

WAS IT REALLY “ROARING?”

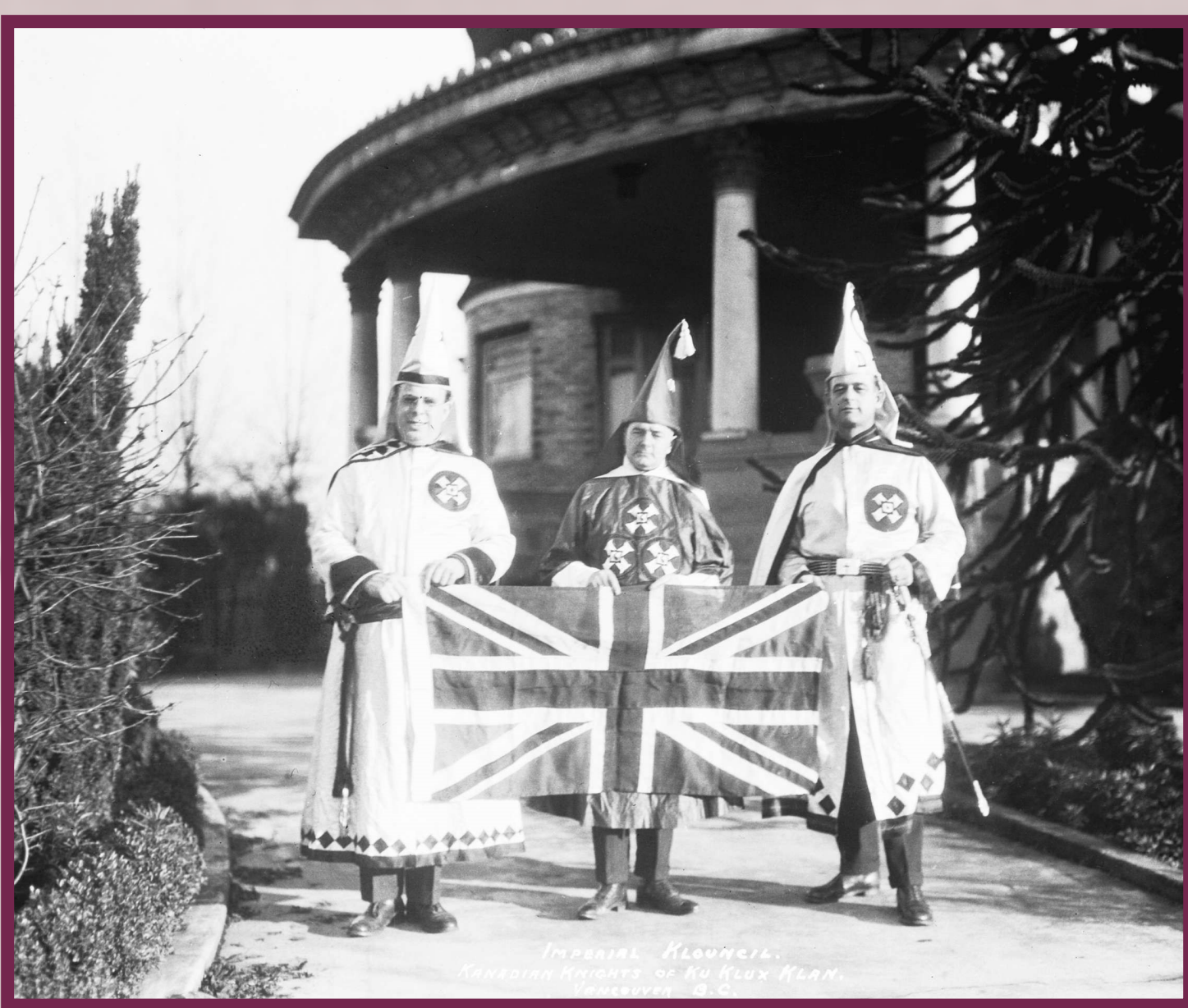
While the decade was a time of prosperity for many people, it was a terrible time for others.

During the 1920s, Indigenous peoples continued to be denied the rights of other citizens, and the government used *enfranchisement*, with the aim of assimilation, to take away a person's Indian Status under the Indian Act. Without status, many lost their treaty rights and right to live with family on a reserve. In 1920, amendments were made to the Indian Act to make Day or Residential School attendance compulsory. In many places day school was not available, so residential school attendance was enforced.



“Aerial View of New Indian School, Alert Bay, ca. 1929”. St. Michael's Residential School (red roof) opened in 1929 and did not close until 1975. City of Vancouver Archives, AM75-F36

In BC, the McKenna-McBride Commission had been established before the war with the aim of solving BC's “land question.” Indigenous people created the Allied Indian Tribes to press for Aboriginal Rights and Title. In 1923 representatives met with federal politicians and bureaucrats to voice concerns, but the next year lands deemed valuable were taken out of reserves and replaced with more, but inferior, acreage. In 1926 a Special Committee of the Senate and House of Commons looked into the BC land claims, and concluded that “the claims of the Indians were not well founded, and that no Aboriginal title, as alleged, had ever existed.” Then in 1927, the Indian Act was amended to make it illegal to obtain funds or retain a lawyer to advance Aboriginal Title cases.



(Left) Ku Klux Klan Imperial Council in front of their Vancouver location, ca. 1925. City of Vancouver Archives, CVA 99-1496

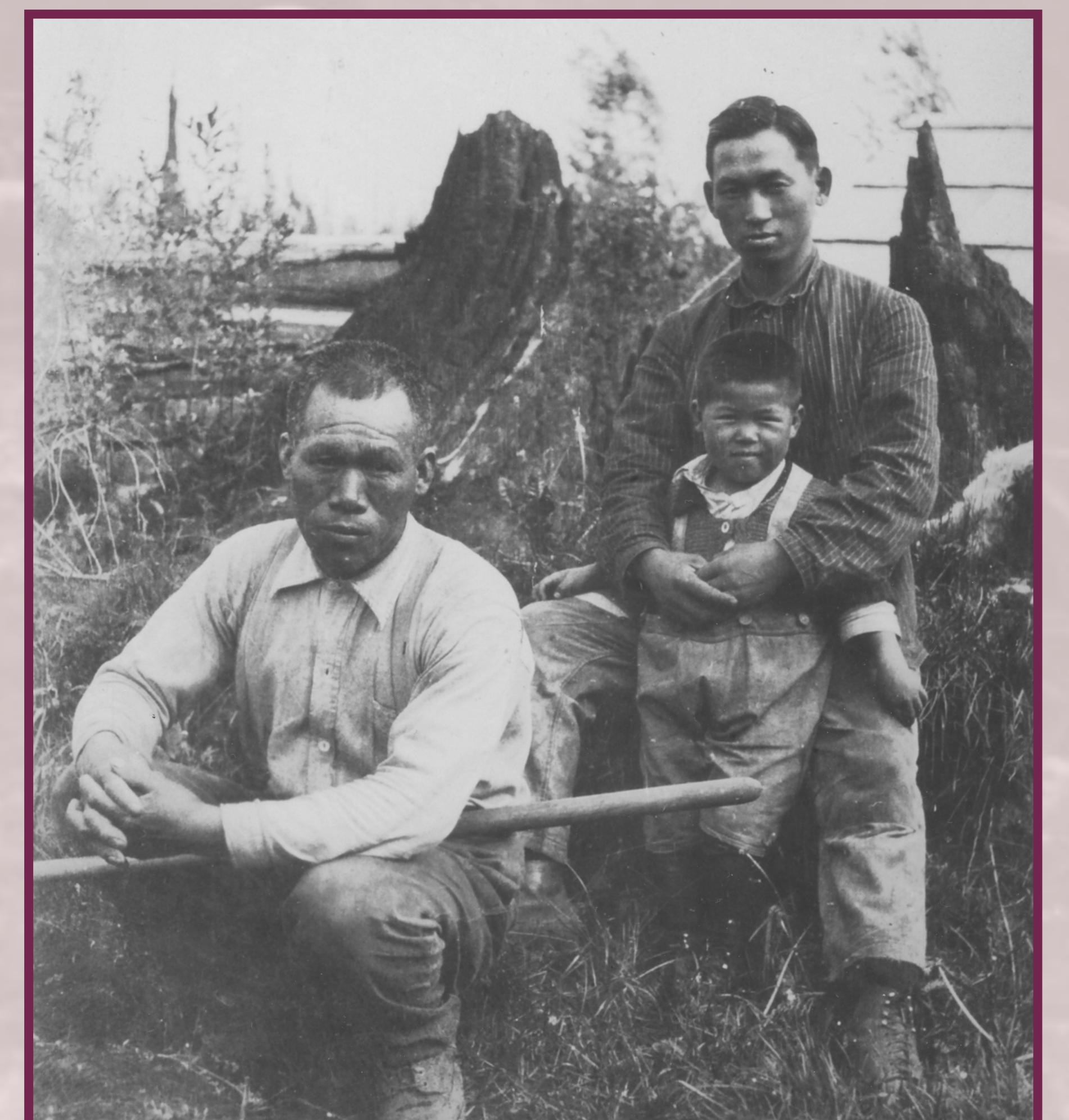


(Right) Glen Brae Manor, the Imperial Palace of the Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1925. Today the building is Canuck Place Children's Hospice. City of Vancouver Archives, CVA 9-1495

Little is known about those of colour that lived in Langley during the 1920s. Many did not remain in the community, and it is hard to determine if that is because there were simply opportunities elsewhere, or because of the treatment they received or isolation they might have felt. For Chinese immigrants, the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923 meant that family could not join them here, which likely prompted many to return to China. Historians have worked to piece together stories of early Asian, Indo-Canadian, and Black residents, but very often the story is incomplete, due to research compiled decades later, often through secondary sources. Omissions might be done deliberately to gloss over racism and create the notion of community harmony. In other instances, due to different lived experiences, it could be unintentional.

Nearby, American Ku Klux Klan organizers established themselves in Vancouver in 1925. The mostly American members who arrived received a poor welcome, with one Member of the Legislative Assembly noting that they would be more successful in BC if they focused on “running the Japanese and Chinamen and Hindus out of British Columbia.” They received media attention after the 1925 Janet Smith murder, when they kidnapped and tortured a Chinese houseboy, but faded into the background by the end of the decade.

Anti-Asian sentiment did not fade away, and gained strength in the community over the decade. In April 1919, the neighbouring Sumas Farmers' Institute held a meeting where land ownership exclusion was proposed for those of Asian descent; the meeting was poorly attended due to the Spanish Flu in the area. By 1921 the United Farmers in Langley were showing concern about the local Japanese population and the gains they were making in the fishing, shingle bolt, and berry farming industries, noting that “these Orientals do not assimilate with the white population - and it is not desirable that they should.” Fort Langley's Charles Hope began the White Canada Association in 1929, promoting its aims through published articles and pamphlets, letter writing, and presentations to local farmers' co-operatives and others. The board of directors included, among other Lower Mainland names, veteran and Municipal Clerk Archie Payne.



(Above) Fernridge's Keizo Fukumoto (left) with his son Naoyuki (Joe) and friend Masao Sugai, ca. 1926. Naoyuki “Joe” Fukumoto was born in Fernridge in 1922, and attended Glenwood School. He was twenty years old when his family was interned to an Alberta beet farm during the Second World War. A neighbour looked after their farm and sent some money from the sale of their produce until he wrote to tell them that he wasn't allowed to do it anymore.