

**“She’s the Queen of Everyone’s Heart”:
Community, Gender, Morality and Sexuality in the
“Queen Val-Vedette” and “Queen Aurora of the Evergreens”
Beauty Pageants, 1948-1970**

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ABSTRACT

During the decades immediately following the Second World War, beauty pageants were popular spectacles throughout North American society. In contests held in Penticton and Prince George, British Columbia during the 1950s and 1960s, the winners were named “Queen Val-Vedette” and “Queen Aurora of the Evergreens” respectively. As indicated by unique titles awarded to the queens, these pageants held very specific meanings to some residents. Beauty contests were used as outlets for these residents to express their sense of community identity, as well as gendered expectations for local young women. This thesis argues that the Penticton and Prince George pageants shared many similarities but ultimately portrayed their candidates and queens in manners that reflected divergent local values. These specific meanings did not necessarily translate to the provincial level, as evidenced by Queen Val-Vedette and Queen Aurora of the Evergreen’s involvement with the “Miss Pacific National Exhibition” pageant in Vancouver, British Columbia.