

No Pint-Sized Prejudice:
A Study of Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Catholic Sentiment in Relation to Restrictive Alcohol
Legislation in Orange County, New York

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On October 14, 1923, the Ku Klux Klan placed a burning cross in front of a Catholic Church in Orange County, New York.¹ The burning cross was a symbol of the terrorist group, sending a "... message of intolerance, intimidation, even malevolence toward those outside the fraternity of white Protestant values and behavior."² This was not the first time such a symbol was visible in the county. Another was seen just days earlier.³ Months earlier, in July, another had been spotted on top of a mountain, along with members of the KKK dressed in "full regalia."⁴ The New York Times reported that the cross from July, stated to have been forty feet tall, terrified the black population of the county.⁵ However, "The KKK was almost as anti-Catholic as it was anti-black, and was one of the most uncompromising advocates of a dry America."⁶ In contrast to this massive and terrible display from July, the burning cross visible on the night of October 14th was significant in that it targeted those who practiced the Catholic faith. At this time in history, many Irish immigrants were settling in the United States, and a majority of these Irish immigrants, and later their children, were practicing Catholics.⁷ Thus, many immigrants were also targeted by the KKK. Though the act was done in the name of the KKK, the group was likely not alone in its views. The beliefs of the KKK in recent analysis are thought to be similar to those of much of the wider society at the time, therefore not alone or unusual in what they

¹"Klan Cross Torn Down," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, October 15, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 100199920.

² Thomas R. Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 3.

³"Klan Cross Torn Down," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, October 15, 1923.

⁴"Klan Frightens Negroes: Blazing Cross on a Mountain Causes Panic at Middletown," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, July 12, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 103139899.

⁵"Klan Frightens Negroes: Blazing Cross on a Mountain Causes Panic at Middletown," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, July 12, 1923.

⁶ Edward Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996), 227.

⁷ Timothy Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), ProQuest Ebook Central, chap. 4.

believed.⁸ The burning cross symbolized much more than the KKK's resentment for Catholics; it showed that the established order of the county, mostly white Protestants, felt threatened, and that these residents saw intimidating Catholics at their place of worship as one way to protect their "natural right to rule."⁹ A study of such responses to this threat reveal the role that alcohol, or, more specifically, restrictive alcohol legislation, played in the formation of collective identity and group formation.

Orange County has a long and rich history, with several sources dating it back to 1683, one of the first counties in New York State.¹⁰ Orange County was named for William, Prince of Orange.¹¹ The county is located in the Hudson Valley, with one of its prominent cities, Newburgh, located directly adjoining the river. Though all of this is important in understanding the county, one may learn the most about the county by focusing on what has been overlooked in its history, namely its history in regard to alcohol legislation leading up to and during Prohibition. In 1919, under the 18th Amendment, the "manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" was prohibited in the United States.¹² The topic of alcohol legislation and its supporters in Orange County has not been thoroughly discussed, leaving many questions about the time and the people that need to be answered. This topic can no longer be overlooked in the county's history, as a study of it will lend insight into how people in the county viewed and understood themselves and others, and grouped themselves accordingly. Such a study will,

⁸ Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s*, 4.

⁹ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3.

¹⁰ Russell Headley, "The County of Orange, Chapter One: County, Precincts and Towns," in *The History of Orange County, New York*, ed. Russell Headley (Middletown, New York: Van Deusen and Elms, 1908), 17; Patricia Edwards Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries* (Goshen: Orange County Chamber of Commerce, 1993), 4. Special thanks are given to the Sojourner Truth Library Special Collections at the State University of New York at New Paltz for access to *The History of Orange County, New York*.

¹¹ Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*, 4.

¹² U.S. Constitution, amend. XVIII, §1.

most significantly, portray how the county's established residents understood themselves and the changing world around them as well as how they reacted to this change. The established residents of the county, many of whom were white Protestants, feared the changes a large influx of immigrants and Catholics could bring to their society. These established residents in the county supported alcohol restriction in an effort to combat these feared changes. The story of Prohibition in the county began with the local campaigns against alcohol and the adoption of local alcohol legislation, and led to the establishment of the KKK in the county as a result of the anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiment present within the county. Many regard Prohibition as a "failed experiment." However, though Prohibition did not last, it was still important to shaping ideas and understanding a small county.

There are currently very few, if any, sources on the topic of Prohibition specifically in Orange County. The writings on Prohibition itself, however, are extensive and varied. Many typical sources on Prohibition are broad in spectrum, encompassing the entirety of the United States. One such source is *Prohibition: A Concise History*, by W. J. Rorabaugh. Rorabaugh focused on American Prohibition and the long history of the movement that led to the American adoption of Prohibition, though he placed the American movement among the larger global movement restricting alcohol and drugs that began in the Enlightenment.¹³ Rorabaugh followed a common tradition in Prohibition historiography by portraying Prohibition negatively. Rorabaugh regarded Prohibition as a "mistake" that was changed by a democratic "self-correction," and an example of how "democracy does not always produce wise public policy."¹⁴ Rorabaugh also described Prohibition as "a unique and peculiar response to high

¹³ W.J. Rorabaugh, *Prohibition: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1.

¹⁴Ibid, 5.

consumption that bordered on hysteria.”¹⁵ The work covered many varied aspects of Prohibition and its preceding movements, such as the involvement of women and the effects of immigration, as well as made conclusions about how Prohibition has had lasting effects on American society, politics, drinking culture, and more.¹⁶

Again discussing Prohibition from a national perspective, in *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, Edward Behr discussed the people who fought for Prohibition and their motives. Behr wrote that those who argued for Prohibition, namely white and Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans, wanted to help the general populace, even if it was at the expense of freedom, and thought they could do so by restricting access to alcohol.¹⁷ Behr goes further to say that they did so because of the large number of immigrants was threatening these reformers and their “natural right to rule.”¹⁸ In order to preserve their status “as the natural guardians of traditional values,” they advocated for the cause on moral and religious standpoints, aiming to improve the moral and physical health of the general populace even if was against their will.¹⁹ Despite this, however, Behr still acknowledges that reformers were trying to improve people’s lives with alcohol reform, even though they ended up doing the opposite.²⁰ As such, Behr follows Rorabaugh in the historiographic tradition of negatively viewing Prohibition, labelling it a “disaster,” though Behr was less adamant and negative on this topic than Rorabaugh.²¹

David E. Kyvig was very careful in his work, *Repealing National Prohibition*, not to fall into the traps of writing off Prohibition in the “failed experiment” narrative as many so often

¹⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2, 110-114.

¹⁷ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

have. He stated, “Such an offhanded assessment of national prohibition and its repeal is as inadequate as it is commonplace. The prohibition episode deserves more careful and thoughtful attention for several reasons.”²² Kyvig notes the importance of the adoption of Prohibition on reflecting on the values of the progressive era and the extent to which these values were held in federal legislation, reflecting changing ideas on national legislation and the conception of the permanence of amendments and politics, and on inciting a great political battle that changed ideas on politics leading up to the New Deal.²³ Kyvig claims that “Historians have never adequately explored the reasons for the Eighteenth Amendment’s reversal nor the process by which it occurred, much less the rapidity with which repeal took place.”²⁴ As such, the nation has accepted an easy and slapdash answer, not doing justice to the more complex explanation.²⁵ Kyvig looks at many aspects of the movements, people, and political influences that affected the eventual adoption of an amendment reversing Prohibition.

In their article “Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition politics, 1890-1919,” Kenneth Andrews and Charles Seguin discussed different populations in relation to one another and how that would affect the enactment of laws on alcohol restriction in an area.²⁶ The authors argued that living close to specific populations, such as immigrants or cities, increased the likeliness of local legislation that would restrict alcohol.²⁷ Using data in their studies, the authors determined that, because of the threat that came from the entrance of a new demographic group, the older or “established” group of people would be likely to promote

²² David E. Kyvig, *Repealing National Prohibition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979), xi.

²³ *Ibid.*, xii-xiii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

²⁶ Kenneth Andrews and Charles Seguin, “Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition politics, 1890-1919,” *American Journal of Sociology* 121, no. 2 (2015): 475.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 502.

certain changes, such as alcohol restriction legislation, in order to prevent change to their “economic, political, and cultural standing” and “maintain or restore group status.”²⁸ Thus, new groups posed a threat, and this threat then inspired a reaction among the threatened group that incited them to action, in this case to promote alcohol restriction.²⁹ Though their work applies to the entirety of the United States, the authors look at the wave of Prohibition and its support from a more local perspective, differing from many other works on Prohibition.³⁰

There is a very small number of sources on the history of the county itself, many of which look at the general, unspecific history of the county as a whole. One of the most notable histories of the county, Edward Manning Ruttenber’s *History of the County of Orange: With a History of the Town and City of Newburgh: General, Analytical and Biographical*, was written in 1875 and documented the history of the county many years before the time period in which this study will focus.³¹ Another source, Russel Headley’s *The History of Orange County, New York*, was written just a decade prior to Prohibition, and though it may not be able to give an account of the history of Prohibition, it still relates the feelings of several individuals in the county at the time that will lend to the study of the years just prior to Prohibition in the county. More recently, there has been a trend of regained interest in local history, noted in 1981.³² While there are still very few writings on the county in recent history, Patricia Edwards Clyne wrote a new history of the county in 1993, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*. The source mentions

²⁸ Ibid., 476.

²⁹ Ibid., 481.

³⁰ Ibid., 476.

³¹ Edward Manning Ruttenber, *History of the County of Orange: With a History of the Town and City of Newburgh: General, Analytical and Biographical* (Newburgh: Ruttenber, 1875). Special thanks are given to the Sojourner Truth Library Special Collections at the State University of New York at New Paltz for access to this source.

³² Marilyn Douglas and Melinda Yates, *New York State Census Records, 1790-1925* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, The New York State Library, 1981), iii.

Prohibition within the county by briefly outlining the rise up to Prohibition and the people in the county during those years, but the single-page summary ends with the author discussing other events that happened during the same time period that Clyne deemed more important than Prohibition.³³ This might be why many other sources on the county as a whole, or even on specific towns and cities within the county, glance over this time period without so much as a mention of Prohibition. Prohibition is largely absent from many works on the county and on specific towns and areas within it, with many focusing instead on the county's earlier histories, such as its involvement in the Revolutionary War.

On the topic of Prohibition, though sources on how it affected the county specifically are nonexistent, there are still a few small resources from local town historians in Orange County about temperance or prohibition movements in a specific town within the county. One such source is Janet Dempsey's article "'Wet' or 'Dry?' Booze Was a Big Issue in 1890s Votes." Dempsey, the Cornwall Town Historian at the time she wrote her article, portrayed the arguments between those in favor of and those in opposition to the election of officials who would not grant liquor licenses to businesses in the town, arguing that though alcohol was prevalent and plentiful within the town, reformers were ultimately successful in voting against the continued operation of saloons.³⁴ She also included the prevalence of alcohol in Cornwall before access to it was restricted.³⁵ Other sources on specific establishments that operated during Prohibition, though they are very few in number, will prove useful in analyzing the way people reacted to Prohibition and who did and did not support it by looking at who continued to

³³ Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*, 55.

³⁴ Janet Dempsey, "'Wet' or 'Dry?' Booze Was a Big Issue in 1890s Votes," *Cornwall Local* (Cornwall, NY), Oct. 27, 1993.

³⁵ Ibid.

purchase alcohol when it was outlawed. One such establishment is Brotherhood Winery, the oldest continuously operated winery in the United States, which was active during Prohibition, and is still open and operating today in the town of Washingtonville.³⁶ During Prohibition, the winery continued to produce wine for church use, which was still allowed by the government.³⁷ There are several sources that discuss the winery and its historical significance for wineries in general as well as for wine production in Orange County.

Orange County experienced many demographic changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in regard to immigration. This was reflected in the changing ways the government tried to organize and obtain census data. While the number of “foreigners not naturalized” was recorded in federal censuses starting in 1820, only in 1850 was the question of place of birth introduced in the federal census.³⁸ Similarly, in the New York State censuses, “male aliens, not naturalized” were recorded in 1825 but only began asking about residents born in other countries in 1855, asking specifically whether born in Mexico, South America, Great Britain, France, Germany, and “other parts of Europe.”³⁹ Later, in 1870, the federal census also began to ask “whether father and mother were foreign born,” now tracking immigrants as well as second-generation residents.⁴⁰ In 1900, the federal census began to ask whether an individual could speak English, and in 1910 the “mother tongue of person and parents.”⁴¹ As seen from the changes in the censuses, there was increasing attention being paid to the specific countries from which these new settlers to the United States were emigrating. This specificity enables analysis

³⁶ Alan Martell and Alton Long, *The Wines and Wineries of the Hudson River Valley* (Woodstock: The Countryman Press, Inc., 1993), 18.

³⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁸ Douglas and Yates, *New York State Census Records, 1790-1925*, 42-3.

³⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 44.

⁴¹ Ibid., 45.

of the demographic makeup of Orange County, where new settlers were coming from, and any changes in pattern that might have been reflected in social beliefs, such as support or opposition to prohibition of alcohol.

Between 1870 and 1875, most of Orange County's foreign born population came from England, "The German Empire" and Ireland.⁴² Roughly 10% of the population of Orange County at this time was born in Ireland, with 8,724 persons born in Ireland of the total population of the county of 85,209.⁴³ There were more foreign-born residents of Orange County that were born in Ireland than there were foreign-born residents of the county born in every other country combined.⁴⁴ In larger trends that were seen across the nation, "During the turn-of-the-century era, the number of foreign-born Irish would finally stop growing. The American-born Irish would exceed them first in the Irish American population by the 1870s and 1880s...."⁴⁵ In Orange County, according to Clyne, "The turn of the century found Italian immigrants replacing the Irish farmers on Chester's black dirt...."⁴⁶ As recorded in the 1910 census, in Orange County, of all of the foreign-born residents of the county, most were born in Ireland, Italy, and Germany.⁴⁷ Furthermore, these three countries were in the top four countries from which second-generation residents of the county had both parents born in.⁴⁸ This is significant because, as Behr noted of Prohibition, "... the massive influx first of beer-drinking Germans, then of beer- and

⁴² C.W. Seaton, *Census of the State of New York for 1875* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1877), 39. Special thanks to the Sojourner Truth Library at the State University of New York at New Paltz for access to this source.

⁴³ Ibid., 39, 47.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁵ Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, chap. 4.

⁴⁶ Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*, 44.

⁴⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Abstract of the Census. Statistics of Population, Agriculture, Manufactures, and Mining for the United States, The States, and Principal Cities with Supplement for New York Containing Statistics for the State Counties, Cities, and Other Divisions* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 614.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 614.

whiskey-swilling Irish, and finally of wine-drinking Italians made it at the turn of the century look like a hopeless, long-lost cause.”⁴⁹ However, the significance of the incoming populations at the time was different than it was in retrospect, as shown by Andrews and Seguin. According to Andrews and Seguin, these were the three immigrant groups that were likely to incite previously established residents located within close proximity to promote alcohol legislation.⁵⁰

Orange County’s demographics differed much from the overall state’s in 1910. In 1910, the population of New York had increased by 25.4 percent since the 1900 census, the biggest increase in population for the state since 1850.⁵¹ However, Orange County’s population increase was less than that of the state’s, with only an increase of 11.7 percent, though it was considerably larger than the population increase of the county between 1890 and 1900, which was 6.1 percent.⁵² In the state overall, most “foreign-born white” residents were born in Russia, and there were more Italian- and German-born residents than Irish-born residents.⁵³ In New York State, “Of the total white stock of foreign origin, which includes persons born abroad and also natives having one or both parents born abroad...,” Germany “contributed” most, followed by Ireland, which was also different from the county.⁵⁴ Thus, Orange County had a greater proportion of first- and second-generation Irish as compared to that of other countries than did the state.

These changes in the population of Orange County, namely the incoming immigrant populations from Ireland, Germany, and Italy, affected the outlooks of those who had long been

⁴⁹ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 48-49.

⁵⁰ Andrews and Seguin, “Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition politics, 1890-1919,” 502.

⁵¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, 568.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 614.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 593.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 594.

living in the county already. Many of these sentiments were expressed in accounts of each town in Orange County as included in Russell Headley's *The History of Orange County, New York*. These chapters gave an outline of the history of each town and city in Orange County. One account, written by William B. Royce, presumably a citizen of the town of Wallkill, wrote of its people, "Agriculture has been the mainstay of a people pious and God-fearing, the descendants of those sturdy New England and Long Island ancestors...."⁵⁵ In this, Royce established himself in the United States as a descendant of its first settlers, differentiating himself from newer immigrants by implying that he had a long lineage and ancestry in the United States. Royce also differentiated himself from newcomers by addressing his values, such as piety, religion, and sturdiness. Most notably, however, Royce states that

Of late years the flood of immigration has sent its waves to our thresholds, and we find in our villages, on our farms, and toiling along our railroads the children of Italy, of Hungary, of Austria, of Russia and the more remote East. What the picture will be a century hence, what sort of an amalgamation will have taken place, we cannot foresee. Certain it is that, if he is to remain with us, we must educate the alien, teach him our ways, prepare him for citizenship, and do all we can for him morally and intellectually, and that will surely involve amalgamation. At any rate, this is a force that is bound to change our town's history, in the next hundred years, from anything that has gone before it. We should face the problem--meet it with those most forcible of weapons, Education and Law.⁵⁶

In this, Royce used the pronoun "our."⁵⁷ This directly asserted the idea of himself and others as an established group, deliberately excluding immigrants. Royce specifically mentioned Italian immigrants first, which further evidences the argument put forth by Andrews and Seguin in which Italian immigrants, in addition to Irish and German immigrants, were most threatening to

⁵⁵ William B. Royce, "The Town of Wallkill," in *The History of Orange County, New York*, ed. Russell Headley (Middletown, New York: Van Deusen and Elms, 1908), 425.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 425-6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 425.

previously established groups.⁵⁸ Royce used the specific term “amalgamation” twice in the source.⁵⁹ However, he used it not as a suggestion of compromise, instead to suggest turning the immigrants into what Royce and others in the group within he established himself saw fit. Royce made no note of learning about what the immigrants could bring to his society, only what he could teach and impose upon them.

Before this excerpt, in which Royce worried about the town’s future, he described the town’s history, stating, “Its course has been peaceful, quiet, serene; its politics have never been infected by scandal and corruption; the red glare of warfare--aboriginal or otherwise--has not shone athwart its pages....”⁶⁰ Royce praised this peace and stability, and yet was the one to suggest warlike tactics against the immigrants in his town. Royce called the immigrants “the problem,” to which his solution was to “meet it with the most forcible of weapons.”⁶¹ Though he previously praised the peace in his town, he used warlike terminology in order to convey what he believed to be best in dealing with immigrants.

One aspect of the immigrants that Royce fixated on was their morality, stating that “...we must... do all we can for him morally and intellectually....” Royce’s statement here exemplifies the belief of many people who supported Prohibition. Behr stated that “Old-established Americans, most of them Protestant, of overwhelmingly British lineage, regarded themselves as the natural guardians of traditional values, and were determined to maintain their moral and religious standards by almost any means.”⁶² One of these means was by advocating for

⁵⁸ Andrews and Seguin, “Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition politics, 1890-1919,” 502.

⁵⁹ Royce, “The Town of Walkkill,” 425-6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 425.

⁶¹ Ibid., 426.

⁶² Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3.

restrictions on alcohol for moral purposes.⁶³ Royce's feelings here fit perfectly into Behr's argument about the motivations of alcohol reformers, who Behr states believed in "...restricting individual freedom in the name of better health, morality, and godliness."⁶⁴ Furthermore, Royce also later proved right about the religious motivations as well, as he wrote that his town only had three churches, two of which were Presbyterian, one of which was Congregational, which were Protestant.⁶⁵ This is further evidence in support of Behr's claim that it was Protestants that feared change brought by immigrants.⁶⁶ This shows that Orange County modelled the greater trend seen across the United States. Royce decidedly stated that these immigrants would change the town's history, which he previously stated was peaceful and lovely, suggesting he thought immigrants were threatening to peace and prosperity. Furthermore, by deliberately labeling immigrants as "the problem," Royce here exemplified the pattern Andrews and Seguin discussed, the nature of previously established groups reacting to incoming groups and feeling threatened. This threat then works to create a collective identity and group solidarity, as well as defending the interests of the group.⁶⁷ Rorabaugh wrote that "The alcohol issue was entangled in rising immigration."⁶⁸ Royce's specific attention to and emphasis on law in his chapter suggest that Royce would be supportive of the introduction of law to force immigrant populations to follow the moral and social values of the established residents of the area. One example of such a law would be the prohibition of or restricted access to alcohol, as is later established nationally. In these ways, Royce, and likely many others like him in Orange County, reacted to immigration with specific

⁶³ Ibid., 3-4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁵ Royce, "The Town of Wallkill," 411-2.

⁶⁶ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3.

⁶⁷ Andrews and Seguin, "Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition politics, 1890-1919," 477.

⁶⁸ Rorabaugh, *Prohibition: A Concise History*, 21.

moral intentions and attitudes. This moral reasoning, the desire to help others be moral, was noted by Behr as one of the motives for supporters of Prohibition.⁶⁹

In another chapter for the same collection, on the Town of Blooming Grove, Benjamin Sears wrote:

Who shall succeed these old families who have so loyally supported the Church, the State and the School? Shall their fine residences, which now crown the hilltops, with their beautiful views, and the valleys with their peaceful streams, attract the residents of the nearby cities, as the neighboring town of Monroe is doing? Or will these homes pass into the hands of those who have to labor for their daily bread, day by day, and neither the one nor the other caring for the traditions of the past, caring not for the old churches, the old burial grounds, nor anything of the past. This question comes home to many of us, as we see the changes going on about us, and we cannot answer.⁷⁰

Sears referred to the “old families.”⁷¹ By this he meant established groups separate from any newcomers to the area. Sears mentioned loyalty to the church first, before the school and the state, further support for the interrelation between religion and the temperance and prohibition movements. Sears also mentioned “...residents of the nearby cities...” as part of the changes occurring that he was clearly worried about.⁷² This is suggestive of another fear that led to support for alcohol legislation, as Andrews and Seguin argued that “...proximity to... urban dwellers encouraged the adoption of dry legislation at the county level.”⁷³ Though this is at the county and not town level, it is logical to assume that it could be the case within counties as well.

Sears also showed a very classist view of the town, as he seems to look down on those who have to work and cannot enjoy the finer things in life. This discussion of the working class

⁶⁹ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 4.

⁷⁰ Benjamin C. Sears. “The Town of Blooming Grove,” in *The History of Orange County, New York*, ed. Russell Headley (Middletown, New York: Van Deusen and Elms, 1908), 143.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 143.

⁷³ Andrews and Seguin, “Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition politics, 1890-1919,” 502.

in such a demeaning way is very telling, and ties in closely with ideas on Prohibition at the time. According to Rorabaugh, “The class bias of prohibition was extraordinary.... Small-town dries cared only about the drinking of Catholic and Jewish immigrants and African Americans who were either working class or poor.”⁷⁴ In this passage, Sears showed evidence of classist thought that was also prevalent during Prohibition, suggesting that the classist thought was also present before Prohibition and may have encouraged prohibitionist thought at the local level before it was implemented nationally. Sears also mentioned “traditions.”⁷⁵ According to Behr, many reformers viewed themselves as the defenders of tradition.⁷⁶ In this passage, Sears showed a fear of disregard for the past, which could also be seen as a fear of the new, such as a fear of the new populations of immigrants who were coming to the county during this time. Sears used terms such as “we” and “us.”⁷⁷ Like Royce, Sears has placed himself among a group in order to associate himself with some and distance himself from others.

In *A History of New York State*, David Ellis stated that “The ‘drys’ enlisted a majority of the farmers, the evangelical Protestants, and the native born.”⁷⁸ Royce and Sears are perfect examples of individuals who would likely argue for alcohol legislation. Royce specifically mentioned agriculture, and both Royce and Sears distinguished themselves from immigrants and newcomers by stating their established presence within the county, presumably implying that they were native-born. Furthermore, though it is unclear what religion the two men were, they both placed emphasis on the importance on the church, so they were likely of one of the Christian faiths of the county. These sources show a pattern of a collective identity of previously

⁷⁴ Rorabaugh, *Prohibition: A Concise History*, 81.

⁷⁵ Sears. “The Town of Blooming Grove,”

⁷⁶ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3-4.

⁷⁷ Sears. “The Town of Blooming Grove,”

⁷⁸ David M. Ellis, et al., *A History of New York State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 310.

established citizens distinguished from newcomers in the county, showing an emerging fear of incoming groups and fear of change.

There was widespread support of temperance in the county before the adoption of prohibition laws, often among the clergy and several temperance organizations. Though some had argued for temperance earlier than 1825, the movement became more prominent and powerful when it gained the support, in terms of both morals and resources, of the evangelical religions.⁷⁹ Though, previously, drinking had been common in this area, even among religious leaders, and seen as “manly,” the author argued that in 1898, drinking then “...was a feature of the time. Conscience had not awakened to the enormity of the evil,” and the town’s clergy had since began to argue against the overindulgence of alcohol and instead promote temperance.⁸⁰ Some of the earliest churches in Orange County were Presbyterian, with the first Presbyterian church in the county built in 1720.⁸¹ Methodism was also a popular early religion, but other religions, such as Catholicism, only gained popularity in the county later, with the first Catholic church in the county only being built in 1826.⁸² Many of the Irish immigrants and second-generation Irish were Catholic.⁸³ However, these first and second generations of Irish living in America were often against the implementation of restrictions on alcohol use and did not support Prohibition.⁸⁴ Protestants were more often associated with supporting alcohol restrictions.⁸⁵ Those of Protestant faith, such as the Prebyterians and Methodists who had been in

⁷⁹ Ibid., 308.

⁸⁰ Rev. Daniel Niles Freeland, *Chronicles of Monroe in the Olden Time* (New York: The De Vinne Press, 1898), 157.

⁸¹ Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*, 14.

⁸² Ibid., 14.

⁸³ Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, chap. 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid., chap. 4.

⁸⁵ Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3.

the county since its early years, were more likely to be supporting the causes of temperance and prohibition in the county.

If religion played a large role in the temperance movement in the county, so too did women. In Cornwall, "...temperance agitation continued, chiefly under the auspices of women and the clergy," hosting a local branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.⁸⁶ Monroe as well witnessed women active in the temperance work, especially in their own branch of the WCTU.⁸⁷ Many other towns in the county had a local chapter of the WCTU as well, including the City of Newburgh, who also had a chapter of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union.⁸⁸ The Anti-Saloon League also organized in the county.⁸⁹ The presence of these groups in the county was significant, as "Many of the grassroots men and women who had worked in the antiliquor crusade through the ASL or the WCTU found a new champion in the more militant Klan."⁹⁰ The Ku Klux Klan would later establish itself in Orange County.⁹¹

As a result of all of this early temperance agitation, many towns adopted legislation restricting alcohol at the local level prior to the implementation of prohibition at the national level in 1919. One newspaper article from 1909 states that 650 towns in NYS had some level of restriction on alcohol at the local level, leaving only 280, among them Monroe, with no

⁸⁶ Janet Dempsey, "'Wet' or 'Dry?' Booze Was a Big Issue in 1890s Votes," *Cornwall Local* (Cornwall, NY), Oct. 27, 1993.

⁸⁷ Rev. Daniel Niles Freeland, *Chronicles of Monroe in the Olden Time*, 158.

⁸⁸ Russell Headley, ed., "The City of Newburgh," in *The History of Orange County, New York* (Middletown, New York: Van Deusen and Elms, 1908), 369-70.

⁸⁹ Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*, 55.

⁹⁰ Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016), 141.

⁹¹ "Klan Meet in Warwick: Hundreds Watch Initiation Ceremony on Orange County Farm." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), August 18, 1923. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 103112675.

legislation on it whatsoever.⁹² In 1845, a piece of legislation allowing for the local option, or allowing towns to vote amongst themselves about whether or not to grant liquor licenses to establishments within the town, was passed, though it was quickly reversed in 1847.⁹³ However, later in 1892, Cornwall held a “no license vote.”⁹⁴ Dempsey argues that the reformers likely won the vote because of their visibility in newspapers, large meetings attended by religious figures and other respected townspeople, and the numerous organized groups that advocated for temperance.⁹⁵ The vote against alcohol, however, was not completely popular, and many in the town still obtained their alcohol through other means, as Dempsey wrote, “...with little means of enforcement, there was no difficulty in obtaining a drink, especially when the neighboring towns of New Windsor and Newburgh were wet.”⁹⁶ Though the vote may have been more symbolic than effective, as suggested by Dempsey, the vote and its outcome are still significant in showing the mobilization of voters and reformers, leading to the question of their motivation.

Other towns looked at Cornwall and questioned whether such legislation was successful. In a Monroe newspaper, Creswell McNaughton defended Cornwall’s decision to limit alcohol. McNaughton proposed that the saloons in Cornwall were the reason there was little to no money in savings, but that since saloons were no longer granted license, Cornwall had \$300,000 in savings, because men could no longer spend their money on alcohol.⁹⁷ This followed a nationwide trend noted by Rorabaugh during the later national Prohibition, with reformers

⁹² “The Civic Federation of Monroe has purchased this space for the discussion of local option -- Editor,” *Ramapo Valley Gazette*, October 22, 1909, HRVH Historical Newspapers, <https://news.hrvh.org/veridian/?a=d&d=jbaggeb19091022&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->.

⁹³ David M. Ellis, et al., *A History of New York State*, 309.

⁹⁴ Janet Dempsey, “‘Wet’ or ‘Dry?’ Booze Was a Big Issue in 1890s Votes,” *Cornwall Local* (Cornwall, NY), Oct. 27, 1993.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Look at Cornwall! What About Cornwall?,” *Ramapo Valley Gazette*, October 22, 1909, HRVH Historical Newspapers, <https://news.hrvh.org/veridian/?a=d&d=jbaggeb19091022&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->.

concerned about how and where the poor and working class were spending their money.⁹⁸

McNaughton also stated that the no license vote had made the streets safe for women to walk alone.⁹⁹ He stated, “There is not one single argument that can be advanced to show that Cornwall has suffered under prohibition. There are a hundred sound arguments that can be advanced why Cornwall has prospered without saloons.”¹⁰⁰ Other newspaper articles invited men in Monroe to seriously consider voting for alcohol legislation in their own town. In what can only be called a moral appeal, one article written to young men in Monroe stated:

You are a young man about to cast your first vote. Have an opinion. Don’t dodge. Be sure to cast it in such a way that you will be proud of it years hence. Gather in your mind all the men who vote for License and all the men who vote No License. Compare the companies as a whole, and decide which you prefer to join and to fight with. It is a war; let your first shot be upon the right side.¹⁰¹

In this moral argument, young men were told to decide on and vote for what was right morally, not for what they would think was fun or what they wanted physically. The article told these young men to vote for the outcome they “will be proud of.”¹⁰² This was a moral appeal to vote based upon lasting principles and not the wishes of the moment. It seemed to tell young men not to vote for what they want right now, but for what would be the best for them and the rest of the town in the long run, which was likely to vote for no license. This is also called attention to the way the residents of the county at this time were placed into groups. The author of this article mentioned two specific groups, “the men who vote for License and all the men who vote No License.”¹⁰³ Those who would vote against the license of alcohol would likely have been the

⁹⁸ Rorabaugh, *Prohibition: A Concise History*, 81.

⁹⁹ Look at Cornwall! What About Cornwall?,” *Ramapo Valley Gazette*, October 22, 1909.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “That First Vote,” *Ramapo Valley Gazette*, October 22, 1909, HRVH Historical Newspapers, <https://news.hrvh.org/veridian/?a=d&d=jbaggeb19091022&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.,

established residents of the town. As Behr noted, those willing to support alcohol restrictions were also often religious, seen as having good morals, and possessing more attributes that would have made them appear as the image of perfect citizens.¹⁰⁴ Those who would be seen as voting for license, in contrast, were likely those who did not fit into the same category as the established residents, especially based on ancestry in the United States, religion, ethnicity, and more.

Obviously, the newspaper article was insinuating that young men should align themselves with the group who would have been seen as model citizens, and distance themselves from those who were not. Regardless of whether the men voting fell into such a strict binary, the clear assumption is that the “better” people would be voting against license, and that young men should want to count themselves among those ranks. This article clearly contained appeals to both the morality and the social consciousness of the young men. It is also worthy to note that the article specifically referred to men throughout the entirety of the article, because even though women were very prominent in the temperance movement they did not have the legal ability to vote yet. Furthermore, the article also foreshadowed the intensity of the fight between wets and dries that turned into an immense political battle during Prohibition at a national level.¹⁰⁵

The Ku Klux Klan organized several local groups within the county around the time of the Prohibition era. While there were a few earlier references to the KKK in the county, most of the local KKK groups were formed during the early years of Prohibition. One place in which the KKK was active within the county was in Cornwall, where the local Knights of Columbus group stated that the KKK’s “...avowed purpose is to promote religious and racial hatred....”¹⁰⁶

Significantly, the Knights of Columbus here named the KKK’s anti-Catholicism before its

¹⁰⁴Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Kyvig, *Repealing National Prohibition*, xiii.

¹⁰⁶ J. Gerald Hollorax, “To the Editor,” *Cornwall Local*, June 27, 1929.

racism, which could suggest that the KKK in Cornwall prioritized its religious prejudice.

However, this ordering of the targets could also be a result of the Knights of Columbus's own prioritization. Regardless of the order, however, the letter makes clear that the KKK was perceived to be religiously prejudiced in Cornwall. It is not a coincidence that Cornwall, one of the towns in the county that voted to restrict alcohol at the local level before the adoption of Prohibition nationwide, was one of the places that the KKK organized in the county. The *New York Times* reported that there were local KKK groups in specific sections of Orange County.¹⁰⁷ "It is said to be the intention of the Klan to establish at least a dozen branches of the Invisible Empire in Orange County before the end of the year."¹⁰⁸ Another place that the KKK organized in the county around this time was Newburgh. In a letter to the editor of a local newspaper about her time spent as a daughter of KKK members, one woman wrote of the KKK that "It was a religious group. They wore their white robes just as the scouts wear their uniform... and did nothing but good."¹⁰⁹ She described the KKK as "...a secret organization that wanted peace."¹¹⁰ Most significantly was what she had to say about the meaning of the burning cross, stating that "The burning of the cross was a symbol that God would never suffer this indignation again."¹¹¹ In contrast, the *New York Times* reported that a burning cross was placed in front of a Catholic church in the county. Though the burning cross may not have been the work of this specific

¹⁰⁷ "Klan Frightens Negroes: Blazing Cross on a Mountain Causes Panic at Middletown," *New York Times* (1923-Current File), July 12, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 103139899.

¹⁰⁸ "Klan Meet in Warwick: Hundreds Watch Initiation Ceremony on Orange County Farm," *New York Times* (1923-Current File), August 18, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 103112675.

¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth Kobelt, "Klan Was Religious In Old Days," *Evening News*, March 15, 1975.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

group, it is still clear that the KKK in this county was not entirely peaceful, and did work to threaten and intimidate those of religions and ethnicities it did not approve of.¹¹²

This was just one small example of a much larger trend. Around 1921 and afterward, there were nationwide “local Klan movements” which drew millions of Americans into the KKK.¹¹³ According to David Chalmers in his work on the history of the KKK, “In almost every state the Klan was a champion of the ‘noble experiment’ of Prohibition, and in areas, such as New Jersey and upstate New York, this was its greatest rallying cry.”¹¹⁴ Thomas Pegram, who studied the revival of the KKK during this time period, noted that a recent trend in analysis of the KKK during this time was to understand “... the Klan phenomenon less as an underground movement of alienated and sometimes violent dissenters from the patterns of modern America and more as an intensified expression of widely shared civic and moral values that many concerned local citizens judged to be threatened by dramatic cultural change in the aftermath of World War I.”¹¹⁵ Thus, though the KKK might have been more visible in its actions, its beliefs were not unique to their organization at the time.

A threat in a letter sent to Supreme Court Justice Arthur S. Tompkins accused the justice of talking to “the Micks and Jews in Goshen.”¹¹⁶ This threat was thought to be in response to the justice’s attendance of a mass held in a Presbyterian church but officiated by a Catholic priest.¹¹⁷

¹¹² “Klan Cross Torn Down,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, October 15, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 100199920.

¹¹³ Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s*, 3.

¹¹⁴ David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1981), 114.

¹¹⁵ Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s*, 4.

¹¹⁶ “Letter Threatens Life of Justice Tompkins: ‘Beware K.K.K.’ Says a Missive, Sent Also as Warning to Two Policemen at Goshen,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, July 28, 1923. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: the New York Times with Index. Document ID: 103143894.

¹¹⁷ “Klan Urges Pastors to War on Catholics: Middletown Clergy Receive Letters Also Asking Them to Organize Against Jews,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, July 1, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 103191805.

This upset the harshly anti-Catholic KKK, and in response, the KKK sent a letter to Protestant pastors in Orange County that requested they “organize against Catholics and Jews,” but a Methodist reverend responded that he did not support the KKK and called it “unAmerican”¹¹⁸

This seems to be the response of at least one member of the KKK to the aforementioned incoming and growing Irish population in the county. However, as previously noted, the KKK was not alone in many of its beliefs.¹¹⁹ Thus, it is likely that these thoughts were not just the thoughts of an individual KKK member, but in fact shared by many others of similar race and religious identities in the county. The KKK and other “white Protestant nationalists” attacked subversions of prohibition laws in order to combat the many threats to their status atop the social hierarchy, which included “shifting gender norms...increased power of Catholic immigrants and religious modernism.”¹²⁰ Thus, the establishment and actions of the KKK in Orange County were likely motivated by the county’s growing Irish and Catholic populations.

These Catholic and Irish Americans were opposed to Prohibition.¹²¹ This was likely why they were targeted by the KKK in Orange County, as seen in the KKK’s burning cross and other threats to the Catholic church and its supporters. The Catholic Church was one of the many institutions that threatened the KKK’s ideal of white Protestant supremacy, and as such many KKK raids for alcohol targeted Catholics, including pastors and the churches.¹²² One case involving a priest from Orange County may have, if only in the eyes of the KKK, vindicated its actions against the Catholic church. In 1930, close to the end of the duration of national prohibition, Charles Mrzena, Bishop of the Czechoslovak Old Catholic Orthodox Church,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s*, 4.

¹²⁰ McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*, 136.

¹²¹ Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, chap. 4.

¹²² McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*, 136-7.

worked with others to obtain sacramental wine and then redistribute it through bootleggers.¹²³

This case was recorded in the New York Times in several different articles, describing the messy tale of several corrupt religious leaders. One of the churches under his purview was the Czechoslovak Church of Newburgh, and the Reverend John Petrykanyn there pleaded guilty to helping Mrzena obtain and redistribute the wine, then testified against Mrzena, saying that Mrzena gave him and others money in order for their cooperation in ordering the wine.¹²⁴ This was a visible case in which those operating under the name of the Catholic Church broke the law. However, this only one of a few, if not the only, of such cases in the county, and did not excuse the hateful and prejudiced targeting of the Catholic Church by the KKK in the county.

Significantly, the year in which much of the KKK was noted in Orange County, 1923, could also show this idea of leadership from such classes of residents. In the year 1923, the New York state government passed legislation ceasing its state-enforced restrictions on alcohol, leaving only the Prohibition Bureau to enforce National Prohibition without any help from the state.¹²⁵ Likely, the KKK was reacting to the state's inaction on the cause of prohibition. The KKK during this revival period enforced prohibition laws when it felt that officials needed help or in some cases when officials were corrupt or not doing their job well enough.¹²⁶ This was the case in states with a very large presence of the KKK, such as Texas and Ohio.¹²⁷ There was also the presence of such failings by those who were supposed to be leaders in Orange County as

¹²³“Say ‘Bishop’ Mrzena was a Clergyman: Dr. Newell Asserts Defendant in Wine Case was Ordained by Methodists. Prelate Title Verified. Russian Orthodox Archbishop Tells of Appointment--Others Recall ‘Sacramental’ Withdrawals.” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, August 7, 1930. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 98654973.

¹²⁴“Tells of Wine Orders: Former Newburgh (N.Y.) Pastor Says He Signed Many for ‘Bishop,’” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, August 13, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 98857182.

¹²⁵ Rorabaugh, *Prohibition: A Concise History*, 73.

¹²⁶ McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*, 133-4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.

well. For instance, an honorary deputy sheriff was arrested, among others, in a raid in Gardiner, where prohibition agents found 4000 gallons of alcohol and more.¹²⁸ Another agent went into court to testify that the women he arrested served him a drink but he had had twenty-four drinks that day in the course of his job as an agent so the judge dismissed the case because he called it a “disgraceful situation” and did not think the agent could be believed.¹²⁹ In a different case, while the ethnicity of the men was never explicitly stated, “...Frank Bianchi, Annunzio Salamone. [sic] Mario Salamone, Frank Salamone, Emilio Salamone, Samuel Salamone, Giulio Di Virgilio and John Lanino, all of Middletown, N.Y...” were all mentioned by the New York Times as people who helped run an illegal redistilling process in Florida.¹³⁰ Italians were named among the immigrants labeled a “problem” by Royce in his description of Wallkill.¹³¹ This shows that the KKK was not alone in its anti-immigrant beliefs. Moreover, these likely Italian men were aided by a constable from Florida in Orange County as well as two men who had previously been Prohibition agents.¹³² These examples, and the many more events like them, were likely also part of the motivation for the establishment of the KKK in Orange County, New York as well, especially with the removal of state officials and forces in enforcing national Prohibition.

¹²⁸“Dry Raiders Seize \$100,000 Alcohol Still: Honorary Deputy Sheriff Among Seven Arrested at Gardiner, N.Y.- Two Restaurants Padlocked,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, February 17, 1931, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index, Document ID: 99469472.

¹²⁹ “Court Refuses Word of Agent Who Had Twenty-Four Drinks,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, September 22, 1925, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index, Document ID: 103539052.

¹³⁰“47 Accused of Plot to ‘Wash’ Alcohol: Two Ex-Agent and a Constable Among Those Indicted for Part in Redistilling. Large Diversions Charged. Corporations are Said to have Sold Denatured Product to Still at Florida, N.Y.,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, November 1, 1927, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 104067250.

¹³¹ Royce, “The Town of Wallkill,” 425-6.

¹³² “47 Accused of Plot to ‘Wash’ Alcohol: Two Ex-Agent and a Constable Among Those Indicted for Part in Redistilling. Large Diversions Charged. Corporations are Said to have Sold Denatured Product to Still at Florida, N.Y.,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, November 1, 1927, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 104067250.

In 1926, when Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr., came to the county, where “Republican leaders in Orange County told him of stiffened opposition to him on the part of the Ku Klux Klan there.”¹³³ Wadsworth, a self-proclaimed Republican, had discussed in his speeches his views on Prohibition, namely that he thought its supporters were hypocritical and that the law was unsuccessful because it was too broad.¹³⁴ However, the KKK did not support such criticism of Prohibition, and at one of the KKK’s meetings in the county, decided to vote for Wadsworth’s campaign opponent.¹³⁵ While this was most likely because the senator was critical of Prohibition, the KKK could also have disapproved of the senator’s views because, in many cases, the KKK was an example of the hypocrisy that Wadsworth criticized. The KKK in many places was known to take alcohol from those subverting national Prohibition and instead of disposing of it, its own members drank it.¹³⁶ As this was seen elsewhere in the nation, such would likely be the case in Orange County as well. Thus, not only was the KKK politically active in Orange County at this time, it also continued to support Prohibition and acted politically in this belief.

Like the Irish Catholics in America at the time, many in Orange County opposed Prohibition, and there were a multitude of people who broke the law because of it. According to Clyne, “For the thirsty, of course, Prohibition was an inconvenience but not a deterrent, since alcohol remained plentiful” in Orange County.¹³⁷ In the last years of Prohibition enforcement, many in Orange County were dismissive of Prohibition, seeing it already as a lost cause. One

¹³³“Wadsworth Scores Liquor Hypocrisy: He Speaks at Four Meetings in Orange, Four in Brooklyn, Praising Coolidge Policies. See Defeat of Cristman. Says Fight is Between Wagner and Himself and Warns Against Revisor of the Tariff,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, October 29, 1926, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times With Index, Document ID: 103671995.

¹³⁴“Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶ McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*, 137.

¹³⁷ Clyne, *Orange County: A Chronicle of Three Centuries*, 55.

local newspaper described a raid in the county 1932, stating, “One of the most spectacular raids in the district, it was looked upon with amusement in most quarters and regarded as ‘one of the storms before the end’ of Prohibition.”¹³⁸ The general public, the newspaper reported, was no longer excited about large raids on those people subverting National Prohibition. It is with this lackluster attention that Prohibition is still regarded in the county. Prohibition, and the earlier legislation on alcohol in the county, is not a major topic of historical discussion in the county currently, nor has it been in the past. Now in the county, Prohibition is used more for its entertainment value than it is for critical analysis of the county. For example, North Plank Road Tavern in Newburgh, a tavern that operated illegally during the Prohibition era, is still operating currently, and uses its history to draw in customers, proudly displaying labels and bottles of illegally produced alcohol.¹³⁹

This lack of attention to the more serious aspects of the period is an oversight, and a dangerous one. Ignoring the anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiment that was popular throughout the county, not discussing its historical significance to the county and its residents, does not allow the history of the county to be fully developed and understood. Prohibition and its prejudiced proponents formed much of the county’s social and cultural ideas that the county operated within. Oversight of a prejudiced history is an obstruction to creating meaningful discussion of prejudice in the county, past and present. Much of the historical writing on Orange County emphasizes the many ways in which it was involved in the Revolutionary War, with the

¹³⁸“‘A Storm Before the End,’ Comment on Liquor Raids--Drys Ruin Church Benefit: Murchio, Carey, ‘Jugger’ Held for Grand Jury-- Sullivan and McGuire Demand Hearing Sept. 19,” *Greenwood Lake News-Letter*, August 26, 1932, HRVH Historical Newspapers, <https://news.hrvh.org/veridian/?a=d&d=jbaggfja19320826&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->.

¹³⁹ Laura Brienza, *New York’s Historic restaurants, Inns and Taverns: Storied Establishments from the City to the Hudson Valley* (Guilford, Connecticut: Globe Pequot, 2016), 218-19.

county's many major landmarks and visits from important people of the time. A disproportionate amount of writing is spent discussing the county's less heroic aspects, such as its prejudice against immigrants and Catholics during the Prohibition era. Though this history is less appealing and palatable, it is just as crucial to understanding the county.

As Kyvig argued, it is important not to disregard Prohibition under the "failed experiment" model, as Prohibition was important for many reasons.¹⁴⁰ Kyvig focused more broadly on the national scope of Prohibition and emphasized its importance in national politics.¹⁴¹ However, Prohibition is also important in understanding how people in Orange County viewed themselves and others, and how they reacted to the changing demographics of the time. Orange County exemplified many of the issues and responses in the nation on a smaller scale, with the growth and rebirth of the KKK in the 20th century, its aims against Catholics and immigrants, and the reactions to growing immigrants populations among established residents, who responded to their fear and threat by advocating for alcohol restriction.

Both before and during national Prohibition in Orange County, people were establishing themselves in groups based upon status and collective identity, distancing themselves from immigrants and others who did not fit their own image. Religion, ethnicity, and a person's ancestry in the country were all factors that went into how groups were formed, which also influenced how an individual would likely weigh in on the debate on alcohol before and during Prohibition. As noted by previous studies on Prohibition, a person's identity in these categories influenced how they reacted to limitations on alcohol. Namely, that it was the white, Protestant, and established residents who would support alcohol restrictions and legislation based on

¹⁴⁰ Kyvig, *Repealing National Prohibition*, xi.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, xii-xiii.

perceived threat from, fear of, and moral and religious superiority over specific groups, such as immigrants.¹⁴² Orange County, through its attention to alcohol preceding and during National Prohibition, showed also how its residents thought of themselves, understood the changing demographics of the county, and responded to the changes. Specifically, established residents of the county were threatened by the changing demographics of the county, forming an “us versus them” mentality, as seen in many of the primary sources of the time as well as in the actions of the KKK. These established residents thus adopted support for alcohol restriction in order to combat the feared social and cultural change that incoming demographic groups would bring. The history of alcohol legislation in Orange County in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries is one that is inherently tied to ideas about ethnic, religious, and moral superiority over immigrant populations.

¹⁴² Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*, 3-4.

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