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White Nativism and Urban Politics: The 1920s Ku Klux Klan in Oakland, California

CHRIS RHOMBERG

ON 5 MAY 1922, a horde of 1,500 men in white robes and masks gathered in silence at night in a valley in the hills above Oakland, California. Two searchlights beamed across the sky, as a fiery cross burned behind an altar draped with the American flag. At a given signal, 500 more unmasked men marched four abreast toward the altar, to take their oaths and be initiated into the order of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.¹ Hooded Klansmen from as far away as San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno, San Jose and Los Angeles came to join their Oakland brethren in the ceremony.

In the 1920s, the city of Oakland was a center of Klan activity in California. Started in 1921, within three years the Oakland Klan grew to at least 2,000 members. Local Klan leaders enjoyed political success late into the decade, winning an election for county sheriff in 1926 and for city commissioner in 1927. Their power was finally broken in a celebrated graft trial prosecuted by Alameda County district attorney (and later United States Supreme Court chief justice) Earl Warren, and the scandal led directly to a major reform of the Oakland city charter.

THE KLAN MOVEMENT OF THE TWENTIES

Founded in Atlanta in 1915 by William J. Simmons, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., grew to an estimated three million members in the mid-twenties, extending well beyond the Old South into the Midwest and Western states, before declining rapidly by the end of the decade.² Traditional interpretations of this "Second Klan" portrayed it as an irrational, backward-looking extremist movement of low status or marginal individuals, symbolizing the last gasp of a dying rural and small-town Protestantism in the face of urban modernism and a mass immigrant working class.³ Recent years, however, have seen the growth of a new historiography of the 1920s era Ku Klux Klan in the United States. A number of detailed case studies have appeared that question

the traditional assumptions about the Klan.⁴ As early as 1967, Kenneth Jackson showed that the movement was as much an urban as a rural phenomenon.⁵ Other studies have shown that the Klan were frequently more successful where native white Protestants were a majority, and not a declining or minority group. Klan members generally resembled the overall white male population in occupational status, with relatively greater representation among white collar and skilled workers and less among the very elite and the unskilled. Moreover, the movement often articulated prevailing white middle-class values and participated actively in civic and electoral politics.⁶ Such features suggest that the Klan, rather than a deviant aberration, should be seen as a significant actor in the urban political arena.

This essay contributes to this debate with a study of the 1920s Klan movement in Oakland. It begins with a review of contemporary socio-economic conditions in the city, including the size and status of the white Protestant population. Next, the study examines the local political context and the rise of white nativism. These will help explain the organization and impact of the Ku Klux Klan in Oakland.

OAKLAND IN 1920

In 1920, the city of Oakland was a rapidly maturing metropolis on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay, with an economy built on manufactures of capital goods, construction, coastal trade and the processing of goods from the area's rural hinterland. Oakland was the West Coast terminus for three transcontinental rail lines, and the Southern Pacific was major property owner and employer in its huge West Oakland yards. The city also experienced a brief ship-building boom in World War One, and was fast becoming a branch plant center for automobiles and other industries.⁷

Alongside economic development came population growth. In addition, migration to Oakland of refugees from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and annexation of outlying areas east of the city, brought total city population from 66,960 in 1900 to 150,174 in 1910, to 216,261 by 1920.⁸ At that time Oakland was almost 95 percent white, but the composition of this group was changing. In 1910, whites of "foreign stock" (foreign-born or native-born of foreign or mixed parents) had accounted for 61 percent of all whites in the city. With the decline of immigration in World War One and after, however, native whites of native parents in Oakland grew from 39 percent of all whites in 1910 to

44 percent in 1920, and continued rising to 49 percent by 1930.⁹ At the same time, the proportion of Roman Catholics among the city's total church membership fell from 68.4 percent in 1916 to 53.5 percent in 1926.¹⁰

Moreover, despite industrial development, the city as a whole was becoming more middle class. Commercial and residential growth meant that professional, clerical and trade employment rose from 35 percent of the city's working population in 1920 to 42 percent in 1930, while the share of industrial employment fell from 49 percent to 42 percent. Similarly, homeownership rates also increased: owner occupancy increased from 41 percent of Oakland homes in 1920 to 49 percent in 1930.¹¹ In short, the typical base of the Klan, native white Protestant middle classes, were hardly a declining group in Oakland. Rather, the data more closely fit a hypothesis of a rising group, with a corresponding greater weight in the political arena.

ETHNIC FORMATION AND URBAN POLITICS

Politics in Oakland were loosely organized around contending urban machine factions, centered on Alameda County boss Michael J. ("Mike") Kelly. Born in West Virginia in 1864, Kelly was appointed county treasurer in 1906 and county tax collector in 1919. A Catholic, Kelly rose to power by allying with Governor Hiram Johnson and the Republican progressives. In 1921, he was named Superintendent of the United States Mint in San Francisco, with the aid of (now United States Senator) Hiram Johnson.¹²

As in other American cities, machine politics was closely tied to the pattern of ethnic and working class formation.¹³ Patronage and nepotism provided access to jobs and served as crude forms of social insurance, reinforcing ethnic group formation and maintaining corporate loyalty among the dependent working classes.¹⁴ The latter were concentrated especially in the old lower-income Fourth and Sixth wards, located near the railroad yards and the waterfront in the multi-racial and ethnic West Oakland neighborhood, one of the oldest sections of the city.¹⁵

In Oakland, the popular Mayor John L. Davie presided over a city council composed of four commissioners heading departments of streets, revenue and finance, health and public safety, and public works.¹⁶ Elected in 1915, Davie won re-election three times, usually in alliance with the Kelly machine.¹⁷ A colorful figure and a prodigious vote-getter, Davie was a master of public spectacle and of the maneuverings on the coun-

cil. The latter were often complex, as incumbent commissioners quickly turned their administrative departments into their own political fiefdoms.¹⁸ The constant logrolling and factionalism in city hall, however, undermined the machine's governing ability and alienated public opinion, setting the stage for popular opposition to the machine.

ANTI-MACHINISM AND WHITE NATIVISM

Anti-machine sentiments were expressed by good government groups like the Alameda County Federation. Its 1918 campaign literature declared, "For many years the 'MIKE KELLY MACHINE' has been in control. . . . The bulk of its financial support has always come from the saloons, the liquor interests, the gambling joints, and the 'Red Light District.' It has consistently fought every DRY measure in the Legislature, and is now supporting WET candidates for County and State offices in an endeavor to save everything for the saloon" [emphasis in original].¹⁹

As the above shows, anti-machine progressivism often found close company with prohibitionism. The latter incorporated Protestant middle-class prejudice against lower-class ethnic and especially Catholic morals, as well as providing a key test of the probity of public officials.²⁰ Postwar patriotism also merged easily into xenophobia and bigotry. The November 1921 issue of the Oakland *Crusader*, a monthly magazine "published in the interests of American Principles and Ideals, Law Enforcement and Social and Moral Reform," editorialized as follows: "The problem of immigration to the United States is as serious a problem for this country as Irish ascendancy. The dangers are the same. . . . The more we get of Southern Ireland and Southern Europe the quicker the control of the United States will pass into their hands."²¹

These values had an impact on mainstream politics. The Oakland superintendent of schools wrote in 1920, "There are thousands of men in Oakland who, without the English language, or knowledge of citizenship, are sources of greatest danger to our government." Shortly before his successful campaign for Congress in 1922, insurance salesman J.H. MacLafferty was touted as "[a believer] in the defense and perpetuation of American ideals as they were handed down by our forefathers. . . . he stresses the need of protecting the Government from its enemies within—the 'reds'—and the enemies without—the Japanese. Americanism is his creed."²²

Anti-machine antagonism was perhaps greatest in East Oakland. Only

recently annexed in 1909, East Oakland residents were distant from the political factions based in the older and more ethnically diverse West Oakland.²³ At the same time, East Oakland was the most rapidly growing area in the city. By the end of the decade, the population of East Oakland (Brooklyn Township) nearly doubled from 1920, surpassing that of the rest of the city.²⁴ This swelling population growth made East Oakland a substantial part of the potential electorate and a competitive ground for political entrepreneurs.

Boomtown conditions also led to mounting grievances against city authorities, particularly over services like sewers and street paving, prime sources of patronage for the machine. Such complaints were often directed against Commissioner of Streets William Baccus, himself a building contractor and a twenty-two-year veteran of the council, first elected in 1903 from the old machine Sixth Ward in West Oakland.²⁵ In one instance, in 1925, members of the 13th Avenue Improvement Club in East Oakland claimed contractor overcharges of \$16,000 on their street, which allegedly began cracking up only three months after completion. Club members demanded and got an investigation by the City Council, and when the council ultimately ruled against the residents, the club initiated an unsuccessful recall petition against Commissioner Baccus.²⁶

Overall, the decade of the twenties saw the emergence of a rising white native-born Protestant middle class in Oakland, parts of which remained weakly incorporated in or alienated from the city's political institutions. Civic concerns such as moral reform, law enforcement, and city services brought this group into conflict with established ethnic group power in the urban machine. The prevalence of nativist ideology helped frame these issues in ethnic and racial terms, and provided a fertile ground for the development of a white nativist movement.

THE KU KLUX KLAN IN OAKLAND, 1921–1925

By August 1921, organizers W.G. McRae and R.M. Carruthers of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., had opened an office in downtown Oakland. Among other things, Klan agents promoted the organization as a patriotic fraternal society, committed to “keep closer check upon public officials,” to prevent “laxity in the discharging of the duties of public offices,” and to “fix its attention on the prosecution of cases involving the honor of women.”²⁷ Oakland Klan No. 9 was chartered in January 1922, and in March reporters were brought secretly to witness 1,000 masked members initiate 200 more in the rural Contra Costa hills north

of the city. A week later, journalists were again invited to watch as six Klansmen in full regalia performed funeral services for a deceased member at a local crematorium.²⁸

Growth in the California Klan was interrupted in the summer of 1922, when Los Angeles District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine raided Klan offices there and uncovered membership lists for the entire Pacific region. These lists were circulated to district attorneys throughout the state, and the resulting publicity brought reaction against the order and mass defections of exposed members. In Oakland, the city council unanimously passed an ordinance to ban masking in public. Yet, although the names of fifty Oakland residents (including some current and former city police) were reportedly on the list, Alameda County District Attorney Ezra DeCoto never released the names, and the scandal left the Oakland Klan seemingly unscathed.²⁹

On the contrary, Klan activity in Oakland escalated with the November elections that fall. The state Governor's race pitted the conservative dry Republican candidate Friend Richardson, from Berkeley, against District Attorney Woolwine, the Klan's hated adversary and a wet Catholic Democrat. The state KKK endorsed Richardson, who refused to comment during the campaign on his alleged ties to the order.³⁰ When Woolwine spoke in Oakland in October a band of Klansmen rushed the stage and tried to place a Klan image on the platform. The following week, a Klan rally at the Oakland Auditorium featured one speaker who declared, "The election of Richardson is imperative if we are to remove the Jews, Catholics and Negroes from public life in California." Anti-Catholicism also played a role in local contests, especially the campaign against Police Judge Edward Tyrrell. Opponents flooded the city with phony literature endorsing candidates purportedly seeking to "Catholicize America," and signed with false names suggesting a Catholic organization.³¹ Tyrrell survived the challenge to his re-election, but Richardson won an overwhelming statewide majority to become the new Governor.

Locally, the Klan functioned as a semi-official vigilante group, accompanying federal agents on prohibition raids, and as a secret fraternal society, at a time when fraternal societies were a common vehicle of grassroots political organization.³² In 1923, Klan No. 9 Kligrapp (Secretary) Ed L. Arnest and Exalted Cyclops (President) Leon C. Francis ran in the primaries for city commissioner and school board, respectively. Despite crowded fields in both races, Arnest won 9 percent and Francis 18 percent of the vote.³³ By 1924, Klan No. 9 had at least 2,000 members and claimed a following of many thousands more. That summer,

organizers planned a statewide convention in Oakland and secured a parade permit from the city for the Fourth of July. Citing the threat of violence, however, Commissioner of Health and Public Safety Frank Colbourn later revoked the permit. Hundreds of Klan members and supporters protested at a council hearing, but Colbourn remained firm. The convention and parade were relocated to the nearby city of Richmond, where a reported 3,000 Klansmen marched on July 4, followed by an evening initiation ceremony in the El Cerrito hills.³⁴

Newspaper, civil and criminal case records reveal the names of 69 local Klansmen in Oakland, of whom 58 were identifiable through city directory and other sources. Although not a representative sample, these included some of the most prominent and active members, and their characteristics are suggestive.³⁵ Klan members included Protestant churchmen, small businessmen, professionals, managers and salesmen, skilled blue-collar workers, members of the Oakland Fire Department, and even the son of a congressman. Household data were available for 49 persons; of these 41 (84 percent) lived in households, and 8 (16 percent) were roomers or boarders. Fifty of the known Klansmen lived in Oakland, with the remainder residing in Berkeley, Piedmont (an affluent suburban enclave in the Oakland hills), or more distant suburbs. Among Oakland residents, 29 (58 percent) lived in East Oakland, 8 (16 percent) lived in North Oakland, and 13 (26 percent) lived in Downtown or West Oakland.³⁶ Altogether, only 22 percent of the known Klansmen lived in the older neighborhood of West Oakland, while more than three-quarters lived in the outer areas of the city or the suburbs.

These data are consistent with other case studies that show a broad socioeconomic base of Klan membership. Moreover, Klan strength in Oakland does not appear to have been concentrated among residents of declining older or ethnically changing neighborhoods, but rather in the newer, more homogeneous middle-class areas.³⁷ This fact suggests an ascendant group, asserting itself independently and reflecting the overall changes in the Oakland population.

As late as October 1924, the Oakland Klan continued to grow, holding group initiations of 50 or more recruits. By the end of the year, however, tensions erupted with the Atlanta-based national Klan over its efforts to impose greater control over the California realm. At a meeting on 28 November 1924, some 500 members of Klan No. 9 unanimously passed a resolution refusing to recognize the authority of Imperial representative G.W. Price and asking for his removal. The next day, Price, acting for Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans, suspended the charter of Klan

No. 9, and the following January the parent corporation filed suit to recover assets and rights to its name. Klan No. 9 remained active through April 1925, when its property was seized as part of the protracted litigation. Although Klan No. 9 eventually won all of its legal battles (its suspension was ruled illegal on procedural grounds) its resources were exhausted and the organization effectively disintegrated.³⁸

However, this was apparently not the end of the Klan movement. Before their suspension, the Klan No. 9 leaders had transferred their group's funds to a parallel organization called East Bay Club, Inc. Some months earlier, Southern California Klansmen J.F. DeBorde and Charles Hayes had organized a rival corporation under the laws of the state of Nevada called the Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc. Through the end of 1924 and into 1925, Klan No. 9 leaders collaborated with DeBorde and Hayes in recruiting their members to join the Nevada Klan. In February 1925, DeBorde, Hayes and others organized a California corporation called the White Cross Clan, and in May 1925 a charter was granted to Oakland Clan No. 9 of the White Cross Clan. By this time there were at least three organizations known as Klan (or Clan) No. 9 in Oakland, as well as the East Bay Club.³⁹ Finally, in August 1925, in a show of strength by the national order, Great Titan T.S. Moodie held an initiation of 500 "aliens" into the apparently loyal Oakland Klan Nos. 1 and 3. The ceremony was conducted in the Oakland Auditorium, attended by 8,500 klansmen and women and their supporters, and featured a 75-piece band from the Oakland organization and drill teams from the national Klavaliers and Women of the Ku Klux Klan.⁴⁰

Whether this signified the decline or proliferation of local Klan organization is unclear, as the fate of the other klaverns is not known. Yet, despite its internal struggles the Oakland movement apparently suffered no public discredit; on the contrary, hundreds of spectators packed the civil case hearings to show their support.⁴¹ Moreover, Oakland Klan leaders remained active political entrepreneurs, with numerous ties to other civic, fraternal and political activities. Leon C. Francis, Cyclops of Klan No. 9, president of the East Bay Club, and vice-president of the state White Cross Clan, was a member of the Masons, the American Legion, and later, the Republican state central committee.⁴² Klansman Fred Haase testified as an expert witness for the 13th Avenue Improvement Club in their paving controversy and participated in the recall effort against Commissioner of Streets Baccus, along with Klan No. 9 officers Andrew Brooks, Danver MacGregor and J.H. MacLafferty, Jr.

(son of Congressman J.H. MacLafferty).⁴³ Haase was also active in the Nevada Klan, as were Jack Garbutt, and C.D. Tudor, who had worked on Francis's 1923 school board campaign. In the 1925 city elections, Garbutt served as a delegate for the Knights of Pythias to the Better Government League, a coalition of civic and improvement clubs that included the East Bay Club.⁴⁴

The most successful Klan politicians were Burton F. Becker and William H. Parker, Kailiff (vice-president) and Kleopard (lecturer) of Klan No. 9, respectively.⁴⁵ Becker was the popular chief of police of Piedmont, and belonged to the Moose, the Modern Woodmen of America, and several Masonic orders. Parker was a self-made realtor and insurance salesman in the prosperous Dimond district of East Oakland. Active in the Dimond Progressive Club, Parker edited a monthly neighborhood newspaper and was first president of the East Oakland Consolidated Clubs, an association of some thirty neighborhood improvement clubs dedicated to "questions of paving, sewage, new park sites, transportation, lighting and other civic improvements."⁴⁶

Despite its internal difficulties, then, the vitality of the Oakland Klan's popular base, and the legitimacy of its active leaders, helped to sustain the movement's influence. The extent to which civic issues were already framed in ethnic and nativist terms underscores the ease with which Klan leaders were able to cross over and enter into the political mainstream. Indeed, the movement's greatest success would come in the latter half of the decade, with the election of Becker as County Sheriff in 1926 and Parker as City Commissioner of Streets in 1927.

KLANSMEN IN POWER

The electoral victories of Becker and Parker epitomized the moral and material issues that motivated the Klan movement in Oakland. Becker was already publicly identified with the Klan in 1922 when he ran for sheriff, winning over 23,000 votes, or about 34 percent, against long-time incumbent Frank Barnet.⁴⁷ An ally of Mike Kelly, Barnet was known as a traditional, patrimonial-style sheriff with a tolerant attitude toward alcohol and vice.⁴⁸ In 1925, however, he was implicated in the gruesome murder of a young woman who allegedly had blackmailed several prominent men of the county (including Barnet) into believing she had given birth to their illegitimate child. Although no charges were filed, the scandal was widely publicized and destroyed Barnet's political career. In their rematch the following year, Kelly was forced to abandon

Barnet and support Becker, who won easily as a modern, professional, reformist candidate. Upon taking office, Becker immediately appointed Parker as under-sheriff and fellow Klansman Leon C. Francis as county jailor.⁴⁹

A few months later, the 1927 city council races put Mayor Davie and Commissioners Baccus and William Moorehead up for reelection. Davie renewed his ties with Kelly and won a clear majority in the primary to retain his mayoralty, while Parker ran independently against Baccus for the commissioner's seat.⁵⁰ Campaigning hard on the street paving issue, Parker eliminated Baccus in the primary and led runner-up H.T. Hempstead going into the final. Seeing an opportunity to win a new council majority and to recapture city patronage, Kelly and Davie backed Parker and challenger Charles Young in the runoffs for the two commissioner spots. With support from Kelly and Davie, and with Parker's own Klan and neighborhood improvement club base in East Oakland, Parker and Young were swept into office.⁵¹

The alliance between Kelly and the Klan leaders was short lived. Once in power, Klan politicians proved to be even more opportunistic and corrupt than their predecessors. On the city council, Parker broke with Davie and formed his own majority faction with Commissioners Young and Eugene Sturgis. Klansmen Fred Haase, Jack Garbutt and E.Q. Norman were active in Parker's campaign, and after his election Parker hired Garbutt and Norman as "special investigators" to conduct political surveillance on city employees.⁵² Garbutt and Norman later became partners with Haase in a street paving business and agreed to pay Parker one-half cent per square foot for contracts specifying their patented paving. Such contracts subsequently included over 800,000 square feet, or one-third of all street paving work in the city.⁵³

In the county, Sheriff Becker established an aggressive system of bribery and extortion from bootlegging and gambling. Sheriff's deputies collected thousands of dollars of protection money from still operators in rural southern Alameda County and developed a plan to rationalize the bootlegging industry by arresting smaller and less profitable producers and centralizing both supply and payoffs in a single designated source. Becker's men also arranged with Cromwell Ormsby, the attorney for several Chinese lottery operators, to tip off impending raids in exchange for payments. Ormsby later conspired with Garbutt and Norman in an attempt to influence the Oakland Police Morals Squad, while Garbutt received \$5,000 from the Mills Novelty Company for the protection of slot machines.⁵⁴

The Klan leaders' corruption quickly alienated their middle-class constituency and began to cause public alarm. In February 1928, the Lions Club convened a meeting of business, civic and improvement clubs to launch a charter reform campaign, and by April the Oakland Council-Manager League was formed, led by local banker and Lions president Harry Harding. The reformers promised to create a more efficient city administration, with a strong city manager system modeled explicitly on the private corporation. However, the city council was able to stall the League's efforts to place the question on the ballot, and the issue remained tied up in litigation for over a year.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, in January 1930, District Attorney Earl Warren began pursuing the graft and corruption in City Hall and the Sheriff's office. Even at this time, Klan legitimacy in Oakland was high enough that Warren feared that Klan members on the Alameda County Grand Jury would refuse to indict fellow Klansmen.⁵⁶ In an effort to break the case, Warren released transcripts of the Grand Jury investigations to the press, and the publicity resulted in the swift resignations of Sheriff Becker and Commissioners Parker, Young and Sturgis. Becker, Parker, Garbutt, Ormsby and others were eventually indicted, convicted and sent to prison, and the scandal turned public opinion increasingly against the commission form of government.⁵⁷

The *Oakland Tribune* began to editorialize heavily in favor of the manager reform, and with support of the Lions, the Chamber of Commerce, the Protestant Ministerial Union, and other groups, the Council-Manager League obtained over 35,000 signatures on a charter amendment petition.⁵⁸ In a final effort to save the old machine, Mayor Davie and his allies called a Freeholders' election to draft their own strong mayor-council charter, supported by labor unions, ethnic organizations and machine-favored businessmen.⁵⁹ In the November elections, both the manager amendments and the City Hall Freeholder slate were victorious. The Freeholders submitted their charter in March 1931, but by this time the machine had lost its capacity to mobilize its base. Middle-class voters turned out heavily to reject it and later elected the entire Council-Manager League slate in the first new council elections. The charter reform marked the end of popular machine politics in Oakland. Business elites, under the leadership of *Tribune* publisher Joseph Knowland, thereafter assumed leading influence over city hall.⁶⁰

THE LEGACY OF THE KLAN

This study adds to the developing body of research on the Klan of the 1920s in the United States. In Oakland, the Klan mobilized a rising white, middle-class Protestant population against an established system of ethnic patronage and machine politics. Klan leaders capitalized on anti-machine and anti-ethnic ideologies and on specific material demands made by middle-class residents, using an organizational form that was both familiar to their followers and ultimately a critical source of weakness.

These findings shed some light on the interpretive debate surrounding the movement. In Oakland, white middle-class Protestants were not a declining group but a rising one, and the issues that concerned them were neither backward looking nor anti-modern, but as contemporary and mundane as well-paved streets. Yet, the point is not whether Klansmen were more concerned with civic problems or with ethnic prejudice, but the extent to which concerns like good government, law enforcement and city services could be framed in ethnic terms, and the ease with which Klan political entrepreneurs crossed over into the mainstream.

Similarly, the Oakland Klan's demise was due neither to the decline of its socio-economic base nor to its ideological marginalism. Rather, the organizational form of the secret fraternal society proved insufficient to hold the movement together, and opportunistic Klan leaders succumbed to the corruptions of machine politics. The defeat of the Klan, however, did not necessarily hinder the agenda of white middle-class Protestants as a group. The latter transferred their allegiance from the faulty vehicle of the Klan to the more effective anti-machine reformers among the business elite. The crisis of Klan leaders' fall led to a decisive change in the city's political institutions. Whether in victory or defeat, the Klan movement left an enduring legacy in Oakland.

NOTES

1. *Oakland Post Enquirer*, 6 May 1922; *San Francisco Examiner*, 7 May 1922.
2. David Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York, 1965), p. 119.
3. Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (1955; reprint, ed., New York, 1977), p. 291; Arnold Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics* (New York, 1972), p. 13; George Mowry and Blaine Brownell, *The Urban Nation: 1920-1980, Revised Edition* (New York, 1981), p. 31; Seymour M. Lipset and Earl

Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790–1970* (New York, 1970), p. 114.

4. For review essays, see Leonard Moore, “Historical Interpretations of the 1920’s Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision,” *Journal of Social History*, 24 (Winter, 1990): 341–357; and Stanley Coben, “Ordinary White Protestants: The KKK of the 1920s,” *Journal of Social History*, 28 (Fall, 1994): 157–165.

5. Kenneth Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915–1930* (New York, 1967).

6. Shawn Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York* (New York, 1995); Shawn Lay, ed., *The Invisible Empire in the West* (Urbana, Ill., 1992); Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 154–173; Leonard Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921–1928* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1991); William Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan: The Ku Klux Klan in Ohio’s Mahoning Valley* (Kent, Ohio, 1991); Robert Goldberg, *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* (Urbana, Ill., 1981).

7. John Dykstra, “A History of the Physical Development of the City of Oakland: The Formative Years, 1850–1930,” (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1952), p. 192; E. T. H. Bunje, “Oakland Industries, 1848–1938,” Oakland: Works Progress Administration, 1939.

8. Dallas Smythe, “An Economic History of Local and Interurban Transportation in the East Bay Cities with Particular Reference to the Properties Developed by F. M. Smith,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1939), pp. 130–132. Beth Bagwell, *Oakland: Story of a City* (Oakland, 1994) pp. 175–179; U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Vol. I, Reports by States: Supplement for California* (Washington, D.C., 1913) p. 582; *Abstract of Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920* (Washington, D.C., 1923) p. 108.

9. U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Abstract of the Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910* (Washington, D.C., 1913) p. 95; *Abstract of Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920* (Washington, D.C., 1923) p. 109; *Abstract of Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930* (Washington, D.C., 1933), p. 100.

10. U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Census of Religious Bodies, 1916, Part One: Summary and General Tables* (Washington, D.C., 1919) p. 126; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Religious Bodies, 1926, Vol. One: Summary and Detailed Tables* (Washington, D.C., 1930) p. 496.

11. “Industrial employment” here includes transportation and “mechanical and manufacturing” occupations. See U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population, Vol. IV: Occupations* (Washington, D.C., 1923) pp. 1185–1188; U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population, Vol. IV: Occupations* (Washington, D.C., 1933; pp. 202–216; U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930—Population, Vol. VI: Families* (Washington, D.C., 1933), p. 57.

12. John F. Mullins, “How Earl Warren Became District Attorney,” an oral history conducted in 1963 by Amelia Fry, in *Perspectives on the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1972, pp. 2–8; Hiram Johnson to Major Archibald Johnson, 13 July 1931, and Hiram Johnson to Hiram Johnson, Jr., 15 January 1933, in *The Diary Letters of Hiram Johnson, 1917–1945*, ed. Robert E. Burke New York, 1983); Joseph Baker, *Past and Present of Alameda County, California*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1914) p. 369; *Oakland Tribune*, 20 November 1940; *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, 20 November 1940. In 1923, it was estimated there were more than 500 state and federal jobs in the county. *Observer*, 12 August 1923.

13. Steven Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840–1985* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 13.

14. Interview with Donald Mockel, an oral history conducted in 1981 by Sally Thomas and Pdraigin McGillicuddy, Oakland Neighborhood History Project, Oakland History Room, Public Library, Oakland, California.

15. Judith May, "Progressives and the Poor," ms., Environmental Design Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1970, pp. 2, 10; Steven Blutz, "Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans—Causes and Consequences" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1978), pp. 7-14; California Department of Transportation, *Historic Property Survey Report: For the Proposed I-880 Reconstruction Project* (San Francisco, 1990); Bagwell, *Oakland: Story of a City*, pp. 85-89; Lawrence Crouchette, Lonnie Bunch, III, and Martha K. Winnacker, *Visions Toward Tomorrow: A History of the East Bay Afro-American Community 1852–1977* (Oakland, 1989).

16. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 164–174.

17. *Observer*, 5 February 1921, 30 April 1921, 17 March 1923; also May, *Progressives and the Poor*, pp. 55–56; Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 210–212.

18. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 208–209; *Observer*, 29 January 1921; *Alameda County Union Labor Record*, 9 March 1923.

19. "Alameda County Federation Stands for Good Government," Alameda County Politics and Government Pamphlet File, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. President of the Federation was R. H. Marchant, president and general manager of the Marchant Calculating Machine Company; and its Executive Committee Chair was John L. Howard, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce. *Polk's Oakland City Directory* (Oakland, 1918).

20. James Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900–1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963). In 1910, 37 percent of Oakland voters had favored a dry amendment to the city charter (the neighboring town of Berkeley was already dry), well before the 18th Amendment took effect in 1920. Oakland City Clerk, *Elections 1852 to the Present*, (Oakland, 1988), p. 18.

21. *Crusader*, (Oakland), November 1921, 2.

22. Fred Hunter, "Oakland Has Started the Second Largest School Building Campaign in the United States," *Oakland Tribune Yearbook* (Oakland, 1920), p. 98; *Oakland Tribune Yearbook* (Oakland, 1921), p. 117.

23. *Observer*, 2 December 1922. In 1910 the East Oakland 7th Ward voted 44 percent in favor of a city charter amendment to ban saloons in residential neighborhoods, compared to 22 and 9 percent, respectively, in the machine's West Oakland 4th and 6th Wards. Only the North Oakland 1st Ward, bordering on dry Berkeley, gave a higher share (46 percent) for the amendment. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 185–186. Parts of East Oakland remained only loosely under the authority of city hall: In 1921, residents of the Dimond district formed their own vigilante police force, and the following year the editor of the political broadside "Free Press" was reportedly tarred and feathered by a mob near his home on 93rd Avenue in Elmhurst. *Observer*, 2 April 1921; *Western Appeal*, 22 April 1922.

24. After years of housing shortages during the war, residential construction boomed in the early twenties: 12,823 new single family houses were built in Oakland from 1921–1924, more than a 50 percent increase over the previous ten years combined. According to estimates, nearly 85 percent of these new homes were located in East Oakland. Harry Lafler, "Oakland and Eastbay Cities Maintain Proud

Rank of Pacific Coast Industrial Center,” *Oakland Tribune Yearbook* (Oakland, 1925) p. 10; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. I, Population* (Washington, D.C., 1921), p. 353, *Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, Population, Vol. II, Part 5: California* (Washington, D.C., 1952) pp. 5–13.

25. *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, 24 April 1924, *San Francisco Examiner*, 25 April 1924; *Oakland Daily Record*, 2 May 1925; Joseph Baker, *Past and Present of Alameda County, California*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1914), p. 19; Blutz, *Oakland’s Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, p. 53.

26. *Oakland Daily Record*, 18 December 1924; 4, 7 February 1925.

27. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 August 1921; 11, 15 May 1922.

28. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4, 12 March 1922.

29. Jackson, *Ku Klux Klan in the City*, p. 190; *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, 5 May 1922; *Oakland Tribune*, 9, 25 May 1922.

30. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, p. 122.

31. *Observer*, 9 September; 21, 28 October; 4 November 1922.

32. Oscar Jahnsen, “Enforcing the Law against Gambling, Bootlegging, Graft, Fraud, and Subversion,” an oral history conducted by Alice King and Miriam Stein, 1970, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976, pp. 36-37.

33. *Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. East Bay Club of Alameda County, et al.*, civil case file #82470, Cal. Superior Ct. Alameda County, 1925; Oakland City Clerk, *Elections 1852 to the Present*, (Oakland, 1988), p. 32.

34. *Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. Leon C. Francis, et al.*; civil case file #81245, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1925; *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, 19, 23 June 1924. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 July 1924.

35. *Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. Leon C. Francis, et al.*, case file #81118; *Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. Leon C. Francis, et al.*, case file #82491, *W. F. Courtney, et al., v. John L. McVey, et al.*, case file #82948, Civil Division, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1925; *Eli J. Coon, et al., v. Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland, Inc.*, case file #101707, Civil Division, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1928; *Eli J. Coon, et al., v. H. Sephton, et al.*, case file #107549, Civil Division, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1929; *California v. Parker, et al.*, case file #11369, Criminal Division, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1930; *Polk’s Oakland City Directory* (Oakland, 1924, 1925, 1929, 1930); *Oakland Daily Record*, 17 January 1925.

36. East Oakland is defined here as the pre-1910 charter 7th ward, including the annexed territories east of Lake Merritt. North Oakland comprises the old 1st ward bordering on the Berkeley line, including Rockridge. West Oakland includes the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th wards, from the western waterfront to downtown and from 36th street to the estuary. Blutz, *Oakland’s Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 502–504; J. H. MacDonald and Company, *Map of the City of Oakland* (Oakland, 1900) Earth Sciences and Map Library, University of California, Berkeley.

37. See Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara*; pp. 102-105.

38. *Ku Klux Klan v. Francis, et al.*, case file #81245; *Coon, et al., v. Sephton, et al.*

39. *Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. Francis, et al.*, case file #81245; *Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. East Bay Club*. The purposes of the California organization were stated in its incorporation papers as “1) To promote the welfare of the Caucasian race and to teach the doctrine of white supremacy, 2) To promote the doctrines and tenets of

Protestant Christianity, 3) To promote and maintain the purity of white blood, and 4) To promote, develop, and safeguard the ideals of American citizens and the high standards in social and political relations, including the rightful use of ballots and the enforcement of law by regular constituted authorities." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 August 1924.

40. *Oakland Tribune*, 24 August 1925.

41. *Oakland Daily Record*, 24 January, 19 May 1925; *Oakland Tribune*, 18 May 1925.

42. *Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. East Bay Club*; Frank C. Merritt, *History of Alameda County*, (Chicago, 1928), pp. 102–103.

43. MacLafferty, Jr., was chaplain of Klan No. 9 and of the East Bay Club until 18 May 1925. Brooks was appointed secretary of Klan No. 9 in 1925, while MacGregor served on the executive committee and as chair of the auditing committee. Both men acted as verification deputies for the petition drive. The petition itself accused Baccus of corruption, negligence, and having "used intoxicating liquors to excess." *Oakland Daily Record*, 17 December 1924, 17, 22 January, 25 February 1925; *Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. East Bay Club*; *Courtney, et al. v. McVey, et al.*; *Coon, et al., v. Sephton, et al.*; City Clerk's Office, 1925 Election Files, Oakland, California.

44. *Ku Klux Klan, Inc., v. East Bay Club*; City Clerk's Office, 1923 election files, Oakland, California; *Oakland Daily Record*, 18, 20 April 1925.

45. *Oakland Tribune*, 4 December 1924.

46. Merritt, *History of Alameda County*, pp. 517–518. *Dimond News*, 23 March 1923; 29 January 1926; *Oakland Daily Record*, 20 July 1925.

47. Merritt, *History of Alameda County*, pp. 218–221; *Observer*, 15, 29 July 1922; *Oakland Tribune*, 30 August 1922; *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, 1 September 1922.

48. A fellow law enforcement official recalled, "Frank Barnet was very liberal. He'd sit down and drink during Prohibition. He was what a lot of people would call a regular guy. He didn't think anything of prostitutes and open gambling operating. He believed you needed those!" [Interviewer: "That's life, huh?"] "Yes. You needed this, you see. It was a common belief that if you close these places up, you'll have a lot of rape cases on your hands. Well, that's what many people thought." "Barnet was a very generous sort of person. He was a short, stocky-built man—always wore a big diamond stud and a big diamond ring, and smoked a cigar, and very worldly sort of fella. He just couldn't see anything wrong in the bootlegging business. . . ." Jahnsen oral history, pp. 34, 38.

49. Parker had also managed Becker's 1926 campaign. Earl Warren, *The Memoirs of Earl Warren*, (New York, 1977), pp. 83–85; Mary Shaw, "Perspectives of a Newspaperwoman," an oral history conducted in 1970 by Miriam Feingold, in *Perspectives on the Alameda County District Attorney's Office*, Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1972, pp. 12–15; *Observer*, 6 March 1926; *Oakland Tribune*, 24 August, 4 November 1926, 20 February 1927; Merritt, *History of Alameda County*, pp. 102, 517–518.

50. *Oakland Tribune*, 3 April 1927.

51. *Oakland Times*, 9 May 1927; *Observer*, 24 May 1930.

52. *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, 11 February 1930; *Oakland Tribune*, 31 October 1927.

53. According to the trial summary, when Norman proposed the paving deal, "Parker said that he was glad Norman had it; that he was not in office for his health; that if Norman and Garbutt expected to lay vibrolithic pavement in the City of

Oakland they would have to pay; that he was getting one cent per sq. ft. from the Black Top people; that since Norman and Garbutt had supported him in his campaign and done a lot of work for him around the City Hall he would make it one-half cent per sq. ft. for them." *California v. Garbutt*, case file No. 11369, *California v. Parker*, case file No. 11399, Criminal Division, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1930.

54. Warren, *Memoirs*, pp. 86ff; *California v. Becker*, case file no. 11359, *California v. Ormsby*, case file no. 11359, *California v. Shurtleff*, case file 11360, Criminal Division, Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda County, 1930.

55. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 227, 235, 247–257.

56. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, p. 262; Warren, *Memoirs*, pp. 99–100.

57. Warren himself endorsed the manager amendments in the November election, declaring "the commission form of government is a failure," Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 288, 356–357.

58. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 265, 278, 355; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 March 1930. In March, the Lions Club passed a resolution thanking the *Tribune* for its "articles and forceful editorials" in favor of the manager reform. *Oakland Tribune*, 28 March; 16, 23 October 1930.

59. The Citizens' Freeholder Committee included representatives from the Italian American Federation, the Western Waterfront Industries Association, and Central Labor Council, whose secretary, William Spooner, chaired the committee. The Council-Manager League chose not to run candidates against the Freeholders' slate, but instead concentrate on the amendments. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 282–285.

60. Blutz, *Oakland's Commission and Council-Manager Plans*, pp. 290–308; St. Sure oral history, pp. 359–363; John Gothberg, (1968) "The Local Influence of J.R. Knowland's *Oakland Tribune*," *Journalism Quarterly*, 43, #3, (Autumn, 1968): 487–95.