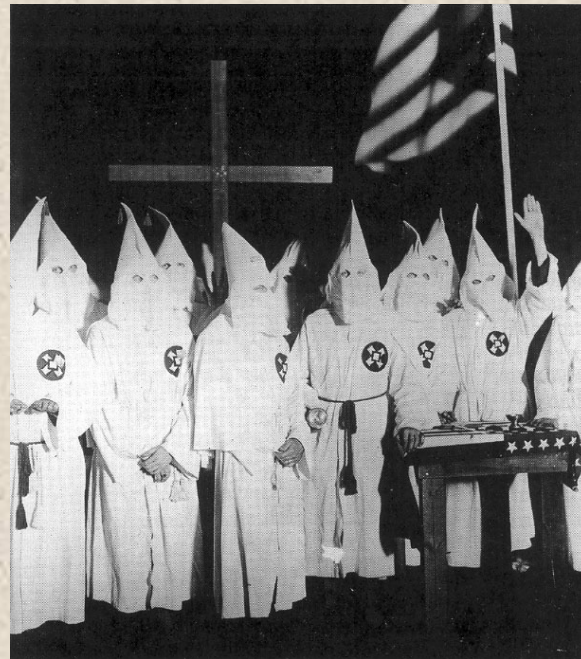


# Backlash to the Roaring '20s



Continued Anti-Immigrant Sentiment,  
the Resurgence of the KKK, and  
Growing Religious Fundamentalism

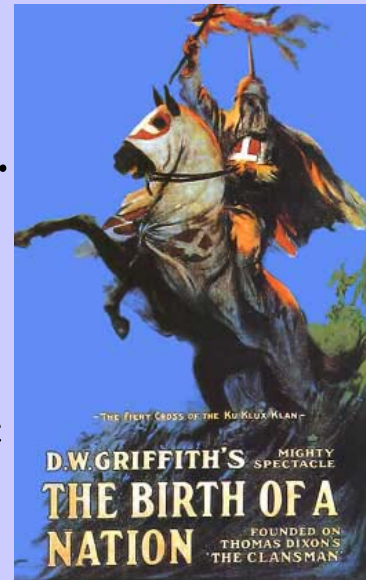
# *Origins of the Backlash Against the Roaring '20s*

- While some embraced the rapidly changing culture of the 1920s, others were terrified of the changes around them.
  - They were torn between their desire to enjoy some of the benefits of modernization (new technologies, electricity, etc.) & their discomfort with changing manners & social norms (flappers, violation of Prohibition laws, etc.)
- These Americans were in large part located in the mid-west and South.
- They wanted to return to how life was before WWI. And felt that a return to the “good old days” would give them comfort and security in a time of great change.

# A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan

- The KKK started in the South in the post-Reconstruction Era (1860s-1870s)
  - Goal was to protect white womanhood and white culture from African-Americans and white northerners
  - Klan was deemed a “terrorist organization” in the 1870s by Congress
  - Achieved its goal of white supremacy in the South after which point it largely disappeared

- Brought back in 1915 by William J. Simmons, a preacher who was inspired by DW Griffith’s film *Birth of a Nation* which glorified the KKK.





NET  
HISTORY

# Rebirth of the KKK

- The KKK had almost 5 million members nationwide by the mid-1920s
- Located all over the U.S. (Sudbury had its own KKK branch in the 1920s!)
- Members were native-born, white Protestants
  - “Respectable,” middle-class Americans, both urban and rural, nationwide.
  - Midwestern states had the largest number of Klansmen, particularly the state of Indiana.



# Responding to rapidly changing society, the 1920s KKK:

- Hoped to stop the rapidly changing society by increased activism
- Focused on defending white, Christian civilization, promoting community activities, enforcing morality, and combating corruption
- *Wanted white supremacy* (specify who is considered to be “white”) *and maintenance of racial purity* (continued to oppose blacks)
- *Wanted to stop immigration*
  - Believed it was leading to the mongrolization of American society...evidenced by the popularity of jazz, etc.
  - Opposed to Catholics, Jews, immigrants
- *Wanted to promote Protestant religious values* (anti-Catholic, family values, etc.)
- *Committed to protecting the "purity of White Womanhood"* (The KKK physically punished people who engaged in immoral behavior, who were dressed indecently or who were drunk. They went after wife beaters, gamblers, adulterers and men who failed to support their families.)





"Klan Day" at the races at Overland Park in Denver, Colorado. [Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western history Collection.]



A group picture of a local Klan in Colorado. [Courtesy Denver Public Library]



# KKK – Women & Youth

The WKKK, or women's auxiliary, began in 1923, and a Junior Klan formed in 1924.



## The Klan Youth Corps

COURAGE TRUTH HONOR

*If you are a White student between the ages of 12 and 17, and idealistically oriented towards the struggle for the survival of White Christian civilization and values, then the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan invites you to become a part of the Klan Youth Corps.*

• • •

*The Klan Youth Corps is dedicated to the principles of White majority rule in America and actively resists programs and materials in America's educational system which are designed to degrade and humiliate Western culture and which are neo-Marxist in nature.*

• • •

*Membership in the Klan Youth Corps is \$6.00 per year. Membership includes an attractive membership card, a subscription to the Crusader, and other materials that aid K.Y.C. members in recruiting their friends.*

• • •

For more information, write:

Klan Youth Corps

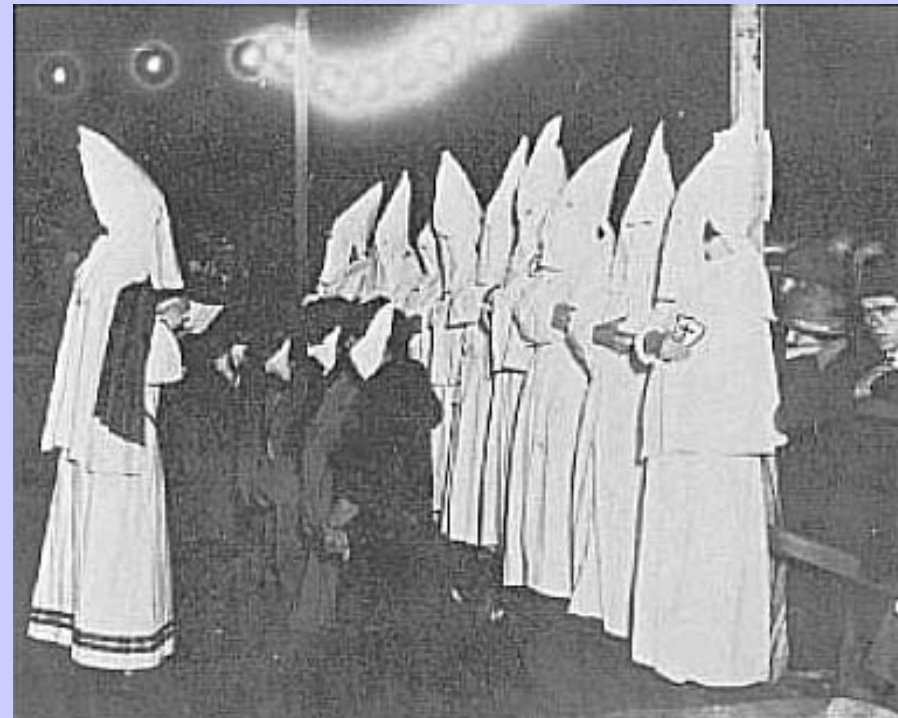
P O Box 41744, Sacramento, CA 95841  
P O Box 3039, San Bernardino, CA 92413  
P O Box 1051, Garden Grove, CA 92642  
P O Box 5817, San Diego, CA 92105  
P O Box 9337, Stanford, CA 94305  
P O Box 6602, Oakland, CA 94614  
P O Box 689, Grover City, CA 93433

### 24-Hr. Message Service

N San Diego County (714) 728-0280  
San Diego (city) (714) 563-4KKK  
Orange County (714) 750-7848  
San Bernardino County (714) 887-KKK2  
Northern California (916) 743-7KKK  
Central California (805)481-4844



• WHITE HERITAGE  
• WHITE PRIDE  
• WHITE UNITY  
• WHITE POWER !





- “If a white girl reported that a colored man had made improper advances to her - even if the charge were unsupported and based on nothing more than a neurotic imagination - a white-sheeted band might spirit the Negro off to the woods and "teach him a lesson" with tar and feathers or with the whip. If a white man stood up for a Negro in a race quarrel, he might be kidnapped and beaten up. If a colored woman refused to sell her land at an arbitrary price which she considered too low, and a Klansman wanted the land, she might receive the K.K.K. ultimatum - sell or be thrown out. Klan members would boycott Jewish merchants, refuse to hire Catholic boys, refuse to rent their houses to Catholics... a lad whipped with branches until his back was ribboned flesh; a Negress beaten and left helpless to contract pneumonia from exposure and die; a white girl, divorceé, beaten into unconsciousness in her own home; a naturalized foreigner flogged until his back was a pulp because he married an American woman; a Negro lashed until he sold his land to a white man for a fraction of its value.”



Frederick Lewis Allen was a popular and biting commentator of the era. The following is his critical description of the Ku Klux Klan. Excerpted from Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's* (New York: Harper and Row, 1931): pp. 49-50.

# 3,000 WILL BURN NEGRO

Kaiser Under Stronger Guard Following Escape Of Crown Prince

Frank Simonds  
Writes For States

## NEW ORLEANS STATES

VOL. 21 NO. 177

1919

NEW ORLEANS, LA., THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 1919

1919

From the Jackson, Miss., Daily News, Thursday, June 26, 1919.

27th YEAR

## JOHN HARTFIELD WILL BE LYNCHED BY ELLISVILLE MOB AT 5 O'CLOCK THIS AFTERNOON

Governor Bilbo Says He Is Powerless to Prevent It—  
Thousands of People Are Flocking Into Ellisville to  
Attend the Event—Sheriff and Authorities Are Power-  
less to Prevent It.

HATTIESBURG, June 26.—John Hartfield, the negro  
alleged to have assaulted an Ellisville, young woman, has  
been taken to Ellisville and is guarded by officers in the office  
of Dr. Carter in that city. He is wounded in the shoulder but  
not seriously. The officers have agreed to turn him over to  
the people of the city at 4 o'clock this afternoon when it is  
expected he will be burned. The negro is said to have made  
a partial confession.

### GOV. BILBO SAYS HE IS POWERLESS.

When Gov. Bilbo was shown the  
above dispatch and asked what

for the lynching has now been fixed  
for five p. m.

A committee of Ellisville citizens has  
been appointed to make the necessary  
arrangements for the event, and the

## NEGRO JERKY AND SULLEN AS BURNING HOUR NEARS

To Be Taken to Scene of  
Crime and Stood Be-  
fore Crowd

ELLISVILLE, Miss., June 26.  
—(Special)—As four o'clock ap-  
proaches John Hartfield, assail-  
ant of the Ellisville white girl,  
is being carefully guarded in the  
office of Dr. Carter of this city.

The wounded negro has con-  
fessed and seems very nervous.  
Discretion has broken out  
among the indignant citizens as  
to what disposition should be  
made of the prisoner.

It is said the negro will be  
taken to the scene of his crime,  
near the Ellisville railroad  
tracks, where he attacked Miss  
Meek, and will be stood up where  
everybody can see him.

Some of the angry citizens, it  
is said, want Hartfield lynched,  
while others want him burned.

ELLISVILLE, Miss., June 26.—  
(Special)—Walter Crawley and  
Will Rogers, two farmers, were  
members of the posse who shot  
Hartfield in the shoulder, and af-

The KKK gained tremendous power & influence in the 1920s.

The KKK elected a number of Klansmen to political office.

- This included state officials in Texas, Oklahoma, Indiana, Oregon and Maine
- The KKK managed to elect members to the position of senator in 10 states and 11 to governorships
- They seized political control in 7 states.



In August, 1925, the KKK organized a mass March on Washington. It was attended by more than 40,000 hooded Klansmen who marched on the Capital in a show of strength.

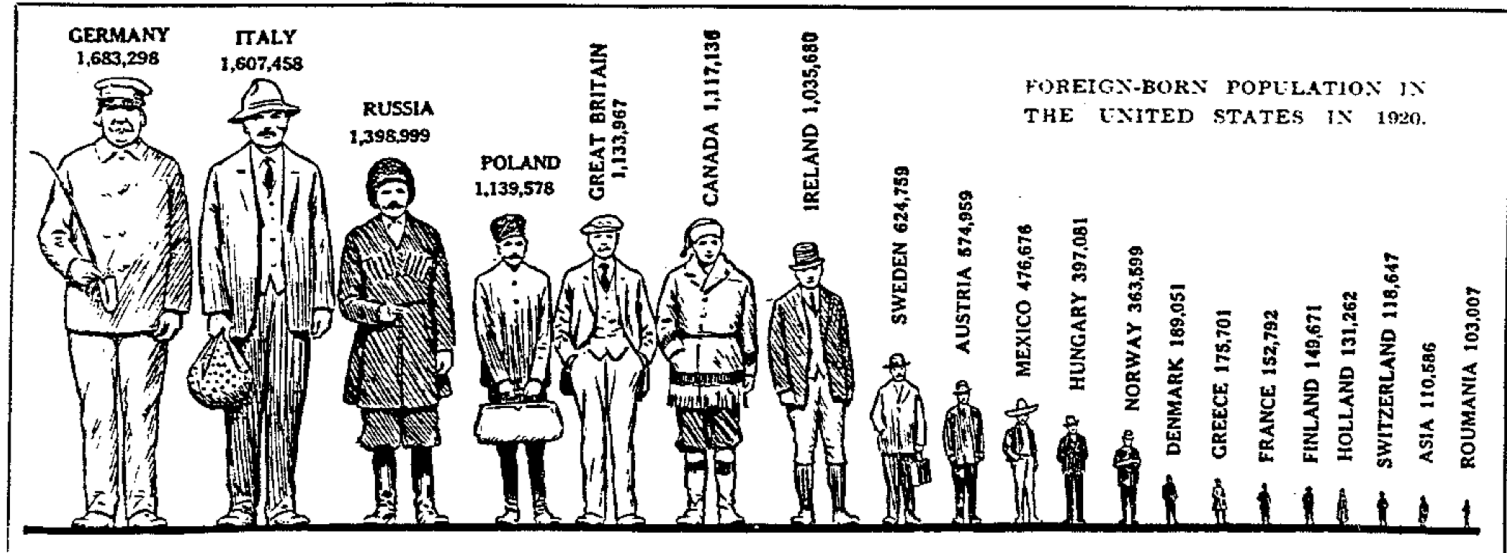
# The 1920s saw continued immigration restriction

- Problem with immigrants:
  - Many Americans thought that they brought bad values into the country including alcoholism, poor work habits, foreign culture and ideas.
  - WWI propaganda had successfully stereotyped foreigners as radicals = led to a resurgence of Nativism
  - Wanted to put in place quotas on certain groups to pick and choose which immigrants we admit to the country.
- Red Scare (Communism): Fear of the Communist threat
  - became real in the years after the Russian Revolution.
  - Feared immigration would lead to the spread of Communism in America

# Immigration Restriction

12

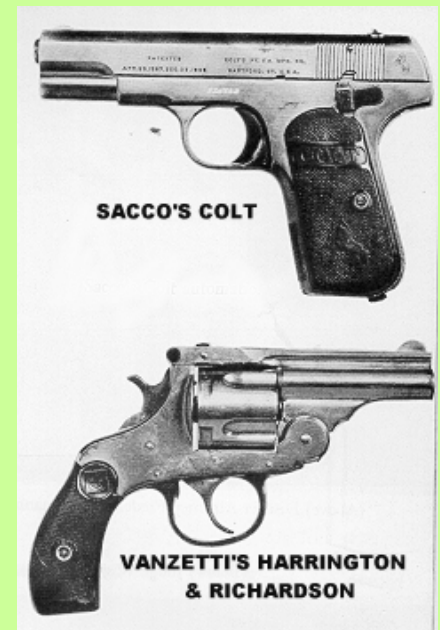
*The Literary Digest for May 7, 1921*



- In the 1920s, Congress established annual immigration quotas that favored Anglo-Saxons but kept out blacks, Asians, South-Eastern Europeans, Slavs, Jews.
  - For example, while 34,007 people were allowed to come from England, only 3,845 people were allowed to come from Italy, only 124 from Lithuania, and only 2,248 from Russia. Also, no African country could send more than 100 people.

# The Sacco & Vanzetti case

- April 15, 1920, a paymaster and his guard were robbed of \$16,000 and murdered in South Braintree, MA. Shortly after, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (avowed anarchists) were arrested and indicted by a grand jury.
- Witnesses identified the 2 as the killers (saw crime committed through factory windows).
- 20 witnesses put Vanzetti at his fish stall at in Plymouth the time of the murder, while the Italian consul in Boston said Sacco was with him at the time of the murders as well.
- Police who arrested the 2 said they were guilty b/c they had drawn their guns when the officers approached = evidence of guilt



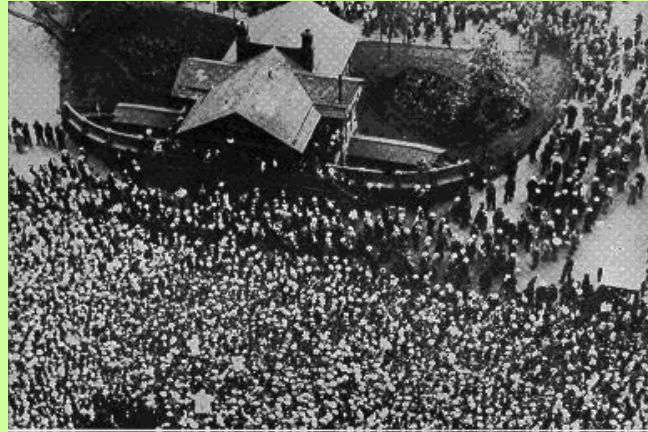
# The case...



- Judge Webster Thayer not accommodate for the poor language skills of the 2 men and repeatedly allowed the prosecution to mention the 2 were revolutionaries & anarchists.
  - WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?
- Evidence was weak and circumstantial, stolen \$ was never traced to either men, neither had a criminal record, both were employed
- They were quickly convicted by the jury, who were instructed by the judge to do their duty “like the boys in France.”
- 1921-1927 numerous motions for new trials turned down by Judge Thayer.

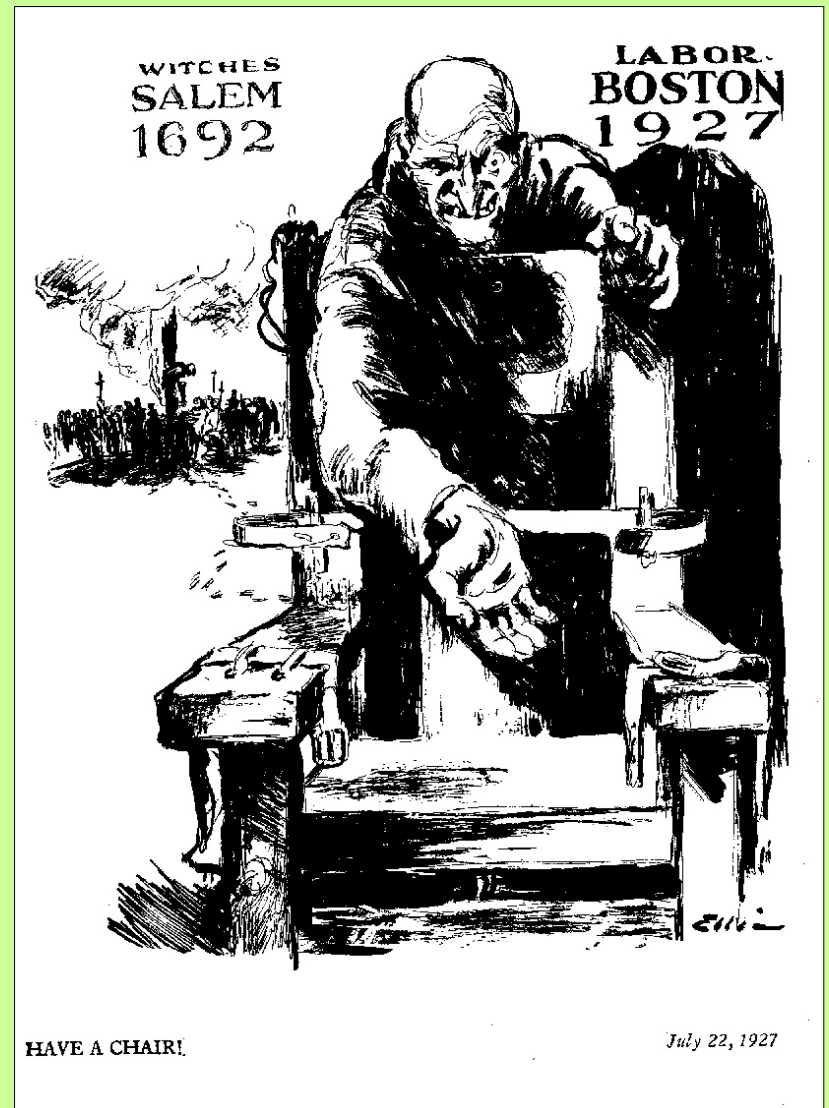
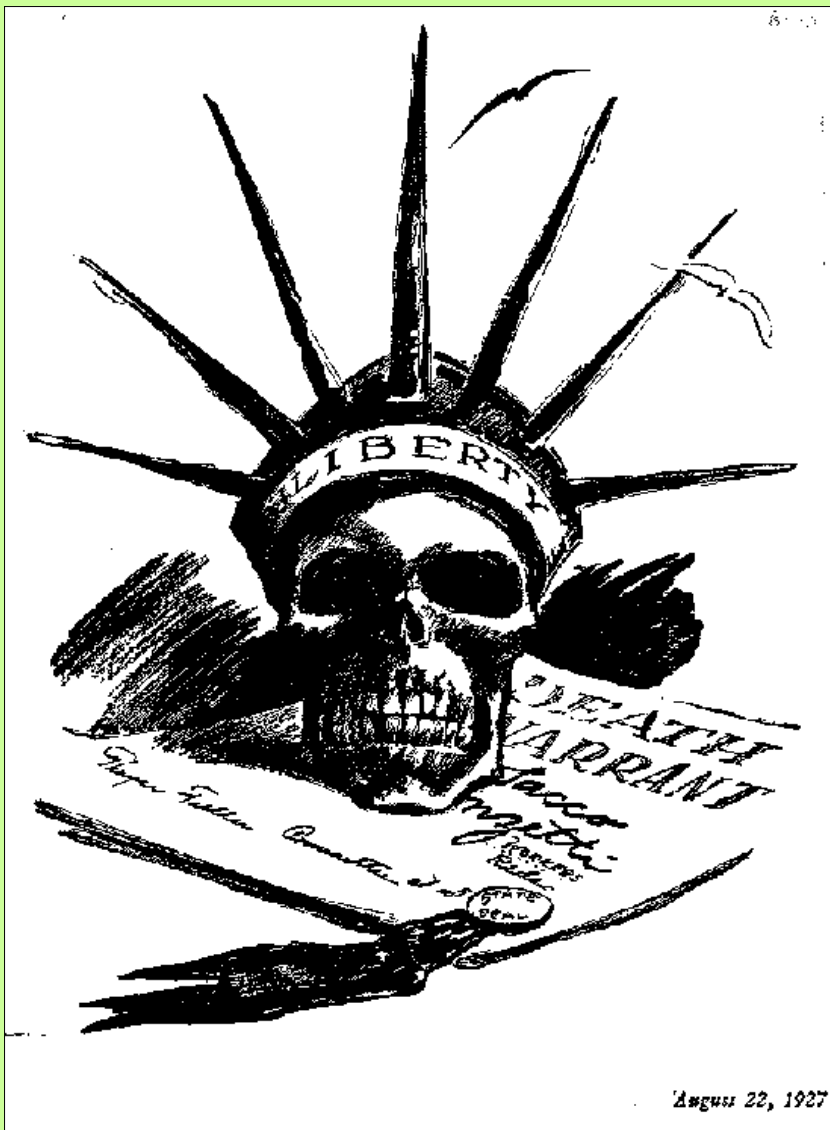
# International Response:

Radicals bombed American embassies around the world in protest & well-known figures like Jane Addams & Albert Einstein pleaded for a new trial.



- In 1927, MA Supreme Court rejected an appeal for a new trial because they felt there was no “failure of justice.” The 2 men were sentenced to die in the electric chair.
- In response:
  - Governor of MA received 100s of letters requesting/demanding a new trial.
  - Thousands across the US, Europe, South America gathered to protest the decision to execute the 2 men.
  - Homes of the governor and judge were guarded around the clock because their mail was filled with death threats.
  - Known anarchists and radicals were placed under surveillance and all public meetings in support of the 2 men were banned.





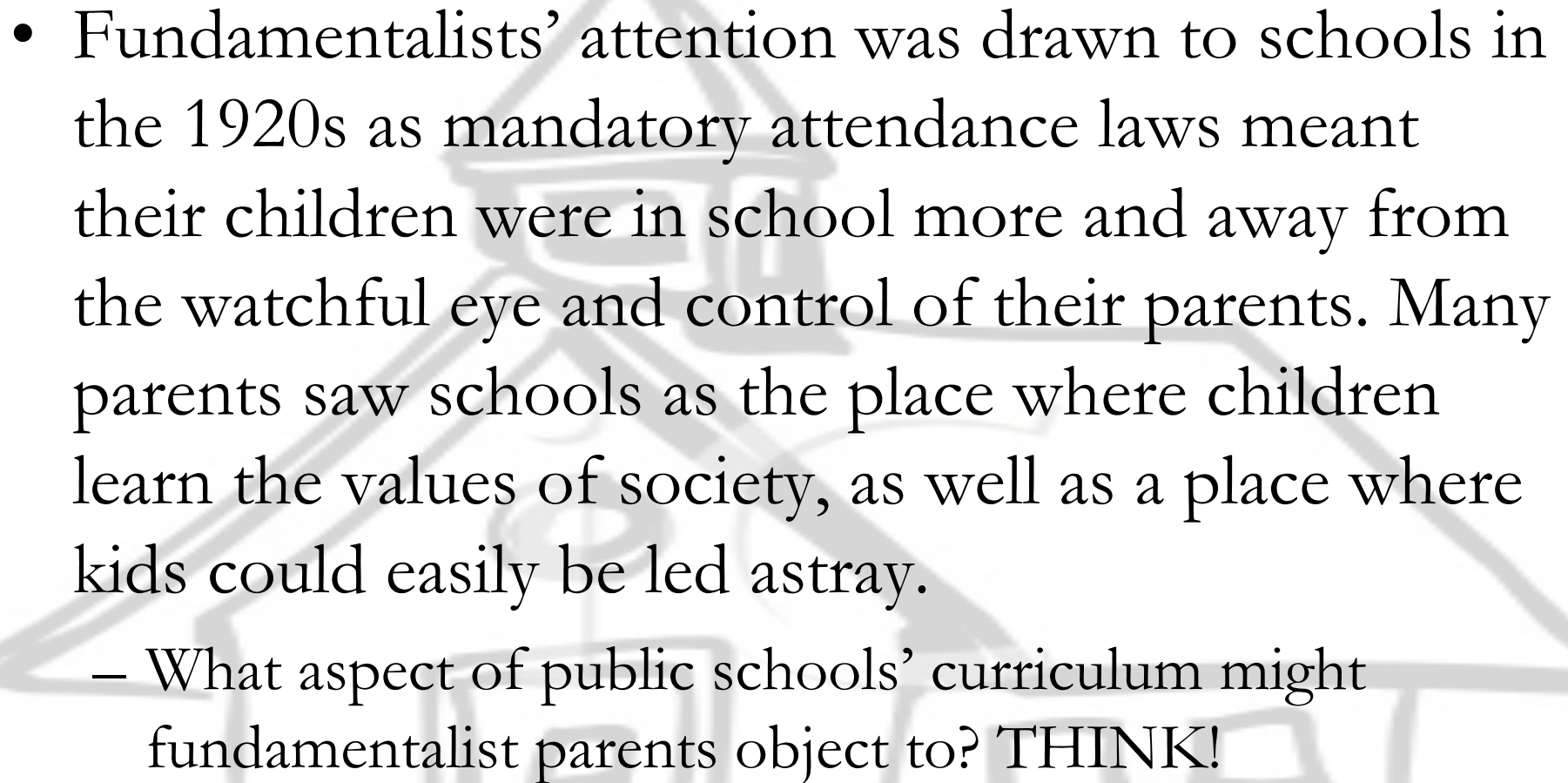
- U.S. Supreme Court refused to intervene because they said they didn't have jurisdiction in the case.
- August 23, 1927 the 2 were executed at the Charlestown Prison.

# Rise in Religious Fundamentalism

- **Christian fundamentalism:**

- *The belief that every word of the Bible is inspired by God and therefore true.*

- In the 1920s, there was a growing number of conservative Christians who believed that the Bible offered the answers to some of the problems presented by a rapidly changing society.
- Christian Fundamentalists sought comfort and stability through religion and believed that if people followed the Bible directly, things would be ok.

- 
- Fundamentalists' attention was drawn to schools in the 1920s as mandatory attendance laws meant their children were in school more and away from the watchful eye and control of their parents. Many parents saw schools as the place where children learn the values of society, as well as a place where kids could easily be led astray.
    - What aspect of public schools' curriculum might fundamentalist parents object to? THINK!

# Opposition to the Theory of Evolution

- Evolution directly conflicts with the teachings of the Bible:
  - Adam & Eve
  - Creation story
  - Man created in God's image
- Opposed to the concept that men derived from apes – thought the theory was absurd and degrading
- Desire to prevent the teaching of evolution, particularly in schools!



# Scopes “Monkey” Trial

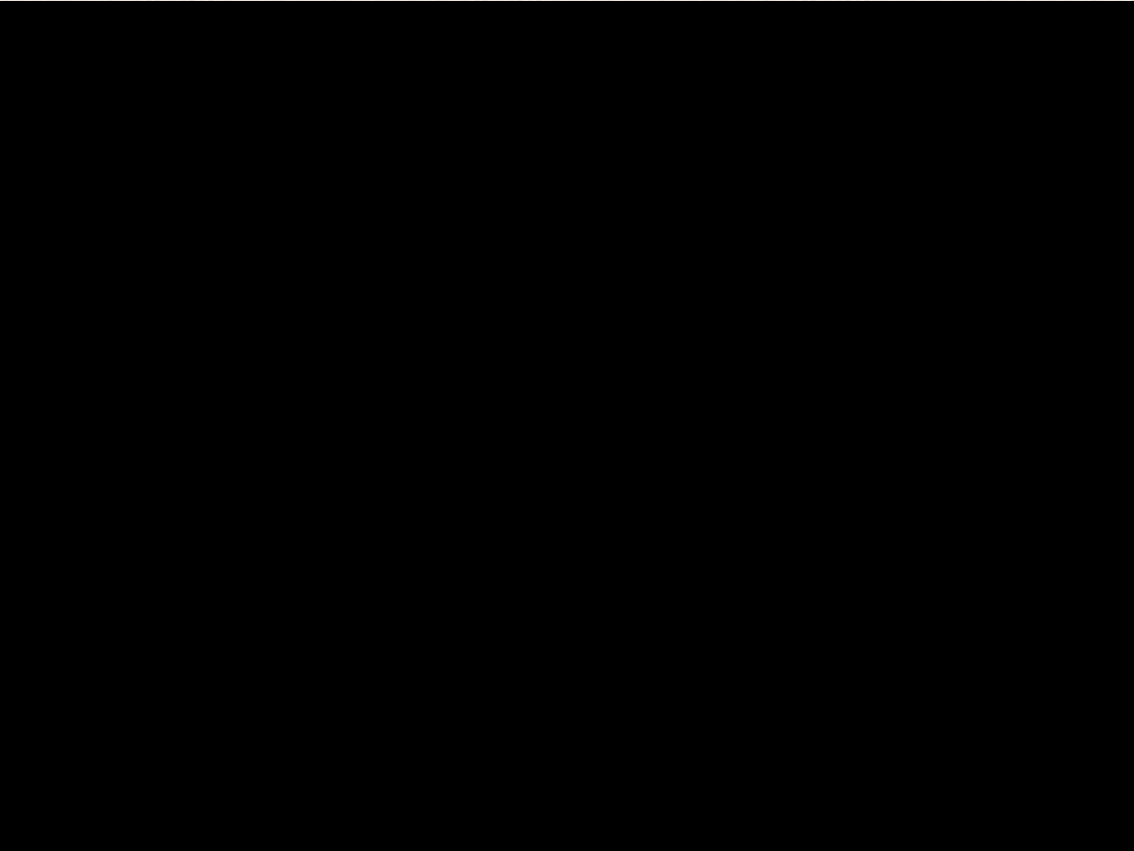
- A TN state representative took up anti-evolution banner in 1922 after hearing a visiting preacher tell of a woman whose faith had been shaken after she’d gone to a university and been taught evolution. He made opposition to teaching evolution in schools a centerpiece of his campaign that year.
- In 1925, the state passed a bill in the House 75 to 5 and in the Senate 24 to 6.
- The law: *Be it Enacted, by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, that it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the...public schools in the State...to teach the theory that denies the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.*
  - MEANING WHAT?



BRYAN  
ASSAILS THE  
DARWIN  
THEORY AT  
ANN ARBOR.

Tompkins  
09

- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) protested this law. They saw it as gross violation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.
  - By 1925, fundamentalists had successfully passed legislation in 3 states banning the teaching of evolution. Legislation was being considered in 15 states at the time of the trial.



The ACLU paid Dayton science teacher, John T. Scopes, to teach evolution. He was arrested and they then used the subsequent trial to call attention to the issue.

# Key Players

- John T. Scopes: science teacher and defendant in the trial. He was only 24 at time of the trial. He never testified in the trial – defense admitted that he had in fact taught the theory of evolution in his classes.

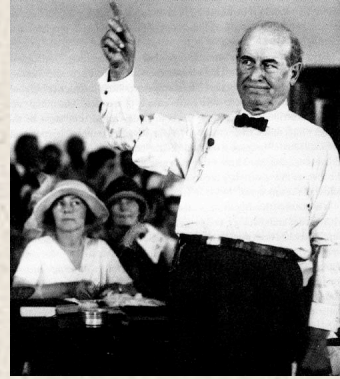


- Clarence Darrow: (Defense) America's most famous defense lawyer. Sophisticated, well-educated. Former corporate lawyer who left corporate law to defend the fringe of society (murderers, communists, etc.)
  - *“If to-day you can take a thing like evolution and make it a crime to teach it in the public school...at the next session you may ban books and newspapers.....”*





# Key Players



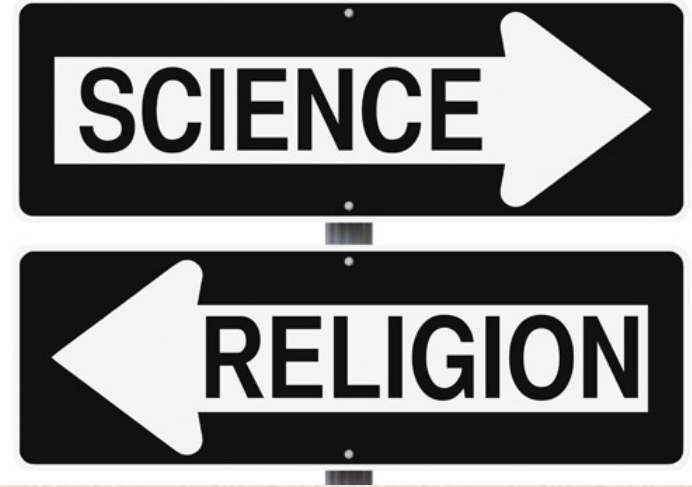
- William Jennings Bryan: (Prosecution)

At the time of the trial, he was the country's most famous figure in the fundamentalist crusade against the theory of evolution.

- Said “When I want to read fiction, I don’t turn to Arabian nights, I turn to works of biology – I like my fiction wild.”
- Offered \$100 cash to anyone who signed an affidavit declaring that he was personally descended from an ape.
- “The first objection to Darwinism is that it is only a guess and was never anything more....The second objection to Darwin's guess is that it has not one syllable in the Bible to support it. This ought to make Christians cautious about accepting it without thorough investigation.... Third--Neither Darwin nor his supporters have been able to find a fact in the universe to support their hypothesis. With millions of species, the investigators have not been able to find one single instance in which one species has changed into another...”



## The Trial of the Century



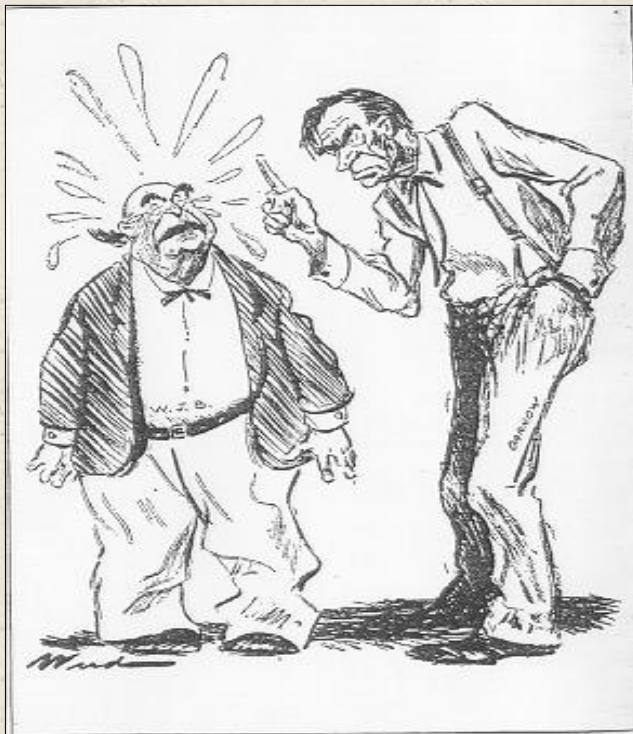
- Topic was big because it was symbolic of the clash of values and morals taking place in the 1920s.
- People involved in the case were huge – Clarence Darrow was the best lawyer of his time, William Jennings Bryan was a 3-time presidential candidate.

# Darrow vs. Bryan



- Towards the end of the trial, Darrow called Bryan to the stand as a witness & questioned him on his literal interpretation of the Bible.
  - Main event of the trial – 2 heavyweights going at it (arch-enemies in ideology) – Amens shouted out, sweltering heat of Dayton in the summer = scene was permanently etched in observer's memories

- Mr. Darrow: Do you claim that everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted?
- Mr. Bryan: I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there; some of the Bible is given illustratively. For instance: “Ye are the salt of the earth.” I would not insist that man was actually salt, or that he had flesh of salt, but it is used in the sense of salt as saving God’s people.



[13] "There Ain't No Santy Claus!" (Ward in Judge.)

Mr. Darrow: But when you read that Jonah swallowed the whale – or was that the whale swallowed Jonah – excuse me please – how do you literally interpret that?...

Mr. Bryan: One miracle is just as easy to believe as another...

Mr. Darrow: Perfectly easy to believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?...

# Outcome

Within 8 minutes of deliberation, the jury returned a **GUILTY** verdict and the judge ordered Scopes to pay fine of \$100 (the minimum the law allowed.) The fine was later thrown out on a technicality.

- Larger significance:

- The trial called attention to the tension between religion/conservatism & science/modernity.
- On a more practical level, most of the states that had been considering similar bans on evolution, did **NOT** pass them in the years after the Scopes case.

