattle's dancers faced, not least those organized as the WDEA. Dance workers likely shared the widespread apprehension that Landes would "go too far and hurt business."<sup>85</sup> The crusade against halls south of Yesler altered during Landes' mayoralty. When Brown was in office, Landes had targeted the halls in part to disrupt a political machine. She even voted to license a competitor of the Liberty over Brown's veto, prioritizing prevention of a Liberty monopoly benefitting Brown over her dislike of vice.<sup>86</sup> As mayor, Landes could select her own Chief of Police and pursue durable policies. The business of running a city precluded a single-minded focus on moral reform. Still, Landes considered dance hall regulation her "most two-fisted adventure in municipal housekeeping," analogizing the city to a "larger home" needing a woman's cleansing touch.<sup>87</sup> Dancers countered these efforts through unionization, court appearances, and appeals to local labor.

The association became the Women Dancing Entertainers' Union (WDEU) by 1927. By 1928 it extended \$22 per month sick benefits to members.<sup>88</sup> Some dancers were married to musicians or other entertainment-sector workers.<sup>89</sup> They may have gained organizational insights from ties to unionized workers. Newspaper references to affiliated matrons or women police officers diminished gradually, suggesting an increasingly grassroots, worker-led body.

To protest a proposed ordinance that would jeopardize two hundred jobs by banning solicitation of drinks and dance sales on commission, an estimated twenty-five dancers packed into City Hall.<sup>90</sup> Many brought infants or young children. Nearly half of Seattle's surveyed dance hall workers had dependents.<sup>91</sup> Bringing their children lent salience to their roles as mothers and economic providers. Did the children cry, shout, or break free of their mothers' laps to dash with rebellious glee through the aisles? If so, such unruliness would have voiced their mothers' protest. This tactic was not without risk. The presence of children drew attention to the constraints night work imposed on family life, itself a central concern of advocates of night work regulations.<sup>92</sup>

The dance hall laborers brought a radical critique to bear on the anti-solicitation ordinance, commenting on the gendered intent: "The dance hall girls, it appears, inquire that if men can ask them to dance, why may they not ask the men?" paraphrased the *Seattle Daily Times*.<sup>93</sup> This stance that women should enjoy the same privileges as

men was noteworthy in an era when minimum wage proponents and opponents alike insisted on gender difference.<sup>94</sup> Neither the entertainers' protest nor anonymous death threats deterred Landes from signing the ordinance in December 1926.<sup>95</sup>

In a politicized May 1927 injunction suit brought by two halls, the plaintiffs' attorney reportedly argued that the new ordinance would "deprive the girls of their constitutional right to earn a legitimate livelihood." The "argument that Seattle dance hall girls have as much legal right to solicit dances on commission as Mayor Bertha K. Landes has to solicit votes" also featured, though the speaker went unrecorded.<sup>96</sup> This subversive phrasing rehabilitated the language of solicitation, rhetorically putting the night workers on par with an upstanding if anomalous woman in politics. At least half a dozen dancers attended, adorned in chic outfits and, in the case of Jean Brown, what appeared to be a fur scarf (Fig. 1).<sup>97</sup> Their court appearances elicited sympathy from reporters alert to the dual burden of night work and daytime advocacy.<sup>98</sup> The only recorded dancer testimony came from two women, one of whom was married to a detective, who spent three nights working in each of two halls.<sup>99</sup> Though these were likely undercover inspectors, their nearly identical affidavits capture workplace pressures and the risk of unwanted advances: Elma Wilson's described a manager prodding her about "wheeling the men into buying drinks," while Katherine Pellet attested to being "bawled out" by a male employee after she skipped a date with him.<sup>100</sup> That WDEU members, along with unionized musicians, stood with management indicates that the earnings may have made such indignities seem worthwhile.<sup>101</sup>

The lengthy trial produced a stalemate. Halls remained open yet officially could not pay dancers by commission. Mayor Landes continued tussling with the City Council over license renewals, yet focused more on technocratic matters such as transportation, budgeting, and utilities. The dance hall issue haunted her 1928 campaign, when frustration with vice reforms—alongside widespread sexism, shadowy yet abundant campaign financing for her opponent, unpopular budget-trimming layoffs, and a recent bridge closure—tipped voters toward a political unknown, Frank Edwards, with strong support south of Yesler.<sup>102</sup>

### Filipino dancers, sexual racism, and the closing of the ten-cent halls

While it is difficult to distinguish the dancers' voices— and votes—in the election that defeated Landes, they likely expected Mayor Frank Edwards (1928–1931) to be a friend of dance. The Strand's proprietor campaigned for Edwards, who allegedly helped him secure a dance hall license. In an apparent volte-face, the new mayor deemed the halls "centers of immorality."<sup>103</sup> Race became central in dance hall debates for three reasons. First, the segregated Liberty Hall had lost its place in reformers' crosshairs after Edwin Brown's term ended in 1926. Second, the political transition in 1928 replaced Landes, whom the city's leading Black newspaper described as personally tolerant but politically apathetic on matters of race, with a mayor whose policies evinced racial animus.<sup>104</sup> Finally, the halls featured a growing share of Filipino patrons amid a mounting sexual panic about white women and Asian men. This coincided with the passage of anti-intermarriage laws in much of the western U.S.<sup>105</sup> Intensifying racism manifesting in Washington State's 1921 alien land law, aimed at curtailing Japanese farm ownership, and through Seattle's proliferating racially restrictive covenants.<sup>106</sup> White





**Figure 1.** Six dance workers attend an injunction suit brought by two dance halls against the City of Seattle, Mayor Bertha Landes, and the Chief of Police. Jean Brown of the Women Dancing Entertainers' Union is seated second from the right ("To Dance Or Not To Dance," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 30, 1927, 4, NewsBank: Access World News).

This photograph shows six women sitting on a bench and smiling at the camera.

male sexual resentments assumed increasingly violent dimensions, most notoriously in 1930 when the opening of a taxi dance hall in Watsonville, California provoked a riot and culminated in the murder of Fermin Tobera.<sup>107</sup>

Racist discourses surrounding dance halls targeted Filipinos, as the latest wave of arrivals. By 1930, 1,563 Filipinos and 51 Filipinas resided in Seattle. This reflects a fraction of the workers, students, and recreation-seekers cycling through this "colonial metropole."<sup>108</sup>

Having weathered U.S. imperialist policies of "benevolent assimilation," many Filipino migrants to the U.S. sought continuities in their schooling. Paradoxically, the presence of English-speaking Filipinos exhibiting middle-class manners threatened

constructed racial hierarchies.<sup>109</sup> Filipinos were stereotyped as sexually promiscuous.<sup>110</sup> Seattle police officers regularly harassed, beat, and arrested Filipinos in the company of white women. To avoid physical harm, Filipinos could frequent “high class” establishments free from brutal patrolling, as was the strategy of one University of Washington student who married a white woman; date women of color, which tended to elicit less hostility; or meet women in dance halls.<sup>111</sup> Dance halls, too, could be sites of racist policing; one 1927 police inspection documenting illegal liquor sales added, as if evidence of criminality, that about half of the patrons were Filipino.<sup>112</sup> Amid rising tensions, a *Filipino Forum* contributor insisted on Filipinos’ right as law-abiding U.S. nationals to circulate in the halls. He estimated that two thirds of the city’s dance halls would close for lack of business if Filipinos were banned.<sup>113</sup>

When Filipino men danced with white women, “who exploited whom?”<sup>114</sup> Dance halls could drain the pockets of Filipinos, who as racialized workers lacked fair compensation. Elderly Filipino interviewees in a 1970s oral history project recalled having made as little as 10–35 cents per hour as migratory laborers.<sup>115</sup> Others accepted room and board and a mere ten dollars a month as a “houseboy,” a common occupation of high school and university students.<sup>116</sup> Felix Narte, who traveled into Seattle to dance, remembered that it was possible to spend three dollars in an evening.<sup>117</sup> High outlays might buy only a fickle dose of affection. Men competed for women’s attention and could wind up in the “icebox” when another patron showed a “bigger bankroll.”<sup>118</sup> Given the financial stakes, some Filipino organizations on the West Coast sought curtailment of the halls.<sup>119</sup> Interviewees nonetheless described the dancers as respectable people. The women were college students, girlfriends or wives, runaways seeking freedom from parents, and workers making a living.<sup>120</sup>

Dance hall workers’ descriptions of Asian patrons, conversely, suggest a fragile sympathy not divorced from economic interest. Reports on Filipino dancers consistently reference their dance talents, debonair appearance, and tailored suits; this contrasted with the overalls favored by many white male dancers.<sup>121</sup> The *Seattle Star* printed the “startling reply” of a dancer who preferred integrated halls. She cited the politeness and liberal spending she could expect from Asian patrons, yet laced her description with an epithet about Japanese people.<sup>122</sup> A police report claimed that workers promised dates “for the purpose of prostitution” to encourage spending, only to skip out.<sup>123</sup> Some interactions were predatory, as women “fleeced” their dance partners.<sup>124</sup> Cressey’s sociological analysis described white dancers treating Asian customers as “fish” to be exploited.<sup>125</sup> Recent scholarship has cautioned, however, that the “duped ‘Oriental’” may have been the only interpretation legible to inspectors.<sup>126</sup>

Mayor Edwards treated interracial sexuality as a social and medical pathology. Forty-eight women quarantined in City Hospital had been arrested in the “10-cent halls,” a statistic seemingly referencing sexually transmitted infections. Edwards met twenty-five ill dancers, two of whom were local. He called for Seattle to “cease to be the dumping ground for the lower elements,” yet cast dancers as “innocent girls, in search of a livelihood.” Turning on a former supporter, Edwards promised in late 1929 that the “Strand Dance Hall, where white women solicit dances and drinks from Filipino and white habitues, will get the ax first—on Monday.”<sup>127</sup> The City Council denied the Strand a license and urged the Chief of Police to deny permits to similar halls.<sup>128</sup> A brief *Filipino Forum* entry registered disappointment at the closures.<sup>129</sup>

Descriptions of venereal disease elicited an indignant response from Jean Brown, then president of the 350-member WDEU.<sup>130</sup> She declared that the dancers garnering negative attention were “floaters” rather than union members.<sup>131</sup> Many taxi-dance workers nationwide did maintain an itinerant lifestyle, sometimes leaving town to avoid specific patrons expecting sexual favors.<sup>132</sup> The WDEU prioritized a reputation of propriety over geographically expansive solidarities.

The WDEU, by then an AFL affiliate, sought support from musicians’ and janitors’ unions and citywide labor leaders.<sup>133</sup> Jean Brown explained to the Central Labor Council that hundreds of women, many with dependents, were in dire straits.<sup>134</sup> The Central Labor Council secretary had heard reports that “the whole trouble comes from the fact that a majority of the patrons are Filipinos.” He demonstrated little solidarity, reportedly saying the halls should stay closed if it “is purely a matter of morals.”<sup>135</sup> The Council approved a draft contract to prohibit solicitation of drinks or dances, pay dance workers a flat rate of fifty-five cents an hour, and guarantee four hours of daily employment. It suggested reopening below-the-line halls “with a rule prohibiting mingling of races,” according to newspapers.<sup>136</sup> Dancers supported the salary basis.<sup>137</sup> The lack of a clear WDEU response to the segregationist proposal raises the possibility that the union acceded to the racist attitudes of the AFL.

### Dance hall entertainers—banned?

As the Great Depression dragged on, newspapers reported on the “exodus” of “banned” dance workers.<sup>138</sup> Competition from radios and “talkies” drove a concurrent employment slump for Seattle musicians.<sup>139</sup> A reporter who went “slumming” in Skid Row found only boredom and underemployed dance workers.<sup>140</sup> Reported dance ordinance violations and licensing struggles dragged into the 1930s, but the WDEU faded from the record.<sup>141</sup> Its members likely accepted lower earnings in remaining halls, migrated, or entered different sectors. A declension narrative of shuttered businesses and failed solidarities, however, risks overstating the halls’ demise. Oral histories hint at continuities, with a Filipino dance hall manager making his way into what had been a predominantly white, male occupation.<sup>142</sup> Filipino musicians, too, gained a toehold in 1930s Seattle’s dance scene.<sup>143</sup> This coincided with rights-claiming by Filipinos in Seattle, notably through the formation of Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union Local 18257.

Seattle provides a unique case in which a woman executive and unionized women entertainers each mobilized a gendered rhetoric of propriety while remaining nearly silent about race. The three-part development of the dance hall battles reveals high political stakes intrinsic to this sexualized variant of night work. The administration of Edwin Brown featured a conflict between dance hall allies making pro-working class arguments, and opponents concerned with vice and municipal graft. Bertha Landes’ mayoralty showed how a gendered reform politics seeking to protect (and constrain) white women could backfire, weighing on Landes’ failed reelection campaign. Finally, the comparative effectiveness of Frank Edwards in shuttering four halls reveals how sexual racism could be a sharper political weapon than were calls for uplift. Seattle’s dancers meanwhile sought to protect their economic well-being, at times missing opportunities for alliances with itinerant dancers, male unionists, and people of color.

Seattle's dance hall battles coincided with regulatory efforts to curtail women's nighttime employment. Night work regulations tended to focus on factory hours, or else the forms and duration of women's night work, for example in mercantile establishments.<sup>144</sup> Amicus briefs attempted to persuade courts of the physical toll of night work, resultant familial neglect, and moral risks arising from exposure to coarse talk, dangerous commutes, and temptations to drink.<sup>145</sup> However meticulously compiled, legal briefs and Women's Bureau tracts on night work tended to elide the labor of women entertainers. The Women Dancing Entertainer's Union's insistence that they were, at the most basic level, workers and economic providers, provides a powerful corrective to contemporaries' and, until recently, historians' tendency to overlook sexual sector night labor.<sup>146</sup>

## Notes

1. Mildred Tanner Andrews, *Pioneer Square: Seattle's Oldest Neighborhood* (Seattle: Pioneer Square Community Association in association with University of Washington Press, 2004), 98. On theaters: Murray Morgan, *Skid Road An Informal Portrait of Seattle* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 123.
2. Megan Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins: Exclusion, Erasure, and the Making of a Pacific Coast City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2022), 7.
3. John Castillo, interview by Frederic A. Cordova, Jr., July 29, 1975, Washington State Oral/Aural History Program interviews, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Libraries Archives & Special Collections, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA [Hereafter: WSOAHP], 3.
4. Seaburn Brown, "Dance Halls: What Star Man Found Out in Night," *Seattle Star*, October 16, 1922, 3, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress.
5. Linda España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s–1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 109.
6. For the argument that night added "extra spice": Peter Baldwin, *In the Watches of the Night: Life in the Nocturnal City, 1820–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 74.
7. "Music makes home happier for young people," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 23, 1924, 74, NewsBank [Hereafter: PI].
8. Ella Gardner, *Public Dance Halls: Their Regulation and Place in the Recreation of Adolescents* (Washington: U.S. Department of Labor: Children's Bureau, 1929), 51.
9. See: Ordinance No. 33109, introduced as Council Bill No. 21708, published May 21, 1914, microfiche, Seattle Municipal Archives [Hereafter: SMA].
10. J. W. Gilbert, "City Again to Grapple with Vice Problem," *PI*, November 1, 1917, 2.
11. Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 107; see also 108.
12. Mary D. Hopkins, *The Employment of Women at Night*, Bulletin of the Women's Bureau, No. 64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 49.
13. I follow the lead of scholars who define taxi dance work as "sexualized entertainment" and "sexual service work" (Elizabeth Alice Clement, *Love for Sale: Courting, Treating, and Prostitution in New York City, 1900–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 180; Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 40).
14. Sandra Haarsager, *Bertha Knight Landes of Seattle: Big City Mayor* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 49.
15. Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 3.
16. Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 31, 4.
17. Cal Winslow, *Radical Seattle: The General Strike of 1919* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2020), 23.
18. On dance work and Filipino patrons: España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*. On the role of "slumming" in forming race and sexuality, and on "sexual racism," see, respectively: Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and*



- Racial Encounters in American Nightlife 1885–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). On commercial amusements: Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). On Prohibition-era statecraft: Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016).
19. A 1934 taxi dancer strike occurred in New York (Clement, *Love for Sale*, 192). However, historiographic mentions of sexual sector strikes are rare.
  20. Doris Weatherford, *Women in American Politics: History and Milestones*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2012), 238.
  21. O. Young, quoted in “Facts vs. Facts,” *Filipino Forum*, January 15, 1929, 5, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress.
  22. “Women’s Protective Division,” in *Annual Report for the Year 1923*, (Statement L, Sheet 2-3), SMA. For the number of inspections in 1922, see: “Report of the Women’s Protective Division for the Year 1922,” in *Report for the Seattle Police Department covering the year ending December 31, 1922* (Statement L, Sheet 2), submitted by William B. Severyns, box 1, folder 7, Police Department Annual Reports, 1802-H8, SMA.
  23. “Women’s Protective Division,” in *Annual Report for the Year 1923*, (Statement L, Sheet 3), SMA.
  24. “Dance Halls Condemned by Church Men,” *PI*, October 21, 1922.
  25. Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 101.
  26. “Dance Halls Condemned by Church Men,” *PI*, October 21, 1922, 3.
  27. Ralph Giordano, *Satan in the Dance Hall: Rev. John Roach Straton, Social Dancing, and Morality in 1920s New York City* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 178; Clement, *Love for Sale*, 184; Paul Goalby Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) [First published in 1932], 9.
  28. Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle’s Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 107.
  29. Paul de Barros, *Jackson Street After Hours: The Roots of Jazz in Seattle* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1993), 7, 24.
  30. A reference to Black women employees in a 1930s taxi dance hall appears in Cordova’s account, though the location is unspecified (Fred Cordova, *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans. A Pictorial Essay/1763-Circa-1963*, ed. Dorothy Laigo Cordova (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1983), 211).
  31. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, 4.
  32. “Dance Halls Condemned by Church Men,” *PI*, October 21, 1922, 3.
  33. “Mrs. Landes Meets 3 Girls of Dance Hall,” *PI*, October 16, 1922, 9.
  34. Author 825,312, “Women in Industry,” *Industrial Worker*, July 30, 1924, 4, microfilm A5, University of Washington Microforms & Newspapers [Hereafter UW-MN].
  35. On the earnings level: “Women’s Protective Division,” in *Annual Report for the Year 1923*, SMA.
  36. Brown, “Dance Halls: What Star Man Found..,” 3.
  37. “Mrs. Landes Real Worker, Wants to Protect Women,” [Newspaper unidentified, undated], box 1, News Clippings: City Council Campaign, Bertha Knight Landes Papers, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle, WA [Hereafter: BKL-UW].
  38. Bertha Knight Landes, “Steering a Big City Straight,” *The Woman Citizen* 12 (December 1927), 7.
  39. [Bertha Landes], “The Problem of the Large City,” July 11, 1926, 13, box 1, Working Files: Fragments of Articles and Reports between 1920 and 1941, BKL-UW.
  40. “Mrs. Landes Meets 3 Girls of Dance Hall,” 9.
  41. “Dance Halls’ Late Hours Laid to Mayor,” *Seattle Municipal News*, July 28, 1923, Seattle Public Library: Seattle Room Digital Collections, <https://cdm16118.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16118coll7/id/11406/rec/1>; John W. Nelson, “Mrs. Landes Seeks to Put Lid On Tight,” *Seattle Star*, November 8, 1923, 9.
  42. Alfred H. Lundin to Mr. Nickols [sic], read aloud on October 21, 1924, during examination of Edwin Brown, Jr., CF10013 Dec: Civil Service and Police Investigations (4 of 7) 1924, 1802-B5, SMA, 321. On Brown Jr. as lawyer: “Dance Hall Wins Renewal,” *Seattle Daily Times*, February 17, 1925, 15, NewsBank.
  43. H. G. Behneman, testimony on October 14, 1924, in Department Efficiency Committee, *Report on Civil Service and Police Depts.*, CF10013 Dec: Civil Service and Police Investigations (3 of 7) 1924, 1802-B5, SMA, 239.

44. "Mayor Backs Dance Halls to Boost City," *PI*, October 15, 1922, 3; "Mayor Defends Dance Hall for Workers," *PI*, October 21, 1922, 3.
45. On racial exclusion in Seattle's AFL, see: Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 9.
46. "Mayor Urges Unions as Dance Hall Solution," *PI*, October 23, 1922, 9. See also: "Dance Halls Quiz Lulled," *Seattle Union Record Daily*, October 23, 1922, 2, microfilm, A1657, UW-MN.
47. A description to this effect appears in a semi-autobiographical novel originally published in 1943: Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 105.
48. España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 123.
49. See: Andrews, *Pioneer Square*, 114; Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 338. On "disguised" jazz, see de Barros, *Jackson Street After Hours* 35.
50. Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall*, 12.
51. On dance leisure doubling as "work" in Black communities, see: Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 181.
52. One Los Angeles-based taxi dancer estimated in 1931 that 80 percent of dancers held a day job (Jeanne de Al Moreau, "Confession of a Taxi Dancer," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1931, K5, ProQuest).
53. Quoted in: Brown, "Dance Halls: What Star Man Found..." 2.
54. "50 Dance Hall Girls Organize as Labor," *PI*, June 29, 1923, 17.
55. On "New Women" in the dance halls, see: Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 7, 98.
56. For an example of a Filipina youth proud of earnings from dancing at a strike camp in Hawai'i, see: Angeles Monrayo Raymundo, *Tomorrow's Memories: A Diary, 1924-1928*, ed. Rizaline R. Raymundo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 18-19.
57. On the existence of a "working-class variant of the modern New Woman" and the ambivalence this provoked regarding women's sexuality, see: Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 126.
58. "50 Dance Hall Girls Organize as Labor Body," 17.
59. Fielding Lemmon, "Dance Halls Are Defended," *Seattle Star*, November 6, 1923, 1, 9.
60. Gilbert, "City Again to Grapple with Vice Problem," 2.
61. "Mrs. Landes Takes Lead in War on Vice," *PI*, October 14, 1922, 3.
62. Clement, *Love for Sale*, 184.
63. Brown, "Dance Halls: What Star Man Found..." 3.
64. Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall*, 104, 49.
65. Clement, *Love for Sale*, 193.
66. "Halls Operate for 'Charity,'" *Seattle Star*, September 7, 1923, 3.
67. Maude Sweetman, "Dance Halls and Sunday," *Seattle Star*, October 30, 1923, 6.
68. On the role of *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) and the 1911 Triangle Fire in galvanizing the passage of protective legislation, see: Nancy Woloch, *A Class by Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s-1990s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 86.
69. By 1920, only 12 states barred women from working at night in select occupations; Washington was not among them (U.S. Women's Bureau, "Night-Work Laws in the United States: Brief Summary of State Legislation Regulating Night Work for Women," Bulletin No. 7, October 15, 1919 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), 2, 3).
70. "Force Action on Dance Law," *Seattle Star*, January 3, 1923, 9.
71. "Lively Hearing on Dance Halls," *Seattle Star*, January 15, 1923, 1; Nelson, "Mrs. Landes Seeks to Put Lid On Tight," *Seattle Star*, November 8, 1923, 1.
72. de Al Moreau, "Confession of a Taxi Dancer," K5.
73. Brown, "Dance Halls: What Star Man Found..." 3.
74. Ordinance No. 44785, March 7, 1923, 4, City of Seattle Combined Legislative Records, Office of the City Clerk, [http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord\\_44785.pdf](http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_44785.pdf).
75. Ordinance No. 44785, 7.
76. "Fight Likely in Council on Dance Halls," *PI*, October 13, 1922, 11.
77. Baldwin, *In the Watches of the Night*, 93, 1.
78. "Dance Hall Opens Fight on City Ban," *Seattle Daily Times*, June 29, 1927, 3.
79. Gardner, *Public Dance Halls*, 16.



80. Bertha Landes, proclamation, June 26, 1924, Comptroller File 95242, SMA, <https://www.seattle.gov/images/CityArchive/Exhibits/WomeninGovt/CF95242.jpg>. On the June dates: Edwin J. Brown, quoted in "Mrs. Landes Acted on 'Small Town Gossip,' Mayor Brown Charges," *Seattle Union Record*, July 5, 1942, 2, microfilm, A1658, UW-MN.
81. Mrs. Henry Landes [Bertha Landes] to William B. Severyns, Jun. 23, 1924, box 1, Correspondence: Outgoing, 1924–30, BKL-UW.
82. Elizabeth Harris, testimony, October 17(?), 1924, in Department Efficiency Committee, *Report on Civil Service and Police Depts.*, CF10013 Dec: Civil Service and Police Investigations (4 of 7) 1924, 309, 1802-B5, SMA.
83. "Mrs. Nell Slusser," *Seattle Daily Times*, December 2, 1924, 7.
84. Haarsager, *Bertha Knight Landes of Seattle*, 301 note 163.
85. Quoted in Alfred Holman, "Seattle Ably Run by Woman Mayor," *New York Times*, July 4, 1926, 45.
86. "Council Grants License to Casino Dance Hall," *Seattle Daily Times*, March 17, 1925, 2.
87. Landes, "Steering a Big City Straight," 8.
88. "Dance Hall Girls' Union Increases Membership," *Seattle Daily Times*, March 21, 1928, 5.
89. "Dance Hall Issue Still Unsettled," *Seattle Union Record*, December 21, 1926, 1, microfilm, A1658, UW-MN.
90. "Dance Hall Issue Still Unsettled," *Seattle Union Record*, 1.
91. "Women's Protective Division," in *Annual Report for the Year 1923: City of Seattle, Washington, Department of Police* (Statement L, Sheet 2), prepared by W. B. Severyns, box 1, folder 7, Police Department Annual Reports, 1802-H8, SMA.
92. See: Hopkins, *The Employment of Women at Night*, 54–56.
93. "Pity Poor Councilmen..." *Seattle Daily Times*, December 29, 1926, 14.
94. Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 35, 44.
95. Florence Jean Deacon, *Why Wasn't Bertha Knight Landes Re-Elected?* (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1978), 38.
96. "Dance Halls Get Hearing," *PI*, June 20, 1927, 17.
97. "To Dance Or Not To Dance," *PI*, June 30, 1927, 4.
98. "Pity These Girls! Dance All Night, in Court All Day," *PI*, June 29, 1927, 5.
99. On the marriage: "Detective Testifies Against Dance Halls," *Seattle Daily Times*, June 30, 1927, 8.
100. "Affidavit of Elma Wilson" in *Bungalow Amusement Co. v. Seattle*, 148 Wash. 485, 269 Pac. 1043 (1928), microfiche, King County Superior Court [Hereafter: KCSC]; "Affidavit of Katherine Pellet," June 1, 1927, in *Bungalow Amusement Co. v. Seattle*, 148 Wash. 485, 269 Pac. 1043 (1928), microfiche, KCSC.
101. On the unions' involvement: "Dance Hall Opens Fight on City Ban," 3.
102. Deacon, *Why Wasn't Bertha Knight Landes Re-Elected*, 85, 93, 100–106; Richard C. Berner, *Seattle in the 20th Century, 1921–1940*, vol. 2. (Seattle, 1991), 111–12.
103. "Mayor Wins in Crusade on Resorts," *PI*, November 5, 1929, 3.
104. "Landes or Edwards," *The Enterprise*, March 9, 1928, 4, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093375/1928-03-09/ed-1/seq-4/>.
105. See: Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 20. Intermarriage remained legal in Washington, but interracial couples faced discrimination (Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 342).
106. Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins*, 143, 141.
107. Cordova, *Filipinos*, 116.
108. Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919–1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 15; see also 118.
109. España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 2, 130.
110. Taylor finds that Filipinos and Black Seattleites encountered similar stereotypes (Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, 107).
111. Teodoro Ranjo, interview by Cynthia Mejia, January 14, and February 9–10, 1976, WSOAHP, 27. On dating Mexican, Indigenous, or Black women, and risks of police harassment or social ostracization if with a white woman, see: Felipe G. Dumlaog, interview by Cynthia Mejia, November 21, 1975, WSOAHP, 67, 19; Toribio M. Martin, Sr., interview by Dorothy Cordova, April 27, 1976, WSOAHP, 7. On Japanese "policing social boundaries between Japanese women and Filipino men," see: Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins*, 147.

112. Lt. J. L. Allen to Chief W. H. Searing, "Report on Columbus Dance Hall," November 20, 1927, appended to File No. 113881, SMA.
113. "Facts vs. Facts," *Filipino Forum*, January 15, 1929, 5.
114. Cordova, *Filipinos*, 214.
115. Castillo, interview, 4; Dumlao, interview, 26; Ranjo, interview, 13.
116. Dumlao, interview, 6.
117. Felix A. Narte, interview by Teresa Cronin, April 21, 1975, WSOAHP, 7.
118. Ranjo, interview, 17.
119. España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 128–29.
120. See: Ranjo, interview, 19; Dumlao, interview, 19.
121. On overalls: "Women's Row Brewing over Dance Halls," *PI*, October 12, 1922, 1; "Facts vs. Facts," 5. On Filipino dancers' attire: Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns, "'Splendid Dancing': Filipino 'Exceptionalism' in Taxi Dancehalls," *Dance Research Journal* 40 (2008): 24; España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 129–30.
122. Brown, "Dance Halls: What Star Man Found...," 3.
123. Lt. J. L. Allen to Chief W. H. Searing, "Report on Columbus Dance Hall," November 20, 1927, SMA.
124. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power*, 134.
125. Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall*, 159.
126. Mumford, *Interzones*, 65. On inspectors' racial and class biases, see also: LaShawn Harris, *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 129.
127. "10-Cent Dance Hall Ousting Plan Taken Up," *PI*, October 4, 1929, 8.
128. "Dance Halls Wide Open Despite Forbes' Closing Ban," *PI*, October 27, 1929, 3.
129. "Brevities," *Filipino Forum*, November 15, 1929, 2.
130. "Mayor Wins in Crusade on Resorts," *PI*, November 5, 1929, 3.
131. "Dance Hall Entertainers, Banned Here, Go Elsewhere," *Seattle Daily Times*, November 5, 1929, 12.
132. Randy McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure Among Working-Class Immigrants in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 109.
133. On AFL affiliation: "Labor Asked to Aid Dancers," *PI*, November 20, 1929, 10.
134. "Dancing Girls Seeking Work," *PI*, November 15, 1929, 15.
135. "Dance Hall Ban is Taken Before Organized Labor," *Seattle Daily Times*, October 31, 1929, 16.
136. "Dance Hall Girls Give No Worry, Says Chief," *Seattle Daily Times*, November 28, 1929, 9.
137. "Labor Asked to Aid Dancers," *PI*, November 20, 1929, 10.
138. "Dance Hall Entertainers, Banned Here..." 12.
139. "Unemployment in Trade Unions," *The American Federationist*, 37 (1930), 82, 244, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b3980461>.
140. "Bad Town? Oh, Shucks!," *Seattle Daily Times*, August 31, 1932, 1.
141. "Café Quits Fight For Dance Permit," *Seattle Daily Times*, November 18, 1932, 4; "Levine Won't Name Man Who Offered \$500," *Seattle Daily Times*, May 9, 1933, 1.
142. Ranjo, interview, 18.
143. España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 123.
144. Woloch, *A Class by Herself*, 93; U.S. Women's Bureau, "Night-Work Laws in the United States."
145. For example: Louis D. Brandeis and Josephine Goldmark, *The Case Against Night Work*, Court of Appeals, State of New York: The People of the State of New York, respondent, against Charles Schweinler Press, rev. ed (1918).
146. On historiographic neglect as of 1988: Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 40. Harris observes increasingly nuanced attention to the "benefits and limitations" of sex work for white women; she contributes by centering Black women (Harris, *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners*, 124).