

Winter 1983

Review of *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* By Robert Alan Goldberg

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Larson, Robert, "Review of *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* By Robert Alan Goldberg" (1983). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 1730.

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Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado. By Robert Alan Goldberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. xv + 255 pp. \$13.50.

Colorado has the dubious distinction of being second only to Indiana in the number of Klansmen who donned their hoods and engaged in a crusade to ensure that "100 Per Cent Americanism" would characterize the nation's society during the flamboyant twenties. Consequently, a study of the post-World War I Ku Klux Klan in Colorado is of particular importance if we are to gain a better understanding of this phase of the Invisible Empire's history, which "has been lost in the wakes of America's two more publicized Klan movements."

The Colorado Klan, according to Robert Goldberg, was not a product of the postwar depression; although the Ku Klux Klan came to

Colorado in 1921, it did not develop real political clout until the mid-twenties. The emergence of the Invisible Empire was not the result of postwar hatred transferred from the Hun to the Catholic, Jew, black, or immigrant, either. The Klan did not thrive solely in rural areas; half the organization's membership lived in Denver. It was not a "pathological assembly of deviant men and women"; many of its members honestly believed that the Invisible Empire could solve a diversity of problems perceived by them to be important. It was not an organization of low-income, "marginal" citizens, a common stereotype; rather, it attracted its membership from a broad cross section of the state's population. Klansmen were drawn from all socioeconomic levels, except the elite sector.

But Goldberg does more than to tell his readers what the Colorado Klan was not. He delves into the program and membership of the Invisible Empire with impressive thoroughness, identifying concrete goals of the program and using statistics and tables to analyze the makeup of the group. The result is a most interesting profile. The Colorado Klan was a pragmatic, problem-solving organization whose members dealt with local issues the way a large percentage of Protestants thought they should. A number of these disenchanting WASPs, as we would now call them, concluded that their governmental institutions had failed to cope with many immediate and very real problems. "The order did not manufacture but manipulated Protestant anxiety concerning crime waves, Catholics organizing, Jewish distinctiveness, immigrant criminality, and black violation of inferior status." On the whole, these alleged problems were social ones; the Colorado Klan was a social as well as a political movement.

Students of Colorado history are aware of the role of the Ku Klux Klan in state politics: a prominent member was elected as governor of the state, the Klan controlled the lower house of the state legislature, and it could claim one of the state's two United States senators. Goldberg recounts with fascinating detail this more

familiar political history and allots proper attention to the enigmatic Denver physician who dominated the organization during its heyday, John Galen Locke. But Goldberg also gets to the grass roots of the movement with extensive research on five Colorado cities where the Klan was a major factor: Denver, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Canon City, and Grand Junction. He discovers that the local Klan organizations were different in composition and goals and experienced mixed results in their efforts to achieve "reform." For instance, in Colorado Springs the local Klan was largely stymied because its leadership was unimaginative and its opposition was well organized, while in Pueblo the organization gained widespread support by cracking down on bootleggers and gamblers in a way that many of the community's citizens felt their government was reluctant to do.

This book is the product of careful research and penetrating and thoughtful analysis. The quantitative information, particularly in chapter 7, reveals a diversity in membership that makes this Klan movement dramatically different from the one following World War II. The documentation is also impressive. Goldberg used membership rolls, newspapers, public documents, manuscript collections, and oral interviews to glean as much information about the Invisible Empire as possible. *Hooded Empire* is a valuable contribution to modern western history.

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