ROBERT WORTH BINGHAM AND LOUISVILLE PROGRESSIVISM, 1905-1910

By William E. Ellis*

Progressivism continues to fascinate and bewilder American historians. From the 1890's through the era of World War I, a reformist mood compelled many urban middle class citizens to examine their society. Debates continue today over whether the movement was actually progressive or if anything of substance was really accomplished.[1]

The political history of Kentucky in the late 19th and early 20th centuries has often been relegated to the back pages or to footnotes by historians who write from a southern or national perspective. Little mention has been made of progressivism in Kentucky. Among Kentucky politicians of this era, only William Goebel demanded national attention. But historians can not even agree in their interpretation of Goebel. Was he a progressive, an urban political boss, or just another southern demagogue? Historians have not looked deeply enough into this period for signs of progressivism in the Commonwealth. If no "Progressive Movement" existed in this state, at least numerous individuals fit the general progressive model. Helm Bruce, a Louisville lawyer and leader in the contested mayoral election of 1905, qualified as a progressive in his fight against an urban political machine. Nicholas Burckel recently included Kentuckians James B. McCreary and A. O. Stanley in his study of "Progressive Governors and the Border States." Louisville ministers E. Y. Mullins and E. L. Powell led the progressive elements within the Southern Baptist and Disciples of Christ denominations. Patrick Henry Callahan, president of the Louisville Varnish Company and an active Catholic layman, followed the ideals of progressivism until his death in 1940. Alben Barkley identified with many progressive causes in his early career. Laura Clay, daughter of Cassius Marcellus Clay, and Madeline McDowell Breckinridge, wife of *Lexington Herald* editor Desha Breckinridge, worked for woman's suffrage. These are only a few examples of individuals who urged reforms on several fronts in the Progressive Era.[2]

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1 For an excellent review of progressive historiography, see David M. Kennedy, "Overview: The Progressive," *The Historian*, XXXVII (May, 1975), 453-68.

2 James C. Klotter, *William Goebel: The Politics of Wrath* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1977), pp. ix-x, 126-31; Steven A. Channing, *Kentucky: A History*

Middle class professionals, like their counterparts in other states, dominated the leadership of Kentucky progressivism. Lawyers, businessmen, ministers, and educators shared a common interest in cleansing state and local government of corruption and in substituting high-minded, moral administration. They united on several occasions in the early 20th century to combat what they considered to be the forces of evil. Their objectives included the typical progressive goals of ending corruption, creating "majoritarian" political reforms, and increasing government regulation. A dominant religious influence animated many prominent members of the mainline churches to seek reform[3].

However, it is just as easy to find men and women from the same social class who either actively opposed reform or tacitly accepted bossism in city and state government. Furthermore, progressives joined in constantly shifting coalitions for reform. For example, some progressives pushed municipal political reform but took no interest in improving conditions of the urban poor. On other occasions progressives united with labor organizations to push child labor legislation and factory inspection through the General Assembly. The prohibition issue eventually divided progressives into factions that could not agree on reforms. More research must be done for Kentucky in this era and a synthesis must be written to identify the progressives and interpret their activities.

Of all Kentuckians who fall under the designation of progressive, none better fits the mold than Robert Worth Bingham. Born in 1871, Bingham earned an undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina and studied law at the University of Virginia. He married Eleanor E. Miller of Louisville in 1896 and entered law practice a year later after graduation from the University of Louisville Law School. Two years later he began a decade long partnership with W. W. Davies, an old school friend from North Carolina. Bingham soon rose to prominence in Louisville, becoming a member of local commercial organizations and developing a successful law practice.[4]

(New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 176-88; Nicholas Burckel, "Progressive Governors and the Border States" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1971), pp. 228-86; Interview with Barry Bingham, Sr., January 6, 1978; Paul E. Fuller, *Laura Clay and the Woman's Rights Movement* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1976); Thomas D. Clark, *Helm Bruce, Public Defender: Breaking Louisville's Gothic Political Ring, 1905* (Louisville: The Filson Club, 1973); William E. Ellis, "Patrick Henry Callahan: A Kentucky Democrat in National Politics," *The Filson Club History Quarterly* 51 (January, 1977), 17-30.

3 Kennedy, "Overview: The Progressive Era," 466.

4 *Dictionary of American Biography* (28 vols.; New York, 1928-1944), XI, 38-40.

In late 1903 Judge James P. Gregory appointed Bingham to an unexpired term as County Attorney. Bingham declared that the position would help his law practice and "will also keep me constantly before the public. It certainly was a great stroke of good fortune." A year later he stood for election for that office on the Democratic ticket and defeated Republican Lafon Allen. At this point Bingham's career intersected with one of the most bitter political controversies in the state's history. The mayoral election of 1905 precipitated a constitutional and political crisis that had repercussions throughout the state.[5]

Since the mid-eighties the political machine of Colonel John Whallen, operating out of the Buckingham Theater, dominated the local Democratic party organization. Dispensing beer, burlesque, and political favors from his saloon, Whallen manipulated local politics through his control of the labor and immigrant vote. Charles P. Weaver and Charles F. Grainger contended with Whallen for control of the party. Whallen usually kept the upper hand through his use of numerous members of the police force to intimidate voters. Richard Knott's Louisville *Evening Post* courageously exposed these corrupt tactics during the congressional election of 1894, but the "Boss" of the "Buck" received only a temporary setback to his domination of local politics.[6]

After years of suffering under bossism, a number of Republican leaders and independent Democrats joined in a Fusion ticket in 1905 and nominated J. T. O'Neal as their candidate for mayor. Other reform groups such as the City Club, the Committee of One Hundred, and the Louisville Ministerial Association joined in the fusionist cause. Basil Duke, William Belknap, Thomas W. Bullitt, and other prominent citizens of the community supported the reform ticket. Knott backed the fusionists, as did the *Louisville Herald,* the local Republican organ. The *Courier-Journal,* edited by Henry Watterson, and the *Louisville Times* of Colonel William B. Haldeman steadfastly upheld the Democratic ticket.[7]

On election day both sides prepared for a conflict other than with the ballot. In a flurry of charges and counter-charges, the Democrats claimed that fusionists appeared at the polls armed with "Ax Handles and Hickory Canes" while fusionists charged

5 *Louisville Times,* November 18, 1903; *Courier-Journal,* November 9, 1904, November 8, 9, 1905; Robert Worth Bingham to Col. Robert Bingham, December 12, 1903; Robert Worth Bingham Papers, The Filson Club, File 1903 (hereafter cited as Bingham Papers).

6 Clark, *Helm Bruce,* p. 20; Hambleton Tapp and James C. Klotter, *Kentucky: Decades of Discord, 1865-1900* (Frankfort: The Kentucky Historical Society, 1977), pp. 98, 340-47.

7 Clark, *Helm Bruce,* pp. 32-44; *Courier-Journal,* November 8, 9, 1905.

that many policemen actively worked for the Democratic ticket. Reform parties won races for control of Cincinnati and Philadelphia, but in Louisville the machine candidate, Paul Barth, defeated O'Neal by over 3,000 votes. The fusionists immediately challenged the results in the courts.[8] Before this episode in Kentucky political history ended: the Democratic party in the state would be torn apart, a court case would set aside the 1905 mayoral election, an interim government would attempt to bring reform to Louisville, a former mayor would commit suicide, and, finally, reform would fail to alter the machine's control of City Hall.

A few days after the election nearly one hundred fusionists met and subscribed over $10,000 to contest the election in the courts. Helm Bruce and William Marshall Bullitt collected depositions and wrote legal briefs. They entered forty-five cases of election irregularities in Jefferson Circuit Court only to have that court return an unfavorable verdict. After raising another $10,000 for court costs, the fusionists turned to the Kentucky Court of Appeals. Both sides marshaled the forces of men and money when the cases came before the state court in April, 1907.[9]

The fusionists claimed that city voter registration had been subverted, "repeaters" had been allowed to inflate the Democratic party vote, ballots had been stolen, the police had allowed and participated in violent acts against the fusionists, election officials had acted improperly in some precincts, and armed men had stolen ballot boxes. By a four to two vote the Court of Appeals reversed the Jefferson Circuit Court, thereby removing from office all elected Democratic officials in Louisville and Jefferson County.[10]

The burden immediately fell on Governor J. C. W. Beckham to appoint an interim administration for Louisville and Jefferson County. Beckham became governor after the assassination of Goebel, winning a special election in 1900 and again in 1903. He hoped to be elected senator after a Democratic sweep of the fall elections in 1907. The interim government in the state's most populous area would only hold office for four months until new officials could be elected. Beckham wanted to ensure the continued strength of the Democratic party in Jefferson County yet fulfill the spirit of the Court of Appeals decision. Bruce encouraged Beckham to appoint Bingham as mayor, and, after some vacillation,

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8 *Ibid.*
9 Clark, *Helm Bruce*, pp. 43-50.
10 *Ibid.*

the governor named the young Louisville lawyer to that post in late June, 1907.[11]

Reactions to the appointment varied throughout the city. The *Courier* reported that the news "came like a peal of thunder from a cloudless sky." Former Mayor Barth asked that Bingham give Louisville "a business-like administration." Editor Knott of the *Evening Post* applauded Beckham's choice, finding the new mayor "animated by a zeal for the righteous conduct of public office." The *Herald* declared the appointment to be a "vindication of the majesty of law and the invincibility of justice." Watterson proclaimed Bingham to be acceptable even though he was "not a very orthodox Democrat." After the subsequent completion of the appointments of city and county officials, the venerable editor of the *Courier* found them "exceptionable," and he doubted that much could be done in a short space of time to reform the city since the new administration would be "handicapped by immemorial abuses." Upon the announcements of the appointment, Bingham issued only an obligatory statement to the press. He promised to "concentrate every faculty that I have upon the effort to give the people of Louisville an honest and efficient city government and an absolutely fair election in the autumn."[12]

A survey of the sentiments of support that Bingham received helps to identify one element of progressivism in the state. Prohibition had become an important issue in Kentucky by 1900. The movement had gained in nearly every state, particularly in the south and west. In the late 19th century the image of the saloon sharply contrasted with the emerging ideal of the "bourgeois interior" of the family. Many people, ranging from Jack London to pietist evangelical ministers, wanted to close the saloon forever as it threatened the emerging middle class nuclear family structure. Louisville and Jefferson County saloons brazenly disregarded a state law and remained open on Sunday, offering a convenient target for temperance advocates of many persuasions. Louisvillians who did not support temperance found it increasingly difficult to ignore this lawlessness. As County Attorney Bingham tried to enforce the Sunday Closing Law, but an unsympathetic judge blocked his efforts. Beckham may have appointed Bingham on the promise of enforcing the law, but it is unlikely that the new

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11 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
12 *Courier Journal*, June 28, 30, July 14, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post*, June 28, 1907; *Louisville Herald*, June 28, 29, 1907; *Louisville Times*, June 28, 1907.

mayor needed much encouragement to enforce the Sunday Closing Law.[13]

The conservative religious community associated enforcement of law with temperance regulation. Attempting to force their civic religious ideals on the community, the mainline Protestant churches of Kentucky and their allies backed Bingham's stand against the Sunday saloon. The Kentucky Anti-Saloon League responded with total support for the reform mayor. Local option successes in the state encouraged anti-saloon advocates to anticipate the eventual prohibition of all alcoholic beverages. At least for a period of four months Bingham and the prohibitionists became inseparable.[14]

Bingham took the oath of office on Saturday and immediately ordered Police Chief Sebastian Gunther to enforce the Sunday Closing Law. The Mayor warned that saloonkeepers serving alcohol on Sunday would have their licenses revoked. On Sunday, June 30, 1907, the *Courier* reported a "Louisville Dryer Than Ever Before in History" with the "Lid" on and "screwed down" tight by the Mayor and the Police Department. In July, 1907 (a month of record setting temperatures in the state) the Sunday saloon disappeared in Louisville as Police Judge Randolph H. Blain, appointed by Beckham, enforced the law. County Attorney Robert Lee Page, Bingham's successor, also took an active interest in this law and closed the Sunday saloons in the county. The popular summer retreats at Fountaine Ferry Park and White City Park did not serve alcohol on Sunday. Success in closing the Sunday saloon indicated that Bingham would be an activist and not a caretaker administrator. Throughout Bingham's brief tenure as mayor, the police and courts stringently enforced the Sunday Closing Law.[15]

The Mayor and Governor faced other problems in cleansing the Louisville and Jefferson County political atmosphere. Beckham's appointments reflected the desire to fill city and county offices with men untainted by the machine. The Governor appointed

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13 Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), p. 13; Harrison Dickson, "The Battle of the Bottle: The Obituary of Kentucky and the Epitaph of Tennessee," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 28, 1907, pp. 15-17, 29.

14 Examples of support included the editor of the *Western Recorder*, a Baptist weekly, a resolution of support from the Kentucky General Association annual meeting, letters from assorted Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist ministers, and the endorsement of the Kentucky Anti-Saloon League. *Courier-Journal*, June 28, July 1, 8, 1907; T. T. Eaton to Bingham, June 27, 1907; Walker W. Watson to Bingham, June 28, 1907; C. L. Collins to Bingham, June 29, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

15 *Courier-Journal*, June 30, July 1, 7, 8, 9, 17, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post*, July 1, 1907; *Louisville Herald*, July 1, 2, 1907; "Special Proclamation Relative to Saloons"; Chief Sebastian Gunther to Bingham, July 1, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

Walter Lincoln as County Judge and A. Scott Bullitt as Sheriff. Bingham and Beckman met on several occasions during the late summer, considering appointments and strategies to be followed during the interim government. After nearly a month of indecision Beckham appointed Aldermen and Councilmen to the General Council. A Board of Public Works, a Board of Public Safety, a Building Inspector, and many lesser positions also had to be filled.[16]

Louisville had no civil service system when Bingham became mayor and the city's payroll included over one thousand patronage jobs. Bingham did not lack for advice from his constituents. Ministers, labor leaders, politicians, and friends worked to have their favorites appointed. The papers reported that many office seekers and their supporters lined up in front of the mayor's office in City Hall every morning, forcing Bingham to seek quieter places in which to carry out the city's business. Rev. E. L. Powell, for example, urged the appointment of a friend as Building Inspector. An attorney asked for a job and promised to support Bingham for mayor. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers pressed for an appointment of one of their leaders as Superintendent of the Street Cleaning Department. The Building Trades' Union asked that one of their members be named Building Inspector. Bingham consulted with close friends and supporters about appointments and reforms in early July.[17]

The Board of Public Safety and the Police Department became early focal points of reform in the Bingham administration. Bingham could make immediate changes because of the strong administrative position of the mayor. He named W. W. Davies as Chairman of the Board of Safety and appointed John Stites, president of the Fidelity Trust Company, and Judge Gregory as members of the Board. This Board had jurisdiction over the police and fire departments and the public health facilities of the city. Rumors spread that Bingham would fire every policeman connected with the Grainger and Barth administrations.[18]

The "old gang" expected a crackdown in the police department, and it was not long in coming. After two weeks in office Bingham replaced Police Chief Gunther with Colonel J. H. Haager. In a public announcement the Mayor declared that policemen and fire-

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16 *Courier-Journal*, June 30, July 6, 14, 26, August 1, 6, 1907.

17 *Courier-Journal*, July 2, 3, 5, 9, 15, 1907; James T. Willis, "Louisville Politics, 1891-1897" (M.A. thesis, University of Louisville, 1966), p. 88; Ben LaBree to Bingham, June 25, 1907; E. L. Powell to Bingham, June 28, 1907; Abner Harris to Bingham, July 12, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

18 *Courier-Journal*, June 29, July 12, 21, 1907.

men would be taken out of the political arena. In late July the Mayor and Board of Safety moved against the offending policemen who participated in the election of 1905. This reform started with a "shakeup" of personnel, reducing in rank six police captains and one major. The Board promoted several officers who had been reduced in rank during the Grainger administration. In addition, fusionist leader William Marshall Bullitt initiated charges against fifty-two policemen for participation in the 1905 election fraud cases. Many of these men resigned before the Board could fire them. No such "shakeup" erupted in the fire department, but the Board of Safety replaced the secretary of the department. Bingham did not remove Fire Chief Fillmore Tyson, but he made it clear that firemen were to stay out of politics in the upcoming election. When Bingham heard that Tyson gave the *Courier* an unfavorable report about the new administration, he immediately called the Chief into his office and explained that he would not allow "insubordination." Finding none, Bingham permitted Tyson to remain as Chief. As a further move to weaken the machine, Davies ordered policemen and firemen to give up membership in the "Mose Green Club," a local Democratic political organization.[19]

Chief Haager and Sheriff Bullitt enthusiastically supported Bingham's reforms. They enforced the Sunday Closing Law and took an active role in executing the laws of the city and county. Throughout July, August, and September, Haager used a "flying squadron" of officers and plainclothesmen to sweep periodically through the "tenderloin" district on Green Street (named Liberty Street after World War I). The police arrested over two hundred men and women for drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution on a swing through the area. Chief Haager attacked the growth of prostitution by arresting the "men who live by the shame of women," who operated in the saloon district on Green Street. An August raid of the city's saloons netted twenty-two men carrying firearms. The progressive element urged a police crackdown on gambling. Sheriff Bullitt raided poolrooms and arrested a number of violators who had illegal poker and lottery operations. Even the mayor on one occasion took an inspection tour with Chief Haager through the "red light" district on Green Street.[20]

While the Bingham administration directed an attack on crime, the *Courier* and the *Times* took little notice of the activities of

19 *Courier-Journal*, July 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 1907; E. H. Chase, Jr. to Bingham, July 3, 1907; John Niman to Bingham, July 14, 1907, Bingham Papers Mayor's Correspondence.
20 *Courier-Journal*, July 18, August 4, 18, 19, September 8, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post*, August 5, 1907.

the Louisville Police and the Sheriff's departments. The *Evening Post,* on the other hand, praised every effort to clean up the city and enforce the law. Editor Knott delighted in running cartoons about his nemesis from the *Courier* on the front page of the *Evening Post.* After the announcement of the filing of charges against fifty-two policemen, cartoonist Paul A. Plaschke illustrated Watterson and Haldeman as demoted, paunchy policemen walking a beat for the first time in a long while. Knott, like most progressives, viewed crime as a serious problem that needed constant attention. He found that Louisville appeared little different from large cities such as New York and needed the continuous "work of regeneration" in its law enforcement.[21]

In other areas the Bingham administration attacked the alleged corruption and mismanagement of previous Democratic administrations. Throughout July, August, and September Bingham pressed investigations on several fronts. One week after he took the oath of office he appointed Charles Meriwether to study the account books at City Hall and ordered a review of all city contracts and a special investigation of City Hospital. The latter study made by a select Committee of Physicians ended in the resignation of Dr. Julius C. Vogt and the appointment of Dr. Jouett Menefee. The committee discovered deplorable conditions in the hospitals, particularly citing the "filthy" wards, hallways, and examination and operating rooms. They found the "colored ward" to be in even worse condition. Bingham and the Board of Safety also examined other public health areas. The Board prosecuted Dr. S. A. Bradley, City Livestock and Meat Inspector, for making false entries and allowing spoiled and diseased meat to go on the market. Bingham took a special interest in this case and collected affidavits from businessmen admitting that they bribed Dr. Bradley. The Board of Aldermen declared Bradley guilty as charged in a preliminary hearing and the Jefferson County grand jury returned an indictment. Fearing that the case would not be properly prosecuted in the courts, Bingham asked the General Council to appropriate $10,000 to pursue the case against Bradley. The City Attorney, however, issued an opinion that any such appropriation would be illegal. After Bingham left office, Bradley won acquittal in a lengthy jury trial.[22]

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21 Louisville *Evening Post,* July 22, August 5, 6, 1907.

22 *Courier-Journal,* July 7, August 14, 21, September 15, 18, 26, 28, October 9, 24, 28, November 9, 1907, June 9, 10, 1908; Louisville *Evening Post,* September 26, 27, 1907.

Courier-Journal

Robert Worth Bingham

Courier-Journal

Robert Worth Bingham

In all matters related to public health, the Mayor and the Board of Public Safety took typical progressive approaches to reform. Davies proposed an ordinance appointing a milk inspector for the Louisville market. At the same time he worked for passage of a state meat inspection law. Dr. M. K. Allen, chief health officer of the city, supported Davies' reforms. Bingham asked that the General Council approve a separate nonpartisan health board. Progressives championed the nonpartisan approach to take all public boards out of the political arena. The *Courier*, however, found only ulterior motives in this proposed reform, claiming that Bingham designed the nonpartisan board to protect Dr. Allen from a hostile Board of Public Safety if the Democrats won the mayoral election. Bingham let the matter drop when he could not produce enough votes for passage in the General Council, declaring that he wanted a completely nonpartisan health board or "none at all." Even under the suspicion of partisanship and the fear of political reprisals, Dr. Allen proposed far-reaching reforms such as regulation of milk transport, stringent control of veterinarian's licenses, and regular health examinations of school children and schools.[23] Bingham could not reverse in four months the poor health regulations in Louisville.

The Bingham administration continued exposure of the machine's activities. Rumors and charges of corruption among public officials had been adrift in Louisville and Jefferson County for years, but nothing had ever surfaced. The reformers appeared to be making progress when Chief Haager arrested former County Clerk William J. Semonin on charges of embezzling over $48,000 in county and state funds. These charges again turned into a contest between the *Courier* and the *Evening Post*, with the former defending Semonin as being falsely accused and the latter deploring a cover-up of corruption. After a few weeks of uncertainty, Semonin made a complete settlement with the state and county for acounts due from collections, claiming to have only delayed in making the payment until he knew the full extent of the debt. The prosecution allowed the court to dismiss the case.[24]

The reform administration also investigated city contracts and the Board of Water Works which controlled the Louisville Water Company. At Bingham's insistence the General Council hired out-of-state auditors to go over the books of the Water Company for

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23 *Courier-Journal*, October 10, 22, 23, 1907.
24 *Courier-Journal*, July 24, August 7, 8, 1907.

the period immediately before Sebastian Zorn became president. Bingham praised Zorn's leadership and emphasized that he was only interested in surveying the period before 1905. The preliminary report indicated "belated entries" and "irregular vouchers," but no proof of criminal intent or action. Bingham also questioned the profits of Louisville corporations that had contracts with the city, particularly the steel construction company of former Mayor Charles F. Grainger and the cement business of former Mayor Paul Barth. The reform mayor hoped that the full report of this study would cite specific evidence of corruption in the affairs of the Water Company, but he also challenged the role of Grainger in local affairs.[25]

Grainger served as mayor from 1901 through 1905 and wrested control of the Louisville Democratic party from Whallen, naming Barth as his successor. When Bingham became mayor, Grainger served as a member of the Board of Water Works and also as a member of the State Racing Commission. Bingham claimed that the state constitution limited a public official to only one such post. The pent-up frustrations of the Louisville progressives fell on Grainger. Helm Bruce and William Marshall Bullitt, members of the most prestigious law firm in the city, backed Bingham's assertion that Grainger could only hold one public office. As usual the *Evening Post* supported Bingham. Knott charged that a conflict of interest existed because Grainger's company had large contracts on the filter plant facilities being constructed. Grainger, however, refused to resign either post. He defended his position on both boards as being within the confines of the state constitution because he did not receive direct compensation for either position. Bingham asked for an opinion from the Kentucky Attorney General, N. B. Hays. The Attorney General ruled that Grainger had indeed vacated the directorship of the Water Board when he accepted the place on the State Racing Commission, but he declined to pursue the case because his term had nearly expired. Furthermore, he preferred not to stir up any difficulties for Beckham. County Attorney Page filed suit against Grainger, but with no apparent success. The final report on the Water Board's activities, issued a few days after Bingham left office, listed inferences of corruption, charging the Board with "incorrect bookkeeping," "loose" business methods, and "carelessness." However, these ir-

25 *Courier-Journal*, August 21, 24, 27, 28, September 8, 9, October 30, 1907; "Joint Resolution" appointing the Audit Company of New York to investigate the "affairs" of the Louisville Water Company, August 20, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

regularities did not warrant indictments and the Bingham administration again failed to prosecute officials of the Democratic machine.[26]

The Bingham administration tried to reform the local Democratic party in addition to the attempts to end corruption. Any reform Bingham and the interim administration accomplished would be short-lived if the "old machine" returned a Democratic mayor to office in November. Governor Beckham had ambitions for the Senate and needed the election of heavy Democratic majorities in the General Assembly. He did not want to alienate the Louisville machine because of the important Democratic vote in the city and county. A key to settling the problems of the Democratic party in Louisville would be whether the Governor would be willing to support the reformers or remain neutral and allow the machine to resume control.[27]

To make the political picture even more confusing, a brief movement surfaced in July to develop a Fusion ticket similar to the one that Republicans and independent Democrats supported in the election of 1905. The Republican City and County Committee met with the City Club on July 5, and it appeared that these groups would again cooperate. In a separate meeting the City Club voted to put the same ticket on the ballot again with J. T. O'Neal as the candidate for mayor. Prominent Louisvillians like William Heyburn, Morris B. Belknap, Basil Duke, Lewis Humphrey, Richard Knott, C. T. Ballard, and Helm Bruce provided the leadership of the City Club. Augustus E. Willson, Republican candidate for Governor, and Colonel Albert S. Scott, Chairman of the Republican City and County Committee, announced that they favored fusion as late as July 7. Within two days, however, the Republican Committee decided against fusion, possibly because they determined that this might harm the state ticket. Republican leaders William Marshall Bullitt and Joseph Seligman praised the fusionist effort of 1905 and the role played by independent Democrats in that election, but Republicans believed that they had an excellent chance to capture outright control of City Hall with their own ticket. They invited Democrats to support them. In late July a Louisville

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26 *Courier-Journal*, August 13, September 17, October 22, November 10, 12, 16, December 1, 4, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post*, September 16, 1907; William Marshall Bullitt to Bingham, August 24, 1907; Bingham to Charles F. Grainger, September 13, 1907; Grainger to Bingham, September 16, 1907; Helm Bruce to Bingham, September 18, 1907; Bingham to N. B. Hays, October 9, 1907; Hays to Bingham, October 10, 14, 1907; R. L. Page to Hays, October 16, 1907; Hays to Page, October 19, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

27 Louisville *Evening Post*, July 8, 1907.

Republican convention chose James F. Grinstead as their mayoral candidate. Clearly fusion had ended.[28]

Bingham wished to run for mayor and he preferred to run on the Democratic ticket. In early July some leaders recommended that Bingham head a Fusion ticket, but Republicans quashed that move by going their own way and nominating Grinstead. A few Louisville Democratic leaders supported Bingham's bid for office. James B. Brown, Cashier of the First National Bank and Chairman of the Board of Public Works, and others urged Bingham to stay in the race. The *Evening Post* gave daily support to the Bingham nomination in its news accounts and editorials. Bingham continued to confer with Beckham, testing the Governor's support for his candidacy and the reform administration.[29]

On a sultry July evening on the rooftop of the Seelbach Hotel, Bingham clashed openly with Grainger at a Democratic caucus. They agreed that the party's candidates should be chosen in a primary, but the Mayor wanted the ballot delayed until just a few weeks before the November General Election. The machine packed the meeting with its partisans, who applauded Grainger and "hissed" Bingham, leaving little doubt that it still controlled the local Democratic structure. Bingham charged that John W. Vreeland, State Central Committeeman from Jefferson County, had directed "so many corrupt primaries in the past" that no honest Democrat had any confidence in him. Grainger denied that he packed the meeting, claiming that "this quarrel is not of my seeking."[30]

Unable to win control of the party at the convention, Bingham tried another approach. He sought intervention from the State Central Committee, asking that it take control of the local primary and guarantee an honest election. The State Committee, however, decided against coming into the local election for two reasons: one, there appeared to be no clear legal precedent for such a move, and two, the Committee feared losing votes in Louisville for the state ticket. The City and County Committee set September 24 for the primary, adding a ruling that all primary candidates must support the victors in the General Election. Bingham refused to enter the primary because he could not accept enforced support for the

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28 *Courier-Journal*, July 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1907; A. B. Lipscomb to Bingham, July 5, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

29 Louisville *Evening Post* August 3, 9, 20, September 4, 1907; William Bosler to Bingham, July 8, 1907; John F. Kelly to Bingham, July 12, 1907; W. E. Richards to Governor Beckham, August 1, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

30 *Courier-Journal*, July 27, 28, 29, 1907.

winners of the primary. Lincoln, Blain, Page, County Clerk Phil Thompson, and most of the members of the General Council also declined to enter the primary. In one last attempt to bring the local Democratic primary under state committee control, sixty ministers petitioned Judge Henry B. Hines, the state Democratic chairman, to follow the advice of Bingham. Their pleas went unheeded.[31] Watterson took only sporadic interest in local political affairs, but he could not pass up this action without condemning direct participation of the Louisville Ministerial Association in politics. "He that dabbles with pitch," the *Courier* editor pontificated, "shall be defiled."[32] With no opposition on the ballot for the machine candidates, the City and County Committee declared their choices to be the candidates of the Democratic party in the fall election, including mayoral candidate Owen Tyler.[33]

These setbacks did not deter Bingham from attacking the Democratic machine. As part of the assault, Bingham disclosed some suspicious purchases made by the Barth administration. Evidence indicated that Barth condoned the purchase of several horses and mules that died or disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Moreover, Barth kept a fine saddle horse named "Marc Hanna" for his own personal use after he left office. Knott immediately jumped on the issue as a blatant example of corruption in the Grainger and Barth administrations. In satirical cartoons entitled "Pauly and His Horse" and "Diary of a City Horse" the *Evening Post* pressed the attack. After continued pressure from Bingham and the reform press, Barth sent the Mayor a personal check for $750.00 to pay for the horse.[34]

A few days later Barth committed suicide in his office at the Utica Lime Company. The papers took their usual stances in reporting and commenting on this incident. The *Courier* and the *Times* declared that Barth had been unjustly attacked over what appeared to be a minor indiscretion. Haldeman in the *Times* claimed that Barth's enemies had driven him to near insanity. The *Courier* blamed the *Herald*, the *Evening Post*, and Bingham for persecuting Barth over an otherwise insignificant error in judgment. Watterson used bitter sarcasm in condemning Bingham. The

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31 *Courier-Journal*, July 30, 31, August 10, 31, September 17, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post*, July 29, August 7, 26, 31, September 13, 1907; Lewis C. Humphrey to Bingham, September 25, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence; Bingham to James MacVeagh, August 8, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

32 *Courier-Journal*, September 17, 1907.

33 *Courier-Journal*, September 19, 1907.

34 Louisville *Evening Post*, August 14, 15, 16, 17, 1907; James P. Helm to Bingham, August

Courier editor declared that he "hoped that the young gentleman who poses as a Reformer in the City Hall, and his newspaper and other satellites, who are making such efforts to be spectacular in front of the grand stand, whilst keeping such equivocal company under the cover of darkness, are now entirely happy."[35] The *Herald,* on the other hand, did not apologize for its attacks on Barth, claiming that many politicians had weathered more criticism than the former mayor without committing suicide. Bingham responded with a public statement defending exposure of the horse incident as part of an overall program to reform city government. He took the fight to the *Courier* and asserted that his pressure did not lead to the "unbalanced" condition of Barth. The *Evening Post* backed Bingham. Knott declared that "the death of Mr. Barth closes a life of business success and political failure . . . He has paid his last debt."[36] The *Courier* did not relent in turning this episode into an attack on the reform administration. When the police could not handle the enormous crowds at Barth's funeral, the *Courier* claimed that this had been done on purpose by Chief Haager to add further insult to a "Victim of Relentless Persecution."[37]

The suicide of Barth undoubtedly weakened the reformist cause in Louisville. Though a convenient target because of his connection with the machine and use of the city-purchased horse, Barth appears to have been a basicly honest man caught out of his element by the circumstances of the contested election of 1905 and the reform efforts of Bingham. The attacks on his character broke his spirit. Bingham may have been a bit over-zealous in using the horse incident to get at more serious problems of corruption, but Barth's supporters, including the Haldeman papers, did not realistically face the facts of the case. Watterson's elevation of Barth to martyrdom demonstrated his subservience to the local Democratic machine in contrast to his lofty national image. The former city buyer, who had bought the horse, later admitted that Barth knew exactly what he was doing when he accepted use of the horse and should have immediately paid for the animal when he left office.[38] If the Bingham administration had had more time

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14, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

35 *Courier-Journal,* August 21, 1907; *Louisville Times,* August 21, 1907.

36 *Louisville Herald,* August 22, 1907; *Courier-Journal,* August 24, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post,* August 21, 1907.

37 *Courier-Journal,* August 23, 25, 1907; Helm Bruce to Bingham, August 23, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

38 *Courier-Journal,* September 17, 1907.

to let the public furor over Barth's death cool down, reform of the city might have stood a better chance of success. Bingham's base of support began to erode with the death of Barth and time began to run out on the reform administration.

With Bingham out of the mayor's race and his administration rapidly drawing to a close, the political scene shifted to the contest between Grinstead and Tyler. This campaign coincided with the race for governor between Willson and Democrat S. W. Hager. The Sunday Closing Law became the major issue in the mayoral election of 1907. Tyler upheld home rule and asked for repeal of the Sunday Closing Law. Grinstead promised to enforce the law. The *Herald* and the *Evening Post* supported Grinstead. The *Evening Post* declared for Grinstead on September 18 and for Willson two days later, finding the Democratic party to be beyond "redemption." Knott argued that Hager should renounce the local Democratic machine, but the gubernatorial candidate supported the "old gang." The *Post* editor drew the lines sharply between Beckham and Watterson, claiming that the *Courier* editor wanted to "destroy" the Governor's career. In early October the City Club offered its support for Grinstead. In effect, the Republicans got what they wanted, i.e., full support from fusionists, reformers, and independent Democrats, without full-fledged fusionist politics.[39]

The regular Democratic forces rallied for a difficult campaign. Bullitt, Lincoln, Thompson, and Page came out for Tyler in early October. Bingham, however, did not bend to the pressure and did not publicly declare for either side. The *Courier* and the *Times* lined up in favor of Tyler. None of the Louisville papers, particularly the Haldeman papers, made any pretense of objective reporting. Page one news stories often read like editorials. In his continuing battle with Beckham, Watterson took occasional sarcastic slaps at the Governor's appointees as "The Lord's Annointed," and the advocates of the "New Jerusalem." Watterson praised Tyler's stand for home rule against the threatened domination by the State Democratic Committee. The *Courier* and the *Times* did not adhere to any real issues in the campaign. On one occasion the *Times* reported that Bingham had made a deal to resign and accept a judgeship as a reward for support for Grinstead. Bingham quickly replied that he did not intend to resign before the election of a new mayor.[40]

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39 Louisville *Evening Post*, August 7, September 18, 23, 1907; *Louisville Herald*, November 4, 5, 1907; *Courier-Journal*, August 27, September 22, October 9, 13, 1907.

40 *Courier-Journal*, August 11, September 2, 8, October 4, 1907; "To the Public," August 30, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

Side issues continued to cloud the election. The language of the news stories and editorials remained colorful if not always relevant. The Haldeman papers enjoyed taking any slight provocation as an excuse for attacking Bingham and the reform element. For example, during a strike of streetcar employees a citizen wrote to the *Times* and declared that Bingham had cursed the name of Bill Haldeman, editor of the *Times* and commander of the Louisville militia unit. The writer claimed that Bingham called Haldeman "that G-d d----d brute," who wanted evidence of violence so that he could call out his troops to kill the strikers. Watterson accepted the letter as authentic and maintained that Bingham had embarked on a campaign of "hatred and revenge." The *Times* published a cartoon of Bingham as a petulant child having his mouth washed out by Judge Lincoln who had often used this punishment in juvenile cases. The *Evening Post*, of course, rushed to Bingham's defense and questioned the "sincerity of the Reverend Mr. Watterson and the Reverend Mr. Haldeman, when with palms downward and eyes upward rolling they censure Mayor Bingham for certain profane language." Knott believed that Bingham's reformist activities not his language terrified his enemies. This incident demonstrated one of the tragicomic features of Kentucky politics, the tendency of editors and politicians to waste their finest rhetoric on useless side issues.[41]

If Bingham could not reform the Louisville political scene, he and Chief Haager could guarantee an honest, peaceful election. They issued proclamations warning police and fire personnel to remain neutral. The Board of Public Safety worked around the clock on the day before the election and on election day. Sheriff Bullitt guarded the ballots and ballot boxes against tampering. Chief Haager gave special instructions to be on watch for "repeaters" allegedly brought in from Indianapolis. Grinstead and Willson ran well together. With the polls closely guarded and with support from Republicans, reformers, and independent Democrats, Grinstead won the mayor's race by 4,500 votes. Willson carried his home county and the state by over 18,000 votes. The Republicans made gains in the state legislature and won a majority of the races in Louisville and Jefferson County. Beckham lost any chance of

41 *Louisville Times*, September 14, 18, 19, 1907; *Courier-Journal*, September 19, 1907; Louisville *Evening Post*, September 19, 1907.

winning the Senate seat in the meeting of the new General Assembly.[42]

Bingham's brief tenure as mayor demonstrated the tenuous nature of reform in Louisville. The Democratic machine held out against attempts at reform from within the city and from the threatened takeover by the State Committee. Bingham held office for too short a time to develop a power base from which to attack the machine. He became, in effect, a lame duck mayor and without power after he refused to enter the Democratic primary. The success of a fusion or a progressive candidate depended on the cooperation of Republicans, who exhibited no desire to leave the G.O.P. to court minority party status. The idea of party remained too strong in Kentucky for success of a reformist third party through 1910. Bingham could expose alleged wrongdoing, but he could not prove the corruption of the Democratic machine. Yet it would be an injustice to claim that his administration completely failed. He gave the city a brief respite from the manipulations of the Democratic machine, ensured an honest election, and established a tone that gave Mayor Grinstead a head start on an honest administration of the city. Even crusty old Watterson admitted that "there was a need for a Democratic house-cleaning" and he grudgingly forecast that the "party will be the best for it."[43]

The new administration, however, returned partisanship to City Hall. Grinstead appointed loyal Republicans to most of the positions in his administration, retaining only Chief Haager from the Bingham regime. True to his campaign promise, Grinstead enforced the Sunday Closing Law to the dismay of the Democratic machine. The Republicans did not attempt any major reforms, but carried out an honest administration of the city. Bingham did not take as much interest in public affairs as in the past, being on the periphery of the local Democratic party. He did, however, keep his contact with Beckham and other progressive Democrats.[44]

The 1909 mayoral race did not generate the intense passions of the 1905 and 1907 campaigns. Whallen regained control of the Democratic committee and named William O. Head as the candi-

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42 *Courier-Journal*, October 1, November 3, 6, 1907; "Louisville Police Department, Office of the Chief, Instructions to the Police Force Relative to Their Duties at the Election to be Held, November 5, 1907," Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

43 Peyton H. Hoge, "The Kentucky Election," *The Outlook*, November 30, 1907, pp. 751-52; *Courier-Journal*, November 3-10, 1907.

In private correspondence Watterson declared that "nothing has happened which leaves the slightest unfriendly impression on my mind." Watterson to Bingham, October 30, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

44 *Courier-Journal*, November 8, 29, 1907.

date. Grinstead ran for re-election. The newspapers maintained the same positions as in the previous races. The *Herald* and the *Evening Post* supported Grinstead while the *Courier* and the *Times* backed the Democratic candidate. Most of the men from the 1907 reform administration returned to the orthodox Democratic fold in 1909. Judge Lincoln and Scott Bullitt ran for Common Pleas Judge and County Judge on the Democratic ticket. In the worst aspect of the 1909 campaign the *Courier* used the race issue to attack the Republicans. Watterson rallied against the "thuggery" of the Republican administration for using Negro "repeaters" during voter registration. The *Courier* sneered, in black vernacular, at the "Right Smaht . . . Gathering of Colored Folk," and lamented that "Negroes Swarm Registration . . . Encouraged by Hope of Dominating City." On the day before the election the *Courier* ran a lead story about a letter from an alleged black Republican leader declaring "Come to Louisville Where the Colored People Has Priviledges." It is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of these tactics, but judging from the evident racism of the times, the Democrats probably gained votes. The "separate but equal" dictum of the Supreme Court officially condemned blacks to second class citizenship in 1895, a condition already evident because of local mores and intimidation. The state of Kentucky completed segregation of the races in educational facilities in 1904 with passage of the Day Law.[45]

Chief Haager and the Republican city and county officials enforced an honest vote on election day. In the final count Grinstead lost to Head by over 2,000 votes as the Democratic party swept the state senate and house elections.[46] According to Bingham, the election of Head returned "the old corrupt and vicious Democratic ring" to power and the "conditions are now as bad, if not worse, then they have ever been." Still interested in reform, Bingham cooperated with local Republicans in one more attempt to wrest control from the machine. Bingham agreed to run on the Republican ticket for the Fourth District, Court of Appeals seat, but only if the party emphasized his candidacy as nonpartisan in nature. Senator W. O. Bradley lauded Bingham's public spirit. Prominent Republicans William Heyburn and Andrew Cowan placed Bingham's name before the local G.O.P. convention and the party faith-

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45 Louisville *Evening Post*, November 2, 3, 1909; *Louisville Herald*, November 2, 3, 1909; *Courier-Journal*, October 4, 5, 7, 8, November 1, 3, 1909.
46 *Courier-Journal*, November 3, 4, 1909.

ful accepted the renegade Democrat as their candidate by acclamation. In his acceptance speech Bingham declared his continued membership in the Democratic party and faith in the nonpartisan judiciary. Some reform-minded Louisvillians proposed that a Fusion ticket again existed composed of Republicans and independent Democrats. Shackleford Miller, the Jefferson Circuit Judge who ruled against the fusionist cases in 1907, became the Democratic party nominee.[47]

Bingham moved into this campaign with the knowledge that he faced the well-tuned Whallen machine, but he believed his chances for victory were good. "This fight here must be made," he declared, because "Louisville is in worse condition than it has ever been, and unless there are some left to fight for better things here, the city is doomed to years of base and contemptible servitude." In typical righteous progressive oratory he asserted:

> It is not only political conditions, but business conditions, and not only that but moral conditions, that are in desperate case here. Yet if we can win this battle we shall gain a foothold to win others. The struggle for clean, decent politics cannot be decided in one fight, nor in one campaign. It is really a war, and in this war I have not enlisted as a sixty-day volunteer, but I am entered for the war.[48]

Bingham's optimism did not diminish throughout the campaign. In a well-attended campaign rally at Phoenix Hill auditorium, he appeared to have the support of the Republican leadership and the rank and file members. The former mayor urged Republicans and Democrats to "throw off the yoke of political machines" and attacked the "boss rule" in Louisville. He praised the "moral influence" of Theodore Roosevelt and declared the need for such standards in local affairs.[49]

The former mayor appealed for support to the same reform-minded group that had won only partial victories in the past. The men who responded to a Bingham campaign circular letter demonstrated a strong sense of public service that characterized progressivism. A ministerial student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in downtown Louisville perhaps best expressed the religious fervor of many progressives when he found Bingham fighting "the mighty host of political corruption in this town." Many other supporters voiced similar thoughts, using terminology that

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47 Bingham to MacVeagh, August 8, 1910; *Courier-Journal*, August 16, 1907.
48 Bingham to W. T. Ellis, September 13, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.
49 *Courier-Journal*, September 21, 1910; Bingham to M. H. Thatcher, September 23, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

one ordinarily associates with theological and religious belief.[50]

The Democratic machine turned to their usual tricks during the campaign, emphasizing the Negro issue. Watterson, in an early indictment of the Republican party in the campaign, found that "the Negro vote in Kentucky is largely a fungus vote carrying with it neither moral nor the pressure of any intelligent, independent public opinion."[51] At the precinct level election officials did not permit blacks to register in as large numbers as in previous elections. In another incident someone inserted anti-Bingham tracts in issues of the *Saturday Evening Post* on the newsstands. Bingham finally traced the culprit to a distributor for the Curtiss Publishing Company, but not before some harm had been done to his candidacy.[52]

With the machine in control of the electoral process and the law enforcement agencies, Bingham lost the November 8 election to Miller by 1,600 votes. In a speech at Republican headquarters he proclaimed: "I am glad I have made this fight and I believe that it has not been in vain. I have neither excuse or apology to offer. The fight was made for principle and not office, and for a principle which sooner or later must prevail. . . . This fight is not ended, but only begun." Bingham maintained that the machine used "intimidation," "bribery," and other corrupt practices to deprive him of 5,000 votes. In a repeat of the methods used in the 1905 mayoral election, the Whallen machine stole another election by corrupting the democratic process.[53]

If Democratic machine politicians thought that they were now free of Bingham, they were mistaken. As soon as Miller resigned from the Jefferson Circuit Court to take his new post, Governor Willson appointed Bingham to fill out the term. This was Bingham's last major public office in Louisville and Jefferson County. Some of his friends asked that he run for mayor in 1913 and 1917, but he declined. In both elections the Democrats kept control of City Hall and the machine continued its dominance of local politics.[54]

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50 Bingham to "Dear Sir," October 1, 1910; Zeno Wall to Bingham, September 21, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17; One file in Box 7, 1908-17 contains a four page list of names of independent voters to whom Bingham sent his circular letter.

51 *Courier-Journal*, August 16, 1910.

52 Frank B. Russell to James W. Brown, October 13, 1910; Russell to Charles L. Scholl, October 19, 1910; Russell to Bingham, October 21, 1910; P. S. Collins to Bingham, October 24, 1910; Bingham to Curtiss Publishing Company, October 21, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

53 *Courier-Journal*, November 9, 1910; Bingham to H. W. Jackson, November 26, 1910; Bingham to Governor Willson, November 22, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

54 Bingham to Senator W. O. Bradley, November 29, 1910; Temple Bodley to Bingham, January 12, 1911, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

Steven Channing recently asserted in *Kentucky: A History* that the Commonwealth did not "develop a sustained and effective progressive movement" though some individuals could be identified as progressives.[55] Moreover, the prohibition issue and the strength of the bipartisan combine complicated Kentucky politics, making broad-based reform all the more difficult for progressive individuals. It is time to begin to identify Kentucky progressives and analyze their reform effort to 1910. A good place to begin would be a study of Bingham and the individuals who supported reformism from 1905 to 1910. This preliminary analysis will suggest some common characteristics of the Kentucky progressives.

Bingham's career from 1905 to 1910 typified middle class progressivism during this period. For example, he did not attack capitalism, proposing instead that government must regulate business to make it more responsive to the public welfare. On the contrary, he represented large corporations such as Swift and Company, American Chicle Company, and B. F. Avery and Sons. He belonged to the Louisville Commercial Club and the Board of Trade. Not long after he left the mayor's office, he lobbied for pure food legislation before the Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, and South Carolina legislatures as a well-paid representative of the National Biscuit Company. Middle class progressives viewed such legislation as a mechanism to assure wholesome food for their families while promoting commerce and business efficiency. Louisville progressives supported their city as a trade center for the upper South. Bingham and other Kentucky progressives, however, did not close their minds to more radical thought. The Louisville Conversation Club, to which some progressives belonged, also discussed current controversial topics.[56]

Neither did Bingham oppose labor organizations as long as they went about their business in a peaceful manner. For example, he arbitrated a strike against the Louisville Railway Company during his brief tenure as mayor. The business community supported a quick settlement of this strike to keep downtown business active. Bingham skillfully kept the opposing sides from using force. Fearing that the strikers would over-react, he immediately crushed the

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55 Channing, *Kentucky: A History*, p. 182.

56 Bingham to A. and H. Veeder, November 20, 1908; Bingham to Louis Summers, October 6, 1908; L. L. [?] to Bingham, January 31, 1908; C. H. Huhlein to Bingham, June 22, 1908; Bingham to Governor Beckham, February 17, 1908; Bingham to Earl D. Babste, January 28, March 9, 1908; National Biscuit Company to Bingham, October 27, 1908; Bingham to Charles H. Kerr and Company, May 26, 1908, Bingham Papers 1908-17; J. F. Buckner, Jr. to Bingham, January 28, 1903, Bingham Papers, 1903; Louisville *Evening Post*, February 14, 1908.

effort of the railway company to hire private police to protect the lines. Too, he kept the Louisville Police Department under a tight rein.[57]

At best, Kentucky progressives demonstrated only paternalistic attitudes toward blacks. Governments in Kentucky and surrounding states permitted lynching as a form of intimidation of Negroes. The Day Law and local restrictions completely segregated the races. As mentioned above, Kentucky Negroes supported Republican candidates, particularly in Louisville. The Democratic papers often used this issue to attack the Republican party as being boss-ridden and anti-southern. No doubt Republicans manipulated their black brethren for political gain. Kentucky sent a large majority of her sons into the Union armies during the Civil War. However, pro-southern politics and sympathy for the "lost cause" of the Confederacy dominated Kentucky culture after the war. Proscriptions against the rights of blacks became nearly as harsh as in the deep South. Blacks in central and western Kentucky faced the threat of complete disenfranchisement. Progressives did not cut themselves off entirely from Negroes. For example, Bingham addressed meetings of blacks and supported Negro education, but he did not move against the racial mores of the community. In general, Kentucky progressives left a bitter racial legacy for later generations to solve.[58]

Kentucky progressives did not ignore the problems of developing urban environments. The effort to reform the city political machine has been discussed in detail and needs no further emphasis here. Bingham and other progressives tried to improve the lives of the less fortunate, supporting such benevolent organizations as the Kentucky Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Associated Charities, Neighborhood House, the Salvation Army, Y.M.C.A., and the Newsboys' Home. These associations demonstrated the progressives' desire for efficiency and control over charitable institutions and a sincere concern for the plight of the poor. The middle class progressive ethos, which included the Protestant Ethic,

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57 Louisville *Evening Post*, September 4, 1907; *Courier-Journal*, September 1, 6, 7, 13, 1907; J. V. Beckman to Bingham, September 6, 1907; Arthur M. Wallace to Bingham, September 5, 1907; Bingham to T. J. Minary, September 5, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence.

58 Tapp and Klotter *Kentucky: Decades of Discord*, pp. 10-18, 141-71; In 1907 a leading Republican of Trigg County threatened to remove the Negroes' right to vote. *Courier-Journal*, September 6, 1907; C. H. Parrish to Bingham, September 3, 1907; C. H. Bullock to Bingham, October 2, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence; G. W. Ferguson to Bingham, January 14, 1908; J. A. Gooden to Bingham, October 4, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

placed the highest value on work. There should be no "imposition by the unworthy" and every effort should be made to put the poor to work.[59]

The abuses of the American labor system struck the conscience of many progressives. As mentioned above, they were not enemies of the labor union, but neither were they necessarily its advocates. Patrick Henry Callahan, a leading Kentucky progressive in the era after 1910, pioneered a profit-sharing plan for his employees to offset the inroads of unionism. Unions grew stronger in Louisville and northern Kentucky in the 1890's and took an interest in local and state politics. Several union leaders, particularly James McGill and William H. Higgins, cooperated with the Whallen-Weaver machine in opposition to the Louisville progressives. Union men came from another social milieu, often Irish Catholic, compared with the middle class Protestant progressive. Yet they frequently supported "bread and butter" issues in politics that brought them together with progressives. The concern over child labor is one such area of agreement. The Louisville Central Labor Union worked with the Kentucky Child Labor Association to push legislation through the General Assembly. Labor's primary concern was that child labor lowered wages for all workers. The progressive middle class leaders of the Kentucky Child Labor Association such as Madeline McDowell Breckinridge took a more humanitarian approach. Both groups worked for legislation and enforcement of these restrictions. A Child Labor Law passed in 1902 and subsequent compulsory education improved the lot of poor children in the state. Later legislation thrust Kentucky into the forefront as a leader in child labor reform.[60]

Louisville reformers led a major progressive effort to improve the housing of the poor. Davies chaired a Tenement House Commission study of housing in Louisville in 1908-1909 sponsored by Associated Charities and the Woman's Club. Mayor Grinstead and the General Council supported the study with an appropriation of $1500. The Commission hired Janet E. Kemp of Boston to make

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59 F. A. Sampson to Bingham, January 1, 1908; Bingham to H. V. Loving, June 11, 1908; Mrs. Luke P. Blackburn to Bingham, [1908]; Arthur D. Allen to Bingham, May 5, 1908; Randolph H. Blain to Bingham, March 10, 1908; Bingham to Wesley Perry, October 2, 1908; Bingham to Lafon Allen, May 26, 1908; Bingham to Governor Willson, March 14, 1908; Willson to Bingham, March 6, 17, 1908, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

60 Ellis, "Patrick Henry Callahan," 18-19; Herbert Finch, "Organized Labor in Louisville, Kentucky, 1880-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1965), pp. 10-11, 131, 208, 219-23; Bingham to Governor Claude M. Swanson, March 10, 1908; Lafon Allen to Bingham, March 7, April 8, 1908; Bingham to Allen, March 5, 1908, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

a detailed study of urban housing. Davies labored hard for passage of a Tenement House Commission bill in the General Assembly in 1910, making Kentucky one of the first states to pass the "model" law advocated by the leading New York reformer, Lawrence Veiller.[61]

The growth of the prohibition movement in Kentucky divided progressives. A substantial number of Kentucky progressives displayed a strong religious inclination in their reform ideals. Bingham represented a smaller faction who only wanted to control the Sunday saloon in Louisville in the interest of law enforcement and estabished civil order. He never advocated prohibition. More and more of the deeply religious progressives asked for a total ban on alcohol. They identified the liquor and racing interests as the enemies of their way of life. Many of the militant Protestants supported the Kentucky Anti-Saloon League as it rose to power in the era before World War I.[62]

The unique nature of the economy of the state contributed to confusion over the most appropriate progressive measures. The liquor interests, coal mining, race track gambling, the L&N Railroad, and agricultural production of tobacco offered a varied economic base for the state. Factional party politics became more dominant after 1910. The bipartisan combine, led by the Kentucky Jockey Club, controlled many elections. Political machines in Louisville and northern Kentucky continued to control local elections and to broker state offices. The Louisville Churchmen's Federation became more involved in politics after the mayoral campaign of 1909. Representing the mainline Protestant denominations, these men vowed to take an activist role in political affairs. Before World War I prohibition became their primary interest. After passage of the 18th Amendment, they turned to race track gambling as their next crusade. In the early twenties the anti-evolution issue split Kentucky Protestants into fundamentalist and moderate factions, eliminating any hope for agreement on key issues.[63]

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61 Janet E. Kemp, ed., *Report of the Tenement House Commission of Louisville, under the ordinance of February 16, 1909* (Louisville: n.p., 1909), pp. 1-4; Davies to James F. Grinstead, September 9, 1909; Davies to Lawrence Veiller, March 23, 31, April 2, 27, 1910, Bingham Papers, 1908-17; Roy Lubove, *The Progressives and the Slums* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), pp. 142, 145.

62 Baptist, Methodist and, Presbyterian groups expressed their appreciation of Bingham's enforcement of the Sunday Closing Law. Louisville *Evening Post*, September 5, 30, 1907; *Courier-Journal*, October 30, 1907; Henry H. Sweets to Bingham, July 6, 1907, Bingham Papers, Mayor's Correspondence. When asked to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Anti-Saloon League of Kentucky, Bingham graciously declined citing his responsibilities on other boards. Charles L. Collins to Bingham, April 9, 1908; Bingham to Collins, April 10, 1908, Bingham Papers, 1908-17.

63 Thomas D. Clark, *A History of Kentucky* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1937), pp. 605-24;

More work must be done in the history of Kentucky in the era from the assassination of Goebel through World War I. This research will identify progressives and the issues in which they appeared to be most concerned, providing information for a recent but little-known period in Kentucky history.

Robert F. Sexton, "The Crusade Against Pari-Mutuel Gambling: A Study of Southern Progressivism in the 1920's," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, 50 (January, 1976), 47-57; Ellis, "The Fundamentalist-Moderate Schism over Evolution in the 1920's," *The Register of The Kentucky Historical Society*, 74 (April, 1976), 112-23.