

The Nation Calls, 1908-1923

By 1908, the time was right for a new kind of agency to protect America.

The United States was, well, *united*, with its borders stretching from coast to coast and only two landlocked states left to officially join the union. Inventions like the telephone, the telegraph, and the railroad had seemed to shrink its vast distances even as the country had spread west. After years of industrializing, America was wealthier than ever, too, and a new world power on the block, thanks to its naval victory over Spain.

But there were dark clouds on the horizon.

The country's cities had grown enormously by 1908—there were more than 100 with populations over 50,000—and understandably, crime had grown right along with them. In these big cities, with their many overcrowded tenements filled with the poor and disillusioned and with all the ethnic tensions of an increasingly immigrant nation stirred in for good measure, tempers often flared. Clashes between striking workers and their factory bosses were turning increasingly violent.

And though no one knew it at the time, America's cities and towns were also fast becoming breeding grounds for a future generation of professional lawbreakers. In Brooklyn, a nine-year-old Al Capone would soon start his life of crime. In Indianapolis, a five-year-old John Dillinger was growing up on his family farm. And in Chicago, a young child christened Lester Joseph Gillis—later to morph into the vicious killer “Baby Face” Nelson—would greet the world by year's end.

But violence was just the tip of the criminal iceberg. Corruption was rampant nationwide—especially in local politics, with crooked political machines like Tammany Hall in full flower.

Big business had its share of sleaze, too, from the shoddy, even criminal, conditions in meat packaging plants and factories (as muckrakers like Upton Sinclair had so artfully exposed) to the illegal monopolies threatening to control entire industries.



Criminals, start your engines: In 1908, the first Model Ts began rolling off the assembly lines, giving crooks both a tool and a target for crime.

June 29, 1908

Attorney General Bonaparte begins hiring special agent force



President Roosevelt's Cabinet. Attorney General Bonaparte is the third from the left.

The technological revolution was contributing to crime as well. 1908 was the year that Henry Ford's Model T first began rolling off assembly lines in Motor City, making automobiles affordable to the masses and attractive commodities for thugs and hoodlums, who would soon begin buying or stealing them to elude authorities and move about the country on violent crime sprees.

Twenty-two years later, on a dusty Texas back road, Bonnie and Clyde—"Romeo and Juliet in a Getaway Car," as one journalist put it—would meet their end in a bullet-ridden Ford.

Just around the corner, too, was the world's first major global war—compelling America to protect its homeland from both domestic subversion and international espionage and sabotage. America's approach to national security, once the province of cannons and warships, would never be the same again.



President Teddy Roosevelt

Despite it all, in the year 1908 there was hardly any systematic way of enforcing the law across this now broad landscape of America. Local communities and even some states had their own police forces, but at that time they were typically poorly trained, politically appointed, and underpaid. And nationally, there were few federal criminal laws and likewise only a few thinly staffed federal agencies like the Secret Service in

place to tackle national crime and security issues.

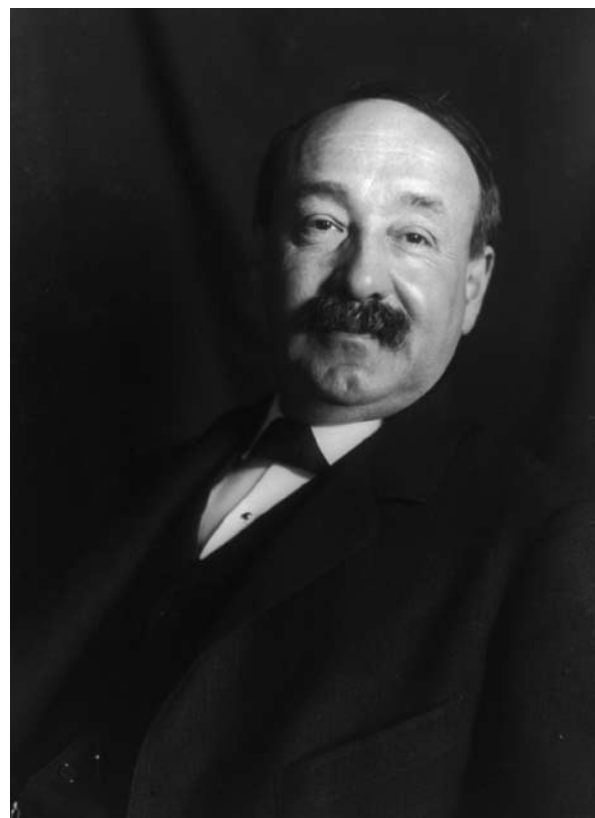
One of these issues was anarchism—an often violent offshoot of Marxism, with its revolutionary call to overthrow capitalism and bring power to the common man. Anarchists took it a step further—they wanted to do away with government entirely. The prevailing anarchistic creed that government was oppressive and repressive, that it should be overthrown by random attacks on the ruling class (including everyone from police to priests to politicians), was preached by often articulate spokesmen and women around the world. There were plenty who latched onto the message, and by the end of the nineteenth century, several world leaders were among those who had been assassinated.

The anarchists, in a sense, were the first modern-day terrorists—banding together in small, isolated groups around the world; motivated by ideology; bent on bringing down the governments they hated. But they would, ironically, hasten into being the first force of federal agents that would later become the FBI.

It happened at the hands of a 28-year-old Ohioan named Leon Czolgosz, who after losing his factory job and turning to the writings of anarchists like Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, took a train to Buffalo, bought a revolver, and put a bullet in the stomach of a visiting President McKinley.

Eight days later, on September 14, 1901, McKinley was dead, and his vice president Teddy Roosevelt took the oval office.

Call it Czolgosz's folly, because this new President was a staunch advocate of the rising "Progressive Movement." Many progressives, including Roosevelt, believed that the federal government's guiding hand was necessary to foster justice in an industrial society. Roosevelt, who had no tolerance for corruption and little trust of those he called the "malefactors of great wealth," had already cracked the whip of reform for six years as a Civil Service Commissioner in Washington (where, as he said, "we stirred things up well") and for two years as head of the New York Police Department. He was a believer in the law and in the enforcement of that law, and it was under his reform-driven leadership that the FBI would get its start.



Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte

July 26, 1908

Force reports to Chief Examiner, formal beginning of future FBI



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

July 26, 1908.

ORDER

All matters relating to investigations under the Department, except those to be made by bank examiners, and in connection with the naturalization service, will be referred to the Chief Examiner for a memorandum as to whether any member of the force of special agents under his direction is available for the work to be performed. No authorization of expenditure for special examinations shall be made by any officer of the Department, without first ascertaining whether one of the regular force is available for the service desired, and, in case the service cannot be performed by the regular force of special agents of the Department, the matter will be specially called to the attention of the Attorney General, or Acting Attorney General, together with a statement from the Chief Examiner as to the reasons why a regular employee cannot be assigned to the work, before authorization shall be made for the expenditure of any money for this purpose.

CHARLES J. BONAPARTE,
Attorney General.

It all started with a short memo, dated July 26, 1908, and signed by Charles J. Bonaparte, Attorney General, describing a "regular force of special agents" available to investigate certain cases of the Department of Justice. This memo is celebrated as the official birth of the Federal Bureau of Investigation—known throughout the world today as the FBI.



The Bureau's first home, the Department of Justice building at 1435 K Street in N.W. Washington, D.C.

The chain of events was set in motion in 1906, when Roosevelt appointed a likeminded reformer named Charles Bonaparte as his second Attorney General. The grandnephew of the infamous French emperor, Bonaparte was a noted civic reformer. He met Roosevelt in 1892 when they both spoke at a reform meeting in Baltimore. Roosevelt, then with the Commission, talked with pride about his insistence that Border Patrol applicants pass marksmanship tests, with the most accurate getting the jobs. Following him on the program, Bonaparte countered, tongue in cheek, that target shooting was not the way to get the best men. "Roosevelt should have had the men shoot at each other, and

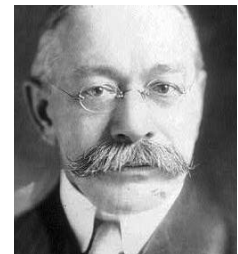
given the jobs to the survivors." Roosevelt soon grew to trust this short, stocky, balding man from Baltimore and appointed Bonaparte to a series of posts during his presidency.

Soon after becoming the nation's top lawman, Bonaparte learned that his hands were largely tied in tackling the rising tide of crime and corruption. He had no squad of investigators to call his own except for one or two special agents and other investigators who carried out specific assignments on his behalf. They included a force of examiners trained as accountants who reviewed the financial transactions of the federal courts and some civil rights investigators. By 1907, when he wanted to send an investigator out to gather the facts or to help a U.S. Attorney build a case, he was usually borrowing operatives from the Secret Service. These men were well trained, dedicated—and expensive. And they reported not to the Attorney General, but to the Chief of the Secret Service. This situation frustrated Bonaparte, who had little control over his own investigations.



Stanley W. Finch

Bonaparte made the problem known to Congress, which wondered why he was even renting Secret Service investigators at all when there was no specific provision in the law for it. In a complicated, political showdown with Congress, involving what lawmakers charged was Roosevelt's grab for executive power, Congress banned the loan of Secret Service operatives to any federal department in May 1908.



Attorney General George W. Wickersham

Now Bonaparte had no choice, ironically, but to create his own force of investigators, and that's exactly what he did in the coming weeks, apparently with Roosevelt's blessing. In late June, the Attorney General quietly hired nine of the Secret Service investigators he had borrowed before and brought them together with another 25 of his own to form a special agent force. On July 26, 1908, Bonaparte ordered Department of Justice attorneys to refer most investigative matters to his Chief Examiner, Stanley W. Finch, for handling by one of these 34 agents. The new force had its mission—to conduct investigations for the Department of Justice—so that date is celebrated as the official birth of the FBI.

With Congress raising no objections to this new unnamed force as it returned from its summer vacation, Bonaparte kept a close
(continued on page 8)

April 30, 1912

Alexander Bruce Bielaski appointed Chief of the Bureau

August 1914

World War I begins in Europe

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO POSITION OF SPECIAL AGENT
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

THE NATION CALLS, 1908-1923 / 5

April 22nd, 1909

The Attorney General,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Application is hereby made for appointment to the position of
Special Agent of the Department of Justice, and for your use in
this connection the following information is submitted:

Name, *Geoff. Ribeiro* Legal residence, *New York City*
Mail and telegraphic address, *# 344 - Ninth Ave.*
Age on last birthday, *28* Weight, *184 lbs* Height, *5ft 8 1/4 inches*
Nationality, *American*
Marital condition, *Wife* Number of children, if any, *one boy.*
Address of wife or nearest adult relative, *# 344 - 9th Ave*
New York City
Whether or not applicant uses intoxicating liquors or narcotics,
and to what extent, *never use liquors at all,*
but smoke occasionally

Education (stating nature of education, what languages, including
English, applicant is able to read, write, and speak, etc.),

Read, write and speak English
and German fluently, and
also practiced Veterinary Medicine
and Surgery.

Passed examination as Pilot for N.Y.
Harbor and its inland waters on July 27th.
1907, my license expires July 27th 1912.

[OVER.]

and East River New York City
this application is accompanied by a recent photograph of the
applicant.

A special agent
application in 1909

Respectfully,

Geo. W. Ribeiro

April 6, 1917
U.S. enters the war

June 15, 1917
Espionage Act passed

June 30, 1919
William Flynn named Director

The Russian Cossack Turned Special Agent

Emilio Kosterlitzky was one of the most colorful characters to ever serve as a special agent.

A cultured, Russian-born man of the world, he spent four decades in the Russian and Mexican militaries, rising to the rank of brigadier general in Mexico. To avoid the dangerous tribulations of the ongoing Mexican Revolution, he settled down in Los Angeles in 1914.

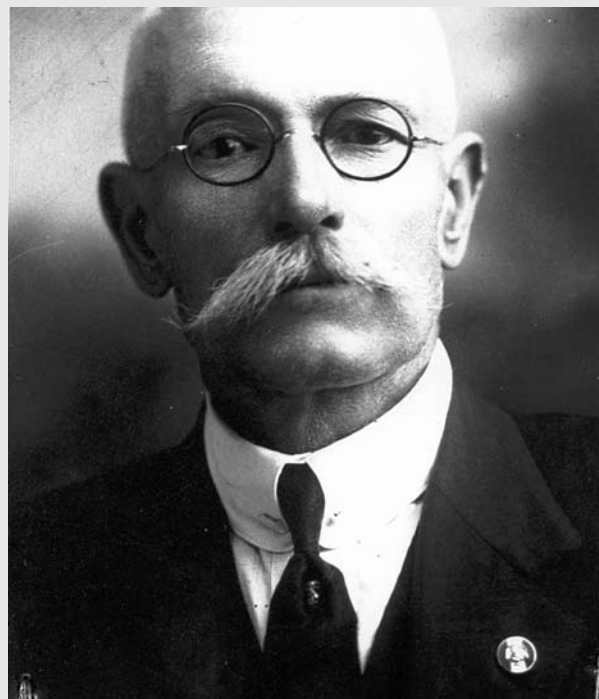
In 1917, the same year as the Bolshevik revolution in his native land, he joined the FBI. He was 63.

Kosterlitzky was appointed a “special employee,” like today’s investigative assistant but with more authority. And with his deep military experience and international flair (including strong connections throughout Mexico and the Southwest U.S. and the ability to speak, read, and write more than eight languages) he excelled at it. His work included not only translations but also undercover work.

On May 1, 1922, Kosterlitzky was appointed a Bureau special agent at a salary of six dollars a day. Because of his unique qualifications he was assigned to work border cases and to conduct liaison with various Mexican informants and officials. By all accounts, he showed exceptional diplomacy and skill.

In 1926, Kosterlitzky was ordered to report to the Bureau’s office in Phoenix but could not comply because of a serious heart condition. He resigned on September 4, 1926. Less than two years later this grand old gentleman died and was buried in Los Angeles.

Kosterlitzky’s oath of office. The cultured Russian-born agent could speak, read, and write more than eight languages.



I, Emilio Kosterlitzky, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Special Agent, Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice,

on which I am about to enter: So help me God.

(Sign here)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____

The Bureau's First Wanted Poster

On December 2, 1919, a 23-year-old soldier named William N. Bishop slipped out of the stockade at Camp A. A. Humphreys—today's Fort Belvoir—in northern Virginia.

Shortly after Bishop's getaway, the Military Intelligence Division of the Army requested the Bureau's help in finding him. One early assistant director, Frank Burke, responded by sending a letter to "All Special Agents, Special Employees and Local Officers" asking them to "make every effort" to capture Bishop.

Little did anyone know at the time, but that letter set in motion a chain of events that would forever change how the FBI and its partners fight crime.

In the letter, Burke included every scrap of information that would help law enforcement of the day locate and identify Bishop: a complete physical description, down to the pigmented mole near his right armpit; possible addresses he might visit, including his sister's home in New York; and a "photostat" of a recent portrait taken at "Howard's studio" on seventh street in Washington, D.C.

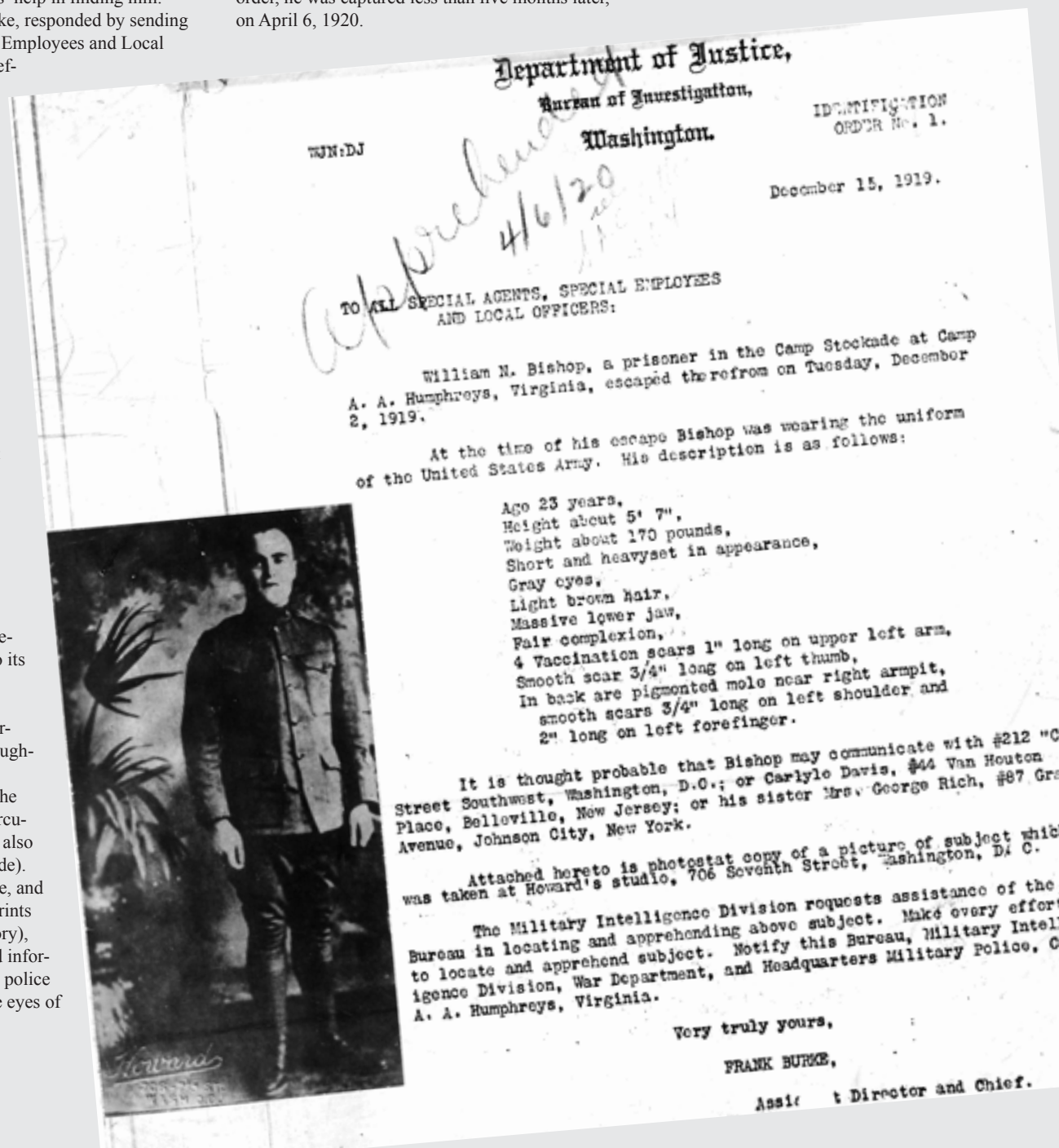
Burke labeled that document—dated December 15, 1919—"Identification Order No. 1." In essence, it was the Bureau's first wanted poster, and it put the organization squarely in the fugitive-catching business just eleven years into its history. It has been at it ever since.

Within a few years, the identification order—or what soon became known throughout law enforcement as an "IO"—had become a staple of crime fighting. By the late 1920s, these wanted flyers were circulating not only throughout the U.S. but also Canada and Europe (and later worldwide). The IO evolved into a standard 8x8 size, and the Bureau soon added to them fingerprints (thanks to its growing national repository), criminal records, and other background information. By the 1930s, IOs were sent to police stations around the nation, enlisting the eyes of

the public in the search for fugitives. In 1950, building on the "wanted posters" concept, the FBI created its "Ten Most Wanted Fugitives" list.

And what of Mr. Bishop? With the help of the identification order, he was captured less than five months later, on April 6, 1920.

The Bureau's first Identification Order, dated December 15, 1919, put it squarely in the fugitive-catching business.



Female Feds

They were pioneers, the first trio of women known to serve as Bureau special agents and among the first women in federal law enforcement.

All three women did well in training at the New York office and, in general, performed up to standard.

Alaska Davidson and Jessie Duckstein were assigned to the Bureau's Washington field office. Both were dismissed when newly appointed Director J. Edgar Hoover dramatically cut the Bureau rolls in the spring of 1924 to clean house following the Teapot Dome scandals. Lenore Houston was hired after these initial cuts and served the longest of the three. She, too, was assigned to the Washington office. She was asked to resign in 1928.

It would be nearly another half century—May 1972—before social mores would change and women special agents would become a regular and vital part of the FBI.

Who they were:

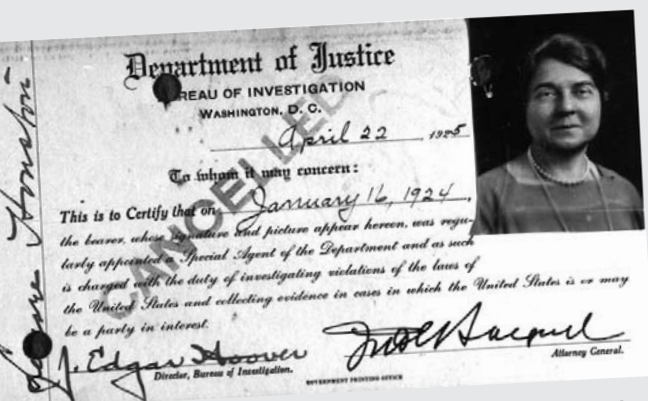


Alaska P. Davidson,
October 1922
to June 1924



Miss Lenore Houston,
January 1924 to
November 1928

Mrs. Jessie B.
Duckstein,
November 1923
to May 1924
(not pictured)



Houston's credentials

hold on its work for the next seven months before stepping down with his retiring president in early March 1909. A few days later, on March 16, Bonaparte's successor, Attorney General George W. Wickersham, gave this band of agents their first name—the Bureau of Investigation. It stuck.

During its first 15 years, the Bureau was a shadow of its future self. It was not yet strong enough to withstand the sometimes corrupting influence of patronage politics on hiring, promotions, and transfers. New agents received limited training and were sometimes undisciplined and poorly managed. The story is told, for example, of a Philadelphia agent who was for years allowed to split time between doing his job and tending his cranberry bog. Later, a more demanding J. Edgar Hoover reportedly made him choose between the two.

Still, the groundwork for the future was being laid. Some excellent investigators and administrators were hired (like the Russian-born Emilio Kosterlitzky, see page 6), providing a stable corps of talent. And the young Bureau was getting its feet wet in all kinds of investigative areas—not just in law enforcement disciplines, but also in the national security and intelligence arenas.

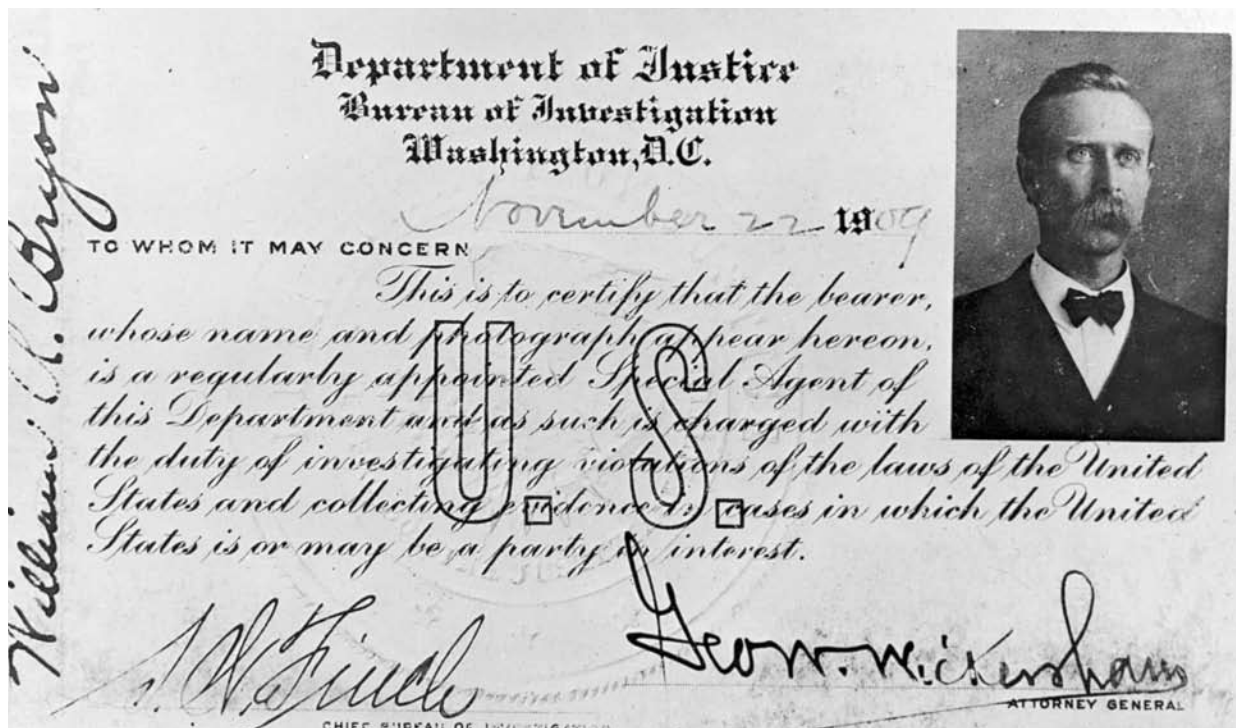
At first, agents investigated mostly white-collar and civil rights cases, including antitrust, land fraud, banking fraud, naturalization and copyright violations, and peonage (forced labor). It handled a few national security issues as well, including treason and some anarchist activity. This list of responsibilities continued to grow as Congress warmed to this new investigative force as a way to advance its national agenda. In 1910, for example, the Bureau took the investigative lead on the newly passed Mann Act or “White Slave Traffic Act,” an early attempt to halt interstate prostitution and human trafficking. By 1915, Congress had increased Bureau personnel more than tenfold, from its original 34 to about 360 special agents and support personnel.

And it wasn't long before international issues took center stage, giving the Bureau its first real taste of national security work. On the border with Mexico, the Bureau had already opened several offices to investigate smuggling and neutrality violations. Then came the war in Europe in 1914. America watched from afar, hoping to avoid entangling alliances and thinking that 4,000 miles worth of ocean was protection enough. But when German subs started openly sinking American ships and German saboteurs began planting bombs on U.S. ships and targeting munitions plants on U.S. soil (see page 10), the nation was provoked into the conflict.

Congress declared war on April 6, 1917, but at that point its own laws were hardly up to the task of protecting the U.S. from subversion and sabotage. So it quickly passed the Espionage Act and later the Sabotage Act and gave responsibility to the principal national investigative agency—the Bureau of Investiga-

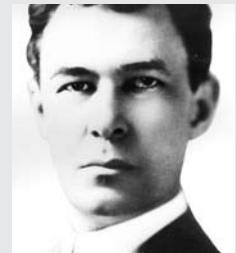
October 28, 1919

National Motor Vehicle Theft Act passed



The Earliest Directors

These four men served as the first directors of the Bureau of Investigation before J. Edgar Hoover took the job in May 1924.



Stanley W. Finch,
1908 to 1912



A. Bruce Bielaski,
1912 to 1919



William J. Flynn,
1919 to 1921



William J. Burns,
1921 to 1924

tion—putting the agency in the counter-spy business less than a decade into its history. The Bureau also landed the job of rounding up army deserters and policing millions of “enemy aliens”—Germans in the U.S. who were not American citizens—as well as of enforcing a variety of other war-related crimes.



Top of page: One of the first special agents credentials
Above: A 1914 protest by the Industrial Workers of the World, known as the “Wobblies”

The war would end in November 1918, but it was hardly the end of globally-inspired turmoil within the U.S. The Bolsheviks had taken over Russia in 1917, and Americans soon became nervous about its talk of worldwide revolution, especially in the face of its own widespread labor and economic unrest. A wave of intolerance and even injustice spread across the nation not only against communists but also against other radicals like the “Wobblies,” a sometimes violent labor union group called the Industrial Workers of the World. When anarchists launched a series of bombing attacks on national leaders in 1919 and 1920 (see page 12), a full-blown “Red Scare” was on.

Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer responded with a massive investigation, led by a young Justice Department lawyer named J. Edgar Hoover, who amassed detailed information and intelligence on radicals and their activities. The ensuing “Palmer Raids” were poorly planned and executed and heavily criticized for infringing on the civil liberties of the thousands of people swept up in the raids. The incident provided an important lesson for the young Bureau, and its excesses helped temper the country’s attitudes toward radicalism.

A new era of lawlessness, though, was just beginning, and the nation would soon need its new federal investigative agency more than ever. As you’ll see in the next chapter, the Bureau first had to get its own house in order.

December 15, 1919

Bureau issues first Identification Order

August 22, 1921

William Burns becomes Director; J. Edgar Hoover named Assistant Director

FAMOUS CASES

“Black Tom” Bombing Propels Bureau Into National Security Arena



Above: The aftermath of the explosion at Black Tom, which killed three men and a baby and pock-marked the Statue of Liberty
 Right: Workers sorting shells at Black Tom



It was still dark in Manhattan on that Sunday morning, July 30, 1916, when the sky suddenly exploded with an unnatural brilliance. Two million tons of war materials packed into train cars had blown up in the Black Tom railroad yard on what is now a part of Liberty State Park.

Thousands of windows shattered in lower Manhattan and Jersey City. Shrapnel pock-marked the Statue of Liberty. Three men and a baby were killed by the explosive energy that erupted from this act of sabotage.

The culprits? German agents who were determined to prevent American munitions shippers from supplying the English during the First World War. Never mind that the U.S. was officially neutral in the conflict at this point.

How to respond? With difficulty. With few national security laws and no real intelligence community to thwart German agents, America was vulnerable. The Secret Service, by presidential order, was able to investigate some German attacks and intrigues. The Bureau of Investigation likewise did what it could, but it was held back by its small size (260 employees in a handful of offices) and lack of jurisdiction. The most successful and experienced anti-sabotage investigators turned out to be the detectives of the New York Police Department’s Bomb Squad—even so, the German agents who blew up Black Tom were not identified at the time.

The Black Tom explosion wasn’t the only provocation. When Germany proposed to Mexico that it ally itself with the Kaiser against America...and when it resumed unrestricted submarine warfare on any enemy or neutral ship crossing the Atlantic... America declared war.

Congress immediately passed the Espionage Act of 1917, which outlawed a variety of crimes associated with German agents; passed several other wartime laws; then the following year passed the Sabotage Act. And the Bureau exercised primary jurisdiction over all of these laws as it pursued a wide variety of national security investigations. How successful were they? Very. German intrigues on American soil essentially evaporated.

Postscript: Were the saboteurs ever identified? Oh, yes. The Bureau and other agencies doggedly pursued the case after the war until the saboteurs were identified and, ultimately, reparations were paid for German attacks against our neutral country.

FAMOUS CASES

Patriot Games

The year was 1917, the war was on, and the Bureau was in need of intelligence about the activities of German agents.

After learning that German embassy documents had been secretly stashed in the Swiss Consulate in New York City in order to avoid their capture by U.S. or British intelligence, the Bureau decided to go after them. The head of the Bureau office in New York—Charles De Woody—put five agents on the job.



Charles De Woody

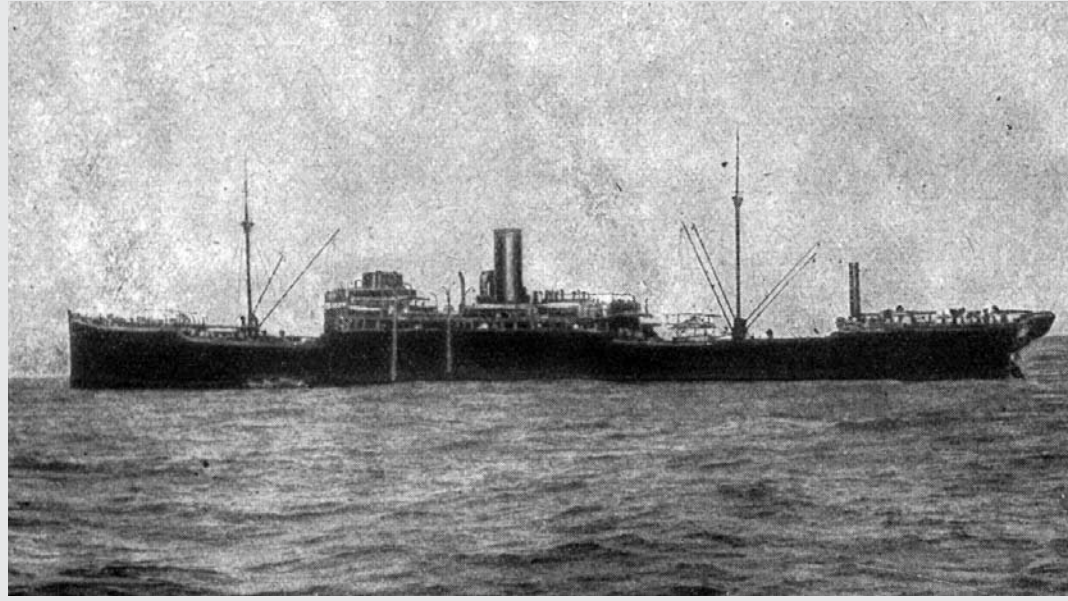
They immediately set to work. The team quickly determined that the documents were locked in a storeroom on the ninth floor of the consulate building. Renting an adjacent office, they waited until embassy employees left one April afternoon and then created a secret tunnel into the locked storeroom. There they found a series of trunks and boxes carefully sealed with red, white, and black tape, ropes, and wax seals. The game was on.



Von Rintelen

After mapping out their operation, the agents snuck into the storeroom every few nights, removed the documents they wanted, and carefully replaced the seals and tape so that no evidence of their tampering remained. By early July, they'd secured thousands of pages of German documents. Closing up operations, they hired a porter who carted the crates of documents to the Justice Department office in New York and left them on the doorstep "anonymously." Translators started transcribing them immediately.

The intelligence value of the cache was significant. De Woody reported that the records "disclosed methods by which the enemy was enabled to secure information for delivering war materials and supplies by enemy ships under neutral flags" ... and "furnished the United States government with information as to the identity [of] methods of codes and enemy intelligence system activities in this country from the beginning of the war," including the activities of German spy master Von Rintelen and his network.



Above: A German ship transporting war supplies
Below: Account of the operation in the *New York Tribune*

Highly Important Documents, Left by Von Bernstorff in Consulate in New York, Helped Beat Teutons

Five Patriotic Adventurers Seized Them During War

Task Was a Masterpiece of Honest Burglary; Multitude of Seals Removed and Replaced by Ingenious Process

This is the amazing story of how five American adventurers obtained and turned over to the United States government very important secret German papers which the Wilhelmstrasse still believes are in the Swiss Consulate in New York.

Charles F. De Woody, who was chief of the special agents of the Department of Justice for the New York Division, had the custody of the documents and supervised the investigations resulting from them. Mr. De Woody was shown a copy of this article and said: "I regard the story as an authentic one."

By Fred C. Kelly
(Copyright, 1920, New York Tribune Inc.)

When diplomatic relations are once more one of the first acts of German to the Swiss Consulate in New York City, the

reached the consuls, and value to the task of local within our g activities.

The papers German Embas hundreds of lett von Bernstorff and both the off from the office of the German fin von Bernstorff's spondents in this German-Americans and social circles toward the country the public knows to

Letters Reveal Act Of German-American

There were stacks Albert and von Bern mas of letters and that passed between ous German agents. ficial ledgers, personal check books and can showed exactly the am disbursed to German of the

FAMOUS CASES

The Palmer Raids

The bomb hit home, both literally and figuratively.

On June 2, 1919, a militant anarchist named Carlo Valdinoci blew up the front of newly appointed Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's home in Washington, D.C.—and himself up in the process when the bomb exploded too early. A young Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, who lived across the street, were also shaken by the blast.



Attorney General
A. Mitchell Palmer

The bombing was just one in a series of coordinated attacks that day on judges, politicians, law enforcement officials, and others in eight cities nationwide. About a month earlier, radicals had also mailed bombs to the mayor of Seattle and to a U.S. Senator, blowing the hands off the senator's domestic worker. The next day, a postal worker in New York City intercepted 16 more packages addressed to political and business leaders, including John D. Rockefeller.



Emma Goldman

It was a time of high anxiety in America—driven by a deadly wave of the pandemic flu, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and sometimes violent labor strikes across the country.

The nation demanded a response to the bombings, and the Attorney General—who had his eye on the White House in 1920—was ready to oblige. He created a small division to gather intelligence on the radical threat and placed a young Justice Department lawyer named J. Edgar Hoover in charge. Hoover collected and organized every scrap of intelligence gathered by the Bureau of Investigation and by other agencies to identify anarchists most likely involved in violent activity. The young Bureau, meanwhile, continued to investigate those responsible for the bombings.



Alexander Berkman

Later that fall, the Department of Justice began arresting, under laws that prohibited immigration by foreign anarchists, suspected radicals and foreigners identified by Hoover's group, including well-known leaders Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. In December 1919, with much public fanfare, a number of radicals

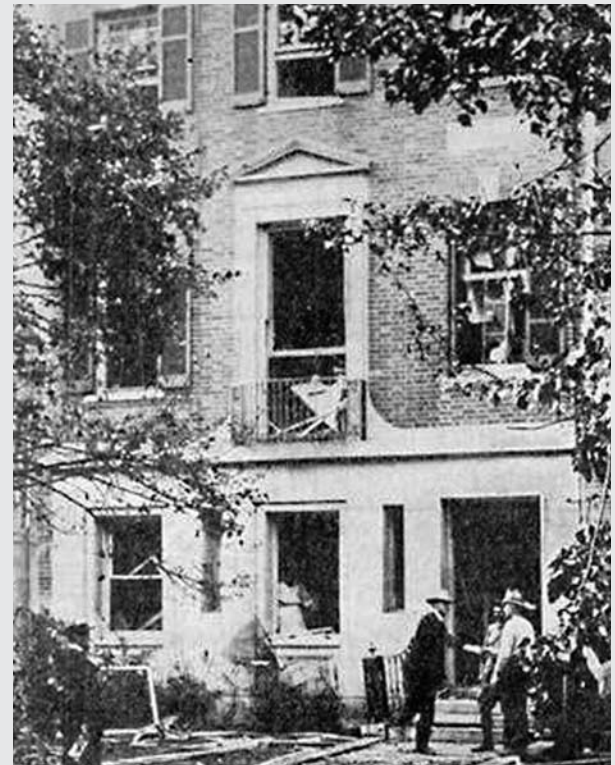
were put on a ship dubbed the "Red Ark" or "Soviet Ark" by the press and deported to Russia.

At this point, though, politics, inexperience, and overreaction got the better of Attorney General Palmer and his department.

Hoover—with the encouragement of Palmer and the help of the Department of Labor—started planning a massive roundup of radicals.

By the start of 1920, the plans were ready. The department organized simultaneous raids in major cities, with local police called on to arrest thousands of suspected anarchists. But the ensuing "Palmer Raids" turned into a nightmare, marked by poor communications, planning, and intelligence about who should be targeted and how many arrest warrants would be needed. The constitutionality of the entire operation was questionable, and Palmer and Hoover were roundly criticized for the plan and for their overzealous domestic security efforts.

The "Palmer Raids" were certainly not a bright spot for the young Bureau. But it did gain valuable experience in terrorism investigations and intelligence work and learn important lessons about the need to protect civil liberties and constitutional rights.



Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's home following the blast

FAMOUS CASES

Terror on Wall Street

The lunch rush was just beginning as a non-descript man driving a cart pressed an old horse forward on a mid-September day in 1920. He stopped the animal and its heavy load in front of the U.S. Assay Office, across from the J. P. Morgan building in the heart of Wall Street. The driver got down and quickly disappeared into the crowd.

Within minutes, the cart exploded into a hail of metal fragments—immediately killing more than 30 people and injuring some 300. The carnage was horrific, and the death toll kept rising as the day wore on and more victims succumbed.

Who was responsible? In the beginning it wasn't obvious that the explosion was an intentional act of terrorism. Crews cleaned up the damage overnight, including physical evidence that today would be crucial to identifying the perpetrator. By the next morning Wall Street was back in business—broken windows draped in canvas, workers in bandages, but functioning none-the-less.

Conspiracy theories abounded, but the New York Police and Fire Departments, the Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Secret Service were on the job. Each avidly pursued leads. The Bureau interviewed hundreds of people who had been around the area before, during, and after the attack, but developed little information of value. The few recollections of the driver and wagon were vague and virtually useless. The NYPD was able to reconstruct the bomb and its fuse mechanism, but there was much debate about the nature of the explosive, and all the potential components were commonly available.

The most promising lead had actually come prior to the explosion. A letter carrier had found four crudely spelled and printed flyers in the area from a group calling itself the “American Anarchist Fighters” that demanded the release of political prisoners. The letters, discovered later, seemed similar to ones used the previous year in two bombing campaigns fomented by Italian Anarchists (see page 12). The Bureau worked diligently, investigating up and down the East Coast, to trace the printing of these flyers, without success.

Based on bomb attacks over the previous decade, the Bureau initially suspected followers of the Italian Anarchist Luigi Galleani. But the case couldn't be proved, and the anarchist had fled the country. Over the next three years, hot leads turned cold and promising trails turned into dead ends. In the end, the bombers were not identified. The best evidence and analysis since that fateful day of September 16, 1920, suggests that the Bureau's



The scene in New York moments after the blast, which killed more than 30 people and injured some 300



initial thought was correct—that a small group of Italian Anarchists were to blame. But the mystery remains.

FAMOUS CASES

Murder and Mayhem in Osage Hills

In May 1921, the badly decomposed body of Anna Brown—an Osage Native American—was found in a remote ravine in northern Oklahoma. The undertaker later discovered a bullet hole in the back of her head. Anna had no known enemies, and the case went unsolved.



Anna Brown

That might have been the end of it, but just two months later, Anna's mother suspiciously died. Two years later, her cousin Henry Roan was shot to death. Then, in March 1923, Anna's sister and brother-in-law were killed when their home was bombed.

One by one, at least two dozen people in the area inexplicably turned up dead. Not just Osage Indians, but a well-known oilman and others.

What did they all have in common? Who was behind all the murders?

That's what the terrorized community wanted to find out. But a slew of private detectives and other investigators turned up nothing (and some were deliberately trying to sidetrack honest efforts). The Osage Tribal Council turned to the federal government, and Bureau agents were detailed to the case.



William Hale

Early on, all fingers pointed at William Hale, the so-called "King of the Osage Hills." A local cattleman, Hale had bribed, intimidated, lied, and stolen his way to wealth and power. He grew even greedier in the late 1800s when oil was discovered on the Osage Indian Reservation. Almost overnight, the Osage became incredibly wealthy, earning royalties from oil sales through their federally mandated "head rights."

Hale's connection to Anna Brown's family was clear. His weak-willed nephew, Ernest Burkhart, was married to Anna's sister. If Anna, her mother, and two sisters died—in that order—all of the "head rights" would pass to the nephew...and Hale could take control. The prize? Half-a-million dollars a year or more.

Solving the case was another matter. The locals weren't talking. Hale had threatened or paid off many of them; the rest had grown distrustful of outsiders. Hale also planted false leads that sent Bureau agents scurrying across the southwest.

So four agents got creative. They went undercover as an insurance salesman, a cattle buyer, an oil prospector, and a herbal



Above right: The ravine where Anna Brown's body was discovered.

Lower right: Anna's aunt (sitting) and housemaid outside her home.

doctor to turn up evidence. Over time, they gained the trust of the Osage and built a case. Finally, someone talked. Then others confessed. The agents were able to prove that Hale ordered the murders of Anna and her family to inherit their oil rights, their cousin Roan for the insurance, and others who had threatened to expose him.

In 1929, Hale was convicted and sent to the slammer. His henchmen—including a hired killer and crooked lawyer—also got time. Case closed...and a grateful community safe once more.

Today, more than a hundred FBI agents from 21 field offices investigate cases on some 200 reservations nationwide, working with a range of partners to help tamp down crime and ensure justice on tribal lands.

FAMOUS CASES

Imperial Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan in Kustody

In mid-March 1924, Edward Young Clarke, an advertising executive in the state of Louisiana, pled guilty in federal court to violating the Mann Act, an anti-prostitution measure enacted in 1910. The fact that he had been caught taking his mistress across state lines, however, was just the tip of this federal case.



Edward Young Clarke

Why was Clarke a wanted man? He was no mere advertising executive. He was an entrepreneur who believed in the tenets of the Ku Klux Klan—which had been resurrected by “Colonel” William S. Simmons in 1915—and he took its anti-Jewish, anti-African-American, and anti-Catholic tenets to heart.

At the same time, he also liked to turn a profit. In 1920 he agreed to aggressively increase membership in the Klan in return for a share of the membership dues. And he was

incredibly successful: over one million members signed up in short order.

In 1922, Louisiana Governor John M. Parker had sent J. Edgar Hoover, then Assistant Director of the Bureau of Investigation, a heartfelt message that was personally delivered by a New Orleans newspaper reporter. Please help, it said, the Ku Klux

Klan has grown so powerful in my state that it effectively controls the northern half. It has already kidnapped, tortured, and killed two people who opposed it...and it has threatened many more.



Louisiana Governor
John M. Parker

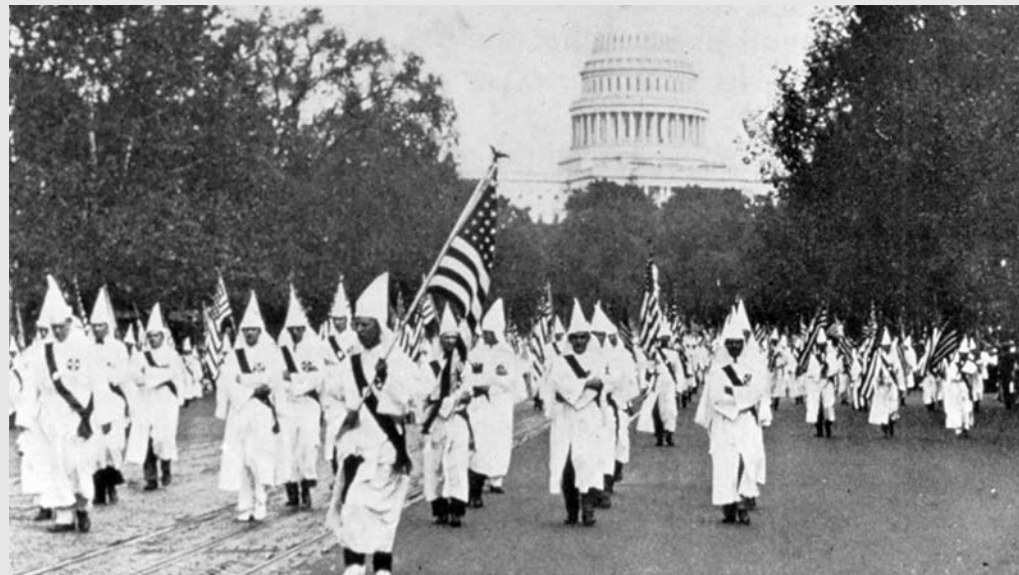
How could the Bureau investigate? At the time, of course, federal civil rights laws were few, and the Bureau did not have authority to investigate. KKK cross-burnings and murders were state matters. But Governor Parker petitioned President Harding to act under the constitutional guarantee that the federal

government would protect the states from domestic violence (Article 4, Section 4). The President agreed, and the Bureau promptly sent agents to investigate, even though it would likely have to turn its evidence over to state governments to prosecute the cases.

What did the FBI find? It found that the Klan was wielding great

political power throughout the South as it fed off the prejudices of the day and instilled fear in millions. It found that Clarke’s campaign to increase Klan membership had been a resounding success. Membership had soared and so had the number of Klan groups in many different states.

On a more personal note, it found that “Imperial Kleagle” Clarke had lined his pockets with \$8 of each \$10 initiation fee he had secured and that he was also netting tidy profits from his new member sales of the Klan’s bedsheet regalia, none of



The KKK marching down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington in 1927

which were violations of federal law. But agents also found that he was using his wealth to lead a high life, including taking on a mistress, and that he was crossing state lines with her.

Now this last was an interesting point. How about using the Mann Act, an enterprising Bureau lawyer suggested. Accordingly, Clarke was arrested when he made his next trip over a state line with his mistress, leading to his guilty plea.

It was just the beginning of the Bureau’s fight to bring these early day domestic terrorists to justice.