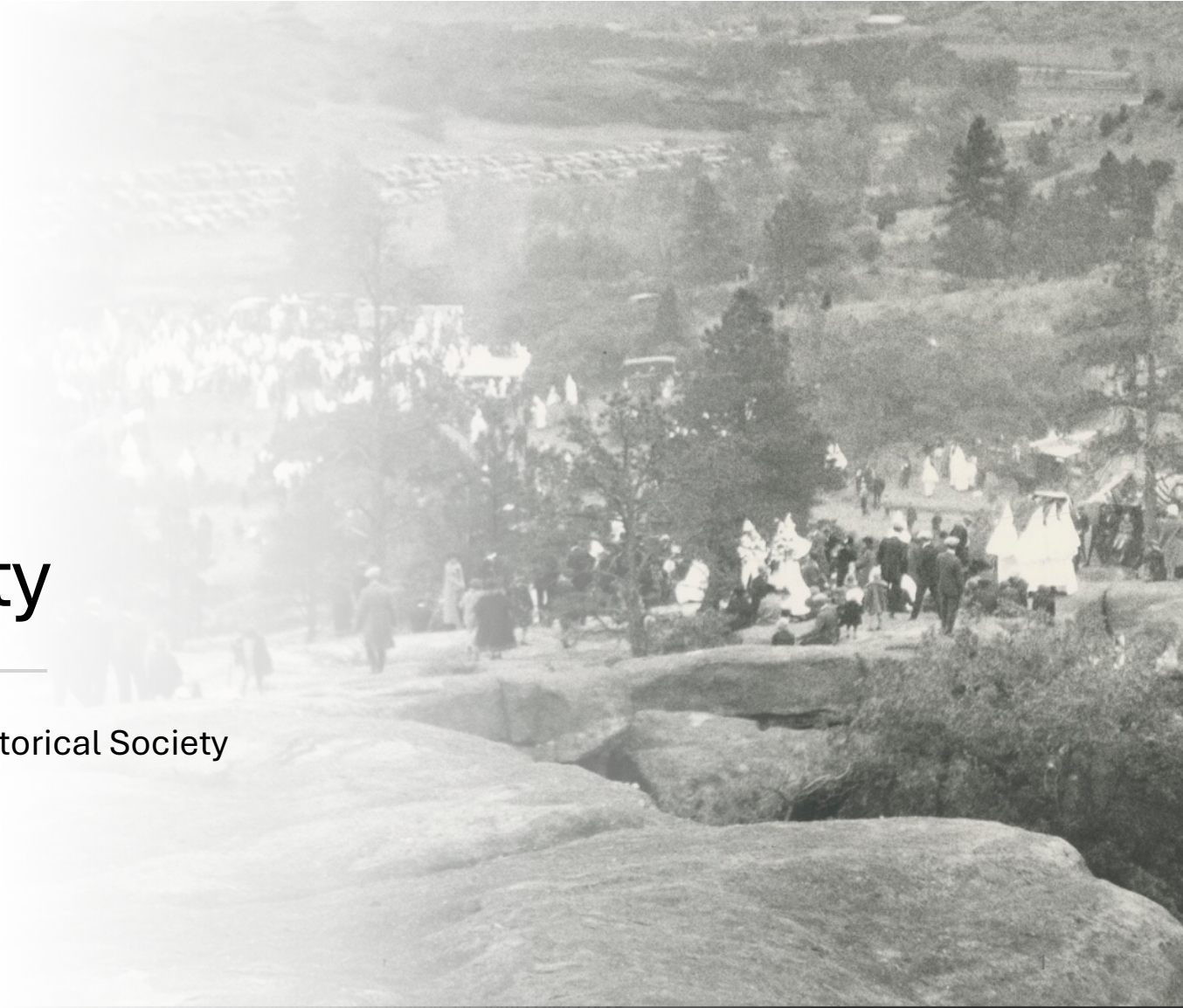


KKK in Douglas County

Presentation to the Larkspur Historical Society

November 2024

Kim Greer



KKK

History Nationwide

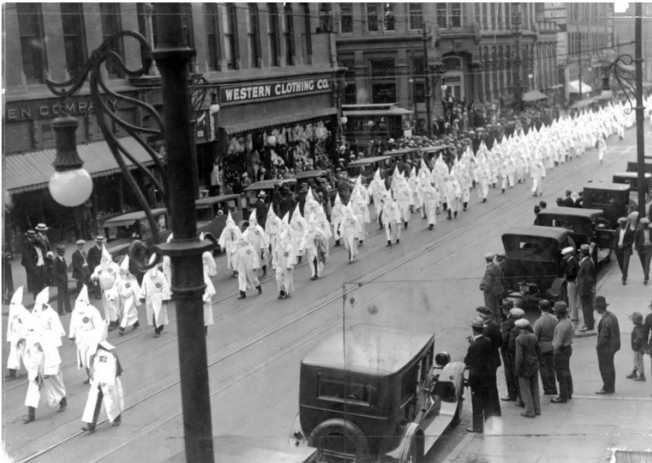
Nationwide

- First Ku Klux Klan (KKK) Late 1860s – Founded by Confederate veterans opposed to post Civil War Reconstruction, assaulted and murdered politically active Black people and their allies in the Southern states. Federal action against it began around 1871.
- Second iteration late 1910s into 1920s - Used cross burnings, white hooded robes and a plethora of K designations (Klavern, Kloran, Klaliff, Klokard, Kludd, Kligrapp, Klabee, Kladd, Klarogo, etc.).
 - Membership estimated at 3-8 million, native-born white English-speaking and Protestant members.
 - Primarily reaction to growing civil rights movement, fear of immigrants changing American culture.
 - 1915 – Revival of the KKK was inspired by *Birth of a Nation*, violently anti-black blockbuster film that promoted the southern view of the Civil War. Colonel Simmons (Imperial Wizard) and a few friends burned a cross on mountain near Atlanta.
 - Used marketing techniques and the lure of a fraternal organization, charging \$10 to join (recruiters got a cut) and further profited by selling Klan uniforms and bling to members.
 - Primarily hostile to blacks, Catholics, and Jews, but as stated by one West Virginia Klan leader, “The Klan believes in white supremacy.” And as its official national newspaper, *The Searchlight*, claimed: “Race forms the basis for all human actions and reactions”. Promised return to law and order.
- Third/current manifestation emerged after 1950, local and isolated groups that use the KKK name. Opposed to civil rights movement. Have used violence and murder to suppress activists. Classified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League (estimates vary from 3-6,000 active members). Numerous other white supremacist organizations exist today.

KKK

History in Colorado

Fun and Games and Intimidation



Denver Post Article: [PATRICK TRAYLOR](#) | August 20, 2017

Colorado

- Colorado somewhat unlikely area for KKK that fed on division
 - Blacks <2% population, better educated and higher home ownership than South
 - Half of Denver's population with at least 1 parent from another country
 - Thriving Catholic parishes across state, 1 of 7 Denver residents Catholic
- Low points
 - 1864 - Sand Creek Massacre
 - 1880 – Anti-Chinese Riot in Denver
 - 1900 – Lynching in Limon of 15-year-old black boy, Preston Porter Jr. after confession obtained after days of torture and threats against family
 - Colorado Governor Thomas stated,
“My opinion is there is one less negro in the world.”
- 1921 – Imperial Wizard Simmons invited by like minded businessmen to give pitch at Brown Palace
 - Grand Dragon Dr John Galen Locke
”The Klan is not interested in politics. Its specialty is patriotism.”

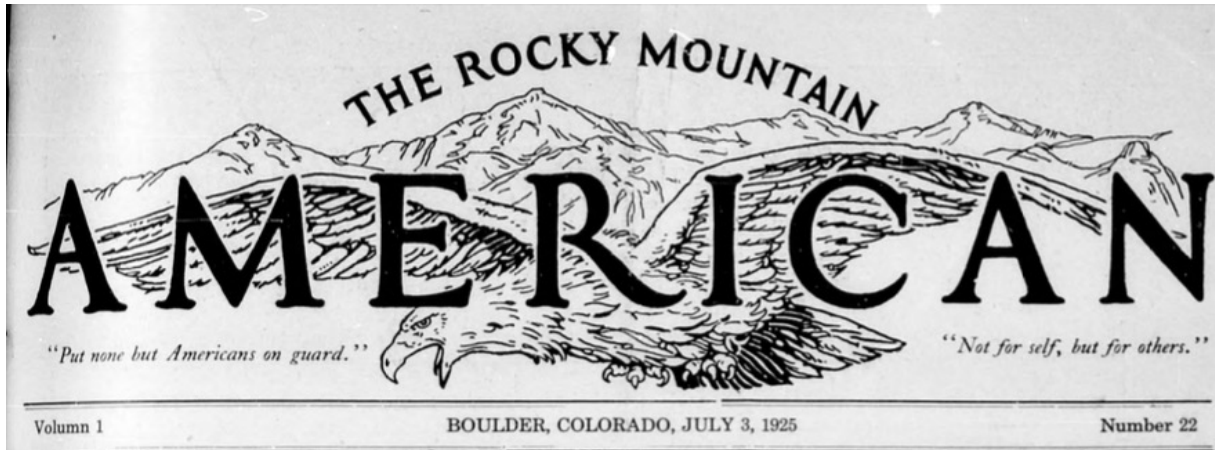


Grand Dragon John Galen Locke

Colorado

- 1921 – Start of transformation of Colorado
 - Second only to Indiana in per capita support of KKK
 - Arguably largest state government takeover in nation
- 1923 – Elected Ben Stapleton as mayor of Denver
 - Appointment of Klansmen to many offices including chief of police
 - 17,000 dues paying members boycotting Catholic and Jewish businesses
- 1924 – Attempts to infiltrate Democratic and Republican parties
 - Swept Republican primaries
 - Elected 2 US senators, Governor Clarence Morley, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, auditor and justice of the state Supreme Court, control of entire Colorado General Assembly





After July 4, 1925, no enemy of the great Christian American order should be able to face intelligent persons and tell them the Klan is dead or dying is merely sectional, or has lost the interest of its members. The spirit of militant Protestant white Americanism, as exemplified by the fiery cross and the Stars and Stripes goes sweeping on to its goal, when Christianity and one hundred per cent American principles will dominate the Nation and the Spirit of '76 will hold the people from the lakes to the gulf and from coast to coast.

The Military Board of this State presented to Governor Morley the pay vouchers for the Department salaries, and among them was one for Dr. Locke, which Gov. Morley signed with the rest. The Denver Post printed its version of it in some what bigger type than they used when reporting Bonfil's connection with the Teapot Dome controversy, while Pad had four fainting spells and Lil' Arthur got by with a conniption fit. At last accounts Gov. Morley is enjoying his usual good health.

Colorado

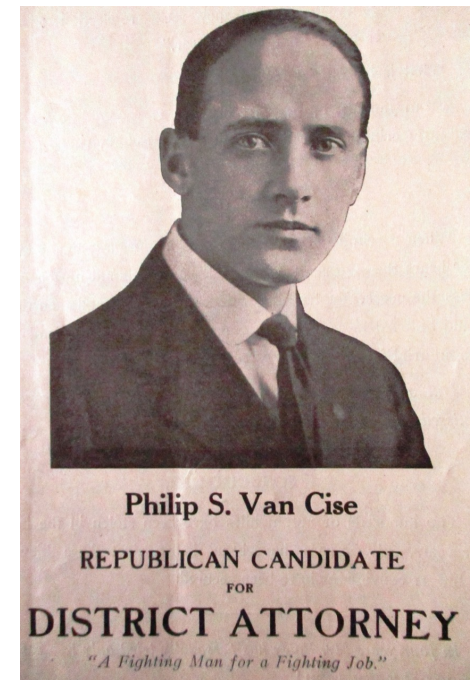
- Strong presence in Denver, Pueblo, Canon City, Walsenburg, Trinidad
 - Klaverns in all 64 counties
 - History Colorado released (2021) digitized membership ledgers (30,000 entries), primarily Denver
- Resistance and less visible backing in Douglas and El Paso Counties
 - 1923 – 30 ft cross set ablaze on Pikes Peak to announce Klavern formation.
 - El Paso Citizens Committee formed anti-Klan alliance and launched massive publicity campaign declaring the KKK to be “Bad for Business” and “Disastrous to Law and Order.”
 - 1925 – 1 public meeting in Douglas County
 - Fewer divisions to exploit

KKK in Colorado Springs



Colorado

- Elected KKK politicians were political novices
- Colorado Attorney General Philip Van Cise, fresh from bringing down corrupt gangs in Denver, focused on KKK lawlessness.
 - Over 3 years, Van Cise was approached, urged, threatened to join Klan 13 times. “You can be governor.”
- Downward spiral included fleecing members, leaders lavish lifestyles, fiscal mismanagement, kidnapping, bribery, alcohol during prohibition.
- 1925 – Grand Dragon Locke arrested for kidnapping and perjury.



KKK

History in Douglas County

Douglas County

- County not fertile ground for KKK recruitment
 - Low population, little crime
 - Immigrants and Catholics well integrated and not seen as a threat, little division
- Douglas County voted for 8 of 10 KKK candidates
 - However - Elected 8 Democrats and 4 non-Klan Republicans to county offices
 - Democrats complained about Klan mailing 2 days prior to 1924 election, disputed by Republicans as fraudulent attempt to discredit candidates
- Only 1 recorded public meeting
 - February 1925 – County courthouse, well attended with Denver imports
 - Record Journal – 1 neutral article, 1 critical (Dillon)

THE RECORD-JOURNAL

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Castle Rock Journal, Established January 1, 1890—Douglas County Record, Established May 23, 1894—Consolidated January 25, 1905.

VOLUME XVII

CASTLE ROCK, COLORADO, FRIDAY, JULY 17, 1925

NUMBER 20

PENCIL PUSHERS ROYALLY ENTERTAINED BY CITIZENS OF NORTHWESTERN COLO.

The mid-summer session of the Colorado Editorial Association was held in Northwestern Colorado last Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and was proclaimed by everyone in attendance to be the best and most wonderful excursion of the kind ever held in the history of the association.

Editors, their wives, and friends, to the number of one hundred and sixty-six, left Denver on a special train over the Moffat road on Thursday night of last week and arrived at Oak Creek early Friday morning, where they were met by a delegation of Oak Creek boosters and served a very appetizing breakfast, prepared and served by the good ladies of that thriving little city, members of the Furthest Teachers Association. The breakfast was served in the new sixty thousand dollar high school building, which has just been completed. This building is a veritable evidence of the progressiveness of the people of Oak Creek, who are properly attending to the educational needs of their young folks. It was here that the editorial party received their first impression of the wonderful hospitality of the people of Northwestern Colorado.

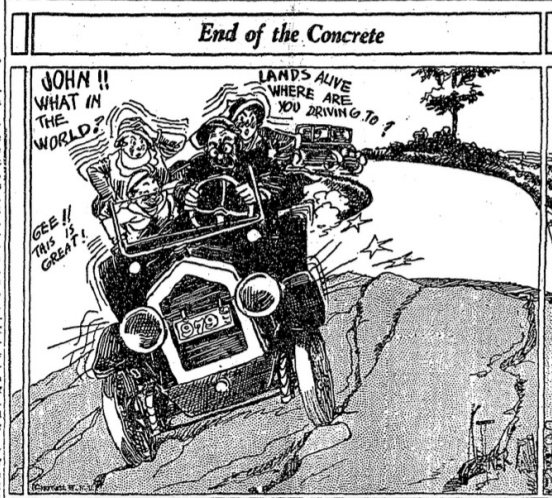
The mayor of Oak Creek gave a short address of welcome, which was responded to by Jack Greenawalt, of Denver. Editor Godfrey, of Yampa, in a few words told of some of the great resources of that section of Colorado. Leaving Oak Creek, the party arrived at Steamboat Springs at about ten o'clock. After registering at the Cattle Hotel, the editors gathered at the court house for a short business session, while the ladies were taken in autos to see many of the scenic beauties and points of interest in the vicinity of the city.

After a discussion of some business affairs, telegrams were collected and

sent. A flash-light picture was taken of the party while in the train.

Coming out of the mine the journey to Craig was continued until, upon nearing the Carey ranch, an old-time stage hold-up occurred in plain sight of the train. Courtney Biley Cooper, the writer, was one of the 'bandits'. Some of the passengers, including J. O. Goodwin of Denver, were injured by the shots of the "desperados." J. O.'s injuries were not serious. Arriving at the Carey Ranch, the crowd detained and visited this famous ranch, where a wild west program was staged. It was here that two fine baby beavers disappeared. A lot of other cats also came up missing. It wasn't, however, a mysterious disappearance. Everyone present could account for some of it. The Carey Ranch, formerly belonging to Senator Carey, is one of the finest ranch properties in that section. It is the home of some high class dairy cows, and thousands of tons of hay are annually put up. Manager Sam Bitterman is a royal host and his entertainments will long be remembered with pleasure.

Counting from here, the journey led to Craig where again the strains of music by the Craig band welcomed the visitors. Here autos were provided by the good citizens of Craig and picnic picnicking trips taken over town and the surrounding country. A visit to the oil fields was enjoyed by many, where the "rigid golf" was seen running from the ground. Drilling operations in the immediate vicinity were being carried on, with confidence that more producing wells would soon be brought in. A pipe line fifteen miles in length delivers this oil to the big storage tanks at Craig, where it is shipped in tank cars to the refinery. A shower, which caused the clay roads



Another Paving Contract Awarded; Work To Start As Soon As Possible

Another state highway paving project in Douglas county was awarded last Friday when the Rogers Construction company were low bidders on the contract to pave the road from the

FAIR EXHIBITS MUST SHOW BOTH BEAUTY AND UTILITY

One of the exhibits in all fairs is the

COLORADO STATE FLOWER IS FAST DISAPPEARING

By W. G. Sutherland, Landscape Ar-

LIONS TURNED LOOSE IN THE OPEN AND ENTERTAIN VISITORS ON H. S. CAMPUS

RUBBER BOUNDED JUST ONCE TOO MANY

In a close and hard-fought game last Sunday, the Castle Rock team went down to defeat with a score of 7 to 0. The game was played on Deaver grounds, and a good representation of local fans journeyed down to witness the game, and all felt well repaid for their trip.

Crosswhite pitched a wonderful game for Castle Rock, and was given erroneous support by his teammates and with an even break in luck, should have won the game. He had nine strike-outs and allowed only eight hits. Jenkins who opposed him, made six strike-outs and allowed twelve hits.

Castle Rock scored two runs in the first inning, Hiler leading off with a single to first. Howe batted and beat it out and both were safe. Stokes sacrificed. Evans hit a long sacrifice fly and Hiler scored. Blaise singled and Howe scored. Hill was thrown out at first and the rally was over.

Deaver came back with a bang and scored three runs. Kirby, first man up, walked. Bergstrom singled. Cattle then connected for a freak home run. The next three men up were easy victims for Crosswhite.

This ended the scoring until the fifth inning, when Hiler again singled. Howe struck out Stokes singled, Hiler going to third. Evans singled and Hiler crossed the plate, tying the score.

This ended the rally, as the next two were easy outs. Gates went scoreless in their half, and Castle Rock came back with another score in the sixth. Stender hit a single, and Kuntz drove a single through the box and scored second on a try for him at first. Crosswhite singled and Kuntz

About thirty of the live-wire Lions and their wives came up from Colorado Springs on Wednesday evening of this week to visit the Castle Rock Club. The occasion was a special 'ladies' night affair and was not mixed with address on the part of Colorado Springs folks, for it became their duty to deliver to the Castle Rock Club a beautiful banner, which the Colorado Springs folks had won at Pueblo a year ago at the district convention, and which they thought they had again won at Boulder this year, but were zoned out by Castle Rock Lions. However, they remarked, that as long as Castle Rock was just a suburb of their city, it was just like keeping the banner at home. And as the next convention will be held at the Springs, and they will be ineligible to compete, they charged Castle Rock Club with the duty of preventing the banner to stray further from home.

Luncheon was served on the High School lawn, by the Lions themselves. A bombshell was thrown into the gathering when President Van Logic read a telegram which had been delivered to him, announcing the marriage of O. P. Weston to a Denver lady. Other telegrams of congratulation arrived—but O. P. was not present. However, a delegation was sent for him and he and the bride were brought to the gathering, where they were greeted with an enthusiastic Lions' roar.

Later another telegram was received and read, threatening suit for breach of promise, at which time the bride jumped up and slapped the president for reading the message, grabbed the offending piece of paper and started to leave. Heresupon O. P. became excited and grabbed hold of the bride's

Douglas County

- July 1925 - “Klan Threatens Vengeance”, Record Journal Editorial by William Dillon
 - Several boys sent threatening letters by KKK (2 were Dillon’s sons)
 - “Crime” was sitting outside venue where KKK ladies were entering for meeting and recording who entered.
 - Keynote speaker was former nun who gave speeches for hire about the atrocities at/decadence of convents/nuns
- 1928 – only one KKK candidate reelected, State Treasurer MacGinnis
 - Douglas County voted for him “enthusiastically”

KLAN THREATENS VENGEANCE

Editor Record-Journal:

On Friday of last week several boys of this town received a notice printed on the official letter head of the Ku Klux Klan, and signed "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan." The paper had a very imposing and mysterious heading comprising some curious designs under which was written "The Sign of the Cyclops." The notice threatened the boys with direful punishment of some undefined character, if they would not desist from the practice of "annoying the women of the Ku Klux Klan during their meetings at Castle Rock." And the boys were warned that the Knights "do not propose to put up with any annoyance from them."

What happened in this matter was this: On Wednesday evening of last week, some four or five boys in an automobile parked their car opposite the stairs leading up to the hall in which the members of the K. K. K., male and female, hold their meetings. At this time, the ladies of the female branch of the order were holding a meeting. The object of the boys apparently was to identify the ladies who went up to, or came down from, this meeting. No words were addressed to these ladies. They were not looked at or stared at in any way that was in the least degree offensive. They were not molested in any way, except to the extent of being identified.

Of course, the boys had a perfect legal right to do what they did. They were guilty of no offense known to the law. Still, if these ladies object to having it known that they attend these meetings, whatever may be their reason for so objecting, as a matter of courtesy they are entitled to have their wishes respected.

Cautionary words

- ***“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,”***
 - Spanish philosopher George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, 1905
- ***“Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”***
 - British statesman Winston Churchill, British House of Commons speech, 1948
- ***“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”***
 - Mark Twain?

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