THE KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

IN

WISCONSIN, INDIANA, OHIO

AND MICHIGAN

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of
the University of Wisconsin in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy.

by

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Date May 26, 1954
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This thesis having been approved in respect to form and mechanical execution is referred to you for judgment upon its substantial merit.

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Approved as satisfying in substance the doctoral thesis requirement of the University of Wisconsin.

Major Professor

Date May 24, 1954
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Norman Fredric Weaver

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PREFACE

This study of the Ku Klux Klan is meant to be a contribution to the Social Sciences. Although the material used is basically historical in content, an attempt has been made to handle the material in such manner that those of other disciplines can both understand and use the information presented.

A particular attempt has been made to integrate some of the contributions of Anthropology and Sociology. The opening chapter of the thesis analyzes the reasons why the Klan was successful in the 1920s in terms of the Culture Concept as well as the conventional historical causes. Social factors in causation have been emphasized wherever possible. The description of events has been complemented with analyses of social materials wherever possible. Throughout the entire project the selection of material to be gathered and the selection of what material should be used in writing the history of the Klan in these four states has been made with an eye to the various Social Sciences and to what might be useful to students of those disciplines.

In several of the chapters a case study techniques has been used to give greater depth in the analysis of the events described. This technique has been used in the analysis of the Negro-white situation in Detroit that caused the growth of the Klan there, in the description of the Niles (Ohio) riot, and especially in the study of political techniques used by the Klan in Indiana. In
fact, the whole of chapter five is a case study of the political techniques used by the Klan as a political pressure group. It is hoped that this material will be of use to Political Scientists interested in how pressure groups operate, and to Political Sociologists as an example of method.

The scope of this thesis was limited to the four states here selected because of the necessity for sampling the Klan movement rather than attempting a history of the whole movement. A history of the Klan nationally was too vast a project for a doctoral dissertation. Indiana was selected because the main outlines of the Klan movement there were known, and the Hoosier state could stand as a kind of reference point in the investigation. The other three states were selected because of the need to stay within the limits of the cultural group that patronized the Klan. This group is described in detail in chapter one of the thesis. Illinois was excluded because the Klan's growth there was exceptional because of the presence of two large cities, Chicago and St. Louis, and more typical Klan units were desired for the thesis work.

* * * * * *

Many individuals helped me during the work on this thesis. I would like to thank each, but I shall mention only three. Dr. Joe Morris of Wayne University helped me out with the Detroit and Indiana Klan at a time when I needed aid; Margaret Pierson of the State Historical Society of Indiana contributed invaluable
aid in the acquisition of material that made an analysis of the Klan at this depth possible, and finally, Dr. Merle Curti -- counselor, guide, master -- has been the most helpful and most patient friend any doctoral candidate could possibly have had. To all who helped me I owe grateful acknowledgment; to these three, and especially to Dr. Curti, I owe much more.

N. F. W.

Buffalo, New York
May 22, 1954
CHAPTER ONE

WHY THE KU KLUX KLAN?

Two pictures of the Klan have been presented to the public: the one consisting of a skull and crossbones in black; the other, the sacred emblems of the cross and the stars on a background of purest white.... 1

This brings us, then, to the ultimate question, What is the real Klan? Is it the Klan as described by Emperor Simmons before Congress or is it the local Klan active in Beaumont, Texas; Mer Rouge, Louisiana; Portland, Oregon... 2

This study of the Ku Klux Klan is a study in attitudes and actions. During the 1920s tens of thousands of men joined local Klan organizations in their communities to take what they hoped would be effective action on matters about which they were concerned and bothered. Through their actions as Klansmen they proved beyond any doubt that they feared and distrusted certain groups of Americans who happened to differ from them physically or culturally. As Klansmen these men exhibited deeply-rooted capacities for hating Catholics, baiting Jews, harassing Negroes, and for making the lives of immigrants insecure and precarious.

As one looks back at the 1920s and asks "Why the Klan?" it is the actions of these Klansmen that catches the eye. What the Klansmen did seems most significant because it was so spectacular and bizarre. But actions are only the overt expression of attitudes that mature

within the individual, and the attitudes that middlewestern
Americans possessed in the 1920s are the real guides to an under-
standing of why Klansmen behaved as they did. This opening chapter
will show how Klansmen acquired these attitudes from a sub-culture
that was wide-spread in the Middle West, a sub-culture that gave to
Klansmen full justification for their actions and wishes.

The Cultural Conditioning of Attitudes

Attitudes are present when an individual is ready to respond
in his characteristic manner to the presence of a specific symbol,
value, person or object. Men are not born with their attitudes.
All attitudes are acquired as the individual goes through the
process of maturing and living in a specific society and culture.
At the instant of his birth the child possesses no fixed
behavior patterns, lacks all knowledge of how to live and to

3 An understanding of the conditioning and canalizing
processes present in the Culture Concept is implied in this
handling of the concept "attitude". If the Culture Concept is
not understood, consult the following works: Ralph Linton,
The Study of Man, (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), Chaps IV-VI
especially; Clyde Kluckhohn, Mirror for Man, (McGraw-Hill, 1949),
17-36; Clyde Kluckhohn and William H. Kelly, "The Concept of
Culture" in Ralph Linton (ed.), The Science of Man in the World
Crisis, (Columbia University Press, 1945), 78-107. These are
summations of the concept by anthropologists. For a discussion
of the concept by a non-anthropologist, see Stuart Chase, The
Proper Study of Mankind, (Harper and Brothers, 1946), 59-68.

4 The basic assumption of the Culture Concept now employed
by many social scientists is that Man at birth possesses no
patterned behavior. All men are born as blank slates, behavior-
wise, and the social and cultural conditioning of each determines
how he will come to behave. In other words, the culture and the
individual's society write the final story that appears on the
slate. Note that these assumptions differ widely from the Freudian
point of view or those of the clearly psychological school.
survive, and is free of emotional attachments to or against any objects whatever. As the child is led by his parents and other associates through the process of growing up, he acquires the skills, knowledges, and attitudes that are characteristic of his culture. From the cultural knowledge taught to him he learns what is a tree, a peach, a chair. He learns to identify his friend "Jim", his aunt Roberta, and his father and mother. He learns how to tie his shoe strings, to button his shirt and to put on his snow suit. As a matter of fact, he must learn to identify and react to an "enormous variety of stimuli":

A child finds himself growing up in a world composed of an enormous variety of stimuli. Nature provides him with an infinite number of sights and sounds, temperatures and smells. And to this array the creations of men are added for his perception--buildings and bridges, furniture and goods, clothes and automobiles. The child also becomes aware of certain forms and rhythms, of music and language, of numbers and pictures. Less tangible but still sooner or later just as intensely experienced are other social products called manners and customs, conventions and mores, laws and institutions. All of these stimuli are an inescapable part of the environment to which the growing individual must adjust and orient himself.

His guides through the maze of his environment are his parents, siblings, friends and other members of his society. These

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6 The term "Culture" is used here in the Anthropological sense. As such it means "The distinctive way of life that is handed down as the social heritage of a people" and "it is the part of the behavior of an individual that is learned as a result of belonging to some particular group". It is the social legacy of an individual as contrasted with one's organic heredity. This definition, one of hundreds that exist, is patterned after the definition in Clyde Kluckhohn, Mirror for Man, (McGraw-Hill, 1949).

6 Hadley Cantril, The Psychology of Social Movements (John Wiley and Sons, 1941), 3.
persons have gone through the bewildering process of learning to cope with this specific environment (both physical and social) before him, and they ply him with their knowledge of the world. "This is daddy". "This is our home". "This is the way you brush your teeth". Hundreds, thousands of objects are identified, classified, clarified for the child by his associates.

The child that is given such aid does not realize how he is being conditioned, how his actions are being channeled into consistent responses. He only accepts what is offered to him because he is forced to do so. He not only has no previous experience to define a situation for him, he has no means by which he can compare what is offered to him with anything else. The child's world is a world of isolation where the child is closed in by the walls of his culture. He cannot make comparison with alternative ways of doing things for they are not offered to him. He can only accept his own cultural ways. The child accepts the cultural definition of objects and skills as they are presented to him, and he then has acquired a way of living that makes him and his behavior acceptable to his fellows. End result: the child accepts and becomes conditioned to his specific cultural pattern.7

7 If for some reason this pattern of cultural conditioning fails to take place, the child does not become "human" as far as behavior is concerned. Certain classic cases in the literature of Sociology demonstrate this. In the case of feral children, children raised with animals, their behavior is that of animals. See J. A. L. Singh and Robert M. Zingg, Wolf-Children and Feral Men, (Harper and Brothers, 1942). If the cultural
But in the process of being conditioned the child learns more than merely skills and knowledge. In the process of learning about things, he is also taught to evaluate them. As Cantril notes, most objects that are identified for the child are also given values by those who tell the child about them. "When people learn about a specific religion they generally learn at the same time that it is the 'best' or that it is the 'true' religion; when they learn about races they usually gather either directly or by implication that some are 'superior', some 'inferior'; when they become aware of sex they learn that some actions are 'right', other things are 'wrong'." Such valuing of objects goes on and on as the child learns what his culture has to say about the items in his environment. "Don't play with Johnny; he is not from our crowd". "Drink your milk; it is good for you". "Negroes are lazy; look at how they keep up their homes". "The Jews have cornered all the money". Hardly anything comes to hand that does not have a value associated with it by the other members of the culture. And these values, when they make a thing "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong", "proper" or "improper", conditioning is partially interrupted, children fail to mature socially and to learn human behavior. They remain at intelligence levels far below their normal capacity. See Kingsley Davis, "Extreme Isolation of a Child", American Journal of Sociology, 45:554-565 (January 1940) and Kingsley Davis, "Final Note on a Case of Extreme Isolation", American Journal of Sociology, 52:432-437. (March 1947).

"moral" or "immoral", form the basis for the states of readiness that are the foundation-stones of the attitudes that an individual holds. Attitudes thus are learned as a normal part of growing up and becoming part of a society of men, and a sharer in a cultural pattern of existence.

How early does a child build these attitudes? Apparently knowledge of the society, of the objects and people within it that the child acquires is colored from the very beginning with value judgments. Trager and Radke experimented with a group of children just coming to the public schools and came to the conclusion that these children, ages five and six, had already acquired many of the cultural stereotypes before that tender age. From the evidence they collected it is clear that the learning of cultural stereotypes about persons, groups and things had already gone far. Children by age six are (a) aware of group differences (b) know about specific religious practices (c) hold fixed notions (d) generally think in terms of group stereotypes (e) reject and know how it feels to be rejected because of group membership. On the basis of such evidence it is clear that every child learns in his earliest years of comprehension to know about things and persons and groups, but that he also learns

10 For a penetrating analysis of how and when attitudes of hostility toward other groups are learned, see Helen G. Trager and Mariam Radke Yarrow, They Learn What They Live, (Harper and Brothers, 1962). See especially the summary, 346-353.
to judge, to pre-judge, and to like or dislike the same things about which he has learned. The innocence of childhood, after the initial conditioning has begun, appears to be a myth that cannot be supported by evidence.

If children are conditioned to attitudes so early, it is apparent that the understanding of human behavior must focus upon the kind of culture that an individual or individuals (if a group is under consideration) is reared into. In that case, into what type of culture were Klansmen born that would produce the types of behavior recorded in the latter chapters of this thesis?

Identification of the Cultural Tradition that Produced Klansmen

Klansmen in the Middle West came from a single broad cultural group. Klansmen called themselves the descendants of the old native stock of the nation, and in that way identified themselves.11 A more precise definition can be made by noting that they came from the issue of those groups that social historians have labelled the "Old" Immigration. The peoples who made up that stream of immigration came to the United States from the countries of northern and western Europe, particularly from England, Scotland, Germany, and the northern counties of Ireland, with only a scattering from the other countries of Europe. For the entire colonial period, and for about the first century of national

11 One Klans leader identified the Klans in this way. "We want the country ruled by the sort of people who settled it. This is our country and we alone are responsible for its future." From an interview by Frank Bohm of an Ohio Klans leader. Frank Bohm,
development, these peoples represented the overwhelming majority of all immigrants to this country. As late as 1880 these groups stood virtually unchallenged as the makers and shapers of the American cultural pattern.

When these peoples came from England, Scotland, Germany and from northern Ireland they were not culturally very similar. Difference of language, customs and institutional patterns of behavior seemed significant and certain to segregate these groups into separate sub-cultures. But the accident of precedent wiped out these differences quickly. The English were the first on the scene and for the first century of colonial settlement they formed the bulk of the settlers. With this time advantage and the added factor of English political control of the colonies, the English settlers established the major cultural institutions of the new society—the English language, the English common law, the English family pattern, and the other English social, economic and political institutions.

When the non-English peoples began to arrive in large numbers after 1700, each of these groups found itself compelled to alter its language, cultural traditions, and institutions to conform to the established English counterparts. It is certainly true that the non-English cultural patterns later came to influence the established English ways of behaving, but it was

the English traditions and ways of doing things that remained basic even when altered. The English institutions might be said to have acted as the catalyst in fusing the cultural traditions around the central English core.

This coalescence was aided by the fact that the culture of these European groups contained fully as many items of likeness as they did of dissimilarities. The family pattern each national group brought to America was basically similar. Each family structure was monogamous and patriarchal in terms of control. Within each of these family structures the children were reared and maintained until early adulthood. Attitudes concerning what the family should be, and the function of the institution were based upon the common Christian tradition. All these groups were Christian; further, the overwhelming majority were Protestants of one denomination or another. Associated with the Protestant religion historically has been a series of traits that added to the likenesses of these peoples. The Protestant religion was inextricably associated with capitalism as an economic system in the home countries of the settlers, and the immigrants came trained in the capitalist's individualism and were strong advocates of individual initiative and independent action. Tied in with Protestantism, also, was the emphasis upon moral behavior and the operation of a moral law higher than man's laws. This was in turn re-enforced when many of the peoples of these groups were converted to the evangelical sects in the years after 1760. When these non-English groups moved to the frontier they carried with
them a broad emphasis upon conventional moral behavior.

In short, while it is not possible to compile here a full listing of the ways in which the immigrants from England, Scotland, Germany and northern Ireland were alike or different, it is possible to note certain facts. First, in the large cultural patterns that covered the whole society—religious beliefs, economic attitudes, family structures—these groups shared a general cultural tradition that was much the same. Second, it was only in the details by which these general areas of concern were put into practice as a part of their daily lives that they differed. But because all these peoples came into a society that was tailored early to a basic English pattern, and because, regardless of national origin, most of them had to adjust to the same environmental and social conditions that each faced, they drew closer and closer together as the generations passed. Eventually these groups—English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Dutch—merged into a loose cultural tradition that was discernible during the middle decades of the nineteenth century as the major cultural unit in American society.

It was out of this tradition that the Klan drew its members in the 1920s. It was this tradition that contained specific values and symbols that could be used to attract men into the Klan.
Klan Use of the Religious Issue

In the Middle West Klan leaders found that they could make most progress through the manipulations of religious attitudes. Their use of this issue took two forms. First, and most important, was the Klan's attempt to identify itself with the whole Protestant group of churches and their creeds. The second was the Klan's ability to exploit a deeply-ingrained cultural tradition of historic Protestantism, a distrust of the Catholic church and its hierarchy.

The pattern of settlement of the Middle West had been such that a fairly homogeneous group of persons lived there in the 1920s. While several streams of migration fed the Middle West, the common conditions under which each group lived made their adjustments quite similar. For at least a century all who came were rural or small-town folk because there were no large cities. Each family settled upon its own plot of ground, worked long hours, were concerned mostly with crops, the weather, the conditions of the soil, the phases of the moon, with kinfolk and illness and death. The pattern of isolation and hard work during the week made them welcome the break from routine that church services afforded on Sunday, and they were a devoutly Protestant group. As contact with one another

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12 Settlement of the Middle West came in three waves. The first was from the South and filled Indiana and Ohio up to the National Road where the limestone hills ended. The second came from New England and filled in the northern areas of Indiana and Ohio and southern Michigan and Wisconsin. The third wave was of immigrants from Europe, mostly from Germany and England. This immigrant wave filled out the open areas in the northern parts of Ohio and Indiana and the southern districts of Wisconsin and Michigan. All of these peoples, with a few exceptions, were Protestants and readily mingled with one another until they blended into a generalized ethnic and cultural group.
was established, as Scotch-Irishmen came to know the German, they
intermarried and merged both culturally and ethnically. By the
time the Klan penetrated the Middle West in the 1920s, most of the
cultural differences had been wiped out, and it was virtually
impossible to tell, in the case of most of these people, whether
their ancestors had come from the South, from New England, or
directly from overseas.

The religious habits of the group became firmly fixed.
Regardless of denominations these people accepted the Bible as
the source of revealed truth and the life of Christ as recorded
in the New Testament as their source of inspiration. Their faith
was simple. They knew little of theology, but felt that their
biblical interpretations were sufficient to answer their needs.
They could be swayed by evangelists, could be moved by moral
stories, and could rise in wrath against those who doubted.
Denominationally these Protestants often quarrelled over bits of
dogma, but like brothers who fight, they presented a united front
against those who were not of their own group.

In the rural areas of the Middle West as late as 1900 this
cultural tradition was dominant. Catholics, Jews, Negroes and
immigrants settled generally in the cities and left the rural
country-side largely to these folk. Certain areas of the Middle
West were exceptions to this pattern—northern Wisconsin and the
out-over region of Michigan were settled mostly by Scandinavians and
Poles of different cultural orientation. Ohio as a whole was more
cosmopolitan than the others of three-four states at the century's end due to the earlier growth of industry there. But, over-all, the Middle West presented a fairly consistent cultural pattern as the twentieth century opened.

The Klan Identifies Itself with the Protestant Tradition

Coming into this situation in the early 1920s, Klan leaders found that their first task was to identify the Klan thoroughly with the Protestant tradition of the area. This was done through a series of regular procedures. In any community Klan organizers first approached Protestant ministers and asked them to give their blessing to the movement.13 In many cases the ministers cooperated.14 Klan leaders offered them membership free of the usual ten dollar fee, and placed them in a special category. If this still failed, Klansmen from outside the ministry were recruited, and were asked to put pressure on their ministers to join.15 If all else failed, Klan organization went ahead, but Klansmen were careful always thereafter to try to act in such a way that Protestant ministers could not attack what they did as immoral or improper. They sought at least implicit support of Protestant ministers even though they might not get explicit support.

In addition, Klansmen emphasized their intellectual kinship and ties to all Protestants. The major symbol of the Klan was the

13 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Hugh "Fat" Emmom, 14.
14 Ibid., 18.
15 Ibid., 25.
Cross. The Klan hymn was "The Old Rugged Cross". The fiery cross, the cross blazing on the hillside at night, was to Klansmen the symbol that the Protestants had at last united in the Klan—and the flame represented militancy of action. The Bible was used constantly in Klan meetings and ceremonies. Klan outdoor meetings to which the public was invited consisted of some of the Klan rituals performed around the light from a bonfire, but the main talk of the evening was usually given by a speaker assigned by national headquarters from its Propagation Bureau. This roster of speakers consisted almost entirely of Protestant ministers who had expressed an interest in Klan work, and who had found that a steady income as a Klan employee was at least as secure and desirable as the collection plate passed each Sunday. The Klan marched always to "Onward Christian Soldiers". The Klan ritual was devoted to an elaboration of a code of conduct drawn from the Ten Commandments. "The Living Christ" was the ideal of every Klansman. In these and in many other ways the Klan sought to identify itself with this cultural group by utilizing symbols and emotions that had real appeal to them.

16 The Klan used a cross made of wood, wrapped in burlap sacking, and then soaked with kerosene to provide their "fiery cross". This was ignited on the side of a hill near a town where the townspeople could see it. Loucks reported that in the mining districts of Pennsylvania the Klan used to set off a charge of dynamite before lighting the cross to attract attention to it. Emerson Hunsberger Loucks, The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania (Telegraph Press, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1938), 86.

17 For the controversial career of one of these ministers see the material on "Pat" Malone in the Wisconsin chapter below, page 87.
Historically, it is of the greatest significance that the Klan in the Middle West was successful in identifying itself in the minds of thousands of Protestants with the general Protestant welfare. The Klan efforts to convince Protestants that the Klan was working for their benefit pulled into the Klan many of the Protestants who felt that on the floor of the Klavern doctrinal differences could be forgotten as members of all creeds could join in a general approval of Protestant beliefs and could work cooperatively for the general welfare of all. Thousands of good, God-fearing men and women in the Middle West were convinced for a year or two that the Klan was actually what it said it was—the organizing movement that would finally bring a unity to Protestantism that had been lacking for centuries. And, Klan speakers told them, that could be accomplished within the Klan by emphasizing the love of God, the leadership of Christ and the bonds of the moral code of the Ten Commandments and by de-emphasizing less important areas of religious belief that had been controversial issues that had held like men apart.

Psychologically, the Klan succeeded in identifying itself as a part of the in-group of this Protestant culture that was dominant in the Middle West. Then, operating from a secure position as a part of the group, the Klan accepted the Protestants' definition of their enemies and exploited the traditions of anti-Catholic bias that were a prominent part of Protestant conditioning. Klan leaders did this to sell the Klan as a necessary implement for combatting the Catholic menace. But note one thing: such an attack upon the
Catholics as an out-group could not have been made if the Klan had not secured for itself the confidence of the Protestant group.

Anti-Catholicism could only become a successful theme after the Klan itself had become identified by Protestants as an ally in the battles they saw coming with the Catholics. Hence, of first importance were the pro-Protestant activities of the Klan. Of secondary, but certainly complementary significance, was the Klan's use of the anti-Catholic theme to sell itself in the Middle West.

**Klan Use of the Anti-Catholic Appeal**

Protestant children go through a period of conditioning similar to that of other children in this or any other society. They learn to identify things, to name them, to use certain skills, to protect themselves and to group persons, places and things into intelligible wholes. They learn that things that they identify have values. They learn, too, the fears, insecurities, and superstitions of their society. By the time they have matured and are adults they are representatives of their culture in the sense that they reflect in their attitudes and actions what they have been taught in the learning process that constituted their cultural conditioning and adjustment.

A significant area of Protestant belief is the attitude that most Protestants feel toward Catholicism. Deeply rooted in the general Protestant culture is a distrust of Catholics. This is carried on, generation after generation, regardless of whether there are Catholics in the neighborhood, community, or county, and
regardless of whether the individual who is transmitting the attitude has ever seen a Catholic Priest, Nun, or convent. 18

In other words, the attitudes are transmitted from generation to generation as a part of the cultural heritage. It is not necessary to have an influx of Catholics into a community, an attack of Catholics upon a school board, or a doctrinal conflict arise between the minister of a Protestant church and a Catholic priest over some interpretation of a social issue. Regardless of the lack or extent of contact, the traditions carry. Anti-Catholicism is a psychological set and a cultural group-attitude that is passed down within this group as routine a manner as are kinship relationships, occupations, and social customs.

What do Protestants learn and believe about Catholics? It would be impossible to catalogue even a small percentage of the charges that have been made against Catholics by Protestant ministers, Sunday School teachers and lay members of the churches. But certain widely held beliefs are illustrative:

a. Catholics are taught that their mission on earth is to

18 Strong enough statement cannot be made of the fact that cultural contact does not have to exist to provide hostility toward another group. Social conflict between groups over an issue, (i.e. between Protestants and Catholics over the public schools) often does cause hostility and aggression. But such contact is not necessary. The patterns for such hostility may be carried in the cultural pattern and may be aroused by the utilization of proper appeals and symbols even when the group against whom the hostility is directed is not a part of the social picture. As an example, the total population in Indiana contained less than 5% Catholics in Indiana in the 1920s. Most of these that were present were concentrated in a few cities--Gary, South Bend, Fort Wayne. Rural Indiana certainly contained less than 2% Catholics, perhaps even less than 1%. Yet it was in the most rural sections of Indiana that the Klan met its greatest success--in the southern counties of the state where Catholics just had not settled.
wipe out "heretical" Protestants.

b. Catholics are taught an undying hatred for Luther and the whole Protestant tradition.

e. The Catholic hierarchy is continually plotting to overthrow civil government and to place the Holy Father at the head of the state. Presumably, this is to wipe out all dissenting faiths and to restore Catholicism to the supremacy it once held.

d. Nuns and priests lead immoral lives behind the secret walls of the convents and nunneries.

e. Girls who volunteer for Holy Orders are kept virtually as prisoners in the convents although most of them wish to escape.

f. Catholics accept without question all orders given them by their priests.

g. Catholics are most concerned socially with the destruction of the public school system. If destruction is not practical, subversion and sabotage of the schools is the next best alternative.19

This is not meant to be a complete list of cultural beliefs.

Such a list could hardly be made because of the multiplicity of the available items. But, more important than such a listing is the fact that most Protestants learn some part of this storehouse of information or misinformation. More significant even than the learning of these items is the fact that they are implanted in

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the minds of Protestant children in such a manner that they lead to
the conviction the Catholics are a distinct out-group to which
Protestants must pay constant heed and who must be constantly
watched. Every action of a Catholic layman or priest is viewed
with suspicion, every act is clothed with an intent which may not
be (and probably is not) there. The attitude thus created is one
of distrust, credulity, and an alertness and readiness to respond
in hostile manner.

The Klan used information of this type to activate latent
attitudes in the culture. The Klan circulated books about the
lewd life carried on within the convents; it spread rumors about
the Pope coming to this country to take over; it showed photo-
graphs of the palace Catholics were preparing for the Pope when
he should arrive; it circulated rumors that the Catholics were
trying to take over the governments of the states in which the
Klans were operating; it said that Catholics were openly seeking
positions in the public schools or on public school boards to
subvert and sabotage the public school systems; it spread rumors
about the activities of particular priests, or brought speakers
who had "escaped" from numeraries to tell about the lives of the

20 For many of the tales circulated about Catholics in Indiana,
see Weaver, Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 18-40. In published material,
Robert Coughlan, "Komklave in Kokomo", in Isabel Leighton, The
Aspirin Age, 1919-1941, (Simon and Schuster, 1949). This article is
especially interesting because it was written by a man who was a boy
in Kokomo, Indiana, while the Klan was at its peak, and who was on
the receiving end of Klan hostility as a Catholic. In the author's
possession are a number of slates put out by Klansmen when they ran
a "Protestant School Board Ticket" in 1926 in Indianapolis, Indiana.
These are illustrative of the concern over the schools that Klans-
men felt.

21 The cause of the lawsuits against "Fat" Malone in Wisconsin
were his allegations of illegitimate children born to a priest in
girls "imprisoned" there. Every tale that had any chance of being believed was circulated. With the initial readiness of many Protestants to believe Catholics capable of anything, these tales, rumors and suspicions spread rapidly and widely. In 1923 and 1924 in the rural areas of Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio feeling rose almost to fever pitch against the Catholics. Although the North does not generally include violence in its normal cultural pattern, even violence broke out occasionally between Catholics and Protestant-Klansmen. The Klan whipped latent cultural attitudes against Catholics to a froth for a time, and during that time the Klan's own success increased fantastically.

This discussion is not meant to imply that every Protestant believed these rumors, suspicions and wild tales to the same degree.

Wiseonsin. See below in the Wisconsin chapter, 136.

22 Klansmen, as nearly as it can be ascertained, fell into about six specific categories. 1. Sincere and honest men and women from this cultural group who were sincerely concerned over the menace of Catholicism, of the aliens, or Negroes (in specific areas). 2. The violently "anti" group—the rabid fanatics who were psychologically unbalanced and who had to take their frustrations out in some way and found the Klan useful for their personal relief. 3. Citizens who were subject to pressure of one sort or another to join—school teachers, ministers urged by their constituents, or persons of weak resistance who were more or less enticed into joining by their friends. 4. Lodge men—those persons in our society (and they are large in number) who join secret societies in droves. 5. Political opportunists who saw the massed strength of the Klan and sought to use it for their own purposes. 6. The "promoters" of the 1920s—those salesmen who reflected the commercial cast of the society and who preferred to sell Klan membership to stocks and bonds, or to running liquor. The membership of the Klan consisted in most areas of a majority of persons of the first category. The leadership had at its top the super-salesmen, the commercial "artists". Between these leaders there was often a group of category two. For a struggle for control of a state Klan between the same but concerned citizens and the irrational fanatics see below, 131-3, for the struggle over the Wisconsin Klan leadership.
Cultural conditioning is always selective and always partial. Under some conditions children accept everything told them about a cultural object, item or value. Under different conditions, they will not accept so readily everything they hear. Such tendencies carry over into adulthood from childhood. Protestants actually broke into three segments. The first were those who openly favored the Klan, joined the local unit, and actively worked for Klan success. These people were often fanatical and were highly suggestible when Klansmen approached them with tales of Catholic evil. A second group of Protestants was as bitterly opposed to the Klan as the first group was enthusiastic for it. They called Klan leaders insincere, money-grubbers, liars and other complimentary epithets. Some Protestant ministers refused to join the Klan and lined up with this group who opposed the Klan as an unscrupulous fraud. The attitude of this group toward Catholics was probably not much more friendly than that of the fanatical group, but it was at least restrained. They thought that the Klan's technique for dealing

23 There is a current school of thought that finds evidence that persons who join mass movements like the Klan are mentally and psychologically unstable. Most of their research has been done with the Nazi movement in Germany, and they have developed the concept of the "Authoritarian Man" to explain certain standardized responses. While interesting, it is impossible to use this criteria upon historical evidence. However, the weight of the argument presented in this chapter is meant to stress the normality of those persons who became Klansmen, not the abnormality. If abnormality existed, it was in the culture. To be sure, many of the fanatics of the "anti-" almost-anything stripe were obviously unstable—but they did not make up more than a small proportion of the movement in the Middle West. For this school of thought see the six volumes sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and published by Harper and Brothers in 1950 under the title Studies in Prejudice. See especially the volume by Theodore Adorno, et. al., The Authoritarian Personality (Harper and Brothers, 1950).
with inter-group problem areas was hardly the answer to the problem in the long run. Between these two polar positions one could find a third class which represented every degree of the scale from hatred to neutrality. In this middle group were those who accepted fundamentally the suspicion of the Catholics preached by the Klan, but who were not interested in a secret society as a solution to the problem; also, here were those who attempted to stay aloof from the whole battle, regardless of where their sentiments lay. The whole Protestant community was stirred up over the Klan and its tactics, and this aided Klan growth.

**Klan Use of other Cultural Themes**

The Klan's ideology stressed hostility toward four groups of fellow Americans. Klansmen were prepared to respond antagonistically toward either Catholics, Jews, Negroes or aliens whenever these groups should become a nuisance in their community, or whenever Klansmen could convince themselves that they were potentially a menace. But, the Klan in the Middle West was operating among people relatively homogeneous in culture, and that culture emphasized strongly only the Catholic menace.24 As a result,

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24 Prior to the 1820s the two strongest outbursts of anti-Catholic feeling took place in the 1850s and in the 1890s. Just before the Civil War the in-migration of Catholic Irish to the eastern port cities gave birth to the so-called "Know-Nothings" movement and the Native American Party in the political field. Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860* (Rinehart and Company, 1938), is the classic study of this movement. In the 1890s The American Protective Association came to life in the Middle West and for a short time had considerable success with its manipulation of the anti-Catholic theme. There is no adequate history of the A. P. A. The best available is a short study by Humphrey J. Desmond, *The A. P. A. Movement*, (Washington, 1912).
Klan use of other ideological themes was extremely limited in the Middle West.

The anti-Negro theme was not utilized in the Middle West because there was neither a cultural base for it nor a social situation that could call it forth. In the South before 1921 the Klan had been used to calm the Negro restlessness resulting from exposure to better treatment outside the South during the World War. But the South had had a long tradition of using force and violence to keep the Negro in line, and the Klan was merely the convenient agency to do this in the post-war period. In the Middle West the situation was radically different.

The English-German-Scotch-Irish population that made up the peoples of the Middle West had had no cultural tradition of opposition to Negroes. In the section of Europe where these peoples had come from there had been no Negroes; those who settled here had always been residents of the Northern states. Therefore, no cultural antipathies to the Negro had grown in their culture. In addition, outside the cities of Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Milwaukee in the Middle West there were few Negroes.

A good general survey of hostility to Catholics can be found in Gustavus Myers, *A History of Bigotry in the United States*, (Random House, 1943).

25 It will be recalled that a large part of the Middle West's population came from the South. Did it not then bring with it an anti-Negro bias? Probably. But that group had been the first into this region, and had lived there out of contact with the Negro-white problem so long that the cultural attitude was blunted. There is no doubt that in the southern areas of Indiana and Ohio it was latent—but there was no issue upon which it could be raised and brought to the active level. Besides, anti-Catholicism was so successful with these same people that Klan leaders made no effort to arouse a latent racist theme.
While the Negroes were rural residents in the South, when they moved north they moved en masse into the cities. Therefore, they did not come into contact with the small-town stronghold of the Klans.

The only anti-Negro outburst in the entire Middle West was in Detroit. The war industry of that city had attracted Negroes in great numbers after 1916. The Great Migration beginning in that year had taken large numbers of Negroes to Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago. The Klan was never strong in Chicago; it had only a short life in Cleveland. But in Detroit it was dragged into the housing mess in that city. When southern Negroes had moved to Detroit they had been crowded into the First Ward of the city and there had piled up into ever more crowded housing situations. Along with the Negro migration from the South had come many southern poor whites, a group bitterly antagonistic to Negroes now removed from most of the social restrictions of the South. These southerners were forced by economic pressure to live in the same section of the city as the Negroes. The almost intolerable housing conditions probably would have caused tension between any two given groups. Between southern Negro and southern poor white the clash was inevitable. The Klan recruited the whites, and led them in a housing riot against the Negroes. The riot was minor, but it does indicate the transfer of southern cultural attitudes to a

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26 Accurate figures on the Great Migration of Negroes north to the industrial cities can be found most easily in Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, (Harper and Brothers, 1944). See especially 182-205.
city which Myrdal calls more "southern" than any other northern city. 27

The anti-alien theme—Resistance to the immigrant historically begins shortly after the Civil War. From then on until the 1920s feeling rose rapidly against "foreigners." Particularly when the "new" immigration came, the feeling against it ran high. Resentment against "Polacks", "Dagos", "Wops", "Ruskies" and others ran at a relatively high level throughout the whole cultural group from which the Klan drew its membership. But in most areas, not enough immigrants moved out of the cities to the small-towns, hamlets and farms to bother the folks of those areas. A low level infection does not necessarily mean an eventual high fever, and resentment against the "foreigners" did not necessarily mean an outburst of feeling against them. Two areas only saw real antagonism. In north central Wisconsin the lumber companies were attempting to salvage the out-over lumber areas by importing immigrants to farm their lands. In Rusk County, Wisconsin, the heart of this resettlement area, the Klan built up to the highest proportion of Klansmen to the total population that it ever had in any of the Wisconsin counties. So the presence of the foreign groups in numbers could arouse resistance. In eastern Ohio, the Klan clashed head-on with the anti-Klan forces of the Flaming

27 Myrdal, An American Dilemma, (Harper and Brothers, 1944), 527, 529n, and 562.
Circle, an organization of foreign-born Catholic men, in a riot that resulted in some deaths and many injuries. Both of these incidents are described in detail below. Illustrative as they are, they represent the only outbursts directly made against foreign-born aliens in the Middle West.

Anti-Semitism was not a strong cultural theme in the 1920s. There has always been a rank order of preference by which minority groups have been chosen for attacks by nativist elements in this society. Catholics for years headed the list of choices, and the Jews were far down on the list through the 1920s. The Klansmen would occasionally boycott a Jewish merchant, but rarely did Klan activity against Jews go further than that. The Klan was about ten years too early to make anti-Semitism a favorite theme. Historical accident placed the Klan before the rise of Hitler and his anti-Semitism. After Hitler's attacks began in Europe, anti-Semitism became fashionable among right-wing groups like the Klan. But in the 1920s it was too early. The Klan did not pay much attention to the Jews.

Thus of all the weapons in the Klan's ideological arsenal, only one was used extensively. The long-time favorite foe of

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28 See below, 80-1, for the Rusk County situation. See below, 238, for the Niles Riot in Mahoning County.
29 Carey McWilliams, A Mask for Privilege; Anti-Semitism in America, (Little, Brown and Company, 1949), 31.
of Protestants, the Catholics, were castigated and opposed wherever possible. The other "enemies" of the Klan were not the recipients of strong cultural attitudes from which attacks could be launched, or the necessary social situations seldom arose that could call the attention of these small-town Americans to the other groups.

Non-ideological Cultural Contributions to the Klan Movement

The culture of the middlewestern small-towner and farmer contained certain other long-standing elements that contributed to the growth of the Klan. The three most important of these were: the tendency of Americans to flock together into voluntary associations to solve their problems, the love of Americans for the ritualism and mumbo-jumbo of the secret society, and the tendency always latent in American life to go outside the law to enforce the law, or to take vigilante action.

One of the most interesting features of American life is the tendency of Americans to come together in "movements" to solve their problems. "Those who have one great object find one another out through a vast extent of country, join their forces, settle their mode of operation, and act together with the uniformity of a disciplined army".31 No real explanation of this phenomenon has been made, but Schlesinger offered some suggestions to why Americans "join" in his study of voluntary associations.32 He suggested that the need for cooperative work on the frontier

32 Ibid., 32-3.
initially, the later improvement of communication facilities, and the nearness of people to one another in the growing cities aided the ease with which persons could come together. Whatever caused the voluntary association to become a basic part of American life, it has been a seminal influence in forming American traditions since the founding of the nation.

The Klan was just one more form of voluntary association in which persons joined together to seek answers to their common problems. Klansmen felt that more was to be gained by unity of action than by individual effort. Klan leaders constantly preached the need for united, common effort. The Klan is one of the most pronounced examples of the voluntary association in this century, and its effectiveness was almost entirely based upon its massed strength. In resorting to voluntary mass action, the Klan used a deeply-rooted tradition of American culture, and used it with great success.

Much of the voluntary activity in the past fifty years has been a specialized type of activity, the secret society. Again, reasons that seem valid cannot be advanced to explain why small-town folk love the ritualism and the spectacle of secret societies, but love them they certainly do! At the beginning of the nineteenth century only a few thousand members of secret orders existed.33

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33 Approximately 3000 Freemasons, 500–600 members of the Tammany Societies and a few members of Phi Beta Kappa in 1800 were reported by Devere Allen in "Substitutes for Brotherhood," World Tomorrow, 7:74 (1924). Quoted in Neil P. Gist, Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States (University of Missouri Press, 1940), 31.
But in the nineteenth century opposition\textsuperscript{34} gave way to approval and more than six hundred new secret orders sprang up, of which more than half survived into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{35} The trend continued and by 1927 Charles Hors estimated that there were over eight hundred secret societies with a combined membership of over thirty million persons.\textsuperscript{36} By the 1920s the Klan had a fertile field to plow in offering another secret society. There just did not seem to be a saturation point.

The Klan presented one of the most esoteric appeals ever offered by secret societies. The normally bombastic nomenclature used in most of the orders was amplified beyond all comprehension in the Klan ritual. Klan leaders were Imperial Wizards, Grand Dragons, Grand Titans, Exalted Cyclops, or Kludus. The alliterative "K" was the favorite device of Klansmen. They held Konklaves in their Klaverns. They held Klouvocations, Klonventions, Klon-ciliums. Their special calendar featured the "Dismal Day of the Weeping Week of the Hideous Month of the year of the Klan LVII." Robes, masks, secret handshakes, special symbols, a vocabulary available only to Klansmen ("Kigy" meant "Klansman, I greet you", and the question "Ayak?", "Are you a Klansman" brought back the proper response, "Akia", "A Klansman I am") were coupled with secret rides,}

\textsuperscript{34} The anti-Masonic movement is an illustration that many Americans feared the secret order as harmful. Opposition to the Cincinnati Society had been present earlier.  
\textsuperscript{35} Allen, "Substitutes for Brotherhood" in World Tomorrow, 7:74 (1924) as quoted in Gist, Secret Societies, 31.  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
parades with visors down, and the mystic ceremonials in the flickering light from a burning cross. The Klan offered more of the ritual and more of the mumbo-jumbo than any other of the secret societies of its time, and the Americans of the Middle West ate it up. How many members the Klan could have gained had it merely brought to the Middle West its ritual and its rigamarole it is not possible to say, but it is a safe bet that even without its appeals to hatred and distrust it is apparent that the Klan would have attracted very many persons.

The third cultural contribution that the Klan fed upon was the tendency, deep-rooted in American culture, for men to take the law into their own hands. Beginning on the frontier where law and order was not available in the early days, vigilantes took to upholding a camp law or informally agreed upon code of behavior. This tendency to act independently of law officials continued beyond the days when law officials were not available. The Indiana Klan made extensive use of this situation by resurrecting an old Civil War statute that allowed county commissioners to set up a body of "horse thief detectives". The Klan built up in Indiana a kind of secret police force by utilizing this statute that had long lost its original meaning but which Stephenson gave another function. Klan secrecy and the massed strength of the Klan made it possible for Klansmen to pass beyond the bounds of law enforcement occasionally and take the law into their own hands. This was done when men were warned to quit philandering, or in
other areas where the Klan decided to flog or tar-and-feather someone. Always Klansmen said they were doing it because the law enforcement people could not know what they did nor act to get the individual they adjudged guilty, and he would then go scot-free.

These three cultural tendencies gave to the Klan in the Middle West some of its most distinguishing characteristics. Klansmen voluntarily joined the Klan in pursuit of goals that they all in general agreed upon. The fact that this voluntary association happened to be a secret society only heightened the interest in it because middlewestern folk (as most Americans) had almost a childish delight in clubs and secret orders with their passwords and their guarded secrets. Such an organization lent itself well to extra-legal activity. While there was little of that type of activity in the Middle West, Klansmen did feel that they had the right to judge what kind of activities were best for the community. In their support of moral rightness Klansmen often went slightly beyond legal limits.

**Why the Klan in the 1920s?**

If the Klan found all of these cultural traditions available to it for its use in the 1920s, why was there no Klan until that time? If these traditions could be utilized to create the Klan movement in 1922, why were they not equally as useful in 1912 or in 1902? What special conditions existed in the 1920s that made them become active then?
The answer seems to lie in the fact that this cultural group that gave the greatest support to the Klan was worried and disturbed in the 1920s whereas in 1912 and particularly in 1902 no such unrest existed. Certain events and tendencies associated with the war and the events following it had created tensions in the minds of the rural, small-town, midwestern Americans, and these fears were exploited by Klansmen to bring these people into the Klan.

This state of mind among potential Klan clientele has many causes. It is not possible to say that a specific condition caused a specific reaction but it is possible to say that a whole complex of events caused a disturbed state of mind that lent itself to Klan exploitation. Any one of these sources of unrest by itself would have been enough to cause some insecurity, but when these developments all came at the same time in the early 1920s there was real insecurity, unrest, and a deep sense of being ground under by change in the society. As a result, many individuals joined the Klan as the organization that offered them a chance to solve their problems by united action.

The first area that was disturbing many in the 1920s was the excessive nationalism of the period. Horace Kallen regards this emphasis upon Americanism as an inevitable result of American wartime propaganda. The war, he suggested, lasted too short a time. All government calculations were that the war would end in 1919, near the end of the year. Propaganda efforts were pitched to bring the nation to an emotional peak to be able to stand the losses
of a major offensive in the summer of 1919. George Creel and his
commiteesmen worked carefully to build the nation to an emotional
push at that time, but not before. But the war ended in late
1918, and the emotional peak had not yet been reached. Peace could
not change newly developed hatreds into sentiments of friendship
immediately. The emotional binge had to take place, it was given
release in the Red Scare of 1919. Anyone who differed from a
pattern of Americanism that was blind to fault and to the need
for constant change in the society suffered the persecution of
the 1919 Red Scare.37

The nation had fallen into a pattern of conformity during the
war when everything even partially tainted with being German was
denied or destroyed. Frankfurters became "Liberty Pups", sauer-
kraut was called "Liberty cabbage", and the teaching of the German
language was wiped out of the schools. This took place because the
German claims to a "kultur" superior to our own had struck home.
Rather than face the charges of the enemy directly by proving the
worth of American institutions the nation chose to wipe him out.
The war started people counting up things that were American, 100%
American. All other things, all variations, represented a challenge
and a threat. This was a new process in American intellectual life.
Prior to the war Americans had simply accepted their institutions as

37 Horace M. Kallen, Culture and Democracy in the United States:
Studies in the Group Psychology of the American Peoples, (Boni and
Liveright, 1924), 37 ff.
good, and had been little concerned with them. But when challenged, they began to take notice of the things that were American and those that were anti-American. A tendency came into the society to judge things by this standard. It carried over into the post-war period. Anything that looked like a challenge was struck down in the Red Scare if it could be easily harmed.

During that brief emotional binge of 1919 these efforts at Americanization were carried out. Campaigns against radicals of all political complexions were launched. The office of the Socialist *New York Call* was sacked by a mob. Race riots were stirred up in many cities directed at the new Negro sections. The worst riots took place in Chicago where forty persons were killed as the battles surged through the city streets. More than six thousand presumed communists were rounded up, and some were deported to Russia. Elected Socialists were refused their rightful seats in legislative bodies. Free speech was threatened by the use A. Mitchell Palmer made of the Sedition Act of 1918. Two thousand men and women were prosecuted for "un-American" utterances. Other events illustrate this trend only in degree. Everything that was slightly deviant from the pattern of American conformity came under attack.

The continuing source of trouble was that while the common conception of the older Americans was that this was a united nation,

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38 There is no summary study of the Red Scare, but it is given sprightly treatment in Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday*, (Blue Ribbon Books, 1931), 45-76.
culturally and ethnically, when they looked around they found that their image of America did not conform to the social facts any longer. While they had not been noticing serious changes had come into American life. This was a white man's country—but there were almost ten million Negroes! This was an Anglo-Saxon nation—but there were millions of Latins, Slavs and other non-Nordics swarming over the streets of the nation's cities. This was a Protestant nation—but there were already present twenty-two million Catholics and they represented by far the largest single denomination in the society! This was a society traditionally individualistic—but wherever one turned one found corporatism, the labor union, the Socialists led by the unmentionable Gene Debs preaching collectivism! And many groups in the society refused to be 100% American—they made reservations upon their loyalties. Probably it was too late to eliminate these menaces completely; but earnest Americans of older stock felt they must strike out at them anyway, control them, make them fall into the American line as much as possible.

Psychologically, many Americans were disturbed by the change's that had taken place in the nation in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They made every effort to force everybody, especially the newer immigrant groups, to conform to their own image of what America was. Thus, the drive for conformity was one of the strongest of the 1920s, and one finds it as a fundamental part of the Klan movement.
As if this social disorganization were not enough, the villagers faced a disintegration of their own family pattern. Social standards were changing. The "flaming youth" of the 1920s led to one of the major parent-youth conflicts that society has seen. The automobile and the movie gave youngsters a place of entertainment to which they could go beyond the supervising eyes of their parents. Particularly the automobile was disturbing to the controlled pattern of courtship previously insisted upon. Klansmen supported local feelings on this by policing the roads to break up petting parties. In addition, divorce was not only increasing, but was verging on becoming respectable. Add to this the fact that industries were attracting the young men and women from their villages and hamlets to the wicked temptations of the city with annoying frequency and you have a social situation that involved a considerable change in social patterns to which not many rural and small-town people wished to adjust. The adjustment was difficult, and it was fought bitterly throughout the 1920s.

The folk of small-town America also learned that this was a transitional age in other ways. Many of the values that their group had held unquestioned for generations were challenged in the 1920s. The fundamentalist religious beliefs were challenged from several sources. The Modernists within the churches themselves were denying the foundation stones of revealed truth and ritual and dogma. Instead of that, Modernists were stressing social service, the Christian life, moral living, and the necessity for the churches to become modern enough to deal with contemporary
social problems. Sinclair Lewis and many other critics of small-town life were laughing at the narrowness of Main Street, at the Babbit warren, at the boosters, the community pushers, the Kiwanis, and Rotary. In the city Mencken was calling these folk the "boobootien", and attacking literally everything that they cherished. The schools were teaching evolution, and when a champion of the older way of life stepped forward to challenge such a doctrine he was made a laughing stock. Their children were drinking booze, "white mule" or hootch at the road-houses and blind tigers, and they could not stop it despite the prohibition law that they themselves had put through the Congress.

All this came at a time when the village resident had for the first time some leisure time to enjoy, and the means with which to enjoy it. The small portable electric motor had made available vacuum cleaners, kitchen appliances of all sorts, the radio and other gadgets that gave a sense of available leisure time. All many people wanted was time to enjoy that leisure and to attempt to keep up in their race with their neighbors for the acquisition of the new goods. Instead, they were faced with problems that almost represented the disintegration of their society. At least, the disintegration of the society that they carried in their minds as the ideal pattern of a social order.

In addition, in the rural areas, after 1921, depression set in. The war markets had been welcome to farm folk. They had meant a high level of prosperity, and for a few years after the war ended
the big markets for farm goods had held. But by 1921 the European nations had returned to production of their own goods, or had found that new producing areas like Australia or Argentina could supply them products more cheaply than American farmers. After 1921 the farmers faced a constant problem of keeping their mortgages alive and their financial heads above water. Depression and shaky financial status are not conducive to good human relations. Since village folk share the prosperity or the depression of the farmer, they suffered in some measure with the farmers. When the Klan came to these folk with a list of scapegoats to blame for their unassining and their ills, the Klan found a ready market. The Klan went especially well because it offered mass action toward a solution to some of the difficulties. For instance, if one could not do anything about the aliens already here, one could at least halt the immigration process itself. So, the Klan found a ready market.

In sum, the Klan found conditions ripe for its appeal in the Middle West. The small-town, village and farm folk to whom the Klan appealed for support and aid were shocked and shaken by many developments in the American society of the 1920s. The nationalism of the war period had carried over to the post-war period and had made them sensitive to differences and distrustful of those who were different. In the Red Scare these folk struck out at those who disagreed with their conception of American society. The social transition through which family relations were passing, and the changing patterns in relation to sex, courtship, drinking and
behavior in general affected them adversely and left them with their familiar anchors tearing loose. The attacks upon their way of life by fellow Americans—in religion, in the business and social life of their villages, in their conception of the universe—left these people sensitive and suspicious. When to this was added depression conditions, there was a social base ready and prepared for Klan growth. The Klan came along with a boxful of panaceas for these various ills with the promise of united action to alleviate the main problem areas. Small-town folk flocked into the Klan by the thousands and made the movement one of the striking social phenomena of the 1920s.

The Klan was successful because it was able to do two things. It found ways by which it could utilize the long-time prejudices and cultural sets of a specific social and cultural group in American society. And it came along at the right time to find the group to which it made its major appeals set and ready to grab at scapegoats and a way out. It was successful because the combination of these two stresses persuaded about five million Americans to join the Klan. And a large percentage of that figure was gained in the middlewestern states.
CHAPTER TWO

THE RISE OF THE KLAN IN WISCONSIN (1920-1924)

United we stick
Divided we're stuck
The tighter we stick
The better we Klux!

RIDE WITH US

You know that the Catholics have their secret societies which admit only Catholics, even though they are closely organized in one church.

You know the Jews have their secret societies which admit only Jews, even though they are closely organized in their church.

You know the Negroes, various alien-national groups are organized to further their particular interest in America.

You know that all these groups exercise their Constitutional Right to peaceably assemble. The right of free speech and a free press.

If you believe the Native-born, Protestant, Gentile, White man should enjoy the same liberties, YOU believe in the KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN.

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The Ku Klux Klan was the sensation of the 1920s. For persistence of interest shown in it, it outranked the Harding scandals, Lindbergh's flight over the Atlantic, the American Mercury, Babbitt, the "Big Bull Market" or the youngsters' revolt against sex conventions. Throughout the nation in that decade the Klan was the object of intense wonder and speculation. Whatever Klansmen did, whatever others thought they were

1 From a broadside printed and distributed by the Wisconsin Realm of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. No date. This item, along with some other items used in this chapter, is in a collection of Klan materials held by a man in Wisconsin who prefers to remain anonymous. Materials from this collection will be marked Private Collection A.

2 From a mimeographed form letter sent out as recruiting material by the Wisconsin Realm of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. No date. Private Collection A.
about to do, they were looked upon with wonder, curiosity and awe.

From the first warning to Americans of Klan activities by the New York World's Klan articles in 1921 on through to the hundreds of accounts of the last death struggles of the Klan in the political arena in the mid years of the decade, Klansmen moved in the floodlight of notoriety. Klansmen loved it; they basked in the unmasked stares of the curious, caring not at all whether the glance they received was friendly or hostile. Everywhere they met, everywhere they went, they sparked an intense interest in themselves and in the goals they were seeking.

Historians, feature writers and social commentators of all sorts, have picked up this sensational side of the Klan's career and have given it the American Weekly treatment since the 1920s. If today one reads any account of the Klan of the 1920s, he leaves the article with the impression that the Klan persistently sought to create excitement, cause trouble, or foment ill feeling in every community. Writers have consistently seized upon the more lurid elements of the Klan's career to use as grist for their mills. Told and re-told have been the stories of the Indiana trial of D. C. Stephenson for rape and murder;3 of the 104 votes taken over the Klan issue in the 1924 Democratic national convention;4 of the "revolt" of the Klan against "Jack" Walton, the

3 Four of the most recent accounts of the Stephenson trial are to be found in Norman F. Weaver, The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1947); John Bartlow Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation (Knopf, 1947); Isabel Leighton, The Aspirin Age, (Simon and Schuster, 1949); Richard B. Morris, Fair Trial, (Knopf, 1950).

4 See Karl Schriftgeiser, This was Normalcy, (Little, Brown, 1948) and Mark Sullivan, The Twenties, (Scribner's, 1935). While the Schriftgeiser book is loaded with errors regarding the Klan, its account of the 1924 Democratic convention is factual and correct in detail.
governor of Oklahoma,\(^5\) of the whippings administered to Negroes and errant whites by southern Klansmen,\(^6\) or of the mysterious murders of Mer Rouge, Louisiana.\(^7\) This history of the Klan in most states in the 1920s did contain enough of these spectacular events to fill the pages of histories and pseudo-histories of the movement. These folk-tales of violence and intrigue have become the nub around which authors have spun what has become the Klan legend, and no other picture of the Klan has arisen to challenge this legendary one.

Certainly such treatment of the Klan movement was justified in many areas of the nation—in Indiana, Oklahoma, Louisiana, perhaps in Texas. But in some areas such treatment is misleading. In Wisconsin, for instance, a picture of the Klan as violent and threatening would be false and dishonest. The character of the Ku Klux Klan movement in Wisconsin was not of this spectacular type; it does not conform to the legendary pattern. For a movement that was so colorful and vivid in

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\(^6\) See Henry Peck Fry, *The Modern Ku Klux Klan*, (Little, Brown, 1922). This is a reprint of the famous New York World articles that set the pattern for interpreting the Klan as an agency devoted exclusively to violence. Fry was a "reformed" Kleagle. For a continuation of this pattern see any contemporary news reporter's release handling news of the Klan at any time in American history.

\(^7\) While one of the more sensational of the Klan incidents of the 1920s, the Mer Rouge murders have never been written about since that time. But the story can be found in such items of the early twenties as "Murders of Mer Rouge", *Literary Digest*, 76:10-12 (January 15, 1923). L. L. Cline, "In Darkest Louisiana", *Nation*, 116:292-3 (March 14, 1923). or John Rogers, *The Murders of Mer Rouge*, (Security Publishing Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1923).
most of the states where it was active, the trace of the Klan in Wisconsin is disappointing. The Wisconsin Klan movement was stolid; it was substantial in scope, and rich in material that throws light on the nature of the Klan movement as a whole, but the details lack the elements of surprise and novelty present elsewhere.

The un-Klan-like lack of sensationalism makes the Klan's record in Wisconsin interesting historically. In 1952, a generation after the events of the 1920s, the legend of the Klan that everyone knows tells of a hooded groups of men devoted almost exclusively to terror, violence and community disintegration. In part this image is true, of course, but just as certainly, in part it is false. In some areas of the nation the Klan succeeded quite well in adjusting its operations to a level at which it could and would be accepted by the community as "just another lodge" to which some citizens belonged. Such an area was Wisconsin. It is unquestionably true that at no time in Wisconsin did the Klan gain the prestige and acceptance enjoyed by the Masonic Lodge, the Knights of Pythias, or even the Knights of Columbus. Yet familiarity and acceptance are in large measure functions of time, and the Klan existed in most Wisconsin areas hardly long enough to allow for any real acquaintance with it to develop. The Klan's average length of stay in a Wisconsin Community was approximately five years (except for an occasional unit here or there that held on longer), and that was not time enough to allow for the acceptance and integration of the Klan into the community structure.\(^8\) Despite this, to an extent seldom

\(^8\) The first unit of the Wisconsin Klan was formed in 1920; the last unit gave up the fight in 1932, according to Ralph Hammond, the second Grand Dragon of the Wisconsin Klan. See the notes of an interview with Ralph Hammond by a member of the staff of the Attorney-General of
appreciated, the local Klan unit in Wisconsin was often able to adjust itself to the community and to force community acceptance of its right to survival if not to full participation in community affairs. If the Klan organization nationally had not collapsed from internal causes, and had not been built upon such a flimsy organizational and leadership structure, many local units of the Klan would doubtless exist in Wisconsin yet today as fraternal organizations. Historically, and sociologically, it is more important to appreciate the fact that in many areas the Klan often adjusted itself to community life and lived peaceably alongside other institutions within the social order than it is to have a complete record of all the spectacular incidents in the Klan's career. Thus, a history of the Klan in Wisconsin, while relatively drab in coloration, has considerable historical significance precisely because of its prosaic character.

The Badger state was one of the areas of the nation where the Klan was relatively well received. In Wisconsin the Klan's local units, Wisconsin, on file in the office of the Attorney-General of Wisconsin, File #A 6469. These notes were taken in connection with the case State of Wisconsin, ex. rel. John E. Martin, Attorney-General of Wisconsin vs. the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Wisconsin, Defendant. This was the case that legally ousted the Klan from Wisconsin in 1946 through action taken in the Dane County District Court. Actually, most units were created in 1922-23 and ceased to operate in Wisconsin by the end of 1927. In references below, this case will be referred to as Klan Ouster Case, (1946).

Testimony of James A. Colescott before A Congressional Committee 2921 and 2945 ff. Some Klan units that began in the early 1920s existed as late as 1942. On January 26, 1942, James A. Colescott, then the Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (the national organization) testified before a congressional committee in Washington, D. C. The hearings were executive in nature, and the special permission granted to the author to use the hearings was gained at the price of not identifying the committee or the series of executive hearings. Therefore, items taken from these hearings will appear only as A Congressional Committee (Executive Hearings), and the page number of the record of the hearings.
particularly in small towns and villages, often were able to win the grudging consent of the community to their right to exist. A word of caution: this does not mean that the Klan's existence in any Wisconsin community was ever achieved or maintained without friction and strife. Far from it. The Klan was new; it was an intruder, and it was forced to face a barrage of criticism and vilification rarely heaped upon any other social group. Its existence was always at the fringe of society, at the bare edge of respectability. Yet one must remember that the road to acceptance for any institution, Klan or non-Klan, is never smooth. Even the American Legion, itself new to the community structure in the 1920s, found itself in difficulty here and there during the decade, and its appeal was to super-patriotism of a degree that even the Klan could not equal. Organizations such as the Non-Partisan League or the Ku Klux Klan, representing as they did a minority point of view, had a far more difficult time penetrating the community structure than did the Legion. So, friction was always associated with the Klan. It was probably inevitable, partially because of the newness of the Klan and partially because of the purposes of the Klan organization. The success of Klansmen in overcoming such obstacles in many areas makes their achievement rather remarkable. And in Wisconsin, at least, Klansmen overcame the obstacles more often than they succumbed to them.

The Klan's adjustment was not easy. Klansmen found that citizens' attitude toward the Klan was affected profoundly by events that took place far beyond the borders of LaFollette's state. This made the Klan's problems of adjustment much greater than they might have been. Reports sifting into Wisconsin communities from the South of tar-and-feather parties, threats to the safety of persons allegedly made by
hooded and masked men, boycotts of merchants, and tales that told of
the vast treasures of wealth accruing to Klan leaders, caused Wisconsin
folk to eye their local Klan Kleagles and Klan organizations with dis-
trust even though they had committed no overt misdemeanors themselves.
The Klansmen found that their reception was never warm and their con-
quests never easy. Yet, despite this and other handicaps, such as
dubious leadership and the failure of that leadership to proceed with
reasonable tact in some Badger areas, the Klan grew with amazing speed
in Wisconsin. By 1922 its presence was felt in Wisconsin and in many
areas of the state it seemed to have established a permanent foothold
by 1925. This rapid success of the Klan in Wisconsin under difficulties
can be understood only when one understands how the general character
of the Wisconsin Klan differed from that of other state Klans and how
these differences led to the Klan's successful achievements in Wisconsin.

One clue to understanding the character of the Klan movement in
Wisconsin lies in the fact that in the Badger state the Klan was allowed
to develop about as it pleased without impossible pressures being placed
upon it, and without the withering opposition that it faced in most
other states. In Wisconsin the Klan movement might be said to have de-
veloped in a "normal" pattern—a pattern that would probably have
characterized its growth elsewhere if it had not met with such bitter
opposition and disfavor and had not fallen into the hands of unscrupulous
leaders. That the Klan movement developed in such a pattern in Wisconsin
can be traced to three sources.

First of all, the Klan in Wisconsin lacked real, live social issues
that it could exploit. Nearly everywhere else in the nation the Klan
had positive issues (an influx of foreign-born or of Negroes into a town or city; aggressive behavior on the part of Catholics, in politics especially, or on the part of the Catholic hierarchy; or intransigence on the part of Negroes) that it could exploit to raise the emotional level of the whole community for its own benefit. Of course, these were some unrest in Wisconsin at this time but it was not acute. None of the Klan's self-chosen "enemies" were spoiling for a fight or giving other citizens reason to distrust them. This disturbed Wisconsin Klansmen. Klansmen everywhere in the nation (and especially the Klan's leaders) were convinced that the Klan movement was most successful when looked in battle (sham or real) with groups who they were convinced were bent upon doing harm to the native-born, white, Protestant, gentile culture. It must be remembered here that opposition from anyone at any time never seriously hurt the Klan. On the contrary, the Klan often deliberately created opposition to have someone with whom to wage public battle.\(^\text{10}\) When none rose to challenge the Klan, as happened in Wisconsin, Klansmen were at a loss to know how to proceed in getting the publicity needed to recruit membership in sufficiently large numbers. In Wisconsin in the 1920s, the Catholics were no more active than usual in state politics, and were content to hold to their

\(^{10}\) This was a well known fact during the 1920s. The Klan needed publicity, and the character of that publicity was of little importance to Klan leaders. If the publicity were denunciatory, Klan leaders simply cried "persecution": See Edgar Allen Booth, Mad Mullah of America, (Boyd Ellison, Columbus, Ohio, 1927), 132. It was useful to have active opposition, but mere denunciation would do. The Klan was virtually unknown until the investigation and stories of the New York World in 1921, followed by a congressional investigation that spread word of the Klan even farther abroad. After this publicity the Klan spread like wild fire throughout the nation.
accustomed place in Wisconsin society; the aliens who had come to Wisconsin in recent years were few in number, and generally still of that Germanic and Scandinavian stock that had always been so well received in Wisconsin; and the Negro race and culture was hardly represented in the state. Of all the "enemies" of the Klan, the bootleggers were most active in this period, and most willing to do battle with the Klan. Klansmen tried to force an issue with them, and to rouse the communities against them. However, the Klan found it difficult to promote much of a campaign against liquor in a state where the good burghers loved their beer as they did in Wisconsin; so, even the campaigns against the bootleggers were not conspicuously successful. The trouble was, from the Klansmen's point of view, that the "enemies" were obstinate; they simply would not cooperate and be grasping, demanding or pushing. How could one fight a noisy and boisterous battle with a shadow? And lacking such a fight, how could the Klan attract sufficient attention to itself to interest recruits? Thus, the Wisconsin Klan, through no fault of its own, was deprived of the issues that had sold it to its potential clientele so well in other areas, and Klan leaders feared ultimate failure in the state.

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11 Wisconsin was not one of the industrial states that attracted large numbers of Negro workers from the South after 1929; therefore, the percentages given for 1920 remain relatively constant throughout the following decade. In Wisconsin in 1920 there were not enough Negroes to appear on the Census tables. Milwaukee possessed less than 1% Negroes, and in the entire state there were only 5,201 Negroes. U. S. Census, 1920, vol. III; Population, 1370.
because of this lack of opposition. In the long run, however, this lack of opposition kept the Wisconsin Klan from becoming violent and menacing; and as a result, it gained a stability lacking elsewhere.

In the second place, the Klan in Wisconsin failed to develop the type of leadership it had produced in other states—a type of leadership that would have brushed aside with a snort of derision the fact that the social issues were not real and acute, and that the opposition would not rise. In other states the Klan's leaders would have gone ahead to exploit even the most fragile issue to its limits, regardless of the actual social situation. Given men such as D. C. Stephenson of Indiana, Sam Rich of Pennsylvania, Hiram Wesley Evans of Texas—even fumbling old William Joseph Simmons himself—the Wisconsin Klan might have made Wisconsin the seething inferno of distrust and suspicion that Stephenson, for instance, made of Indiana. But men like William Wieseman, Charles Lewis, Ralph Hammond, or William Woodward, substantial men all, but lacking in color, were not out to the pattern of the rabble-rouser. They could not or would not do that kind of job in Wisconsin. Even if they had made the attempt, there is considerable evidence that this approach, the violent approach so successful elsewhere, probably would have failed completely in the Wisconsin of the 1920s. At any rate, ultra-emotionalism pushed by violent leaders never was a part of the Wisconsin Klan scene.

What saved the Klan movement in Wisconsin was its discovery that fraternalism, if wrapped attractively, sold well. Fraternalism, good

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12 Some men did appear for the Klan in Wisconsin of the type that were so successful elsewhere. Dr. Leslie Fowler, Hugh F. (Pat) Malone, and Ben Bellows, all of whom were capable of rousing bitterness and hatred in a community, had their moments in Wisconsin. But none of them was successful for very long. See below, 101-4 and 135-8.
fellowship, conviviality, and boon companionship offered the Klan a fertile field to exploit in Wisconsin. Lacking colorful social issues to exploit, the Klan turned to the gregarious nature of man for its success. The Wisconsin Klan reached its peak by appealing to men who like to dress up in mask and robe, who liked ritual and mysticism and who enjoyed being with others of their kind. The fact that so many of this type person live in our culture and that they were attracted by Klan comradeship is the key to the understanding of the Wisconsin Klan. 13

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The Klan comes to Wisconsin

The good citizens of Wisconsin were unaware of the entrance of the Klan into their state when it came. On an autumn day in the year 1920 the Klan was born quietly aboard the Coast Guard Cutter, the U.S. S. Hawk, while it swung at anchor in the Milwaukee River just upstream from the point where the river empties into Lake Michigan. On this particular afternoon the sun was bright, but the wind had enough of the nip of fall in it to cause the men who clambered aboard the Hawk to pull their overcoats tighter up over their shoulders and to duck away from the spray chopping in off the waters of the river. 18

In 1926 Gist estimates that there were more than eleven million Americans who held memberships in secret societies in the United States. See Noel P. Gist, Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States, (University of Missouri, 1940), 41. Gist's figures are taken from Statistics Fraternal Societies, an annual compendium of data relating to fraternal organizations featuring insurance protection for their members. The figures seem far too low.
Only a few men had been invited to come to the organizational meeting of the Milwaukee Klan local, and the invited were all members of Milwaukee's business and professional classes. All who were invited came, for the screening had been careful. There, aboard the Hawk in a conference that lasted less than two hours, these men drew up the articles of agreement with the national Klan organization that created Milwaukee Provisional Klan #1. This was the first Klan unit to be formed in Wisconsin, and one of the first to be created in the entire Middle West. By the time the meeting adjourned, officers for the provisional Klan had been selected, a man by the name of Mitchell had been appointed King Kleagle for the state of Wisconsin by the representative of the national Klan present, all the members of this infant Klan had been given the Klan oath, had been sworn in, and tentative plans had been laid for future operations. With all details settled, the meeting adjourned. As these men hurried down the gang plank of the vessel, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was a going concern in the state of Wisconsin. 14

But Wisconsin citizens did not learn about the Klan's movement into their state until later. It was a year and a half after this

14 Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928. In 1928, after the Klan movement had passed its peak in Wisconsin, Russell G. Lynch of the staff of the Milwaukee Journal wrote for his paper a series of articles on the history of the Ku Klux Klan in Wisconsin. These articles appeared in the following issues of the Milwaukee Journal: April 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16, 1928. Much of the statistical material for the Klan movement in Wisconsin that has been used in this chapter comes from the Lynch articles. In an interview with the author on July 15, 1950, Mr. Lynch said that his information had come directly "from the horse's mouth". He said that he had joined the Klan while working for a Racine newspaper and had transferred his membership when he moved to Milwaukee. There, with Milwaukee the state headquarters of the Klan, he had become quite intimate with the state leaders of the order and had checked his information with them before publication.
initial meeting before the Klan snowball began to roll and to attract attention to itself. In the meantime the Milwaukee Provisional Klan met unobtrusively as the "Milwaukee Businessman's Club" in a hall over the Fadst Theatre in downtown Milwaukee. Throughout these early days this Milwaukee Klan was little more than a social club for the charter members, and its activities and future aims (if there were any) were kept a closely guarded secret. During this initial period of organization the Milwaukee Klan made only minor attempts to expand by means of the creation of sister units. When it did finally begin to move out, it began its expansion with a cautious movement out to the suburban Milwaukee towns, and to the neighboring cities of Racine and Kenosha. In these suburban areas in late 1921 it began to set up local Klan units similar to the Milwaukee Klan. But Wisconsinites remained unaware of the Klan's presence throughout all of this time. As long as the Klan's activities remained on a minor scale, and as long as the Klan had little or no effect on the lives of the citizens of Wisconsin, they learned little or nothing about it. As a result, the existence of either the original unit or the additional units in Racine and Kenosha remained hidden from Wisconsin citizens until the late months of 1921.

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The Klan organizes

The growth of the Klan was slow during its first year and a half in Wisconsin. Its rate of growth for the following three years was much more rapid although each stride it took toward greater strength was

15 Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1928.
tentative and uncertain. When the Klan had gained a large and active membership in 1924-25, and was approaching its peak of strength and power in Wisconsin, it still faltered repeatedly in its climb toward a place of prominence in Wisconsin society. This uncertain growth was a part of the Klan picture because during these years the Klan in the Badger state was never able to erect a stable organizational structure to promote its growth and to build a strong esprit de corps in the membership of the body. And the Klan failed to develop a leadership group that could grasp the reins of power in the organization and hurry the whole group forward to success in their quest. Strong leaders failed to develop because of the type of organizational structure imposed on the state organization by the national Klan leaders.

When it came into Wisconsin the Klan brought with it its conventional "provisional" organization. As noted above, this was a

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16 When the Klan moved into an unorganized state it set up its "provisional" organization. One man, almost always a man from the Klan movement in some state already organized, was appointed to the office of King Kleagle. He became the head of the Klan's organization in the new state. He was charged with the responsibility of making the Klan movement in the state active and constantly expanding. He was responsible only to the national Klan leaders; more specifically, to that Klan leader who happened to be in charge of the Propagation Department of the national Klan organization. He created a state wide sales organization to bring in new members. He hired salesmen on a commission basis to sell the Klan to eligible men in the state. These salesmen were called Kleagles within the Klan itself, and their head was the "King" Kleagle. From each candidate for admission to citizenship in the Invisible Empire they collected ten dollars, and their commission was 40% of the sales price or four dollars. This was their only salary; how well they lived depended upon how successful they were as salesmen. This provisional organization remained intact until the state Klan was given a charter by the national organization. A charter came only when a specified number of members was reached by the state Klan. The quota required varied from state to state, depending upon the whim of the leaders and the potential market for memberships within the state. Leaders of the provisional organization were reluctant to charter state Klans even when they reached the
temporary organization that the Klan established in each state to stand as the Klan's organization until enough members had been taken into the new state Klan to give it the stability that went with a large membership. When a stipulated quota of members was reached, a charter was granted to the now-mature state organization by the parent national body. With the charter came semi-independent status, and the right to semi-autonomous action. But until then, as long as the provisional status prevailed in a state organization, the state Klan was in the absolute power of any man the national leaders appointed to fill the office of King Kleagle in the state. How this temporary organizational pattern contributed to the instability of the Klan in Wisconsin is illustrated in the careers of Wisconsin's first two state leaders, the King Kleagles, Mitchell and Wieseman.

The first leader of the Wisconsin Klan was a man named Mitchell who was appointed to head the state Klan at the meeting aboard the Hawk. Directly after taking office King Kleagle Mitchell faced up to his two immediate tasks: to begin the expansion of the Wisconsin necessary size. As leaders of a provisional organization, their power was unchecked. They collected all the profits from the sale of memberships and they were not required to ask for advice or suggestions from local Klansmen. They were autonomous within the state. When the charter was granted, their powers were drastically curtailed. The former provisional leaders were often replaced by new directors when the Klan became a chartered organization. Profits were limited; initiation fees went into the treasuries of the local organizations, the King Kleagle and the Kleagles went on salary. The state's Klansmen gained the right to elect their own officials (subject to approval by higher echelons in the Klan, of course), and to have the deciding voice in determining the type of Klan program that would be carried on within their home communities. As a result, chartering was often delayed beyond the normal time for it because the leaders of the provisional organization were unwilling to let go of what was to them a good thing. See above, for a more complete description of this technique of operation.

17 Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1928.
Klan as rapidly as possible by procuring a large membership throughout the state, and to build a healthy morale among the members of the Klan units already functioning. As a result of the type of organization under which the Klan operated, success in the first of these objectives would almost automatically insure success in the second. So, to Mitchell, the task of putting together an organization of Kleagles to go out into the Wisconsin counties to beat the bushes for new members was of primary importance. Mitchell began to round up men in late 1920 to sell the Klan to Badger males. With these men he made the usual financial arrangements: for every new member signed by a Kleagle and who paid the ten dollar "Klecktoken", the Kleagle was to keep four dollars, one dollar was to go to the King Kleagle's office (state headquarters), and five dollars was to go to national Klan headquarters at Atlanta, Georgia. These arrangements had worked well in bringing in new members in other states and they worked well later in Wisconsin, but they did not work well when used by Mitchell. Mitchell was a failure as an architect of a state organization; success never attended his efforts. His Kleagles failed to produce candidates; the Klan's program of enticements failed to pull in the numbers of men wanted; and lacking candidates, the Wisconsin Klan, under Mitchell failed to grow rapidly.

The initiation fee demanded of every new member coming into the Klan was known to Klansmen as the "Klecktoken". It amounted to ten dollars and represented the profits accruing to the sales organization. It was the fee that was split between various Klan leaders and which allowed some Klan leaders to pile up large amounts of money through its collection. Usual disposition: four dollars to the Kleagle who signed the candidate and collected the Klecktoken; one dollar to the King Kleagle; and five dollars to the national leaders at national Klan headquarters.
through late 1920 and into the summer of 1921.\textsuperscript{19} Mitchell's failure in his first mission—to increase the Klan's membership in Wisconsin made certain failure in his second—to build a strong morale in the units already in existence and operating regularly.

Mitchell's Klal members had not been total failures. Into the summer of 1921 they had brought in a tiny stream of men who became new members of the Klan. As these new Klansmen took their oaths and entered the local Klan organizations the original members of the Milwaukee Klan watched with considerable interest the collection of monies from their new brethren. They noted with curious eyes that none of the money found its way into their local treasuries. They saw that every penny was siphoned off by the members of the Klan's hierarchy. Milwaukee Klansmen were not surprised at this; they had known that it was inevitable. They knew it was the Klan's way; that had been made crystal clear to them at the first organizational meeting aboard the Hawk. But they did feel that although they could be denied the use of this money to build a club-house for their Klan and to carry on

\textsuperscript{18} A strong contributing factor to the failure of the Klan to grow during Mitchell's regime was the fact that in 1920-21 the Ku Klux Klan was virtually unknown north of the Ohio River. The Klan always attracted members in direct proportion to the degree that it was known in an area. Not until September, 1921, was there any attention paid to the Klan outside of some southern areas. In that month the New York World began publication of a series of articles that have been given wide credit for "exposing" the Klan. Perhaps they did, but their main effect was to inform American citizens of the existence of an organization about which they knew nothing before. And the Congressional investigation that followed these articles in October 1921, gave to the Klan exactly what it sought and could never have purchased—free, nation-wide publicity. From the time of these investigations the Klan grew rapidly in the North. Klan leaders never had a better break than the free publicity they received from these "exposed". Mitchell's misfortune was that he was trying to sell an unknown product too early. His successor reaped the rewards of a national advertising campaign.
programs that would have given strength to their local organizations, they should at least have the privilege of auditing the incoming funds. They asked Mitchell to account for the money he had received. He refused. As an alternative plan, they suggested, an independent audit of his books? Again a refusal. The result: tension between Mitchell and his Klansmen. Weeks passed and no agreement was reached that could lower the level of tensions. It mounted steadily until something had to snap. When the release came, it almost killed the infant Wisconsin Klan in its cradle. 20

One night in early 1921 the Milwaukee Klansmen walked out of the organization. At the time this revolt took place, the Milwaukee unit was the main one of only a few units that Mitchell had succeeded in establishing in Wisconsin. If this revolt held, it probably meant the end of the Klan movement in Wisconsin at the very moment when it looked as if it might mushroom into a movement of considerable size. Thus, when the national Klan leaders received the telegram sent to them by Milwaukee Klansmen demanding that someone be sent to investigate Mitchell's actions, they moved quickly. A trouble-shooter was sent flying off to Wisconsin. He heard the case of the rebellious Klansmen and took the facts under advisement. To the surprise of the Milwaukee Klansmen, he backed Mitchell in his stand on monies. He refused to force Mitchell to produce his books or to have an audit and an accounting of his funds made. The best he would do was to explain where the monies had gone. But when this decision started the pot boiling again, he offered Milwaukee Klansmen a compromise. He proposed

20 Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1923.
that he transfer Mitchell out of Wisconsin, and that the Milwaukee Klans-
men get together and agree upon a local man whom he would then appoint
as King Kleagle of the state. Milwaukee Klansmen accepted the alter-
native, and came up with the name of William Wieseman as their choice
to head the Wisconsin Klan. Mitchell was transferred, Wieseman was
appointed King Kleagle of Wisconsin, and the Milwaukee Klansmen
were accepted back into good standing in the national organization.21
The revolt was over and Milwaukee Klansmen were reassured about Klan
purposes in their state. For the next three years, the Klan grew with
fair speed and consistency in the Badger state under the new King
Kleagle, William Wieseman.

The Klan grew because William Wieseman, a Milwaukee insurance
broker, was one of those men whom astrologers would say were born under
the right combination of stars. Just before the revolt against Mitchell
broke, he had been asked to head a committee of Masons who were making
plans for the annual Masonic dance at the Milwaukee Auditorium. Possessed
of considerable organization ability, he had taken charge of the group
and had carried off one of the most successful dances that the Masons
had ever staged. Came the revolt against Mitchell, Mitchell's ouster,
and everyone remembered Wieseman favorably. Without much knowledge of
what the job offered, Wieseman was sworn in as King Kleagle of the
Wisconsin Klan in the summer of 1921.22

Wieseman's luck held for three years. By chance those three
years happened to coincide with the years of the Klan boom in

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21 Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1928.
22 Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1928.
Wisconsin. From 1922 until 1924 Wieseman rode the crest of a wave that swept over the state from south to north and back again before it receded. And when the Wisconsin boom began to subside, he was able to jump to national headquarters of the Klan and to another good job. His good fortune seemed endless. As long as he let nature take its course, she worked for him. Wieseman fared ill in his Wisconsin Klan role only when he tried to force his luck.

It was in 1923 that he began to push too hard. He had moved cautiously when he first took over the Klan. He had taken over Mitchell's infant organization, retained most of Mitchell's Kleagles, but added some of his own choice. His success derived from his ability to pick men loyal to himself and to weld together a working organization. In a short time he had created an efficient recruiting machine.

Wieseman's organization brought in the men; and before he left the King Kleagle's office in 1924 the Klan reached its peak in the Badger state. It is apparent that when Wieseman took office he had not realized the financial possibilities of the Klan in the state. When the flood of members also turned into a flood of coin, his financial success surprised him. For each member his Kleagles brought in, he

\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}}\] The Klan boom in most of the northern states lasted about three years, and then the order declined rapidly. Wisconsin's years of boom were from 1922 to 1924. Wieseman reaped the harvest of those three years, for they corresponded exactly to the years of his reign. By 1922 he was handling a product that was known and heavily advertised in the news columns of every newspaper that appeared on the street. It would have taken incredible inefficiency on his part to have been a failure in those years!

\[\text{\textsuperscript{24}}\] Wieseman put a Kleagle to work in every county in the state. Obviously many of the counties of the cut-over areas of northern Wisconsin offered no hope for a Klan to have more than a momentary existence, but he established local and province organizations for the entire state. See first Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928.
received one dollar, and he began to have wealth with which to play. As time passed, and as he came to know the whole system, temptation overcame Wieseman's earlier stability.

William Wieseman had always lived in modest circumstances. When, as King Kleagle, he found money pouring into his pocket, he came to appreciate it with the intensity of one who has known what it is not to have money. But when he came into money, he failed to learn to live with his wealth. Sudden riches went to his head. By 1923 he was altering the structure of his organization to see how it could be made to provide more money for him. He hired new Kleagles with the understanding that of the ten dollar Kleektoken paid by each candidate, five would continue to go to national headquarters, but half of the remaining five dollars would go to Wieseman rather than only one dollar. And he put pressure upon his veteran Kleagles to send him two dollars out of the five they retained, rather than the usual King Kleagle's out of half that. Under these arrangements, Wieseman's already large income rose into the five figure bracket by the end of 1923.

Eventually such tactics brought disaster to the King Kleagle. The source of his downfall was the same Milwaukee Klan that had put him on top in the first place. He had always been closely associated with that Klan. He had risen from membership in that local organization, he had kept his home in Milwaukee, and had retained the state headquarters

25 Lynch reports that after wealth began to pour in to him, Wieseman bought a new car. One hot summer night he set out for Racine, but drove too fast and the engine of his new car "froze" on him before he reached Racine. He parked the car, caught a ride back to Milwaukee, bought that same night a new and higher priced car and took off again for Racine. The dealer had to go out along the road and tow in his trade-in. Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1928.
of the Klan there. He knew the most powerful men in the Milwaukee Klan well and leaned on them for advice and aid at times. And throughout the Klan's history in Wisconsin the Milwaukee Klan #1 remained the largest and most powerful unit in the state. Wieseman retained his loyalty to it and was responsive to its desires. In connection with it, Wieseman had faced a difficult decision very early in his regime. Mitchell had promised Milwaukee Klansmen a charter and with it semi-independent status when they secured a membership of one thousand members. Shortly after Wieseman took over the state organization, the membership of the Milwaukee Provisional Klan #1 began to approach that figure. Wieseman knew that if he granted a charter to the Milwaukee Klan he would soon be forced to grant charters to the other large units in the state. And he did not want that to happen. For after a Klan was chartered, that Klan itself kept the initiation fee of the new members it secured, and no sizeable split was made with either the state or national leaders. Just as prospects of wealth were opening up for him, Wieseman feared that he would have to let the bubble burst. He was faced with the loss of a considerable fortune if he gave these Klans a charter. So he gambled. Supported by the national Klan officials, he boosted the quota of the Milwaukee Klan from one to five thousand members before the Milwaukee Klan could be chartered. And he won. He made it stick. 26

There were complaints and cries of "double-cross" from Milwaukee Klansmen, but they were not serious. In the hectic days of 1922-23, five thousand, ten, fifteen thousand, even twenty thousand members

26 Third Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 10, 1928.
seemed easily attainable to Milwaukee Klansmen. New classes of a hundred or more candidates were being admitted weekly or bi-weekly. Nothing seemed impossible; one had only to assume that the source of candidates was well nigh limitless, and then accept any figure that came to mind as reasonable. So, while complaints were made at the raised quota, they were not serious enough to threaten Wieseman's good relations with his Milwaukee buddies.

But despite the initial optimism of Milwaukee Klansmen, late in 1923 the stream began to run dry. Many new Klansmen were still contributing their Klecktokens and taking the Klan oath, but new members were coming in at a decreasing rate. It began to be obvious to all Klansmen that the crest of the wave was approaching. But while this conclusion was sinking home, the totals of the Milwaukee Klan kept climbing higher and higher and nearer to the five thousand figure needed. By February, 1924, forty-four hundred men had joined the Milwaukee Klan, and only six hundred more were needed. Milwaukee Klansmen worked more vigorously than ever to seek out new members to push the figures upward.

Then Wieseman boosted the quota up to ten thousand. As far as Milwaukee Klansmen were concerned that was the last straw. To reach Milwaukee's Klan was perhaps the key Klan unit in the state. The Wisconsin Klan was organized with that unit, it experienced its first success in Wisconsin in the metropolitan area of Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee unit was always considerably larger than any other Klan. State headquarters was kept in Milwaukee until the very last period of the Klan's life. The Milwaukee Klan began ahead of the rest of the state and reached its peak first. Its maximum membership and strength came in early 1924, and thereafter it began to decline. The rest of the state was from six months to a year behind the Milwaukee Klan in these developments. Second Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 9, 1928.
such a figure was not possible and most Milwaukee Klansmen knew it. They felt they had been trapped by their own man, their old friend. When friendships go sour, feuds are the bitterest. Almost to a man, Milwaukee Klansmen turned against Wieseman. At about the same time another Wieseman action was adding fuel to the flames. Wieseman had appointed Benjamin Bellows Kleagle of Milwaukee County. Bellows had proved to be most unpopular. His attempts to grab control of the finances of the county organization, and his campaign to stir up hatred and fear in Milwaukee had turned Milwaukee Klansmen against him.\textsuperscript{28} The rise in the quota and the actions of Bellows, coming, as they did, at the same time, were more than even loyal Klansmen could take. For the second time in their short history as Klansmen they revolted.

On February 28, 1924, every member of the Milwaukee Klan, except a handful of loyalists, followed Frederick Groelle, William Haefner, and H. A. Boge out of the Wisconsin Klan.\textsuperscript{29} While they withdrew their allegiance to Wieseman and Bellows and their regimes they had no intention of disbanding and destroying their local Klan. Instead, they told the press that they were thorough Klansmen at heart, but that from that time forward they would meet outside the Klan organization as the "Bow-Tie Club."\textsuperscript{30} They would go their own way, they said, as Klansmen, but would operate for the time being as independent Klansmen. Only in that way, they insisted, could they be free of control and

\textsuperscript{28} Third Lynch article, \textit{Milwaukee Journal}, April 10, 1928.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. See also the news articles about the revolt: \textit{Milwaukee Journal}, March 1, 1924, and \textit{Milwaukee Sentinel}, March 1, 1924.
\textsuperscript{30} "Bow-Tie" was rather ingeniously devised to read "Brother of Whom? The Invisible Empire." The name indicates the position that these Insurgent Klansmen held. They were not breaking with the national order; they just refused any longer to take orders from Wieseman and Bellows. Third Lynch article, \textit{Milwaukee Journal}, April 10, 1928.
exploitation from Bieseman and Bellows.

During the first week in March, 1924, they justified their withdrawal from the state Klan to the other Klu Klux Klans in the state by distributing copies of the resolutions under which they were acting. They sent along a covering letter indicating why such action was just and necessary.

The covering letter read:

Enclosed herewith find copy of resolutions adopted...in regular meeting assembled. This resolution, we are sure, expresses the sentiment of the entire membership in Milwaukee County.

Read the resolutions carefully. Note that they declare unequivocally for a continuance of our adherence to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Note that they in no way express antagonism to the National Body.

There is not to our knowledge a single Klansman in Milwaukee County that desires to secede from the National Body. The sole purpose covering the adoption of these resolutions was to protest against the autocratic and destructive methods and rulings of the King Kleagle of this state, who foisted upon us a Milwaukee County Kleagle whose methods are based upon Rule or Ruin.

This new Kleagle, imported to Milwaukee from another State, came here with a well laid plan to secure complete dominance and control of our properties and policies. He demanded the right to control our finances--our cash and bonds--to appoint officers and committees at his will, in other words to make each and every one of us amenable to his every command.

We as freedom loving American Citizens refuse to bow to the dictates of despotic usurpers at all times. We are appealing to the National Body for justice, and we expect and sincerely hope that each and every member in this county will remain loyal to and a part of Klan No. 1, realm of Wisconsin, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan....

We refuse to recognize the King Kleagle and his agent in Milwaukee County until such time as matters are adjusted properly by the National Body. Therefore each and every member is asked to attend meetings, pay his dues and continue his undivided allegiance and support to Klan No. 1.31

This covering letter was sent to all members of the Milwaukee Unit Number One under date of March 1, 1924. Additional copies of this letter and of the accompanying resolutions were then distributed to other Klan units in Wisconsin. Private Collection A.
The resolutions accompanying the letter bitterly noted that

We representative residents of Milwaukee County have complied with all of the requirements for citizenship in the Invisible Empire, many of us did enjoy these privileges prior to the creation of the present Extension Department.

And we are thoroughly imbued with the desire to promote the lofty purposes of our noble order, and conceive it to be a Klansman's duty to resist tyranny whether exercised by a member of this Order or by an alien.

And conditions demand that we act courageously to relieve the situation which exists and to encourage Klansmen everywhere to seek redress.

And we conceive that we can best do this at this time by refusing to countenance the continued disregard of the Constitution and Laws of our Order which are being violated.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that we meet regularly at such time and places as may be hereafter determined in Conclave Assembled and that we urge our fellow Klansmen to meet with us.

Be it further resolved that here and now we re-dedicate ourselves to the principles of the Ku Klux Klan and to the righteous cause of Klancraft and strive to promote their incarnation of the ideas of the Order in the breast of every Klansman that we require each of our fellow Klansmen who desire to meet with us for the purposes also to re-dedicate himself to the same principles and ideas.

Be it further resolved that we seek to gain ourselves as comrades who prove themselves worthy the honors and privileges justly due Klansman by joining Milwaukee Klan No. 1.

Be it further resolved that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the Imperial Wizard and to all Klans which may be interested in receiving same....

The national Klan leaders stated at first that they would keep hands off the revolt. Obviously they were stalling for time; they had no intention of letting a four-thousand member Klan disband and probably destroy the whole Klan organization in Wisconsin. Members of the Bow-Tie club wired Hiram W. Evans, the Imperial Wizard, the terms under which they would return to the Klan fold: the removal of Wieseman, the removal of Bellows and the stopping of practices he

32 Ibid.
33 Milwaukee Sentinel, March 9, 1924.
had established in the Milwaukee area (cross burnings, inflammatory speeches, and the preaching of hatred of Catholics and Jews). For several weeks national Klan leaders observed from a distance, and then in June, under pressure, they yielded to the rebels' terms.

They did not yield gracefully. In mid-May Frederick Groelle, the rebels' leader, had gone into court to obtain an injunction to prevent Wieseman from cancelling his membership in the Klan. At the time of the revolt Wieseman had suspended the Milwaukee Klan, and had threatened all of the rebellious Klansmen with banishment from the Invisible Empire if they did not return to his Klan meetings immediately.

There is no doubt that Wieseman had the right to banish any one at any time; there is little doubt that he would have used his power at this time had he dared, but Groelle invoked the discovery statute of Wisconsin law to have the courts ascertain the full facts of the situation.

This meant that the courts would subpoena witnesses, put them under oath, and ascertain the facts of the Klan's organization. All the Klan

34 Milwaukee Journal, March 1, 1924. See also third Lynch article April 10, 1924.
35 Milwaukee Journal, May 15, 1924
36 The King K smashing had unlimited authority to bounce any individual he so wished out of membership in the Klan organization. The Klan called the process "banishment". See above 53. Although there is no written evidence that such action was threatened by Wieseman, the indirect evidence of Groelle's injunction indicates that such threats were made.
37 This case was filed in the Circuit Court of Judge Julius E. Roehr in Milwaukee. The case, Frederick F. Groelle vs. William F. Wieseman, Benjamin Bellows, Albert A. Giese, A. C. Schroeder, Harry J. King, A. M. Pfitzinger, Robert T. Rice, Walter B. Barker, A. E. Schimmel and W. Gollert, was later withdrawn, and the court records taken out of the public domain. This has been verified by the present writer, and by an assistant Attorney-General of Wisconsin in connection with the Klan Ouster Case of 1946. See the notation to that effect in file #A6469, Klan Ouster Case.
secrets—organization, ritual, operation, and purpose—then would have been exposed to public examination in the court records of the case. Under such threat Klan leaders in Washington agreed to meet the rebels' terms if the court case were withdrawn.

Charles B. Lewis, then the Grand Dragon of the state of Michigan, was sent to Milwaukee to confer with Klansmen there. After a series of conferences, the rebels' terms were met fully. Wieseman was "promoted" to a job with the national Klan in Washington. Bellows "resigned" as County Kleagle and was made a special field representative under Lewis in Wisconsin. The quota for chartering was reduced and the promise made by Lewis that the charters would be granted by the national organization as soon as he, Lewis, could size up the Wisconsin situation. The activities of which Milwaukee Klansmen had complained and which they insisted Bellows brought in were stopped. And, reciprocally, Groelle's case was withdrawn from the courts the following day. The Milwaukee Klan was reinstated, and the Bow-Tie Club disbanded.

Charles B. Lewis was kept in Wisconsin as King Kleagle. He took charge in June, 1924, and for the first time he gave the Wisconsin Klan

38 Charles B. Lewis had had a useful if not spectacular Klan career in Michigan, and in this case was moved into a serious situation as a Klan trouble shooter.
39 Third Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 10, 1928. See also Milwaukee Sentinel, June 12, 1924.
40 Bellows disappeared from Milwaukee County for a time and turned up as a Kleagle in the Fox River Valley. Later, he returned to Milwaukee to cause more confusion. See below 137-8. Wieseman was moved to national headquarters where he was given a make-shift job for a time. Later he reappeared in Milwaukee, out of favor with the national leaders but still trying. He then was organizing for one of the imitators of the Klan, the "Esskaye" movement. See below,134-5
41 "This state was pretty clean," Ralph Hammond, second Grand Dragon of Wisconsin, said in 1946. And extensive investigation indicates that Hammond was honest in his statement. There are examples of cross burnings, of threats, of some attempts at intimidation, but they were very few in Wisconsin. Only when someone such as Bellows
stable, steady leadership. He set to the task of straightening out the records left behind by Mitchell and Wieseman, and in six months he kept his promise to charter the Wisconsin Klan. In Madison on December first, 1924, he chartered all Klans in the state that had any real size and any chance of remaining alive. The following year, 1925, after some legal difficulties, he got a corporate charter for the Wisconsin Klan from the state of Wisconsin. He got Milwaukee Klansmen to buy a Klan home at 2424 Cedar Street in Milwaukee and set up a Klan Home Corporation to operate it and rent it to the Wisconsin Klan. And Charles Lewis 

or "Pat" Malone came into an area and got tough about one or another minority group was there typical Klan action such as was notorious in other states. But these outbursts were short-lived and not approved by the great bulk of Klansmen in Wisconsin. For Hammond's statement see the notes of an interview with Ralph Hammond taken by one of the members of Attorney-General Martin's staff in File #6469 of the Klan Oust Case of 1946.

43 Milwaukee Sentinel, June 16, 1924.
44 Milwaukee Sentinel, June 16, 1924.
45 On November 27, the Attorney-General accepted a charter which established the Wisconsin Klan as an independent corporation. See the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), November 27, 1925. The corporation charter is still on file in the office of the Secretary of State of Wisconsin although its privileges now have been vacated. It was a myth, of course, that
brought his family to Milwaukee to live. He tried to put the Wisconsin Klan on a permanent basis through steady and constructive leadership.

The Lewis regime first as King Kleagle and then as Grand Dragon after chartering, was the first stable regime the Wisconsin Klan had been able to establish. Lewis put a sound grip on the tiller. From 1924 to 1926 he conducted an honest, relatively quiet, and sound administration. If the Klan ever had a chance to become established as a permanent fraternal organization Lewis gave it that chance. And for a time in those years success seemed at hand.

The Klan gains men

Despite the problems of organization that slowed the potential growth of the Klan in Wisconsin, the Klan did haul in members in large numbers from 1922 to 1925. Who were these men? Why did they join the Klan? There were many persons in the state of Wisconsin in the mid-twenties who would have given a great deal to have learned the answer to those questions!

The evidence indicates that the Wisconsin Klansmen fell for the most part into the six categories delimited above—the sincere individual interested in the principles of the Klan, the promoter, the individual

the Klan in Wisconsin was ever independent of the national order, but a necessary legal myth to gain legal standing. See comment of Ray Twining, legal counsel of the Klan in the 1920s, given to an assistant Attorney-General in connection with the Klan Ouster Case of 1946.

The Klan Home Corporation was a legally constituted non-stock corporation set up to own the Klan home in Milwaukee at 2424 Cedar Street. Its directors were the Klan officers in 1924. The charter is on file in the office of the Attorney-General of Wisconsin. See third Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 10, 1928.
who joined under pressure, the lodge man, the opportunist politician, and the rabid "anti" individual. While it is impossible to determine just what proportion of each of these persons composed the Wisconsin Klan, it is possible to make some comparative generalization about the nature of the membership.

In the first place, the orderly, serious character of the Wisconsin Klan argues a large proportion of the sincere, concerned individuals who honestly believed that the Catholic problem was a problem to be faced, that the flood of aliens really threatened American unity, and that certain local conditions needed the broom of the Klan to sweep them clean. There were, of course, rabid individuals in the Klan in Wisconsin who hated indiscriminately, but they were few. Their success was limited and gained only in certain areas of the state. Throughout the state, Wisconsin men who joined the Klan were not generally interested in violently opposing Catholics, aliens, Negroes, or other minority elements of the population. They were interested in the announced principles of the Klan—not to hate, but to stand up for the native-born, Protestant Americans who, they insisted, had made America great.

A second conclusion stands out from an examination of the Wisconsin Klan's activities and records: the Wisconsin Klan was much more a

These are the types defined in the first chapter as making up the membership of the Klan in all the states of the Middle West. See above 20n.

47 "Ben Bellow? I heard of him. He was a speaker and organizer. Ben was rough. He was plain in his talk. He was anti-Jew, anti-Negro, anti-Catholic." Ralph Hammond speaking, from the notes of an interview with him made by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Wisconsin Klan Ouster Case, 1946. The tactics and charges of Dr. LeRoy Fowler and of Pat Malone are discussed below, 101-4 and 135-8.

48 Collected as Appendix A are some Klan documents of the Wisconsin Klan. These, gathered from various sources, go far toward indicating the types of appeals that the Klan used successfully in Wisconsin to attract members to it. See below, Appendix A
fraternal organization per se than the Klan was in any other state of the Middle West. The Wisconsin Klan's history is not spectacular because most of its doings were routine. And in an organization like the Klan, routine means, simply, fraternal, lodge, concerned with ritual and the trivia that occupies time at weekly meetings.

The conclusion is inevitable that many men of the Wisconsin Klan were in the movement because of its simple appeal to their wish for companionship, conviviality, and the mysticism of the lodge ritual. Wisconsin Klansmen met weekly in the cities, bi-weekly in the country. They had their parades, their public initiations, their local campaigns against this evil or that that they saw in their communities. Toward the end of the Klan's career in the Badger state Klansmen even worked actively in the political campaigns. But most of the time of Wisconsin's Klansmen was spent in attending the routine meetings. These were, for the most part, neither inspiring nor interesting. After prayer, the meeting always opened with a business session. Following might come any one of a number of things. There might be a speaker, usually a retired minister sent out by national headquarters to speak at Klan meetings. There might be an initiation of new members, if there were enough members to make a class. There might be a social meeting, with the wives and families of the men invited to come in after the business meeting was concluded, a matter not difficult to arrange since the Klans usually met in the basements of churches, or in the halls of the town (Masonic Temple, Woodsmen Hall, or similar places). The women could remain upstairs or in the ante-rooms until the business meetings were concluded. Or bored, they might elaborate on the Kloran,
and develop extensive new rituals to be used at later initiations or other affairs. Or they might work toward qualifications for the second Klan degree. In other words, while they occasionally had their fascinating ceremonies, Klansmen operated much as any other lodge most of the time. As a result, the strongest support for the Klan came from men in Wisconsin who like homely tasks and trivial affairs, who liked to get together with other men like themselves and talk and chat and perhaps split a bottle of near beer or dance with their neighbor's wife.

All other types of Klansmen were present. The promoter was represented by men such as Wieseman, Ralph Hammond, in the southeastern counties, or "Doc" Tilton in the western counties of the state. They pushed the Klan and became leaders because they were organizers and professional boosters, and to them the Klan offered a means of making a good living for a time. The opportunist politicians were there.

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50 The activities of the Klans are described by Ralph Hammond in the notes of an interview taken by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Wisconsin Klan Ouster Case, 1946.

51 After Lewis took over as Grand Dragon, and the rate of expansion began to drop off, Klan leaders paid more attention to fraternalism. They stressed the second degree. One of the Bulletins sent out to Klansmen in central Wisconsin in mid 1924 had this to say, "A NEW MAN has been placed in charge of the State and he wants to meet every new member, and every member in Dane, Sauk and Columbia Counties....Among other things, he will outline to you the new policy in this state, will also tell you who is entitled to the Second Order, and where and when you may have it conferred upon you." Bulletin dated May 29, 1924. Private Collection A. Lynch records that the K-Duo, the Knights Kamelia, cost five dollars, a fee divided equally between the state and national headquarters. The first two initiations were put on free at Racine and Milwaukee to stimulate interest. But the Klan began to decline before many members had taken the "work" for the second degree. All who did paid a dollar and a half for the baldin which identified them. Sixth Lynch Article, Milwaukee Journal, April 13, 1928.
The classic figure in Wisconsin was Fred Zimmerman, whose story is told below. The peddlers of hate and fear were there. These were men like Ben Bellows, "Pat" Malone and many of the speakers who were brought in from outside the state. And while the evidence does not exist to document it, there is no reason to doubt that some men were pressured into joining the Klan to gratify the wishes of their employers, or because of the force of character of some of their friends, or by the general rush in some communities to hop onto a fascinating new bandwagon. But, while all these familiar types were present, in the total picture, such elements were slight. The bulwark of the Wisconsin Klan was in its lodge men and the concerned Protestant elements in the population who joined it.

Many appeals were made to these men to entice them into the Klan. The most effective propaganda used was a discussion of the issues of Americanism, of the problem of Catholicism, of the threat of aliens, and of the danger of allowing non-Protestants in their society to dictate the fact that Protestants must not form their own secret society if they wished. Some violent anti-Catholic material was circulated in Wisconsin, particularly in the Badger-American, an unofficial Klan publication, but this was the recessive theme in Wisconsin. The Klan’s performance of its function as a social unit, 

52 See the third item in Appendix A, a part of which is quoted to make the opening statements for this chapter. This expressed the attitude of Klansmen—that those who themselves had and used secret societies (Catholics, Jews, and others) fought a secret society bitterly when it was made up exclusively of Protestant Americans.

53 The Wisconsin Klan had no official publication. Ralph Hammond noted that the only publication that the Klan pushed in Wisconsin was the Kourier, a magazine that the national Klan published through one of its subsidiary corporations. The Wisconsin Legislative Library took this magazine until 1925 when the Library received a
that brought together men and women for a dance or a picnic or a barbecue, was one of its most effective appeals. And the Klan used in Wisconsin that never-fail boast that it could "clean up" any community in which it was given a free hand. There were of course, few communities that did not have some condition of which respectable folk complained (the Klan represented, Klansmen insisted, the respectable folk of the community) and the Klan promised, always, to take care of the situation. In this promise lay one of the Klan's greatest appeals in Wisconsin or elsewhere. 54

Of the many local situations that might be noted that aided the Klan, three following seem illustrative:

1. In Milwaukee the group that responded to the Klan's blandishments most readily, surprisingly enough, was the Socialists. The long letter from national headquarters that it was discontinuing publication and urging those with subscriptions to take the rest of their time with the Fellowship Forum, a Masonic magazine. See the letter in the clipping file on the Klan in the Wisconsin Legislative Library. Hammond said that the Klan was always interested in Masonic publications. Both comments by Hammond from notes of an interview with Hammond by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Wisconsin Ouster Case, 1946. There was an unofficial Klan magazine published in Milwaukee by the Badger-American publishing Company, the Badger-American, but it had no official connection with the Klan, even though its subscription list was filled largely with Klansmen. It published monthly from April, 1923 to August, 1924. Its policies were violently anti-Catholic, anti-Jew and anti-alien. It was not a representative paper for Wisconsin Klansmen, for its attitude was far too violent. A full file of the Badger-American is preserved by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

54 In almost every instance where the Klan is defended it is because of its efforts at local reform. Invariably, when newly organized Klans asked the Atlanta authorities what to do, the reply was to "clean up" the community, no matter whether that community was New York City or Trinidad, Colorado. Here, then, we have in the Klan's stand for law and order its earliest effective justification for its existence...." Thus noted the perceptive contemporary observer of the Klan, John Moffat Mecklin, in his study of the Klan, The Ku Klux Klan, 41.
struggle in the working class areas of Europe between the Catholic Church and the various brands of European Socialists had implanted deeply in the Socialist creed a permanent anti-Catholicism. The transmission of Socialist creeds to this country had not wiped out the distrust and suspicion of the Church. The source of the dislike probably lay in two areas: the competition for control of the minds of men between two institutions with distinct goals and techniques; and the psychological reaction of Socialists to the consistent opposition that the Church had always offered to the Socialist movement. Whatever the intellectual source, however, it was an established fact that anti-Catholicism was deeply rooted in the Socialist traditions and expressed itself whenever there was sufficient cause to bring it to the surface.  

In the Milwaukee area, particularly in the lower middle class and working class areas of Milwaukee proper, the Socialist party had its stronghold in the state. In fact, before the twenties Milwaukee had become known as the Socialist stronghold of the entire nation. Here the European traditions of Socialism had been modified to meet the new conditions necessary to produce successful action in this country, and in Milwaukee many of the leaders of the Socialist movement on the national level were developed, notably Victor Berger, and Daniel Hoan. In the transfer of doctrine from Europe the old world anti-Catholicism was brought along, and in Milwaukee as a center the Klan was able to  

\[55\] In Oklahoma the fight that developed in 1923 found the agrarian Socialists of that state on the side of the Klan in opposition to Governor "Jack" Walton. The reason: anti-Catholicism. Information given to the author by David Shannon, Assistant Professor of History at Teachers College, Columbia University, currently completing work on his history of the Socialist party in the United States. Corroborative evidence may be found in Oscar Ameringer, *If You Don't Weaken*, (Holt, 1840), 187.
entice Socialists to membership on the basis of this latent anti-Catholicism.

This is one of the best examples of the eclecticism of the Klan's approach. It was fully capable of meeting almost any circumstance, regardless of how much flexibility was required on its part. On the whole, the Klan represented the more conservative elements in any community, and on that basis should have been anathema to Socialists. In fact, Socialists knew that the national Klan magazines regularly contained articles denouncing the Socialist creed and the "radicalism" of the Socialist movement and the Socialist party nationally was on record with a bitter denunciation of the Klan. Yet whenever it was necessary to take in members from areas dominated by hostile groups the Klan found a technique for doing so. In Milwaukee the Klan merely stressed its national anti-Catholic themes, and the Socialists flocked to join.

Officially, in the form of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party in Milwaukee, the Socialist Party was bitterly opposed to the Klan. In the Milwaukee Leader in his own column called "Findings", Victor Berger expressed the official Socialist attitude toward the Klan of the twenties.

There was absolutely no excuse for the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915--other than the widely awakened mob spirit through the World War. This mob spirit naturally found more fertile ground down South where the white "would-be" Anglo-Saxon population is probably the most ignorant and most conceited and most barbaric residue of the Caucasian

66 At its national convention in 1924 the Socialist Party went on record as being completely opposed to the Klan. Socialist leaders had thought the action would be routine, but a bitter fight developed over the issue on the floor of the convention. Milwaukee Sentinel, July 9, 1924.
It is a brazen and contemptible swindle, of course, when the sneaking, cowardly, lynchers, crooks and prostitutes who have started the Ku Klux Klan, talk glibly about free speech, free press and freedom of conscience and about 'protecting the home'. Most of these morons do not know what these terms mean. The government reports show that more than 50% of the '100 per cent' Americans who were drafted down south for service in the World War—suffered from venereal diseases. The Southerners are great 'Protectors of the home'.

And Berger was the dominating figure on the executive committee! But an executive committee can express the attitude of a hierarchy only; it cannot always control the actions of the members of its organization.

Opposition to the official Socialist position crystallized around the person of John Kleist. Kleist, a successful lawyer in Milwaukee, had been a member of the Socialist party for over two decades when the Klan came into Wisconsin. He was attracted very early by its

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57 Milwaukee Leader, October 7, 1922. See also for the Socialist viewpoint on the Klan, George R. Kirkpatrick, The Socialist Party and the Ku Klux Klan (2653 Washington Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois, n.d.) This was an official Socialist Party publication. The thesis of this pamphlet is that the Klan is harmful because it detracts the workers' attention from other, far more important, issues confronting them. For the Communist (Stalinist) point of view, see Pasquale Russo, Ku Klux Klan and Labor, (Chicago 1925)

58 John Kleist was so strongly Socialist and anti-war in 1918 that he was indicted by the Federal Government for his anti-war activities. He was not convicted. Milwaukee Journal, October 29, 1918. Kleist was famous in Milwaukee for another reason. He was married for years but no children were born to his wife. Over the years he adopted and raised eleven orphan children. This in itself made him a well-known Milwaukee character. See the Milwaukee Journal, December 27, 1926, for a story and pictures of his large family. For a full obituary and account of Kleist's life, see Wisconsin Notes, 30:14-16. A Klan information sheet carried this information about John Kleist. "Born in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, Graduate of Lawrence College and the University of Michigan Law School. Practiced law 30 years in Milwaukee, Assistant District Attorney of Milwaukee County. District Attorney of Calumet County. 32nd Degree Mason, Elk, Klansman. The most outstanding characteristic of this man is that although his home was never blessed with children, he and his wife have raised and educated in their own home eleven (11) children (orphans). This alone in our opinion is sufficient to recommend him as one who will always be guided by the humanitarian as well as the legal side of questions. Mr. Kleist stands absolutely four-square on the principles for which we stand and is not
principles and joined—in defiance of the Socialist leaders, most of whom were close friends of his. He was followed into the Klan by hundreds of other Socialists. In 1922 he ran for the Supreme Court on the Socialist ticket as a Socialist and a Klansman and polled the highest total of votes ever received by a Socialist in Wisconsin. 59

From that time on he was under pressure to resign from the Klan, but a year later, in October 1923, he announced to the press that he was a Klansman, and that he knew from personal experience that there were more Socialists on the Klan membership rolls than there were on the official party rolls in Milwaukee. 60 In the face of the furor this caused, he stood steadfast. He vowed that he was still a good Socialist and would remain both a Klansman and a Socialist despite pleas or threats to make him resign from the Klan or the party. 61 The Executive Committee, after requesting him to resign from the party forced him out a half year later, in the spring of 1924. 62 But not before he had made his point, and it was generally recognized that the Milwaukee Klan contained many Socialists.

2. A second illustration that shows how the Wisconsin Klan used a local situation to push its membership drive took place in the city of Madison and in Dane County. The situation there was this: beginning with the construction of the state capitol shortly after the turn of

at all backward in publicly proclaiming same." Published over the signature of Sara B. Bellows, Major Kleagle of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, no date. Private Collection A.

59 Milwaukee Journal, October 1, 1923.
60 Milwaukee Journal, October 3, 1923.
61 Milwaukee Journal, June 3, 1924.
the century, there had been a small but steady influx of Italians and
Sicilians into the city of Madison. Traditionally construction labor,
these Italians, mostly of immigrant stock and alien in birth, had come
to Madison to work on the capitol project but had remained to work on
other construction jobs. By the early 1920s there was a section of
Madison that was known locally as "Little Sicily". This section con-
trasted strongly with the rest of Madison. While the Italians in this
decade were moving slowly along toward Americanization, they still re-
tained many of the traditions of the old World. Two of these traditions
particularly disturbed the older residents of the area. One was the
love of good vino the Italians retained. The liquor and wines which
they made were drunk and sold in quantity in direct violation of the
prohibition laws. The Italians, of course, were not the only ones to
make and drink liquor in the twenties, and they had regular customers
among those who opposed their actions, but they were violating the codes
of the community in so doing. A second tradition that disturbed staid
Madisonians was the readiness of the Italians to resort to violence to
settle personal conflicts between themselves. In Madison, in 1924, for
instance, there were eleven shootings and stabbings with six deaths
resulting. Madisonians regarded this slaughter as open defiance of
proper law-enforcement officials of the city, and they determined to
enforce their own codes of behavior on what the called derisively, the
residents of "The Bush."

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Frank A. Gilmore, Madison Our Home: The City of Madison, (Blued
Gilmore of the Unitarian Society, says that Italians had been coming
into Madison for more than a decade before 1915.

The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin,) December 2, 1924.
This situation was ready made for the Klan to seize upon and use. The situation came to a head when a policeman was shot in "Little Sicily". From that time on an undeclared war raged between the Protestant members of the Police Force (many of whom were Klansmen) and certain individuals and gangs within the area of "Little Sicily". This "war" brought about a raid conducted by the Madison Klan on "Little Sicily" in 1925, a raid described in detail below. While the Klan remained strong in Wisconsin, the menacing figure of the "gun-totin' Sicilian" was used most effectively by the Klan in the areas of central Wisconsin.

3. A third area in which the Klan's ability to exploit local situations was apparent in Rusk County. In Rusk County the Klan had its greatest success in the entire state of Wisconsin in terms of percentage of membership. In this county the proportion of Klansmen to total population was higher than in any other county in the state. The local situation that produced such a phenomenon was this: Rusk County was one of the areas of the state that had been completely cut over by the lumber companies in their search for marketable timber. After the land had been stripped, it became a waste land. Since taxes came due regularly on it, it represented a drain on the companies' treasuries. When the companies sold some of this cut-over land to individuals and they began to farm it successfully, the lumber companies awakened to the fact that the land could be utilized, at least well enough to pay the taxes. They undertook the colonization by

65 The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), December 3, 1924.
66 See below, 140-2 for a full discussion of the raid.
67 First Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928.
transplanting immigrant groups onto the land. They picked up whole
villages in eastern European areas, most often Poland, and trans-
planted them intact on much larger farms in these cut-over regions.
This colonization process was not new in the 1920s. It had been
going on for years, but it was at its height in the 1920s. The older
residents resented this process bitterly. It meant that the companies
retained control of the land and leased it to the new immigrant farmers;
the old native stock could not touch it. And then, most of the older
residents were German or Scandinavian in background, and resented the
bringing in of Polish stock. The Klan's organizers arrived in the
early twenties and offered organization to these native Americans.
They seized it eagerly; they hoped that they might use the Klan in
some way to stop the invasion of these foreign villages. It is
significant that Rusk County, which produced the largest percentage
of Klan members to total population, laid at the geographical center
of this colonization activity.68

These are by no means all of the adjustments made by the Klan to
local conditions, but they are sufficient to show the extreme flexi-
bility of the Klan's approach, and to illustrate how principle was
certainly relative when the Klan expansion was at stake. The Klan
seized and used any issue available. This flexibility was one of

68 Information on the colonization of the cut-over areas of
northern Wisconsin was furnished to the author by Arlan Helgeson,
present instructor in History at Illinois Normal. This information
was gained as a part of Mr. Helgeson's research for his thesis,
completed in 1951 and filed with the University of Wisconsin Library,
Madison, Wisconsin. See also B. M. Apker, tape-recorded interview,
on file at the Wisconsin Historical Society, and Loyal Durand, Jr.,
The Geographic Regions of Wisconsin, (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation,
University of Wisconsin, 1950).
the main reasons for Klan success in Wisconsin as it was in all other areas.

The size of the Klan in Wisconsin

How large did the Klan become in Wisconsin? How many members did it take in, and how many of these remained faithful to the movement for more than a few months? 69

The most reliable figures available indicate the following facts: The Klan reached a maximum strength of not more than 75,000 men in the Klan organization proper. This is an estimate only, for no one in the world knows how large the Klan actually did become and how many men it took in. The largest number of men were taken into the Klan during the years from 1922 to 1924. Thereafter the pace slackened rapidly. During these productive years Wieseman and his organization were running the state organization. They kept no books. Kleagles might report; or they might not; all who came into the Klan. Wieseman had no idea how many men came in. When he was deposed and replaced by Charles Lewis, Lewis found that there were no available records. He found hundreds of men claiming to be members who had no proof of membership in the organ-

69 Any discussion of Klan membership must take into account the fact that the Klan leaders insisted that any person who ever joined the Klan remained a Klansman for life unless he was banished for some crime against the Invisible Empire. See testimony of James A. Colescott before A Congressional Committee, 2943. Such beliefs have led to the charges made by the Hearst papers and Walter Winchell since 1937 (for Black) and 1944 (for Truman). There is probably little doubt that both men were Klansmen at one time. In fact, Black publicly admitted it. But only in the minds of Klan leaders do men remain permanent citizens of the Invisible Empire.
ization. In desperation, and in order to bring some order out of the mess, he ruled that any person who was willing to sign an affidavit, take an oath that he had paid his fees, and swear that he had been taken into the organization would be recognized as a bona fide member of the Wisconsin Klan. Slightly more than 38,000 men signed affidavits. But by this time, late in 1924, thousands who had joined were no longer interested in membership, and they did not bother to sign. So, Lynch found that state leaders of the Klan estimated that a figure that would be fairly accurate would be that about 75,000 men had joined the Klan during the decade of its existence in Wisconsin.

To these figures must be added the members in the Klan’s subsidiary organizations. The Klan organized a Women’s Order in Wisconsin, a Junior Order for boys from 12 to 18 years of age, and the Klan was on record as having established a Tri-K Klub for girls from 12 to 18 years of age, and a unit of the Krusaders for foreign-born Protestants who would have been eligible for Klan membership had they been born in the United States. How many members of these units there were is unknown. There are no figures available anywhere. A guess would be that there were

70 First Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928. These figures are supported by the statement of Daniel A. Woodward, one-time Grand Titan of the Wisconsin Klan, and a Klan candidate for the United States Senate in 1925 and 1926, who said that the Klan signed up at least 50,000 men in Wisconsin and that about 20,000 paid dues for four years. The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), February 15, 1927. These two estimates completely destroy the estimate of Klan membership in Wisconsin made by the Washington Post and reprinted by the Capital Times, November 7, 1930. The Post reported that in 1925 the Klan had 220,650 members in Wisconsin, an absurdly high figure. The article further reported that the Klan dropped to 1,114 members in good standing in 1926, to 986 in 1927, to 287 in 1928, to 29 in 1929, and to 42 members in 1930. These figures, while probably too low throughout are better than the first estimate of total Klan strength. The source of its information was not disclosed by the Post.
were not more than a few thousand, five thousand at the outside, who ever joined these subsidiary organizations. Including these persons, the Klan probably had an overall membership in the state of somewhere between 70 and 80 thousand persons.

But note should be made that this strength could never be mobilized at any one time. Actual organizational strength of the Klan at any one time was never stronger than the 38,000 persons who signed affidavits in 1924. The others who joined for one reason or another, drifted away and lost interest in the organization. The discrepancy between those who signed and those who were faithful to the organization can be seen in these figures from some of the largest Klans at the time of chartering. Column one indicates how many persons signed up (in round numbers), and column two shows how many members had their dues paid up and were members in good standing when their Klan was chartered on December 1, 1924.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Klan</th>
<th>Signed</th>
<th>Paid Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>3,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racine</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenosha</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnebago</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dane</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eau Claire</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walworth</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>24071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is safe to say that most of the Klan's membership was concentrated in four areas in Wisconsin. It was in these areas that the Klan had its greatest appeal, and where it remained strong for the longest time. The first and most important Klan area was in the Milwaukee-Racine-Kenosha area and in the surrounding southeastern counties of the state. Ralph Hammond organized these territories and

---71 First Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928.
he bred considerable loyalty to himself. When, in 1926, he succeeded Charles Lewis as Grand Dragon of the state, this was about the only area of the state that had any substantial Klan strength remaining. A second area was in central Wisconsin, in the counties beginning with Dane County on the north and running down to the Illinois border. This was the second most important area of Klan strength in the state, and here the Klan had a solid nucleus of members. A third area was the Fox River Valley where Protestant and Catholic Germans lived elbow to elbow. And the fourth area of strength was in the western counties centering around the area between Eau Claire and La Crosse.

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Ralph Hammond gave a good picture of some of the reasons why some men kept on in the Klan. He said he came back to his pre-war home in Moline, Illinois, after the Armistice in 1918, then moved to Racine. There he went to work in a cigar store, eventually renting the soda fountain concession. His name was put in for membership in the Klan and he joined. He became quite interested in it and quite active. Word got out that he was a member and he lost friends and business. People of other faiths got down on him. Catholic friends stopped speaking or trading with him. Newspapers got against the Klan for its "anti-" bias, which Hammond insisted the Wisconsin Klan did not have. "Maybe we were in some sections". He got to be a "dead pigeon" in Racine, so he had to go on in the Klan work. "I had to. I didn't have anything else to do...." Notes of an interview with Ralph Hammond taken by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Wisconsin Klan Ouster Case, 1946.

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See first, second, third, fourth and fifth Lynch articles, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1923, respectively.
measured in terms of the size the Klan attained and its effect on Wisconsin society. For an assessment of how the Klan affected Wisconsin society and how it was received, turn to the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

THE WISCONSIN KLAN: IN POWER AND DECLINE

In Madison...there is being organized, a college Fraternity of Klansmen. This is for the purpose of having a Fraternity house where-in all members of the Klan may assemble and promote Christianity and love of Country....

Our aim is to establish a meeting and living place for all Klansmen in the University of Wisconsin, where the principle of Klansmanship will be taught and enforced which will tend to make leaders in our national organization....

In college circles, groups of men gather together, in what are called Greek Fraternities...We have chosen the letters Kappa Beta Lambda whose fundamental meaning is 'Klansmen Be Loyal'.

The Truth about the Klan
WORK FOR YOUR COUNTRY
Labor Day at the Dane County Fairgrounds
If there is any disturbance of the peace, notice who starts it.

ROY P. NILCOX

Radical Republican, 30 years old, untried and unqualified. Lined up with Holmes, Hanna, Blaine and Madison Ring. Very wet. Aims to destroy our courts and American institutions. Absolutely opposed to President Coolidge. Unitarian supported by the Romans.

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It was entirely possible for the Ku Klux Klan to come into an area like Wisconsin and remain unnoticed--in 1920. Such a thing

1 From Field Bulletin No. 32, sent out to all Field Men and Executive Committees of the Wisconsin Klan, August 27, 1924. The Klan's purpose
could not have happened a year later, nor at any time since that date.

In 1920 the Ku Klux Klan was not a familiar name in the northern states. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had been founded in 1915 at Atlanta, Georgia, purely as a fraternal organization to help southerners keep alive memories of the Klan of Reconstruction days. For about five years it attracted little attention, even in the South. As late as 1919 it was barely alive, struggling to survive as a fraternal order that southerners had not clasped to their bosoms. Then the concur-
currence of two unlikely events boosted the Klan to fame in the South. The Klan promotion was taken over by a firm of advertising agents, the Southern Publicity Company, headed by Edward Young Clarke and Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler. These two succeeded in selling the Klan as a revived
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was to "have enough Klansmen in the various organizations on campus, to control the school and therefore have a great body of men who stand for Klan morals, Christian ideals, pure womanhood, and the other fundamentals of American life." In short, infiltrate and control. A check by the author at the offices of student affairs reveals that no organization by the name of Kappa Beta Lambda was ever established on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, nor was any application ever filed requesting permission for such an organization to form. Bulletin is preserved in Private Collection A. The editor of The Dawn, November 25, 1922, noted that reports were circulating that the Klan was organizing at the University of Wisconsin but denied it was so--the Klan did not solicit membership.

2 Handbill in Private Collection A.
3 From a Bulletin circulated to Klansmen during the Campaign of Daniel Woodward for the United States Senate in 1925. Woodward had Klan support, and the remainder of the Bulletin sets forth his personal qualifications. The Robert La Follette herein referred to is Robert M. LaFollette, Jr., "Fightin' Bob's" son, who won the contest and succeeded his father as United States Senator.
4 Such was the purpose for reviving the Ku Klux Klan according to the testimony of its founder in 1915, William Joseph Simmons. See U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Rules. The Ku Klux Klan; Hearings, (October 11-17, 1921), 67 Congress, 1 Session. (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1921).
5 While this is common knowledge, for confirmation see Meeklin, Ku Klux Klan, 20.
6 See the testimony of Clarke and Tyler concerning the arrangements they made with Colonel Simmons when they took charge of the Klan's publicity. Ku Klux Klan hearings, 1921.
southern necessity because they grasped control of the organization just at the time southern Negro soldiers were returning from Army service outside the South. These soldiers were restive at having to come back to live under the restrictions southern society imposed upon them, and they stirred up Negro resentment in the South. At least southerners dreaded such a reaction. Clarke and Tyler put fear into southerners through a whisper of Negro intentions and signed them up in the Klan. It is true they laced their product with anti-Catholicism and a distrust of the aliens swarming to American shores, but in the South it was the fear of a fading color line that sold the Klan. The Klan swept the South in 1921 and 1922.

But—it did not sweep the North. Its penetration of the North was more of a seepage than a thrust into virgin territory. By 1920 some individuals in the northern states had caught rumors of the Klan and its meaning, and they aroused interest enough among their friends to ask Atlanta headquarters to send a man to talk with them about establishing a Klan. That was the method by which the Wisconsin Klan was founded—through a request of some Milwaukee men that a man be sent North to talk with them. But except for a few persons like these no one in the North knew anything about the Klan in 1920. Even when the Klan began to advertise its presence in the summer of 1921 by placing advertisements in the newspapers, the average citizen of Wisconsin only noted the ads with slight interest. The words "Ku Klux Klan" meant

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7 The figure of the masked and hooded Knight on a rearing horse that appears at the beginning of each chapter of this thesis was taken from a mat in the possession of the Capital Times of Madison, Wisconsin. It is the usual type of mat furnished by advertisers for the use of newspapers. Variations of this picture that requested men to write to particular Post Office boxes for information concerning the Klan
nothing to northern folk until September 1921.

In that month the New York World exploded its long planned bombshell. On September sixth the World began the publication of a series of articles it had spent months in preparing. The World's editors had heard of the Klan in the South, had heard rumors of whippings, threats, tar and feather parties, of long night rides, even of murder and death. They had sent a troop of reporters to investigate and see if there was a story in the rumors. The facts resulting from the investigations astonished everyone concerned. The accounts of the investigations were published in eleven articles that appeared in the World throughout the month of September. The World articles were violently, almost viciously anti-Klan, and, seen in the perspective of time, highly sensationalized. Before publication the articles were syndicated and sold to newspapers over the country and thus appeared simultaneously in large dailies around the country, including two that had large circulations in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Journal and the Minneapolis Tribune. These articles were the news sensation of 1921! As a direct result of the World's disclosures, the Ku Klux Klan became notorious throughout the entire United States, in the northern states for the first time as well as the southern. Forever after, the words "Ku Klux Klan" had real meaning to most Americans, regardless of place of residence.

Congressmen rushed in to capitalize on the tidal wave of publicity. From the House of Representatives came an immediate demand for a

appeared in many Wisconsin newspapers as early as the summer of 1921.

The New York World articles appeared in the issues of that newspaper through the dates of September 6-18, 1921, inclusive.
Congressional investigation, and within a month, the House Rules Committee held hearings to determine if the existence of the Klan violated any federal statute. The testimony given at those Klan hearings in October, 1921, while furnishing no grounds for legal action against the Klan, produced a further riot of publicity about the Klan, and informed those few who had missed the World's articles what the Klan was and what it did. Accounts of the testimony offered by William Joseph Simmons, then the Imperial Wizard of the Klan, and by Clarke and Tyler, were carried in most of the newspapers in the land, regardless of size. From October, 1921, on, the Klan was a marked organization everywhere, widely known, uniformly feared, and carefully watched.

Citizens of most of the northern states enjoyed the World's articles and the Congressional investigation that followed. After all the evidence and testimony given had told only what the Klan had done in the South. But when they awakened to find the Klan firmly rooted in their own territory they were not so pleased. The Klan organization had slipped into the states of the Middle West in 1920 and early 1921, and by the fall of that year when publicity came, its foothold was too secure to rip away. The Klan had made its jump across the Ohio River successfully and had established itself on the soil of the Old Northwest before it was recognized. By 1921 the Klan had gained sufficient roots in Wisconsin to lead to a rapid expansion.

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9 The Ku Klux Klan hearings of October, 1921, were designed to see if there were grounds for federal action against the Klan. The hearings, however, turned out to be a publicity hunt by the Congressmen conducting the hearings. Ironically, it was the Klan that benefitted from these hearings. For the first time most people in the North realized that there was such an organization they could join. The Klan then made it easy for them to do so.
in the very near future.

The Wisconsin citizen contacts the Klan

The publicity that always followed the Klan after 1921 has to be understood to understand the Klan movement. It was the World's investigations and the ensuing congressional investigations that tipped off newspapermen everywhere to the news value of the Ku Klux Klan. They discovered that their readers would devour instantly any item concerning the Klan. Newsmen were delighted to satisfy this curiosity by filling their columns with news of the latest Klan kluxings. Once they had made their discovery that the Klan held the readers' interest, the newspapermen of the decade never allowed the Klan issue to die. Week after week, month after month, year after year, the Klan remained NEWS. Nearly each edition of every paper featured articles about the Klan, or carried some items in their columns devoted to short spot coverage. It did not matter if the items concerned the readers' local Klan or a Klan from some other area of the state or nation, editors knew each report was read with interest. Syndicated wires were kept busy sending the familiar "KKK". Some of the stories printed were true; some were half-truths; many were deliberately falsified; others were pure cock-and-bull stories cooked up for the trade. In those years of the mid-twenties editors breathed many a prayer of thanks for the Klan; they had sought for a long time to find something of news value, of interest to nearly everyone to take the place the World War had held. The years of peace that had followed the war had been uniformly lacking in interesting news items. Especially after the Versailles conference
had dragged to its close, and the Red Scare stories had ceased to hold interest, was this true. Then came the Klan, and it was a spectacular success from the journalist's point of view. The newspaper editors seized it and refused to allow it to escape. Editors assigned reporters to join the Klan and move into its inner circles if they could, they hired informers at the informers' prices to learn what was happening behind the cloak of secrecy. They paid dozens of ex-Kleagles and other former officers in the Klan handsome sums to "explain" the Klan or to detail their experiences within the organization. These stories all sold well on the syndicated wires, and the papers of the 1920s were full of such exposes. With such sources of information open to them, the editors could check their stories fairly well for accuracy, and much of the material printed by the newspapers of the 1920s remains

10 One man who carried out such an assignment was Russell Lynch of the Milwaukee Journal. Personal interview, July 13, 1950. He had served in a similar capacity while employed by a Racine newspaper before moving to Milwaukee. The author has seen the Klan files of many newspapers, including the Milwaukee Journal, The Milwaukee Sentinel, the Capital Times of Madison, Wisconsin, and the Cleveland Plain-Dealer. In these files one can find reports and information filed by newsmen engaged in this sort of work, plus contributions made gratuitously by individuals who sought to aid the newspaper by contributing information on the Klan. From the character of the information given, many of these had to be Klansmen themselves. The library of almost any large newspaper will yield reports of this nature.

11 Exposes of the Klan by former Klan leaders were numerous during the 1920s. Among the books of this nature are: Edgar Allen Booth, The Mad Mullah of America, (Columbus, Ohio, 1927); Robert A. Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, (Huntington, Indiana, 1940); Marian Mosteval, (pseud.), The Klan Inside Out, (Claremore, Oklahoma, 1924); Henry Fry, The Modern Ku Klux Klan (Boston, 1922). In the newspaper articles of this type attention should be called to the series of articles by P. J. "Twilight" Orn, beginning May 14, 1926, in the Minneapolis Daily Star, and running for ten days thereafter; and to the articles by Court Asher in the Hearst chain of papers, beginning on September 26, 1926. A glance through the Periodical Index for the years from 1922 to 1926 will reveal numerous accounts of this sort.
valuable today as historical evidence of the Klan's trail.

For the Wisconsin resident of the 1920s, as for the residents of most states, the Klan items in the newspapers furnished a rather good informal source of information about the Klan. Sitting in his warm living-room on a cold winter's night, his feet stuffed into a pair of ancient slippers, a pipe rammed into the corner of his mouth, the Wisconsin resident--farmer, merchant, day laborer or professional person--could glance through the news columns of the day and learn much of what was going on both inside and outside the Klan. He could make a good guess as to what was causing the Klan to appeal to some of his neighbors; he could follow the Klan's growth and could guess when the Klan had maybe hit its peak. Perhaps he could even spot, if he were at all acute, the signs of decay and disintegration that set into the Klan organization as it passed its peak of power. All of this was available to him on the printed page; all that was required of the reader was that he read his paper regularly and carefully, and that he be able to read some things between the lines so that he could escape the propaganda that flew forth so easily from friend or foe of the organization.

Soon after the World's disclosures in September, 1921, the Wisconsin citizen of the 1920s had a chance to know the Klan at close range. Once its presence was discovered, the Wisconsin Klan revealed itself as an aggressive organization seeking wide membership and some power within Wisconsin society. As the Klan units struck out boldly in their bids for members, the Wisconsin citizen found he could examine the organization closely; if he wished close contact with the Klan as
a whole, it was simple to get it in most Wisconsin communities in the 1920s. During the warm seasons of the years 1922 through 1926, the Klan held innumerable outdoor meetings and ceremonies of various kinds. The Badger citizen could walk down to the main street of his town or village on any one of a half dozen occasions during the spring or summer and there watch Klansmen parade by in their mysterious, silent marches from hither to yon. He could count the slow steps of the marchers, hear their voices suddenly ring out in unison to the beat of "Onward Christian Soldiers". As he stood on the curb and watched the ranks of Klansmen go by he could speculate upon what faces, what identities might be hidden behind the folds of the masks the marchers wore. If, watching, he could only see shapeless forms in their white robes generally, more specifically he could see the trouser cuffs and the shoes of the marchers. One of the clichés of the 1920s was that "by the looks of their shoes, they aren't all ditch diggers!" Or he could load his family into his Pierce-Arrow and drive out to the fields around the town on the nights when the Klan was holding initiation ceremonies. From a distance he could watch the spectacle of the fiery cross and of marching, hooded figures as they moved about in the intricate patterns of their silent ceremonies on the hillsides or in the fields.

Or if he wished to know more about the Invisible Empire during these years, the Wisconsin male could have a closer look. Rare was the white Protestant man who did not receive one or two or a dozen invitations to join the Klan and participate in the brotherhood of the members. His neighbor might, very often did, invite him to a Klan lecture, a Klan picnic or a Klan barbecue, the purpose of which was to recruit new
members. In Wisconsin the barbecue came to be the outstanding attractions put on by the Klansmen for their visiting guests and prospective brothers. At a barbecue near Racine one whole steer was turned on a huge spit, bushels of potatoes were baked in the coals, and cords of firewood turned into ashes to furnish the food and heat for hungry Klansmen and their guests. At these events, the food and companionship shared the spotlight with Klan speakers who came forward after the meal, when everyone was filled, comfortable and content, and spoke of "Americanism", of the "enemies" who would destroy this Protestant American culture, and of the necessity for all Protestants to join the Klan in order to organize against them. If this smooth approach failed to entice the Badger male into the Klan, he was often approached later at his work by one or two of his friends who once again urged him to take the final step and join with them in this movement for the good of all Protestant white men.

Or if finally, this Wisconsin male wanted to know more about the Klan or if he were interested by now in the principles of the Klan, he could join. To enter the Invisible Empire was simple enough. It meant merely the acceptance of a bid to a secret meeting, a written statement of his willingness to join, the possession of about sixteen

12 Colonel William Joseph Simmons and Hiram Wesley Evans, at various times the Imperial Wizards of the national Klan, each appeared once in Wisconsin. Simmons was present at the Racine meeting described here, a meeting at which more than 15,000 Klansmen and curious were present. Milwaukee Journal, July 29, 1923. Evans appeared at Oshkosh in 1924. See the Notes of an interview with Ralph Hammond taken by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Klan Ouster Case, 1946.
or seventeen dollars for initiation fee and robe, and his appearance at a later meeting for a long enough time to take the oath. Later it meant he could and would participate in meetings, hear lectures, go on raids on local liquor stills, march in parades, electioneer for Klan candidates at election time, and carry out the sundry other activities assigned to members of the organization as they kept themselves active through most of the decade.

These opportunities for contact with the Klan and with Klansmen, and the opportunities he had to participate in the Klan movement if he wished, gave the Wisconsin citizen of the 1920s the special privilege of being able to learn a great deal about the Klan movement at first hand. In addition, other sources of information—newspapers, periodicals, chats with Klansmen, independent observations—added to his store of knowledge. From all such sources of information the Wisconsin citizen of the 1920s could watch and assess the effect of the Ku Klux Klan on Wisconsin society in that decade.

The Klan makes its presence known

The Congressional hearing in October, 1921, caused Wisconsin citizens to peer carefully at their society to see how deeply the Klan had penetrated their state by that time. The reaction countrywide was similar: now that the nature of the Klan movement was being revealed, people everywhere began to look for it to see if it were growing in their own territory. Wisconsin citizens could not scare up much evidence that the Klan was active in Wisconsin, but they did turn up enough to indicate that the Klan had organized and was growing.
Near Racine an incident occurred in that very month of October that appeared to be the work of the Klan. John Baker, his wife and daughter left their farm home one Sunday morning to visit Mrs. Baker's mother at a near-by farm. When chore time approached late in the afternoon, John returned home alone to do the chores. While he was in the barn milking he heard an automobile drive up in the barn-yard. When he walked out to talk to its occupants, he discovered they wore long white robes and masks. Speaking for the five occupants of the car, the driver ordered Baker to take his family and get off his farm by October 25th, or harm would come to his wife and daughter. Baker did not pause to argue; he left. Governor Blaine offered him the use of state troopers and the local sheriff provided an armed guard on the place for a couple of weeks, but nothing further ever developed. A quarter of a century later when Mrs. Baker was questioned about it, she said it all blew over and that after a while the whole family moved

13 First reports of the Baker story were controversial. The Wisconsin News referred to the farmer involved as Frank Miller, but the Milwaukee Journal correctly identified him as John Baker. Both identifications made in the editions of October 18, 1921. Their stories checked in essential details, however.

14 Politics flared up in this first of all Klan incidents in Wisconsin. When informed of the threat, Governor Blaine offered state aid to the farmer. But since he was a Progressive Republican, the Regular Republican sheriff, Nate James, turned down state aid and said his men could handle the situation without outside help. Wisconsin State Journal, (Madison, Wisconsin,) October 18, 1921.
No one ever learned whether this was really the work of the Wisconsin Klan or of some men who knew that masks are convenient to hide behind when they have certain types of work to do.

It was about this time, too, that the newspaper advertisements of the Klan soliciting membership began to carry the phrase "Masons preferred". At the same time rumors began to circulate that Masons were flocking into the Klan. Masonic leaders reacted violently. Charles B. Whelan, past Grand Master of Wisconsin's Masons, stated for publication that:

"Probably no more insidious effort to prostitute the institution of Masonry to a movement entirely out of line with its principles has ever been witnessed than the attempt to use Masonry for the promotion of the Ku Klux Klan... Not only were Masons visited personally and their influence sought to aid the growth of the Klan but advertisements were inserted in the papers for solicitors with the statement "Masons preferred". To the layman the impression might obtain that Masonry was assisting in the promotion of what to the best minds in Masonry is a false doctrine, and a dangerous element in a community, a commonwealth, or a nation." 16

The current Grand Master chimed in with the statement that the Masonic Order was not allied with the Klan in any way, and that he was charging Masons with the responsibility for maintaining the "truly Masonic principle of liberty of conscience, equality before the law, and fraternity among men..." 17 How could a Mason who sincerely subscribed to these views be a Klansman, he asked? The Klan made no

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15 John Baker died in 1938. His wife remarried, and as Mrs. Peter Verheyen told investigators from the Wisconsin Attorney-General's office that eventually the whole family moved back on the farm and nothing more had happened. See the notes of an interview with Mrs. Verheyen by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Klan Ouster Case, 1946.
16 Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), October 18, 1921.
17 Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), October 18, 1921.
public reply, but went right on preferring Masons, bringing them into the Klan, and using the Mason's ancient anti-Catholic feelings to the Klan's advantage. In Wisconsin, as elsewhere, Masons furnished one of the groups in the society from which the Klan drew heavily for support and membership.18

In 1922 the Klan organization in Wisconsin was still amateur. It had not had time to learn that if the Klan were to be successful it would have to be because it used home-grown men and provincial appeals. At first Klan leaders used outside organizers, most of them from the South, and they found that a rich southern drawl was not convincing to Wisconsin citizens.19 What was needed, they learned, was the flat speech of a Wisconsin farmer speaking to Badger folk in words they recognized.

The extreme ineptness of the initial Klan approach in Wisconsin is illustrated by the Klan's importation of Dr. Leslie Fowler into Milwaukee to sell the Klan at its first big meeting in the state. The tactics, the attitude, "the showmanship" of Dr. Fowler when he appeared at the Milwaukee Auditorium in October, 1922, were bad enough; but the ideas that he said represented Klan thinking drove Klansmen ----------------

Everywhere in the Middle West the Klan made use of the anti-Catholic bias of the Masons to lure them into the Klan. Note the case of William Wieseman above, 58, Russell Lynch said that one of the facts that did not get into his series of articles on the Klan was that the Masonic Order almost split on the issue of the Klan in the state. He said that it was the custom in those days for the Masons to elect a Grand Master for a year, then, as a show of respect, re-elect him for a year. In the mid-twenties one of the Grand Masters criticized Masons for joining the Klan, and the next year the Klan was strong enough within the Order to defeat and prevent his re-election. Personal interview with Russell Lynch, July 13, 1960.

19 Wisconsin News (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), February 28, 1924.
and other interested folk away. After his appearance the Wisconsin Klan never again turned to speakers of his ilk. They turned to persons whom they knew.

Dr. Fowler was brought to Milwaukee to head the Klan's first big rally in the state. Fowler came advertised as a member of the faculty at Lanier University, the Klan's highly publicized university at Atlanta, Georgia, and the possessor of an L.L.D. degree. His talk from first to last was a bitter tirade against Catholics, Jews and Negroes. It was so vicious and so blatantly nationalistic that it shocked Milwaukee citizens. Fowler opened his talk with a defense of the Klan, stating that the Klan did not believe in violence and that it was a real American institution. Then he turned to such remarks as the following:

No one but a native-born American who is willing to take an oath to defend unto death the flag and the constitution may become a member. While the Klan does not believe in violence, it does believe in and insists upon respect for the law, for white supremacy and for Protestantism....White men, we are determined, shall be dominant in the country....We will protect the American home, American womanhood. We believe that the negro has a future in his own race, and in his own way, but he shall not mingle equally in the society of white men....Jews pick quarrels with the Klan because the Klan insists that all members be Gentiles, but they have their own Ḥānai B'rīth, don't they? They are organized for their own purposes, and we are organizing for our own purposes. We are pro-white, pro-Gentile and pro-Protestant....Brothers, a Jew never made any money in his life, yet we all know he has most of it. The Gentile makes it and the Jew gets it away from him. All Jews are descended from Jacob, the greatest rascal that ever lived, who robbed his kind old father-in-law....We are going to see that Gentile money is kept in Gentile hands....We are not fighting the Catholics, but we insist that this country is a Protestant country and we intend to keep it so. The Declaration of Independence is a Protestant document. Every clause in that document was created by men of Protestant faith....Many people who are born in America are not Americans and I will tell you why. The Klan believes that to be a 100 per cent American every citizen must subscribe to certain fundamental things. These are a belief in the
separation of church and state, a free press, free speech, liberty of conscience, and free public schools. There isn't a good Catholic in America who will subscribe to one of these things. He cannot do it and remain a good Catholic. And, above all, he hates our glorious free public school system. Oh, my friends, the time has come for a reckoning with the priesthood in America. We are ready for them and nothing can stop us now. We shall tear off the mask and show the truth. We shall go into the monasteries and the nunneries and show the death that exists there and we shall rescue the thousands of girls... This we have sworn to do and we are four million strong.... Every lie you see in the press is born in the brain of a Catholic priest.... We will censor every book that goes into the public schools so that the poisonous lies may be kept from the minds of our children. That is my job. And we shall require every school teacher in America to take an oath to support the constitution and the flag or get out.²⁰

During his talk, twenty-five hooded and robed members of the Klan sat on the stage behind Dr. Fowler. At one point he seized a small flag and holding it aloft, exclaimed, "You all love this flag, don't you?" When the applause had subsided a little he turned and faced the hooded members of the Klan, who rose from their seats. He held the little flag before them with the command to salute it. All of them saluted. The speaker then turned and held the flag out to the audience with a gesture indicating that it should stand. Practically everyone rose and saluted. A few remained seated, refusing to honor the flag under such circumstances.

Cards were passed out among the audience at the end of the speech, cards offering those present a chance to apply for membership and they were "signed by hundreds" and returned to the speaker, according

²° The Milwaukee Journal, October 6, 1922, carries a full transcript of the speech taken by a reporter of that paper. The talk was widely reprinted in Wisconsin as an illustration of what the Klan stood for. See the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), October 13, 1922, and the Oshkosh Northwestern, October 11, 1922, for reprints of the transcript.
to the Milwaukee Journal's reporter. "We will never solicit you,"

Dr. Fowler cautioned these applicants, "But you will be 'investigated' and, if you are the right sort of person, some time, somewhere, somehow, someone will come to you and tell you how you can get to someplace, somewhere, sometime..." 21

The reaction to the speech by Dr. Fowler was electric. He was denounced by every religious and social organization in Milwaukee. The Socialist administration of Milwaukee was submerged under a flood of startled questions as to why the Ku Klux Klan was allowed to use the auditorium. A hurried meeting of the Auditorium's Board of Directors voted to instruct Manager Joseph Brieß of the Milwaukee Auditorium to refuse to lease the building to the Klan in the future. 22 In case the Klan should attempt to rent the building by subterfuge, Brieß was ordered to inspect in advance the programs of all organizations who rented the hall. In addition, Mayor Daniel C. Hoan denounced the Klan publicly and said he would do everything in his power to oppose its growth. 23

The Fowler meeting was intended as an advertisement for a large outdoor demonstration and initiation the Klan had scheduled for three

21 Milwaukee Journal, October 13, 1922.
22 Milwaukee Journal, October 19, 1922.
23 Mayor Daniel Hoan of Milwaukee sent a letter to Fowler at Atlanta which said, in part, "Let me state that for law and order Milwaukee stands first among all the cities in the world. Consequently, for you to come here from the state where lynching is the most popular outdoor sport to tell the people that they need this organization with its hood and nighties to insure law and order is in itself ridiculous.... Milwaukee will become the hottest place this side of Hell for the KKK if any of the Klan pounce upon one of our citizens, whether he be black or white, red or yellow, Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant." The letter, in full, is in the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), October 19, 1922.
days later. In his talk Fowler had predicted 10,000 men would turn out and more than 1,000 new Klansmen would be initiated. To stage the show, Klan leaders had asked permission of state officials to use the state Fair Grounds in Milwaukee. State officials had received and handled the request in a routine manner; when everything appeared to be in order, they had approved the rental of the park. When the Fowler fiasco took place, and even before that when word had leaked out that the Klan had rented the park, state officials came under heavy fire for opening up public property to Klan use. At the eleventh hour Governor Blaine moved in to prevent repercussions against his administration and cancelled the Klan's permission to use the park. The Klan, indignant at this, but not balked, moved their initiation to the property of one of its Milwaukee members and staged its meeting anyway. On October 7, 1922, the state of Wisconsin was treated to its first glimpse of the Klan's large-scale demonstrations and initiations. More than 2000 persons attended the meeting, and during the evening more than 300 new members were initiated into the Klan Order under the light given off by a huge fiery cross.

For the next three years these large Klan meetings became commonplace in Wisconsin. The largest meetings held in 1923 were the gatherings at Racine on July 29th and the meeting of the Milwaukee Klan at Pleasant Valley Park in West Allis in September, both of which drew about 15,000 persons. The all-day Racine meeting, the Milwaukee Journal reported, was the first annual meeting of the Provisional

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24 Milwaukee Journal, October 6, 1922.
25 Milwaukee Journal, October 8, 1922. For the Klan reaction to the whole Fowler-State Fair Park affair, see The Dawn, October 21, 1922.
26 Fourth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 13, 1928.
Klan #2 of Racine. The picnic and initiation were held in a grove, part
of a 90 acre tract leased for the purpose. Two vacant fields were
designated for parking of autos, but these were soon filled and the
highways for a half mile in all directions were jammed by the cars of
those in attendance. This was the first meeting in Wisconsin at which
Klansmen appeared unmasked, and many curious persons not in the Klan
apparently came to see who was in the Klan. Colonel Simmons, the
Imperial Wizard, was the speaker of the evening. The crowd became
very thick as evening drew on and those who had had to work during the
day could come. The Klan had rigged two mammoth fiery crosses out
of cross poles covered with electric lights. One was approximately
40 feet tall and was visible in Racine, a little more than two miles
away. By the time the fireworks display was fired following Simmons'
speech, the crowd was so thick that one could hardly move. Ten
clerks were kept busy in a tent set up by the Racine Klan furnishing
information to those interested in joining.27 The Milwaukee meeting
was a duplicate of the Racine affair, large in scale and of wide
interest in the entire area.

In 1924 large Klan meetings were held in many of the communities
in central and southern Wisconsin. Three of the largest meetings of
that year were held at Cornell, a village in Chippewa County, at which
10,000 were present, at Darien in Walworth County at which 10,000
persons were present and at Ladysmith where about 5,000 persons put

27 Milwaukee Journal, July 29, 1923. While Klansmen appeared
at this gathering without masks, it was one of their rare appearances
anywhere without these coverings to hide their identity. In each
community, the Klan leaders were known, and when they led Klan
parades, they marched with their visors up. But the bulk of the
Klansmen always hid their identity.
in appearance for an all day meeting. In the summer of 1924, more than 2000 Klansmen in full regalia paraded around the capitol square in Madison in a mass demonstration of the strength of the Klan in Wisconsin. The biggest meeting of the year, however, was held again in Racine where more than 30,000 Klansmen and interested friends attended the second annual picnic of the Racine Klan. 28

Big Klan gatherings continued to be held throughout the state in the next summer season. The largest event of the year 1925 was the meeting at Oshkosh on the fourth of July. More than 25,000 persons, Klansmen and other interested persons, attended an all-day meeting held at the Oshkosh City Park. It is interesting to note the degree to which the Klan organization was found acceptable in the Fox River Valley city. The program of the day’s events shows that the mayor of the city welcomed the Klan and that the city threw itself open to the meeting in every way possible. The program for the day illustrates this very well.

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27 Fourth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 13, 1928.
The Programme for the Day--

Morning--
10:00 A.M. -- Address of Welcome.............Mayor of Oshkosh
10:30 A.M. -- Response - Imperial Representative--C. B. Lewis
11:15 A.M. -- Address - National Director of the Junior Klan--Paul Poock
12:00 A.M. -- Dinner will be served at the English Lutheran Dining Hall

Afternoon
1:00 p.m. -- Band Concert.............Milwaukee Klan Band
2:00 p.m. -- Exhibition Drill.............Milwaukee Drill Team No. 1
            Madison Klavaliers
            Milwaukee Klavaliers
2:15 p.m. -- Klan Wedding.............Prominent Young Couple of
            Milwaukee
3:00 p.m. -- Address "America".............Judge Charles J. Orbinson (sic)
            Indianapolis
4:30 p.m. -- Parade will form on Main Street, opposite Fair Grounds.
            All men parade with masks down with the exception of
            the leaders. Each unit will form behind its float, if
            they have one, carrying a banner showing the name of
            the Unit. Absolute quiet must be maintained in the line
            of march, all men and women marching with arms folded.
            No singing or shouting. Remember you are carrying the
            honor of the Klan and your conduct must exemplify our
            principles.
5:30 p.m. -- Parade will move promptly at 5:30 p.m. Line of March--
            Main Street south to Eleventh Street, west on Eleventh
            Street to Clark Street, north on Clark Street to
            Jackson Drive to Fair Grounds.
6:30 p.m. -- Luncheon

Evening--
8:00 p.m. --Klan Wedding................Prominent young couple of Madison
8:30 p.m. -- Public Naturalization. All candidates will check in
            and receive ticket of Naturalization from the Winnebago
            County Headquarters. No one will be Naturalized without
            this certificate from Winnebago Headquarters.
9:30 p.m. -- Address....................B. Bellows, Milwaukee
10:30 p.m. -- Fireworks..................Largest and best ever 29

The profits accrued, if any, are to go to the Winnebago County Organization
and not to any individual.

29 The day's program is taken from page 6 of the Ku Klux Klan
Souvenir Programme of the State Klanvocation, held at Oshkosh, July 4,
1925. A copy of this program is in Private Collection A. Details of
the program can be obtained from the Oshkosh Northwestern, July 5, 1925.
This program of events was rather standard for Klan meetings throughout the Middle West. Most of the Klan's mass meetings consisted of a picnic dinner, Klan speakers, a parade through the host city in full regalia as a climax of the afternoon, a return to more food, a major Klan speaker in the evening, followed by the initiation of a class of new members taken through their initiation ritual under the lights of a fiery cross. Fire-works displays, invariably "the best ever", capped the day's entertainment. Sometimes special features were developed in different areas. In Wisconsin, the specialty was a Klan wedding. A member of the Klan and a lady of the Women's Klan were often married before the assembled thousands. The stunt was quite effective in arousing interest and attracting viewers. Who can resist a wedding? The Klan gatherings, like any event of this kind before the coming of sound movies and television, drew exceptionally well and furnished a pleasant holiday for small town and farm folks.

In other states such meetings were not held as quietly as they were in Wisconsin, where they became a conventional part of the society's life. Some people resented them, but they never constituted a majority, nor were they willing to take actions such as were taken elsewhere. Twice in Pennsylvania, for instance, the prospect of a Klan parade through a town brought pitched battles between Klan and anti-Klan, and at Carnegie, Klansman Thomas Abbott was killed in one ------------------

30 The Indiana Klan always made a feature cut of Klan funerals, but the Wisconsin Klan started nearer the other end of life and featured marriages. Sometimes the Klan staged two at a single meeting, but invariably there was one marriage at every large demonstration. See above, 107, and note that at the Oshkosh Klonvocation two weddings were performed, one as a part of the afternoon program and the other as one of the evening features.
of the riots. In Niles, Ohio, the resistance also flared into violence, with several persons being killed. In Indianapolis, Mayor Lew Shank opposed the Klan to such an extent that he waited until the Klan had begun parading down the streets of the city, and then sent fire engines careening down those same streets on their way to false alarms. But not so in Wisconsin. Violence only once flared forth at these Klan parades.

That one incident occurred in Boscobel in Grant County, the hometown of Governor Blaine. Boscobel was one of those sleepy little towns of about 1500 population that dot the prairies of the Middle West. It had had a quiet existence until the Klan organized in Grant County in early 1922. In two years it had become one of the larger ones in the state. While some people resented its presence, it came to be relatively well accepted by 1924, and no violence nor resistance was ever offered to it until that summer.

In July of 1924 advertisements appeared everywhere announcing that the Klan of Grant County had chosen Boscobel for one of its open meetings. Placards, handbills, and hand-painted signs appeared over-night on fence posts, the sides of buildings, and along the highways everywhere announcing a big Klan gathering for Boscobel on Saturday afternoon, August 16, 1924. The Klan announced a program of fireworks, a naturalization ceremony, and a Klan parade down Main Street at about dusk. Word of the event spread rapidly throughout

31 For a full discussion of the Carnegie riot, see Loucks, Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania, 128 ff.
32 For a discussion of the Niles, Ohio, riot, see 238-264.
33 See below, 150n.
central Wisconsin, and when the day arrived, more than seven thousand persons swarmed the streets of Boscobel.

Late in the afternoon Klan speakers had had their say, and as dusk approached, the Klansmen began to form in regalia for the parade through the town. Silently, arms folded across their chests, heads up, not a sound issuing from the ranks of the marchers, the Klan stepped out, turned into Main Street, and began to pass the throngs of massed spectators that lined the sidewalks and the doorways along the street. The Klan parade proceeded quietly until it reached a point about one third of the way through the business district.

The town of Boscobel had no regular police force. It had two deputies employed, on a day and night shift. These men patrolled the streets and watched the stores of the merchants. In fact, they were more or less private store guards, since the merchants paid most of their salary with the town contributing only ten dollars a month to each. One of these men was George Shields, an elderly man who had held his job for many years. While many city and county officials had been approached and had joined the Klan, night-watch George Shields had been open in his denunciation of the whole movement. He had boasted that some day he and the Klan would clash openly.

George Shields held a place on the curb as the Klan approached. As the first marchers approached him, Shields stepped out from the ranks of the crowd and gave a signal to the leading Klansman to halt. They brushed him aside and marched on down the street. When they did this, he snatched at the mask of the leading marcher and succeeded in pulling it off the face of George Hunt, a prominent Boscobel merchant. Apparently pleased with his success, he lifted the mask of the next
marcher, skipped the third, a woman, and reached for the mask of the fourth one in the file nearest him. Just as he touched the visor, he was felled from behind with a mighty blow from the fist of Klansman Bert Felsch, and was knocked sprawling in the dirt of the street.

Klansman Felsch of Muscoda, a neighboring town, had been marching farther back in the right hand file, and as he looked ahead, he had seen what was happening. Felsch had broken ranks, slipped up along the side of the marching Klansmen, and had worked his way into position to knock Shields out of his idea of raising Klan masks.

But Shields reacted more violently than expected. Sobbing with rage and cursing violently he jumped up and glared at Felsch. Then, more quickly than it takes to tell it, he drew the pistol he carried on his belt, cocked the gun, slammed the business end of the barrel against Felsch' chest, and pulled the trigger. There was no doubt, in his state of rage, of his intent to kill. But the gun mis-fired, and Felsch was unharmed. Before a second attempt could be made, the crowd swarmed over the two men, separated them, and disarmed Shields. Felsch and Shields were hustled away to the Grant County Jail, the Klansmen re-formed their ranks, and the parade moved on to a finish.

But that was not the end of the Shield's case. Governor Blaine, a man bitterly opposed to the Klan, chose to push the incident. But, unfortunately, he was not on the scene. From Madison he demanded of

34 Newspaper accounts of the action at Boscobel are a little confused. Compare the accounts in the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), for August 26, 1924, with the account of the action given in the Wisconsin State Journal, (Madison, Wisconsin), August 26, 1924. For the best accounts with stress on different details, but with the facts of the case identical, see the two accounts (Shield's and State's) given in "George Shields vs. the State of Wisconsin", Cases and Briefs v. 1539, 187 Wis. 384-465.
the Grant County Sheriff that he prosecute the Klansmen who were responsible for the rioting in Boscobel. A bitter quarrel broke out between George Clementson, the Sheriff, who insisted he was going to prosecute Shields, and Blaine, who insisted that the Klan be prosecuted for causing trouble.35

Ultimately, Clementson won out, George Shields, not the Klan was brought to trial in the State Courts, in October 1924. Very quickly the question of whether he had the right to do what he had done was almost forgotten as a constitutional issue came to the fore. Did the Klan have the right to march masked in the state of Wisconsin? Could Klansmen wear masks in public, and legally refuse to disclose to governmental authorities the identity of their membership? Judge Sherman E. Smalley decided the case in favor of the prosecution, and ruled that it was legal for the Klan to march masked in Wisconsin and that the state had no power to force Klansmen to reveal their identity or that of their friends.36

The differences between Blaine, the governor, and Clementson, the Sheriff, were political ones. The Sheriff of Grant County, also Blaine's county, was a conservative Republican and Blaine was a Progressive Republican. Clementson did not wish to take action that might rebound to Blaine's credit; therefore, when Blaine asked the arrest of Klansmen for causing a riot, Clementson insisted on arresting Shields. The argument reached the point where Clementson defied a direct order of the Governor, and was suspended. Blaine later compromised the issue, lifted the Clementson suspension, and allowed the case to go to court with Shields the defendant, and not the Klan. To follow the dispute, see these references: Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), August 23, 1924; Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), September 5, 1924; Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), September 6, 1924; Milwaukee Journal, September 6, 1924; Milwaukee Journal, September 7, 1924; Wisconsin State Journal (Madison Wisconsin), September 9, 1924; Milwaukee Sentinel, September 10, 1924; Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), October 24, 1924.
established a precedent in Wisconsin law that stands today. George Shields was convicted and sentenced to a short prison term for his actions.

But the case was appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In *Shields vs. the State of Wisconsin*, the Supreme Court held that the ruling of the lower court was correct, and recognized the precedent set therein.37 Shields' conviction stood. But the case had become such a *cause celebre*, that Blaine interceded. He pardoned Shields and the merchants of Boscobel welcomed him back to his old job with a raise in pay.38

The danger of being unmasked had worried Klansmen for a long time. The Klan had hardly appeared in the state before members of the state legislature had dropped bills into the hopper to force the Klan in Wisconsin to reveal the identity of its membership lists. The usual device suggested in these bills was to make the Klan file a list of


38 *Capital Times* (Madison, Wisconsin), October 2, 1925. The Klan opposed the pardoning of Shields and circulated petitions throughout the state to be presented to the governor, but to no avail. *Wisconsin News* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), September 9, 1925.

The only other instances of violence in connection with the Klan were not really that. In Waukesha in 1924, when the Klan announced it was going to begin organizing, it met resistance. It was first going to meet in the Stock Pavilion in that city, but was denied the use of the building. The Klan held its meeting in the Commercial Hotel then, but when the Klansmen and interested persons collected, so did other persons. A group of several hundred men threatened to cause trouble, but when the Klansmen agreed to go home, they, too, dispersed. See *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 27 and 28, 1924, and *Milwaukee Journal*, March 10, 1924. Two years later, at Hudson, Wisconsin, a trial was held for fourteen persons charged with inciting a riot at a Klan meeting on June 14, 1926. But they were acquitted, and no damage was done by them. The defendants included a woman, several students of Marquette University and a group of local tradesmen and merchants. *Milwaukee Journal*, June 29, 1926.
its members with the Secretary of State, and the list would then be public property and open to inspection to anyone who wanted to see it. After several trials, the House and Senate of the Wisconsin legislature approved a bill to accomplish this, and sent it up to Governor Blaine for his signature. The bill finally approved was different in form from most of the suggestions. It would "prohibit any person from appearing on any street or highway or other place open to the view of the general public with his face or person practically or completely concealed by means of a mask, regalia, or paraphernalia with intent thereby to conceal the identity of such person; provided, however, that this section shall not be construed to prohibit of such means of concealment for the purpose of amusement or entertainment." To the surprise of everyone, considering his antipathy for the Klan, Governor Blaine returned the bill to the Legislature with the following veto message:

39 It was popular sport in the 1920s to pass bills limiting the right of the Klan to appear masked and to bar the Klan from holding meetings in public buildings. The Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), January 23, 1923, contains a list of what states other than Wisconsin had done to halt the movement of citizens who happened to be Klansmen. During the Spring of 1923 many bills were proposed to prevent the Klan from appearing in masks in the state. For samples, see Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), January 23, 1923, and February 13, 1923; and the Milwaukee Sentinel, January 23, 1923. Many cities barred the Klan from using public buildings. In Madison, for instance, the Klan was refused the use of Central High School, (Capital Times, January 7, 1925); the use of the Stock Pavilion on the University of Wisconsin Campus by the University's Board of Regents (Capital Times, August 6, 1924); and even turned down the Klan's request to use the schools of Madison to present a play (Wisconsin State Journal). All these things are interesting in light of the position taken by the American Civil Liberties Union when that organization came out against any bans on the rights of the Klan to hold meetings. The ACLU said that it considered the right to free assemblage as basic to any other things. While not pro-Klan, still it thought the Klan was being deprived of some of its rights, as an American organization. Chicago Tribune, August 17, 1925. 40 Text of the bill (#2185), was reprinted in the Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), March 23, 1923.
The proposed law accomplishes nothing, except perchance to restrain the exuberance of youth from improvising the regalia of the 'merrie men of England' and from engaging in the imaginary rescue of Maid Marian by a modern Robin Hood; and even in the interpretation of that story the doughty might hold the performance to be an amusement or entertainment and therefore outside the prohibition of the law. No, this bill if enacted into law, would give no additional force to the present criminal statute, and would mean nothing and prohibit nothing that is not now prohibited by law....In fact, section 4500 is more comprehensive in prohibiting whatever was aimed at by this proposed law....I see no reason to write upon the statutes a meaningless provision the presumed purposes of which are already comprehensively covered by the present law....

In Wisconsin there were few of the things that made the Klan famous in other areas. Wisconsin citizens were threatened by the Klan only once—if the Baker incident noted above was really an example of Klan action. There is no record of the Klan taking violent action against the person of any Wisconsin resident. Boycotts do not appear anywhere in the evidence, although it is doubtful that some did not exist here and there. The Wisconsin Klan did try, occasionally, to enforce morals in the community, and turned down other chances to do so. In Madison and in Oshkosh they staged liquor raids, in Milwaukee they prevented the marriage, for a time, of a white man and a Negro woman, and in Madison they attempted to give a contribution to a Negro minister, but had it refused. Parades there were, large meetings and small meetings; fiery crosses burned here and there, and

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41 The Senate Journal (Wisconsin), March 23, 1923.
42 Ralph Hammond said that Klansmen were often asked by wives to threaten errant husbands, but that so far as he knew, the Klan turned down every such request. Notes of an interview with Ralph Hammond by a member of the Attorney-General's Staff, Klan Ouster Case, 1946.
43 See below, 139 ff.
44 Wisconsin News (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), April 19, 1924.
45 Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), October 23, 1922.
Klansmen tried their hand in politics. But Wisconsin Klansmen were devoted to picnics, to fraternalism, and to the ordinary routine of life. They were not notably spectacular at any one thing, and that applied to politics as well.

The Klan in Wisconsin politics

The success of the Klan in politics in any state depended upon whether Klansmen could move into the dominant political party, seize control, and succeed in getting their candidates nominated. Or, failing that, whether they could impress the leaders of the dominant party with their strength as a highly-organized secret bloc of votes and thus gain concessions from the major party. Klansmen had no hope of success in the minority party, and they never chose to develop a third party movement.

In Wisconsin in the 1920s the dominant party was the Progressive Republican machine that "Old Bob" La Follette had built up in the first two decades of the twentieth century. With the Progressives the Klan could make no headway. In the campaign of 1924 when the senior Robert La Follette was making his run for the presidency as a third party candidate, he was asked a staged political question by Robert Scripps of the Scripps's newspapers. How did "Fighting Bob" look upon the Klan? "I am unalterably opposed to the evident purpose of the organization known as the Ku Klux Klan as shown in its public acts." La Follette answered. 46 The state leaders of the party denounced the Klan as well.

46 La Follette's reply to Robert Scripps was syndicated and appeared in all newspapers with wire service on August 8, 1924. See Milwaukee Journal, August 8, 1924.
In 1924 Governor Blaine replied to a letter from "a citizen of Spooner" after the Klan had gained some real strength in Wisconsin. "The Klan is a species of invisible government—secret government. Its membership is unknown, and in most cases the membership suppresses its identity with the Klan....They hide their identity behind a mask. As a form of invisible government it is a bad thing, a wrong thing." The Klan had no hopes of breaking down the solid front of the dominant party organization, and they learned that La Follette, Blaine and their cohorts did not scare. Hence, the Klan was not particularly effective in Wisconsin politics at any time because of its failure to make any sort of bargain with the dominant party.

The major enemy of the Klan within the state government was John J. Blaine, the Governor of the state. He had announced his opposition to the organization as soon as it was exposed in 1921, and he never let up in his opposition. He barred Klan meetings on public property, and he harrassed the Klan at every point. Klansmen fought him, but were never able to defeat him because he was backed too strongly for them to make a dent in his vote.

47 Blaine answered the letter from a "Citizen of Spooner" for its political effect in April 1924. See the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), April 14, 1924. Later in the campaign of that fall, Blaine made his language stronger and called the Klan a "menacing Plague", Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin), September 29, 1924.

48 The depth of the feeling the Klan held against Blaine can be seen from this item from a pamphlet published by the Wisconsin Klan. Called "An Analysis of the Governor's Anathema" it contained this item on page 14. This story, the pamphlet said, was reprinted from the Catholic Milwaukee Citizen: Father Lambert, who lived in his boyhood near the Blaine family said that on one occasion, when Blaine's father, Ephraim, was running for office, his enemies tried to rouse anti-Catholic feeling against him. They alleged that he had become a "Romanist" just like his wife. Ephraim thereupon went to the Roman Catholic Priest and said, 'Now, Father, you know I am not a Catholic. But my enemies say I am. Would you have any objection to give (sic) me a written statement to that effect?' 'Oh, certainly,' replied the Priest, 'I'll do so with
The Klan's political techniques in Wisconsin were similar to those used in other states. The Klan, unable to move into control of the major party, attempted to throw its organized strength behind candidates favorable to it, or to the things the Klan stood for. The Klan preferred a man friendly to itself in public office; better still was a man who was an actual member. So in each election the Klan endeavored to determine the attitudes of the men running for public office, tabulate them, and make available to all Klansmen the information concerning these men. Klansmen were supposed to know what to do at that point.

In Wisconsin the Klan attempted to wield its strength through the use of a "decade" system. The Klansmen met in their Klaverns and decided upon the men whom they would support. Then each Klansman took it upon himself to speak to ten other men, non-Klansmen, about the candidates the Klan favored. They were to speak not as Klansmen, but as interested citizens, impressed by the men they were supporting. Despite the obvious duplications inherent in such a system, it worked well.

By 1924 the Klan was electing, or helping to elect, men in many areas of the state to local offices. For instance, in Chippewa County, where the Klan was strong, the Klan elected ten of the eleven men it backed for local offices in the 1924 election. Although specific figures are not available for other areas, Lynch indicates that "in some communities the Klan was one of the most effective political pleasure," And he wrote, 'I hereby certify that Ephraim Blaine is not a Catholic and, in my opinion is not fit to be a member of any Christian denomination.' Private Collection A.

49 Sixth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 13, 1928.
50 Fifth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 12, 1928.
machines the state has seen—especially in Chippewa County, Oshkosh, Racine and Kenosha was this so."

The type of information collected by the Klan leaders and circulated about the candidates is illustrated by the following Klan documents:

Below is information of a political nature. The names of the men who have a star before their names are worthy of the support of all true Americans at this particular time.

Governor Blaine Anti-Klan Anti-American
Lt. Governor Huber Anti-Klan
Secretary of State *Zimmerman
Treasurer Levitan No information other than a Jew.
County Clerk *Johnson

If you are a hundred per cent American show it by going to the polls and casting your vote....

Or, a more elaborate form:

WHICH IS YOUR CHOICE?

Edward F. Dithmar—age 52 years—Married—
Three children—Thirty years of legal and business experience—Understands the needs of the farmer, worker, and problems of Government. Has been Lt. Governor of Wisconsin for six years with a splendid record. He stands for President Coolidge and his policies. He opposes the Madison ring.

R. M. La Follette, Jr.—age 30 years—unmarried
—no children—no legal or business experience trade or profession—Never served his town, city, or county or his state in any official capacity. Opposes President Coolidge and his policies. He is the candidate of the Madison ring.

WHY SEND A BOY TO MILL—WHEN WE HAVE A MAN???

51 Sixth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 13, 1928.
52 This is a bulletin sent out by the Dane County office of the Klan dated October 30, 1924. Private Collection A.
53 This information comes from a special bulletin sent out by Klan state headquarters on September 25, 1925. Private Collection A.
This sort of information proved effective wherever there were enough Klansmen to make their weight felt. Otherwise, it had no effect at all on politics.

One of the more surprising incidents of the Klan's career turned up when the Klan in Milwaukee came out in support of Daniel Hoan, the Socialist, in the mayoralty contest in 1924. The Badger-American, the semi-official Klan newspaper in Wisconsin, told Klansmen that they should vote for Dr. Elmergreen for Mayor in the primaries, but if he lost, then shift to Hoan for the general election. Hoan bitterly denounced Klan support, but the fact that the Klan was willing to support him at all indicates again the degree to which the Klan had brought Socialists into the Milwaukee chapter of the organization.54

In 1925, Robert M. La Follette, Sr., died suddenly. His senatorial term ran until 1928, and it was necessary to choose a replacement by a special election. Robert M. La Follette, Jr. ran as the candidate of the Progressive Republicans. The Klan distrusted him as a young upstart and the captive of his father's party.55 In July the Klan sent out a notice to all Klan officers to attend the conventions in each county of the Republican party to pack the delegations to the state Republican convention if they could. The notice:

Milwaukee, Wis.
July 16, 1925

TO: ALL GREAT TITANS, FIELD REPRESENTATIVES, EXALTED CYCLOPES AND KLANSMEN.

54 Milwaukee Sentinel, March 16, 1924. See the original articles in the Badger-American, March 7, 1924.

55 Note the third item in the introduction for this chapter and the content of the political "analysis" on page 119 above.
FROM: C. B. LEWIS

GENTLEMEN:

There will be held in each County in Wis. a convention to elect delegates to the Republican Convention. The purpose of this Convention is to nominate a man to run for the office of United States Senator in Opposition to Robert M. LaFollette, or John J. Blaine. We believe you should immediately ascertain when this Convention is to be held in your county and notify all Klansmen of this convention that they may attend same, and see that the proper kind of delegates are sent to the Republican convention.

Remember our Slogan--PUT ONLY AMERICANS ON GUARD--

NUF SED

Sincerely yours

Itsub

C. B. Lewis
Imperial Representative
State of Wisconsin

Charles Lewis, the Grand Dragon, ultimately asked Daniel Woodward, one of the three Great Titans of the Klan, to run against "Young Bob" La Follette, and rally support against him. When he accepted and entered the primary contest, the Klan supported him with handbills that read:

Unwaverling support of the American Public School, believing with our fathers that the free public school and universal education is the cradle of our American Democracy and the foundation upon which this government rests.

Strict economy in administration and reduction of taxes.

Limitation of undesirable immigration to protect American labor and to reduce crime and dependency of the nation.

This is Wisconsin's opportunity for a new deal, a chance to elect a Real American to office. A man who can always be depended upon.

As you love your God, your country, your Home, don't neglect your chance to redeem Wisconsin on Sept. 15th and restore it to

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A special bulletin sent to All Great Titans, Field Representatives Exalted Cyclops and Klansmen under date of July 16, 1928. Private
Woodward lost, but a year later he ran against John J. Blaine in the 1926 senatorial primaries. Again he failed to stop the Progressive ticket as Blaine won and moved on up to the United States Senate.

The Klan's greatest success in Wisconsin politics was with Fred Zimmerman. He had become Secretary of State as a Progressive Republican in 1918 as a very young man, but his affiliations with the Progressive wing of the party never held him very tightly. He was an opportunist in politics, he shifted with the political winds, and when the Klan came along, he tacked over to a new course that allowed the Klan a place in his plans. Apparently he feared that the Klan might become a real force in Wisconsin politics, as it had in other states, and in 1922 he protected himself from that possibility by joining the Wisconsin Klan's Milwaukee chapter.

For two years he carried on a nominal membership, occasionally attending meetings, sometimes addressing the meetings with a political talk on one of his favorite issues. His decision to resign from the Klan came suddenly when in 1924 he got into trouble over his handling of the affairs of the Secretary of State's office. Zimmerman had fired his chief deputy in the State Office, Alex Cobban, on grounds of inefficiency. But Cobban appealed to the state Civil Service Commission and was awarded a hearing on his case. In the testimony at the hearings

Collection A.

57 Handbill for Daniel Woodward, n.d., Private Collection A.
it developed that Cobban, a Roman Catholic in religion, felt that he had been fired because of that fact rather than because of incompetence. Zimmerman was called to the stand and questioned about his firing of Cobban. The attorney for Cobban, John L. Baker, made the testimony as difficult as possible for Zimmerman:

Mr. Baker: Mr. Zimmerman, did you, after your election in 1922 and before you took office in 1923, go to one or more persons then in the department of State and inquire as to who and how many Catholics were on the pay-roll in that department?

(Bitter argument between counsels)

Mr. Zimmerman: I refuse to answer the question on advice of counsel.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Zimmerman, are you a member of any fraternal or secret organization, the membership of which is not accessible to and is kept secret from the public?

Mr. Zimmerman: I refuse to answer....

Mr. Baker: Are you a member of or affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan?

Mr. Zimmerman: I refuse to answer....

Mr. Baker: Did you belong or associate with any organization adverse to the Catholic faith....and all of the membership are known within their group as citizens of the Invisible Empire?

Mr. Zimmerman: I refuse to answer....

The testimony of one of Mr. Zimmerman's clerks was interesting:

Mr. Baker: That is true, he did say it to you? Answer yes or no. Is it true that he said that to you, Mr. Gordon?

Lance Gordon: He said, "Why don't you join, Lance?"

Fred Zimmerman was in a tight spot that might wreck his political career in Wisconsin—and he knew it. The investigation was recessed

58 Civil Service Commission: *Hearings on Alex Cobban* (April 14-17 1924), 198.
59 Ibid., 203.
for several days at this point and Zimmerman drove to Milwaukee where he went directly to the office of John Kleist, the Socialist-Klan lawyer, to talk over the situation. Charles Lewis, the Imperial Representative at the time, was called into the office and all agreed it would be best for Zimmerman to resign from the Klan. Lewis issued a special dispensation and accepted Mr. Zimmerman's resignation on the spot. Later, Zimmerman returned to Madison and filed an affidavit with the Civil Service Commission in which he swore he was not a member of the Klan, or any other organization opposed to the Catholic religion.  

In 1926 the old charge of "Klan" rose up to harass Fred Zimmerman as he ran for the governorship of the state. He had Klan support throughout. The Klan, by packing the delegations from the various counties, had insured that the Regular Republican organization would put a weak slate into the primaries against Fred Zimmerman, a slate he could surely defeat. He won, and went into the general election in November with Klan support.  

Fred Zimmerman's problem during the campaign was to make certain that he kept Klan support while convincing the rest of Wisconsin society that he had never been a Klansman. He talked to Klansmen and told them he was not a Klansman—but they would wink and smile and know that a man in his position did not dare admit his membership. But behind the closed doors of the Klaverns they admitted freely that Fred was one of their own kind. They were easily convinced, and early in the

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60 Eighth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 16, 1928.
61 Seventh Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 16, 1928.
campaign Zimmerman became certain that nothing he could do would alienate Klan supporters. 62

His problem then was to win over the Catholics, on the other side, and as many as possible of the group that was neither Klan nor Catholic. He announced time and again from the platform that he "was not, had never been, nor ever will be" a Klansman. 63 He had close friends among the Catholics in Wisconsin, and he convinced them of his innocence of the charges that were hurled against him. He was so successful in this that Catholics worked hard for his election. 64 He hired a Negro Jazz band to play at his headquarters at the Plankington Building in Milwaukee; when he took trips he got Jewish Rabbis and Catholic Priests to ride with him in his car. 65 When he visited a

62 Eighth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 16, 1928.
Zimmerman's most famous statement of his position in regard to the Klan was in his Fond du Lac speech. Milwaukee Sentinel, July 13, 1926. A little later his campaign managers felt it necessary to have him make the statement to a member of the Catholic hierarchy. Therefore, on August 27, 1926, he replied to Father A. H. Arentz' letter and stated again that he was not a Klansman. Wisconsin State Journal, (Madison, Wisconsin), August 26, 1926. To these statements the Capital Times remarked, editorially, that "if this declaration (Fond du Lac speech) harmonized with his life since he has been filling the office of Secretary of State, we could all applaud him and say 'More power to you, Fred.' Those of us who know him at short range, who have been in close daily contact with him for many months know that Fred R. Zimmerman not only is not opposed to the Klan but advised at least one of his office staff to join that organization...." Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), July 20, 1928.

64 Frank Starck of Madison was so taken in by Zimmerman that he travelled around the state getting groups of Catholic priests to vote for Zimmerman. "They knew me and they believed me. Why, I know of a meeting of priests in Milwaukee before the election at which 30 priests expressed themselves in favor of Fred....I never had an idea he was a Klansman until just before the election." Ninth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 17, 1928.

65 Zimmerman's campaign leaders told Lynch that they had been glad to see the Klan issue arise. They felt they could meet it, and that in a dead campaign with no issues, it was just what was needed. Ibid.
community, he called at the homes of the Priests, and in De Pere he gave five dollars for a special mass to be said on the occasion of the opening of a parochial school. The Priest mentioned his name in announcing the Mass. 66 "Election officials in De Pere told subsequently of Democrats coming to them to ask how they could split the ticket because they wanted to vote Democratic except that they wanted to vote for Zimmerman whom they referred to as "The Republican Catholic candidate." 67

Zimmerman's master coup, however, was his use of the Reverend Stanley Maslowski. In Milwaukee there was a community of Polish Methodists, and Rev. Mr. Maslowski was a Methodist minister of that group and a close friend of Fred Zimmerman. He had the rather unusual habit of wearing a reversed collar with a black robe, in the manner of the Catholic priesthood. Fred Zimmerman took him along on all of his trips around the state, placing him on the platform with the local dignitaries. But he never indicated that he was not a Catholic priest. As a matter of fact, as far as he would go was to introduce him as the Reverend Maslowski. The frocked "priest" on the platform added immensely to the popularity of Zimmerman among Catholics and won him good will throughout the Catholic communities of Wisconsin. 68

Such tactics counter-acted the attack launched upon Zimmerman by his opponent, Charles B. Perry. Perry obtained affidavits from

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Eighth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 16, 1928.
William Wieseman and Herman Huhlman, former King Kleagle and former Kleexter (Outer Guard) of the Milwaukee Provisional Klan in which each swore that Mr. Zimmerman had attended numerous meetings of the Klan in Milwaukee's Alhambra Hall to which only regularly affiliated members of the Klan were ever admitted. They stated that Fred Zimmerman had been initiated at the Silver Spring Road meeting in 1922. But such tactics were not effective even when most of the press in Wisconsin carried the documents. Zimmerman swept into office on a landslide vote as Klansmen and Catholics joined most of the rest of Wisconsin society in voting for "Fred."

In 1928 the Capital Times of Madison produced documents to prove that the following session of the legislature, the 1927 session, had been dominated by the Zimmerman organization and that the Zimmerman organization was headed by A. E. Smith. Smith was the Secretary of the Wisconsin Good Roads Association and a known Klansman. Even though the charges were proved, they had little meaning. The Klan was too near finished in 1927 to have any important bearing on legislation

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69 The affidavits were widely reprinted. See Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), October 18, 1926, and the Milwaukee Journal of the same date.

70 These documents, almost absolute proof that Zimmerman was a Klansman at one time, were reprinted everywhere in the state. Yet Zimmerman won hands down. Perhaps it indicates that Wisconsin citizens did not worry too much about their Klan?

71 The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin) on January 16, 1928, carried photostats of a series of letters addressed to A. E. Smith at his business address. They were addressed to Klan headquarters and were concerned with official Klan business, such as suggesting the name of a person who might do organizational work for the Woman's Klan in that county—as was one of the letters from Sara Bellows, State Commander of the Woman of the Klan. The letters carried dates from the summer of 1924.
at that session. There is no evidence to indicate that the Klan had a program they sought to push through that session of the legislature, or that they succeeded in producing any legislation that had a Klan tint to it.

The Klan's most vigorous stand, nationally, was made on the World Court issue. Senator Lenroot had been in the Senate for a long time by the early twenties, and he had become a devoted exponent of the plan for the United States to join the World Court. In 1926 he ran his campaign for re-election on this issue, but lost to James J. Blaine. The Klan claimed credit for his defeat, and at the national Klan Klonvocation of that year, were credited with the defeat of Lenroot as a major accomplishment of the Klan.\(^\text{72}\) The Klan had also approved Robert La Follette Jr.'s stand in opposition to the Court.\(^\text{73}\) But other than the court issue, the Klan did not take an open stand on national issues.

The decline of the Wisconsin Klan

The decline of the Klan in Wisconsin was precipitous. From a peak active membership of 38,000 in 1924, the Klan dropped to an active membership of less than 800 in 1928. The reasons for the Klan decline were partly of a national character, partly of a local nature, and partly due to the internal collapse of the Klan itself.

\[^\text{72}\] Wisconsin News (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), September 14, 1926.

\[^\text{73}\] When Robert La Follette, Jr., announced his intention of opposing America's adherence to the World Court, the Klan sent him this telegram: **YOU STAND ON THE WORLD COURT HIGHLY COMMENDABLE. THE KU KLUX KLAN OF WISCONSIN IS WITH YOU 100 PER CENT ON THE QUESTION. YOUR EFFORTS TO STOP THIS UNAMERICAN ATTEMPT TO ENTANGLE AMERICA IN AFFAIRS IN EUROPE WILL MEET SUCCESS. YOUR POSITION TODAY IS THE SAME AS WASHINGTON'S 150 YEARS AGO. MORE POWER TO YOU.** The message was signed by C. B. Lewis, Grand dragon of Wisconsin. Milwaukee Journal
Wisconsin folk were affected by the climate of opinion throughout the rest of the nation. By 1926 opinion concerning the Klan had swung from partially favorable to highly unfavorable. To account for this transformation in attitude many things can be mentioned. First, the momentum such a movement as the Klan attains can be held for only a short time. There is a limited group in the population that can be interested in such an organization, and at some point in time all the potential members, or nearly all, have been contacted. Some join; others do not. However, when all have been reached, the momentum dies and organization work becomes primarily a struggle to hold the membership already gained. In 1926 the Klan passed its peak of strength in the Middle West, and presumably had contacted all of the persons who were interested. Then the momentum went out of the movement and swift attrition set in.

Second, one of the major items that sold the Klan was its appeal to super-patriotism, to the chauvinism carried over from the too-sudden ending of World War I. By the mid-twenties the United States had retreated behind its self-imposed curtain of isolationism. As the American people accomplished this, the intensity of the nationalistic feeling began to leave the nation's people. After all, a threat at arm's length is less than one right at hand. As the heat of nationalism cooled a little, the Klan's appeal to "100% Americanism" began to lose its potency as a drawing card. In its stead came a thirst for profits, for money, and the Klan could not feed that for more than a limited few. To the small businessman it became far more exciting to speculate or to seek out good liquor than to join the Klan and ---------------

January 13, 1926.
parade around as the nation's most patriotic folk.

Finally, the expose of the Klan movement that at first had aided the Klan by giving it publicity, later began to hurt it. Especially was this so when the conditions that were exposed were discovered close to home. Disclosures of Klan activities in the South were curiosities to the people of the Middle West; they were not threats. When the disclosures came close, when Kleagles and Grand Dragons began to leave the Klan and tell of the internal intrigues, when the sale of offices and the grasping tactics of the Klansmen and their leaders in the Middle West came out, then the stories began to carry weight. When the Stephenson case broke in Indiana, or the Herrin battles continued for years in Illinois, then Klan corruption began to seem real and menacing. People began to look into the affairs of their own Klans, and the things they saw were not always pleasant.

The very excesses of the Klan claims eventually told against it. When claims were made that the Pope was coming to the United States and he did not appear; when promises were made that the Klan was going to establish colleges and college fraternities and nothing was done; when the Klan claimed memberships that everyone knew were out of line with actual facts—then even Klansmen began to doubt their leaders.

Local conditions played the greatest part in ruining the Klan in Wisconsin. During the boom years of 1923-25 it was possible to keep the Klans in Wisconsin unchartered, and to keep the members of the Klans ignorant of internal conditions in that way. Under the Klan's provisional structure, no one could question what went on in the Klan at any level. No one could ask the Kleagles to account to the
members: the Kleagles used the system to hide their own grasping tactics. The commission system used in building the Klan was at once successful as an organization device, and destructive of the Klan in the long run. It increased the size of the Klan immensely; at the same time it brought into the Klan men who would have been kept out under any real screening. The Klan had, from the first, pulled into its ranks many natural leaders who might have made the Klan into a permanent fraternal organization, but the commission system loaded the Klan with men whom they could not tolerate, and when these leaders learned the actual conditions that existed within the Klan they pulled out.

One of the most effective natural leaders was F. F. Groelle of the Milwaukee Klan. He was one of the sincere men who had accepted the Klan at its own statement of principles. He was not, and neither were most of his friends, opposed particularly to any religious or racial group. He thought the Klan offered a haven for white men of Protestant background, a place where men of like mind could come together in friendly companionship. He had been one of the leaders in the 1924 revolt of the Milwaukee Klan, and he had led the revolt and walk-out pretty much on principle. He was opposed to the anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic tirades of Ben Bellows, the County Kleagle, and he wanted them stopped. When Bellows was removed in the spring of 1924, he rejoined the Klan, and was one of its leaders after it was chartered. But in July 1925, he resigned and explained why in a bitter letter:

I hereby tender my resignation as a member of the KKK to become effective at once. My reason for taking this step is as
well-known to you as the members of the local unit, thousands of whom for the same reason have resigned or permitted their membership to lapse by non-payment of dues, causing the membership to drop from 5,000 to less than 600 in good standing at this time.

When I became affiliated with this organization a little over three years ago I believed that it stood for the objects, principles and purposes for which it was incorporated, and to which no just person, regardless of color, sect or religion, could have any objections, namely—a fraternal organization uniting white male persons native born, gentile citizens of the United States into a common brotherhood for the purpose of cultivating and promoting real patriotism in the state and nation, and at all times to uphold, defend and protect the constitution and laws of the state and nation....

(He recited the Klan regulations to the effect that no Klan regalia should be worn outside the hall, and that the order shall not in any case contravene the law of the land.)

During the first two years of the existence of the local Klan, it not only grew rapidly, but complete harmony existed between members and non-members who were not eligible to membership. About a year ago, the national office put B. B. Bellows in charge of the field work in Milwaukee County, and he immediately began to revolutionize matters.

Religious hatred was taught, fiery crosses were burned contrary to the laws of the city and state, subjecting members of the organization to public contempt and ridicule, until it became necessary to obtain an injunction from the court. This was followed by an agreement whereby it was agreed that the officers would in all respects, live up to the laws of the land and of the order and the legal proceedings were dropped.

But in less than six months after the agreement was made fiery crosses were again burned and circulars teaching religious hatred were again sent out, requesting members to attend a lecture in Alhambra Hall under the date of May 27 to hear a lecture reading "Come and Hear Rome Unmasked" and "Rome Knows it is Beaten in Milwaukee". Nationality and religious hatreds and prejudice are again being taught.

Mr. Bellows is again placed in charge of Milwaukee County; the objects and principles for which the order was formed are disregarded until I have come to the conclusion that it is not men you are looking for, but only the $10.

I cannot permit myself to remain a member of an organization which repudiates the solemn agreements entered into by it and does not stand for the principles for which it was organized.

74 Milwaukee Journal, July 28, 1925.
Groelle never returned to the Klan. When he withdrew from the Milwaukee Klan he took with him most of the stable members. From the date of Groelle's withdrawal in the summer of 1925, the Klan in Milwaukee was through.

Groelle was not the only major Klan figure to resign. Daniel Woodward, a man who had been the Klan's candidate for the Senate of the United States in 1925 and 1926 and a Grand Titan in charge of one of the three Klan Provinces under Ralph Hammond, resigned in December 1926. In a prepared statement to the press he said that three months before that time a committee of Wisconsin Klansmen began to look into the affairs of the Wisconsin order. "Conditions were worse than we dreamed of", he said. Klan leaders insisted that they were not in politics, but he had found that much Klan political money had been spent on him in his run for the Senate. He had charged Klan leaders with immorality and no reply had ever been made, no denial given. Finally, the organization was an autocracy, and had no resemblance to a democratic institution at all. He vowed that from that date on he would refuse to have anything to do with the order.75

Other Klan leaders resigned at about the same time. Many of them turned to similar organizations that attempted to imitate the Klan.

Imitations of the Klan sprung up like mushrooms around the country in

75 Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), December 16, 1926. See also Oshkosh Northwestern, December 17, 1926, and March 31, 1927, and the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), February 15, 1927. For a full account of the career of Daniel Woodward (he was at one time a member of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin State Prison at Waupun and at another time, the Chaplain of the Prison), see H. B. Hubbell, History of Dodge County, (Fond du Lac, Wisconsin), 2:218-222.
1925 and 1926. In January 1926, press releases out of Atlanta, Georgia, pointed to one Roscoe Carpenter as the head organizer for the "Supreme Kingdom", an organization created to work for a world-wide drive against evolution. The leader of that organization was Edward Young Clarke, the original publicist of the Klan movement around 1920. Dr. Simmons, the deposed head of the Ku Klux Klan, formed the "White Band" club, a secret organization of white men and as late as 1931, William Wieseman returned to Wisconsin to organize for the "White Band".

In Wisconsin former Klan leaders rallied to two of these new movements. Lew Wallace McComb, who as Kleagle had organized and brought to full strength the Dane County Klan organizations, announced in February, 1926, that he was the local Brigadier-General for the "Minute-Men of America." They would wear uniforms, would bar only Negroes, and would have their membership lists open to the public. Despite organizational efforts for some time in the area of Madison, efforts in which William C. Dean, the leader of the Madison Klan joined McComb, the Minute-Men had scant success in Wisconsin. The

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76 The Nation, February 17, 1926. In 1932, Clarke was again organizing an order he called "Esskaye". Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), May 2, 1932.
77 Milwaukee Journal, December 23, 1931.
78 Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), February 11, 1926. See also, "Circular of Information #7" addressed to all officers and Comrades, ex-Ku Klux Klan and ex-Independent Klan of American members, which contains the information that the Minute-Men of America established their Wisconsin headquarters in Madison in February, 1926, and were seeking men to push the movement. Private Collection A. See also Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), September 25, and 29, 1926 for letters from William C. Dean, former Madison Kleagle, for reasons why he switched from the Klan to the Minute-Men organization.
organization was the creation of Dr. Galen Locke, erstwhile Grand
Dragon of the Colorado Klan.

Daniel Woodward hooked on with yet another imitator, the most
successful of them all. As early as 1924, in Indiana, Samuel
Bemenderfer and Orion Norcross had joined forces to jump out of the
Indiana Klan and form an organization which they called the Klan of
the North. In due time this organizational name was changed to the
"Knights of American Protestantism". Woodward investigated this and
found in the KAP, as they styled themselves, the thing for which he
was searching. It was democratic in operation and honest in every
way and Woodward became enthusiastic about it as the real Klan move-
ment. He organized it in Wisconsin, and sold it, to some extent, in
the Fox River Valley. But it was never a success, since it came
too late.

These disgruntled leaders exposed some conditions in the Klan
and hurt it in Wisconsin. But it was the excesses practiced by some
Klansmen themselves that hurt most.

The classic example of these men was Pat Malone. An itinerant
minister, he had arrived in Wisconsin in 1925 and joined the Klan
there. Then, in the Fox River Valley and in the Northern areas of
the state he gave a series of bitter lectures which were a mixture of
calls to the sinners and a denunciation of Jews, Negroes, and
Catholics, particularly Catholic Priests. The climax of his campaign
was reached in Coonto Falls where, during the week when he was giving

79 The KAP had a respectable growth in Indiana. For Woodward's approval of it, see Oshkosh Northwestern, March 31, and April 5, 1927.
a series of lectures, a Catholic Priest by the name of Fr. Peter J. Grosnick deplored the attacks upon the Catholic Church in the Oconto Falls Herald. At one of his later meetings Malone read this communication and then commented "From what I see in the paper I have the local priest scratching." Then he added that, "Some years before in Manawa" he had met a man by the name of Grosnick. "That man came into my audience leading a gang of men with a rope. He was leading the men with a rope, or carrying a rope with the intention of 'hanging Malone'--if he said anything that didn't suit." And, Malone said, before that night was over he had proved to the audience in attendance that that man, Grosnick, was the father of illegitimate children. Then Malone added, "If this was the Grosnick he knew in Manawa, he was the father of illegitimate children."  

Malone was haled into court, and there pleaded guilty to the charges of slanderous language. He was let off with a fine, but the case reached all the way to the Supreme Court of Wisconsin before Malone was allowed to pay his fine and go free.

There were many in the Wisconsin Klan who enjoyed this sort of tirade. These fire-eaters loved Malone, Bellows and others like them, but they were in the minority in Wisconsin. Such conduct disgusted many respectable men who had joined the Klan, and when the

80 Oconto Falls Herald, December 10, 1925.  
82 Milwaukee Journal, June 5, 1927.  
83 Citation for the Wisconsin Supreme Court case is given above in foot-note 81. See Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), March 8, 1927, for a discussion of the case, particularly the dissenting decision of Justice Crownhart.
likes of Malone and Bellows came to be of real importance in the Wisconsin Klan, these men simply allowed their membership to lapse. Such excesses drove large numbers of Klansmen out of the Klan in the Badger State.

An example of what such tactics did to the Klan is illustrated in the experience of the Oshkosh Klan in the Fox River Valley.

The Fox River Valley had proved to be a strong center for the Klan. Organization in 1923 had proceeded rapidly, and by 1924 the Oshkosh organization alone had more than 1500 members. These included some of the most respectable citizens of Oshkosh, and the Klan had earned a place of real prestige in the community.

Then Ben Bellows showed up in Oshkosh as Special Field Representative of Charles B. Lewis. His tactics of pushing cross-burnings, lecturing against Jews and Catholics and fomenting violence hurt the Oshkosh Klan as much as Bellows' tactics had hurt the Klan in Milwaukee. He got into a quarrel with the local leaders of the Klan, and that situation reached a climax when the whole executive committee of the local Klan resigned. The minutes were sent to Lewis in Milwaukee, and Bellows was withdrawn from Oshkosh. 34

Local leaders rebuilt the morale of Klansmen, and the membership returned to the fold. In fact, the Klan built up to a strength in Oshkosh of over 2000 in the summer of 1925. On the fourth of July that year the Klan held in Oshkosh the second largest gathering that the Klan ever held in the state. The program included official welcome to the Klan by the Mayor of the city, and this gave the Klan

34 Fourth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 11, 1928.
enormous prestige. Admission was charged, and a large sum was taken in from that and from the sale of refreshments. But when it was all over, the Klan had a three thousand dollar deficit. Local Klansmen knew that someone had stolen most of the money, but the records were in such a tangled state that no one could find the point of loss. That situation nearly wrecked the Klan. It fell off the point that only about 100 persons attended the meetings.

But the local leaders built up the Klan again. By the following summer, in 1926, most of the prestige of the Klan had been restored and the members were again attending meetings. Then in 1926 Pat Malone came to town for a series of meetings in May and June. The Klan got together and built a huge tabernacle on the northern edge of Oshkosh, a tabernacle that would seat more than 10,000 persons. The completed the whole structure in six days and had it ready when Malone arrived. Malone held his usual meetings there. He preached the word of God, but between times he sandwiched in attacks on the Jews and

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85 On May 4, 1926, people who came to hear Malone speak at the Ku Klux Klan tabernacle were turned away and sent into Webster Hall in Oshkosh. The Klan had built the tabernacle without consulting the state building authorities, and Blaine had struck another blow at the Klan by ordering the tabernacle closed for not conforming to the state building codes. It was later re-opened after the inadequacies were corrected, Oshkosh Northwestern, May 5, 1926. See also fourth Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 11, 1928. In 1928 after the Klan fever had burned itself out in Wisconsin the Ku Klux Klan tabernacle on the outskirts of Oshkosh stood as a lonely monument to the Klan in the Badger state. It was heavily mortgaged to the banks that had financed its construction. Other Klan club-houses were left unsupported by the sudden demise of the Klan. In April, 1928, bonds were still unpaid on the Kaverna at Darien in Walworth County; personal notes covered the cost of a Kaverna near Chippewa Falls, a large debt for electrical wiring still was owed by the Oshkosh Klan on the 1925 Klonvocation; and a tabernacle north of Roberts had reverted to the owner of the land who was at the time converting it into a dance hall. Such were the legacies left to some persons by the collapse of the Klan. First Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928.
vilified the Catholics and specialized in "exposing" the infamous activities of the Priests in the Orders and the "poor girls" in the nunneries.

His tactics soured many of the Klansmen personally toward him. This time when they left, they never came back. His talks were so offensive that the Klansmen of Oshkosh protested to the Grand Dragon, Ralph Hammond, and Hammond severed Pat Malone's connection with the Wisconsin Klan. But the damage had been done. When a debt of several thousand dollars turned up on the tabernacle (the goodwill offerings had all gone to Malone, and not to defray the costs of the tabernacle) the backbone of the Oshkosh Klan was broken. It never recovered after 1926.

Klan membership began to decline rapidly by the summer of 1925. Klan leaders sought to find ways to check the insidious attrition that was setting in. They tried the always-reliable technique of turning Klansmen's attention to politics and to the election of men to public office who would promote Klan ideals. But in Wisconsin political triumph was not frequent enough to interest most of the members. New techniques had to be found.

In 1925, the Klan in Madison staged the first large scale liquor raid, designed to revive men's interest in the Klan. As noted above, there was a considerable colony of Italians in Madison, in the north-eastern section. These "Sicilians", as they were called in Madison were a local source for illegal liquor sales. During the mid-twenties

86 See above, 79.
The Madison police force became a haven for Klansmen and they carried on a running battle with the "Sicilians" with no holds barred. Violence was a common thing in the "Bush", and police violence only added to the pattern.

On December 2, 1924, a Madison patrolman, Herbert Dreger, was found shot and dying in the Little Sicily section of Madison. The Klan conducted his funeral three days later. His murder, for which two Italians were arrested, aroused intense feeling in the community, and Joseph Jones, the local Kleagle, offered two hundred men to the Chief of Police to help him go in and clean up the whole Italian area. The Chief of Police refused. Then, in order to keep sentiment alive, and the issue burning as an attraction to bring in members, Jones hired Fred Rist, a Milwaukee private detective to come to Madison and investigate liquor conditions in "The Bush". Rist took ten days to---

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37 Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin,) December 5, 1924.
38 The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), December 5, 1924, had some fine pictures of the Klan conducting a funeral, that of Patrolman Herbert Dreger. The feeling against the two Italians who were arrested for the shooting of Dreger was so high that the trial was venues to Baraboo and trial date set for January 26, 1925. Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), January 5, 1925. The prosecution had no real evidence on the two men, and both were acquitted. But the feeling of the trial is illustrated by the actions that followed. De Martino, one of the defendants, had testified in his own defense that he was hunting on the day of the Dreger shooting, and had shot one rabbit--for which he was immediately re-arrested after the trial because he did not possess a hunting license! Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), January 27, 1925. On the next day the other defendant, Vitale, was re-arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), February 4, 1925.

39 Fred Rist collected the evidence for the raid. However, he apparently did not appreciate the publicity associated with carrying out a Klan activity, and ultimately sued the Capital Times Company for $50,000. Court records of the case contain a long deposition by Rist made under the questioning of hostile counsel, Fred J. Rist vs. The Capital Times Company, a corporation, Circuit Court, Dane County, Wisconsin. In the Rist deposition full details of the raid are disclosed, and in addition, many of the Klan matters came out for an airing. Here is another long deposition in this case that found its
make his investigation, and found liquor easy to obtain. He took his bottled evidence to Herman Sachtjen, the Federal Prohibition agent, and asked him to deputize thirty Klansmen to raid the Italian section. When Sachtjen offered to use their evidence as the basis for raids with his own men, the Klansman refused to turn over their evidence. They then turned to the District Attorney, Theodore Lewis, but he refused to accept Klan conditions: he would conduct the raids only with the police force of Madison. So, the Klan turned to Mayor Milo Kittleson. He later explained that he was afraid that if he used regular police there might be a tip-off to the Italians, so he acceded to the request of the Klansmen and deputized them. They moved into the Italian section and succeeded in purchasing liquor without trouble. This they brought back to Sachtjen and fifteen persons were arrested as violators of the Volstead Act.

More important than the liquor arrests was the fact that the whole thing was obviously staged as a recruiting device for the Madison Klan. The summer of 1924 had seen Klan applications slow down alarmingly, and interest in the Dane County organization begin to die. Therefore, when Dreger was shot, someone within the Klan hierarchy saw a chance to revive interest in the Klan. So the raids were held. For a time they accomplished their purpose, but the way into Private Collection A., made by Frank Adams, one of the men active in the raid.

*These facts came out in the case cited in the foot-note immediately preceding. For a detailed statement of the developments of the raid and its after-math, see Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), January 3, 1925.*

*Ibid. Mayor Kittelson explained his action to reporters shortly after the raid was held, Milwaukee Sentinel, December 23, 1924. The Madison City Council approved Kittelson's expense account of $140 to conduct the raid without question, Capital Times (Madison, Wis) January 10, 1925.*
interest did not hold up. By 1926 the Klan in Madison as well as in other areas of the state was about through.

Klan leaders tried economic appeals as a last desperate attempt to keep alive interest in the Klan. They tried to get Klansmen to insure through the Empire Mutual Life Insurance Company, for an economic tie is a binding tie. In 1927 the National Klan had set up a Reclamation Bureau and was sending out literature to the local Klans to have them designate men who might act as Reclamation agents.

Hiram Wesley Evans wrote that "You can assure the Klansmen that these new Reclamation Agents now going into the field are doing much better than those of some years ago who were in the field of propagation." But all efforts to revive interest in the Klan by any means failed, and by 1928 the Klan was virtually dead in the state. From a peak active membership in 1925 of 38,000 men, the Klan by 1928 had only about 2700 paid up members, and the figure was declining rapidly. From 1927 to 1928 the figure had dropped from more than 6000 to the 2700 figure. By 1930 the Klan's career was over in Wisconsin, although Gale Carter, the Grand Dragon who succeeded Ralph Hammond

---92--- A "General Letter" from the Imperial Wizard, Hiram Wesley Evans, to all Klansmen in March, 1927, urged every Klansmen to sign up for his insurance with the Klan's own company. Private Collection A.

93 A letter and an enclosed official document from general headquarters at Atlanta, Georgia, from the Imperial Wizard on February 28, 1927, urged all men who could to sign up for the Reclamation Bureau immediately. Private Collection A.

94 First Lynch article, Milwaukee Journal, April 8, 1928.
continued to come to Wisconsin until 1932.\textsuperscript{95}

On March 19th, 1927, the Klan sent out a letter in which they described what "might have been."\textsuperscript{96} But the sentiment most appropriate for the Klan even at that date was best expressed in the poem that went along with the letter:

\begin{quote}
When sometimes our feet grow weary
On the rugged hills of life
The path stretching long and dreary
With trial and labor rife,
We pause on the upward journey
Glancing backward over valley and glen
And sigh with an infinite longing
To return and begin again.

Yes, upward and onward forever
Be our paths on the hill of life
But ere long a radiant dawning
Will glorify trial and strife.
And our Father's hand will lead us
Tenderly upward then.
In the joy and peace of the better world
He'll let us begin again.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

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But the Klan's history does not quite end in 1930. Right after the second World War there was a spate of righteousness on the part

\textsuperscript{95} Gale Carter succeeded Ralph Hammond as Grand Dragon of Wisconsin in 1930. Carter also had charge of the state of Illinois, because the Klan was so low in membership that it could not support a leader for one state alone. Carter finally resigned in 1932 when there was no business at all left for him to do. Notes of an interview with Ralph Hammond, taken by a member of the Attorney-General's staff, Klan Custer Case, 1946.

\textsuperscript{96} "Of all the sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these--IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN....How much farther the AMERICANIZATION OF AMERICA might have been carried forward if you had grasped an early opportunity to help with your means and counsel in directing this great movement....IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN so much better for the generations yet to come (your neighbor's children and your children) if all who saw the vision of a better America had worked together. You cannot go back; but we CAN look ahead....So urged a recruiting letter sent out by the Klan on March 19, 1927, unsigned, Private Collection A.
of state officials as they went earnestly to the task of wiping out
the Klan—the Klan that had been dead in most of the states for
fifteen years! With real solemnity the Wisconsin Attorney-General in-
vestigated and prepared a case against the Wisconsin Klan. Attorney-
General Martin charged that "No charter should ever have been
granted to said corporation by the State of Wisconsin." and the
issuance of a certificate of incorporation to the Knights of the Ku
Klux Klan of Wisconsin was without authority of law because said
corporation was not formed for a lawful purpose. Martin moved to have
the corporation charter vacated. Since there obviously was no
opposition from any Klan corpse, the deed was done. On October 22,
1946, the Ku Klux Klan was formally banished forever from the state
of Wisconsin. 98

97 The anonymous poem is printed on the back of the letter noted
in the immediately preceding foot-note.
98 On October 22, 1946, the Attorney-General of Wisconsin, John
E. Martin, announced that the national leader of the Elks had re-
quested that he take action against the Klan in Wisconsin; and, there-
fore, he was going to prepare and file a case against it. Investigations
proceeded, and the case was filed in the Circuit Court of Dane
County six weeks later, as the State of Wisconsin vs. the Ku Klux Klan
of Wisconsin, defendant. Since the Klan did not exist and the case
was not contested, the Klan's corporate charter was revoked by
Circuit Judge Herman Sachtjen on December 10, 1946. See the Capital
Times (Madison, Wisconsin), October 22, 1946, and December 10, 1946.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE INDIANA KLAN AND D. C. STEPHENSON

It grieves me to be late. The President of the United States kept me unduly long counseling upon vital matters of state....

I do further promise and declare that I will...wage relentless war, secretly and openly, against all heretics, Protestants, and Masons...and that I will hang, burn, waste, boil, flay, strangle, and bury alive those infamous heretics...rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women, and crash their infants heads against the walls in order to annihilate their inexcusable race....

I find that from the period...from February...to July...1923, you have remitted to the Imperial Treasury of the Ku Klux Klan $641,475.00. You have rendered service...at a total cost of $159,786.00, thus serving the Klans to their satisfaction at a cost...of perhaps $1.25 per man.

Stephenson took hold of the bottom of my dress and pulled it up over my head...What I had drunk was affecting me. Stephenson took all my clothes off and pushed me into the lower berth. After the train had started Stephenson got in with me and attacked me. He held me so I could not move....

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan reached its climax in Indiana. It had successes elsewhere--in Texas, in Oregon, in Georgia--but it was in the Hoosier state that the Klan found its natural home. There

1 Legend has it that Stephenson used these words to open his speech to the assembled thousands who had come to see him inaugurated Grand Dragon at Melfalfa Park in Kokomo, July 4, 1923. Whether he ever said it is open to question, but the point is, the words fit. He could have said it; it fits his character. See the Kokomo Tribune, July 6, 1923. Reproduced also in Coughlan, "Klonklave in Kokomo", in Leighton, The Aspirm Age, 106.

2 Taken from the initiatory "oath" the Knights of Columbus were alleged to have to take. The Klan spread more than a hundred thousand copies of this oath through Indiana in 1924. Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Testimony of Thomas Swift, 18.

3 Letter to Stephenson from Hiram Wesley Evans, Imperial Wizard. This letter is widely reproduced in the literature about the Klan. Stephenson claimed the letter was authentic and written to him.
it rose to dizzy heights of power and success. It brought in half a million members. It seized the Republican Party. It took control of the state. There it produced the most picturesque leader of the whole Klan movement—D. C. Stephenson. Its success with Hoosier folk was unparalleled anywhere in the United States. Never did the Klan climb so fast and so swiftly...and nowhere else did it fall so precipitously. It can be said that in Indiana the Klan produced all the good and all the evil that its potential could develop. Perhaps its fate was a clue to its basic worth.

Klan Origins in Indiana

The Ku Klux Klan came into Indiana from the South. In late 1920 organizers crossed the Ohio River and organized Indiana Klan #1 in Evansville, the southern-most city in the state. Its origin was the South, and the first organizers were from the southern Klan. But Indiana was not the South, and first recruiting efforts went slowly. Like the Klan in every area, before success would come, the Klan had to change its approach to one that would appeal in Indiana.

Robert A. Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, (Privately printed, Huntington, Indiana, 1940). This little book is the classic defense of D. C. Stephenson, written by his former secretary. The letter appears on page 31, but can be found in other sources.

4 From the dying declaration of Madge Oberholtzer. Stephenson was convicted of murder for this deed and sentenced to life imprisonment. See Indianapolis News, November 17, 1925, or Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana, May 16, 1933 to December 22, 1933, Vol. 205 (Indianapolis, 1934), 165-182.

5 The most complete source of information about the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana is the present author's Master's Thesis on the Indiana Klan. It contains the most complete information available covering the years from 1921 through 1928. Norman Fredric Weaver, The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana (1921-1947), (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1947).
D. C. Stephenson made that shift; the shift made him. 6

Klan success in Indiana, as in all of the northern states, was slow for the first year. Klan #1 in Evansville was established upon a fairly sound foundation in a few months, but the spread and expansion of the Klan into other areas was slow. During 1921 few Klans were set up, and it was not until the election campaigns of 1922 were nearing that the Klan movement began to show any life. When it did begin to stir it was due to the fact that David Clarke Stephenson had joined it to stay with it. In 1922 D. C. Stephenson entered the Indiana Klan, he said, to take over an election battle the Klan was losing in Evansville. 7 It was less than a year before he was the Klan in Indiana.

The origins of D. C. Stephenson are obscure. He was born in 1891, but even he does not know where. 8 The city, as a best guess, was Houston, Texas. Rumors about his boyhood abound, but none are authenticated. He was born into a family of drifters, and picked up the habit in his boyhood. He quit school before he had finished the elementary grades, and began to drift on his own. By the time of World War I he was an itinerant printer in Oklahoma and was drifting slowly northward. He served as a

6 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 16.
7 Ibid., 4. See also Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, 13.
8 Edgar Allen Booth, The Mad Mullah of America, (Boyd Ellison, Columbus, Ohio, 1927), 6. This is an "expose" of the Klan movement by an individual who chooses to remain anonymous. Internal criticism of the book indicates that the author almost had to be a Klansman, but at times his writing becomes almost irrational. See also Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo" in Leighton, Aspirin Age, 124.
Second Lieutenant in the War, but saw no overseas duty. At the end of the war he continued drifting until he wound up in Evansville in 1920.9

In Evansville Stephenson began organizing war veterans in his first effort as a public figure.10 He took time off to run as a wet Democrat in the 1920 election but the anti-Saloon League licked him.11 He came up as a Republican and bone-dry. He had joined the Klan before the election, but then lost interest and went back to his veterans. In 1921 Evansville Klansmen asked him to help them out in the local elections, and he did better than in the preceding year. He moved to leadership of the Evansville Klan, then was appointed head of the Klan propagation drive in Indiana. In addition to Indiana, he was quickly given a total of twenty-three states to klux, all of them north of the Mason-Dixon line.12

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9 In Evansville after the war he entered the coal business as a retail merchant. Throughout his career this was to remain his official occupation and business. Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, 18.
10 Ibid., 19.
11 John Bartlow Martin, in one of the best short summaries of the Klan movement, adds up about all that is known about Stephenson's early career. See John Bartlow Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation, (Knopf, 1947), 190.
12 Apparently, in his travels, Stephenson had met Hiram Wesley Evans although there is no record of when they met. When Evans was ready to stage his coup de état and take the national Klan away from William Joseph Simmons, Stephenson was one of his lieutenants, and one of the two men who went to Simmons' room at night with compromising photographs with which they threatened to ruin Simmons unless he gave them control. As a reward for his part in the coup Stephenson rewarded with the rights to propagate twenty-three states in the northern and eastern United States. This is the story reported by Loucks in Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania, 46-48. Marion Monteval, (pseud.), The Klan Inside Out, (privately printed, Ardmore, Oklahoma, 1924), 36, relates essentially the same tale except for minor variation in details. Monteval's book is an analysis of how the Klan worked in the South from the pen of one who had extensive knowledge of the inner circles of the Klan. Monteval has never been identified.
At this task he was an unparalleled success: he had no equal in the Klan. In 1922 and 1923 he dashed about the states of Indiana Ohio, setting up an organization that reached into every corner of the two states.\(^{13}\) Within two years he was master of both states, but turned his whole attention to Indiana. Through his success with the Klan, he became the recognized "dictator" of Indiana.

Stephenson's success was due to his own effort, his ability to select useful subordinates, and the zeal with which he kept his organizers at work. It is apparent that at a very early date he understood what a political force the Klan could become and was building toward that. He was his own best salesman, better than any he could hire. In appearance he was not striking. Short, stocky, with fleshy face and pallid complexion, he did not make a dashing figure. But he had a plastic, mobile face, a powerful voice, and was a natural actor and orator. He was capable of making an audience believe statements that, when read, sounded absurd and foolish. When he took the stump, people listened and cheered and then followed him. Legends about "Steve" abound. He was only thirty-three years of age when he reached his ambition to wield power without hindrance in Indiana. Yet he constantly referred to himself as "The Old Man" and made his subordinates carry on the fiction. He maintained a sumptuous eight-room suite of offices in Columbus, Ohio, but very early, in 1922, moved to the Kresge building in Indianapolis.

\(^{13}\) Despite responsibility for twenty-three states, Stephenson never exercised more than nominal control over any but Ohio and Indiana. For a while he operated his office in Columbus, Ohio, but
the Kresge building in Indianapolis, and for his personal quarters he kept an entire floor of Indianapolis' finest hotel. On his desk stood a bust of Napoleon. He kept a battery of as many as eight telephones on his desk, and when credulous visitors entered his office they would "discover" Stephenson in earnest conversation with President Harding, Senator "Jim" Watson or other like persons. He wore robes of many colors at Klan meetings, with his Grand Dragon's robe of flaming orange silk as probably the most dynamic. He moved about Indiana ceaselessly, shaking hands and learning the first names of those whom he met. Wherever he could he spoke, and not always about the Klan. He had a real flag-waving talk on Patriotism that he loved to give. In the small towns and villages he met the local politicians, and he learned to spot the good ones who could help him. He took ministers into the Klan gratis in order to have their moral influence (and their facile tongues) busy at the task of selling Klan memberships. He hired super-salesmen out of the Florida land boom to come to Indiana and sell, and he was ruthless in removing the unsuccessful. Within a year and a half after he took over Klan propagation in Indiana he had been everywhere, met nearly everyone that counted, and knew his way around the political map.14

14 Most of the sources that treat the Indiana Klan cannot resist the temptation to repeat the many legends about Stephenson. See especially Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation, 190-2; Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo", in Leighton, Aspirin Age, 124.
By the last few months of 1923 the Klan probably reached its peak of expansion in Indiana. After that it remained very strong for almost two years, but those who were added only replaced those who dropped out of the Klan. How many members Stephenson's Kleagles finally brought into the Indiana Klan no one will ever know. Klan books were never accurate. It would be too much to expect every Kleagle to report everyone who gave him ten dollars to join the Klan. Many "kloektokens" were never split, and when these members were not reported, Klan figures drifted away from reality. So, the best that can be offered is estimates.

The Fiery Cross estimated that by late 1923 the Klan had taken in over 500,000 members in Indiana, and reported that its circulation was over 100,000. As late as the summer of 1924 the Klan's newspaper held to that figure. Half a million became the figure that was commonly accepted as the maximum Klan figure in Indiana. "Pat" Emmons, on the stand before the Reed Committee, said that Klan estimates were that between 500,000 and 600,000 had joined, but that there never was an active nucleus of more than 400,000. Robert Lyon gave an even lower figure. He said that

15 The Lynds, when they were surveying Muncie, Indiana, for their first Middletown book, reported that in 1924 the crest of the Klan wave had passed in late 1923. Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd, Middletown, (Harcourt, Brace, 1929), 234.
16 The Fiery Cross (Indianapolis), March 10, 1923, 3:9. See also The Fiery Cross (Indianapolis), October 5, 1923, 1:7.
17 U. S. Congress. Senate. Special Investigating Committee: Expenditures in Senatorial Primary and General Elections: hearings before special committee to make investigations into means used to influence nomination of any person as candidate for membership of Senate (October 18-27, 1926), (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1927), 2060. Hereafter these hearings will be referred to as the Reed Committee Hearings. This is the name under which
as State Treasurer of the organization he never knew a time when the Klan had more than 125,000 Klan members who were paid up and in good standing with the organization. Taking into account the fact that the Klans everywhere found it almost impossible to keep their members in "good standing", which meant that they had paid their quarterly dues, this figure tends to buttress the estimates of the Fiery Cross and "Pat" Emmons. And D. C. Stephenson used the same figure.19 So, about the best estimate of maximum Klan strength would be a figure of near 500,000 members in Indiana. But no one knows or will ever know, even Klan officials who handled the books.

**Klan Identification with Indiana Culture**

Klan successes in Indiana were simple because the Hoosier society of the 1920s was such an easy target. Indiana society represented perhaps the purest strain still remaining at that time of the cultural group—rural and Protestant—to which the Klan made its particular appeal in the North.20

The Klan found it easy to identify itself with a culture so homogeneous. Indiana had few dissident elements scattered throughout its population. Catholics were few. In 1926 there were 312,194 Catholics according to the religious census.21

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18 Reed Committee Hearings, 2246.
19 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 11.
20 John Bartlow Martin referred to Indiana as a "cross section of the United States". Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation, 169. Lest this sound like Hoosier boasting, Robert S. Lynd and his research group picked Muncie to be "Middletown" because it was the most typical city they could find to represent America.
21 Religious Bodies: 1926, (Bureau of the Census), Vol. II
This represented about ten percent of a population just under three million. But that figure is deceptive. Most of the Catholics were in the northern cities of the state like Gary with its steel furnaces and large numbers of immigrants who worked in those blast furnaces. Most of the recent migration to Gary had been of the "New" immigrant stream and was largely Catholic. South Bend had a large Polish district, and Elkhart a large Italian section. Thus, the Catholics tended to congregate in the industrial areas of the northern cities and did not disperse throughout the state. In the hills in southern Indiana where the Klan had its stronghold, it is doubtful if there was one Catholic family in a hundred. Negroes, too, were missing. Only about 81,000 lived in Indiana in 1920. Indiana, with its light industry and need for skilled and semi-skilled labor had not attracted many Negroes from the Great Migration. Aliens were not prominent in the population, either, except in the industrial cities of the northern fringe of counties. Only 5.1 per cent of the population was foreign-born in 1920. So, it is clear that with only small numbers of persons not in the traditional cultural pattern, the homogeneity of Indiana's population is its most striking feature. In a society that was this racially and culturally unified the Klan had only to seek out the values of that group, use the standard

Separate Denominations, 1256.

22 U. S. Census, 1920; Vol. III: Population, 282. The total Indiana population in 1920 was 2,930,000. Same reference.

23 There were 150,868 aliens scattered through the state. Ibid., 282. A map of the distribution of the aliens throughout the state appears on the following page.
symbols, and success was practically certain. At least the technique worked for the Klan from 1922 through 1925.

Klan Techniques of Identification

The two strongest Klan appeals in Indiana were made to the love Indiana folk had for all-day outings like barbecues and picnics to which they could come to be with their neighbors, and to the anti-Catholic tendencies latent in the culture of these folk. With a development of just these two themes the Klan would probably have made a howling success of their venture in Indiana, but they carried the folk theme farther, and succeeded in identifying themselves with many of the every-day activities that Hoosiers liked to do.

The Klan appeal to the ritualism of the lodge men and their delight in doing things in company with other men has been described above in the discussion of the Wisconsin Klan. The techniques used to attract those men in Indiana varied little from those successful in Wisconsin. Klan meetings were held regularly to give members who were bored with "every-evening-at-home" something to do. After the Klan leaders in the state decided to launch a campaign to bring every man into the regular Klan, every woman into the Woman's Klan, and every child into the Junior Klan, monster rallies were staged to which every man, woman and child in that section of the state was invited. These out-door meetings, usually barbecues (at which the Klan footed

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24 See above,
the bill and then passed a collection plate in some way from which they usually came out ahead!) were extremely popular. The programs at the all-day meetings were conventionally opened by a prayer or two, one or two local bands played, a speech followed after which the rest of the morning was devoted to games, sports, "just talk", and the building of an appetite. In the afternoon after a tremendous meal another talk, and then at dusk the Klansmen paraded through the streets of the town or village to a hill near the town upon which a cross was burned. While the ashes of the remnants of the cross still gave off a flickering light an initiation ceremony was staged with all the mysticism that Klan mumbo-jumbo and the uncertain light could give it. At these meetings the "aliens" not yet in the Klan were given a glimpse into the mystery of the Klan ritual without learning enough to satisfy any of them, and they were given just a sip of the companionship available to them behind the door which they themselves could push open. Many "aliens" rushed to be "naturalized" on the spot, and occasionally those watching found a rope around them and found that they were being sworn into the Klan along with other spectators. 25

In addition to the monster rallies, picnics and barbecues were one of the most appealing features of Klan membership. Local and regional Klans scheduled them regularly, and they served a positive social function just as they had when the earlier

25 At least this device was used in Ohio successfully, and anything that worked in one area was quickly copied by other state Klans. Christy Interview. For full bibliography on the Christy Interview, see below,
Grange movement had used the technique to build sentiment for it. Farmers and small-town folk live a life that does not contain much excitement. A Klan picnic would break the monotony of daily living and gave persons something to look forward to for weeks in advance. Hoosiers took to these meetings. Beyond the chance it offered to get together, the day ended with the excitement of a parade—who knew when trouble might break out?—and the mystical performance in the flickering light cast by a cross (often as high as twenty-five feet when ignited) slowly burning to the ground. At Valparaiso in early 1923 the Klan drew perhaps 40,000 persons to their first big picnic and rally, and crowds of more than 20,000 turned out for barbecues in Crawfordsville, Jeffersonville, Winamac, and Kokomo on July 4, 1924.27 Smaller gatherings of all sizes took place and reports of the Klan picnics appear constantly throughout the newspapers of the period.

The largest rally of Klansmen in Indiana was held when the enthusiasm among Hoosier groups for the Klan was at its highest. On July 4, 1923, D. C. Stephenson staged his "coronation" at Melfalfa Park at Kokomo.28 On that day he was officially commissioned as state director of the Klan. He thus moved from his post as King Kleagle to the status of a Grand Dragon. In order to make the event as big as possible, Stephenson probably

26 The Fiery Cross (Indianapolis), May 25, 1923.
27 Indianapolis News, July 5, 1924.
28 Melfalfa Park in Kokomo was later purchased by the local Klan and was one of the Klan's investments that did not pay off.
put pressure on his boys to turn out the crowd. Whether he did or not, the day of the picnic Kokomo was inundated with a flood of Klansmen. Estimates of the crowd run as high as 200,000 ("Steve's estimate"), on down, but reporters present estimated that the crowd was certainly larger than the crowds that turned out for the 500 mile auto race at Indianapolis, and those crowds at that time were running around 130,000.²⁹

A planned program of games and sport (and assigned individuals to help with the kids and keep them happy) occupied the time of many.³⁰ The Klan served a banquet on tables a block long, several rows of them, and the figures quoted for the meat, potato chips, and soft drinks consumed were almost unbelievable. The official program included a talk by the Imperial Wizard of the national Klan, Dr. Hiram Wesley Evans, on "Immigration", and speakers from local churches. The high-light of the day came when Stephenson was invested with the robes of authority as Grand Dragon of Indiana. At the time scheduled for the event on the program, he was not present. The crowd waited. Out of the sky roared an air-plane that circled and landed in a nearby field. Stephenson crawled out of the plane clad in a shimmering Royal Purple robe touched with orange. To the packed thousands he

²⁹ Kokomo Daily Tribune, July 5, 1923.
³⁰ An eye-witness account of part of this Klan day is given by Robert Coughlan, a boy at the time, who lived in Kokomo at that time. Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo", in Leighton, Aspirin Age, 105-9.
apologized for being late, but told them that his presence had been so urgently needed in Washington that he had been conferring with President Harding until an hour before. Would they forgive him? At the end of the day the parade down the Main Street of Kokomo had a touch not new, but staged on a larger scale than at any other time or place ever reported. A troop marching in the parade carried a huge American flag, at least thirty feet long. As these Klansmen came down the street word buzzed through the crowd ahead of them, "Contribute to the hospital". Kokomo had only a small hospital run by Catholic nuns, and the Klan was collecting for a new non-Catholic hospital. The money never reached the hospital board, but estimates were that more than $50,000 was in that flag when it reached the end of the march.

The "Hospital for Kokomo" story illustrates the way in which the Klan took on the functions of a service club whenever it chose to do so. Christmas baskets were delivered by Klansmen, charity was given to some dependent persons, and donations were made to various causes. All these things were done with abundant publicity, of course. The Klan's favorite device to attract attention to itself was to give money to churches. But the money was contributed in characteristic fashion. A Klan visitation committee would appear at that point in the minister's sermons when men begin to doze. The rear doors of the church would be swung open with dramatic suddenness—often

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31 This story is now so widely reprinted that it is virtually legend. Both Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo", in Leighton, Aspirin Age and Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation carry it.
32 Kokomo Daily Tribune, July 6, 1923. See also Kokomo Daily
at a signal from the minister—and four to a dozen solemn, robed figures would stride silently down the aisle of the church, reach the altar, display then lay down a parcel—presumably filled with money—on the altar, and then march out. Not a word would be uttered during the whole performance. The device was effective. Nothing so well calculated to cause people to gossip and chatter was ever devised by the Klan.34

In addition to these techniques, the Klan utilized the virulent anti-Catholicism latent in the Hoosier, rural, small-town, Protestant culture. Rumors of the eventual, perhaps imminent, coming of the Pope brought about a situation where a crowd of North Manchester folk boarded a train from Chicago and made the sole passenger still on the train, a travelling salesman, prove that he was not the Pope in disguise. Klansmen circulated a photograph of the Episcopal Cathedral in Washington, D. C., as a photograph of the Palace that Catholics were preparing for the Pope’s coming. Stories about the immorality of priests—how when a Spanish convent was torn down, hundreds of graves were found beneath the floor, or how when a Spanish convent was finally forced open by civil authorities more than a score of children were

Tribune, July 19, 1923, for a comment that no money ever was turned over to the hospital committee.

33 The issues of the Fiery Cross for the years from 1923 until the paper ceased publication in 1925 carry innumerable stories of Klan trips to bereaved widows, and Klan contributions to various causes. Many of these are confirmed by parallel stories in the legitimate press.

34 Another item so often repeated that it is legend. The Klan in every community found the contribution made at the climax of a sermon a useful technique and used it in most cases.
found—and of the secret passions of nuns were widely circulated. Klan units had speakers come into their meetings who were "escaped" nuns or who said they had been children when sent to nunneries and thus were helpless. Later they found a way to "escape", and then told their experiences. A woman of this type was Helen Jackson who said she had "escaped" from a convent in Michigan. A little book called Convent Cruelties sold widely, and was advertised for a time in the Klan's own Fiery Cross, the official Klan newspaper that sold on the street corners. The "Knights of Columbus oath" that new members being initiated into the K. C. were supposed to have to take was widely circulated just before elections in Indiana.

It was perhaps the most virile piece of anti-Catholic propaganda.

The area of most concern to Protestants, as usual, was that of the public schools and reputed Catholic subversion of them. Klansmen were convinced that Catholics were trying to penetrate the school

35 The Fiery Cross in its first few months of publication and again in its last two months of publication was virulently anti-Catholic and was the source of many stories on the immorality to be found behind convent walls.

36 The lectures of Helen Jackson, said to have escaped from a Home of the Good Shepherd, were advertised regularly until June, 1923, but then her lectures no longer are advertised there. The Fiery Cross (Indianapolis), Jan.-June issues, 1923.

37 Convent Cruelties was advertised as long as Helen Jackson was, but it too disappeared. Ibid.

38 Thomas Swift said that for a time he drove for Stephenson. Just before the primary elections in 1924 "Steve" asked him to drive on a long trip to the northern cities of the state and deliver more than 100,000 copies of the Knights of Columbus "oath" printed as a pamphlet. This he did. Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Testimony of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Nocorss, Edward Stilson and Thomas W. Swift, 213. A part of the "oath" appears in the quotations at the beginning of this chapter.
system, and were deliberately getting positions for Catholic teachers in the schools. Klansmen reacted violently to this, but found that they were unable to do anything effective about it until they controlled the political offices that determined school policy. When the Klan finally gained political control of the state most of their activities were directed toward the elimination of Catholic teachers in the public schools. Only chance prevented the Klan's wishes in respect to the public schools from being enacted into law.

The Klan Wins Political Control of the Republican Party

D. C. Stephenson always viewed the Klan as a route to direct personal power for himself in the state of Indiana. When he took control of the state Klan he found that it was recruiting members by selecting only those who were congenial and would likely join, and then sending invitations to join to them. He quickly changed. He wanted every man, woman or child to come into the Klan in order to use their votes and influence to give him control of the state. He changed the recruiting technique to mass meetings, coercion, appeals to the use of pressure and of any other technique possible for bringing persons into the Klan. He wanted the Klan converted into a mass political machine.

To accomplish his purpose, he constructed within the Klan a political machine that he called the Military Machine. It was a machine designed to bring out every vote available and to make possible political success. Because this machine was so finely
constructed, and because it is almost unique in American History, the following chapter is devoted to an analysis of just how the Klan did manage to operate a state-wide machine behind the closed doors of the Klavern.

Stephenson made his first serious bid in the political arena when he picked out a politician of established success in the Republican Party who would go along with the movement. Ed Jackson, already Secretary of State of Indiana twice, was chosen. In 1924 he was entered in the gubernatorial contest by the Klan forces in the Republican Primaries and won that election with little effort. Stephenson lined up his Military Machine behind Jackson, whipped up an emotional support for him as the fair-haired representative of the Klan's group, and pushed Jackson to success. The fact that Jackson's name was already known, and that he had already had considerable success helped to pile up a considerable margin for Jackson. Along with him his "team" was nominated, most of them without much trouble. In the general elections in 1924 Jackson beat Dr. Carleton McCullough with ease. 39 Again Stephenson's Military Machine performed admirably. Coming into office with Jackson were many representatives directly representing the Klan in the State Legislature, the mayors of several of the larger cities, 40 and innumerable sheriffs, district attorneys, and other minor

39 It is interesting that Dr. McCullough never once mentioned the Klan during the campaign although every one knew that Jackson was a Klansman and was running as that organization's representative. This indicates the fear that prevailed in the society at that time.

40 The Klan elected the mayors of Indianapolis, Evansville and Kokomo among the larger cities.
officials. By the time these officers took over their functions at their inauguration about the first of the year, 1925, the Klan was the major political force in the state.

The Klan in Command

D. C. Stephenson had used the Klan to gain power in Indiana. What would he do with it?

Such a question is not easy to answer. Ed Jackson won the governorship in November, 1924. He took office early in 1925. With him there came to the State Legislature for 1925 a whole crop of victorious Klan candidates. The Klan possessed enough strength in the Indiana legislature to do just about what it wanted to do. "Steve" was the big factor, the man to see during the whole legislative session. But the Klan was not able to put across any program at all because of two situations that destroyed the Klan's one opportunity to leave its mark on Indiana's culture.

The first of these situations was the fact that D. C. Stephenson had quarreled with the national Klan hierarchy headed by Dr. Hiram Wesley Evans. Stephenson had been phenomenally successful in Indiana, and in the light of that had become, to Evans, an uncomfortable probable rival for control of the whole Klan movement. Just what began the feud between Evans and Stephenson is not known, but within a few months after Stephenson was inaugurated as Grand Dragon of Indiana on July 4, 1923, he resigned from the Klan. The apparent reason was that Stephenson wanted an entirely free hand in the Indiana Klan and Evans wanted to control the organization
and "Steve" through Evans' most reliable man in Indiana, Walter Bossert. Bossert himself had a strong following among Hoosier Klansmen, and wielded considerable power. The result of the situation was that by the spring of 1924 the Klan in Indiana had two Grand Dragons. Stephenson continued to exercise power, but Bossert was the officially appointed Grand Dragon. On some issues the Klan compromised with "Steve". Stephenson was headed hell-bent for politics and in that he had no rival. Evans wanted the power that political control would yield the Klan, and so he was willing to compromise the issue. Stephenson was allowed to keep control of his peculiar creation, the Military Machine, and was allowed to speak for it from the floor of the Klaverns and to go to Klan meetings and be welcomed. But the administration of Klan affairs in the state passed to the regular organization headed by Bossert. In that form of compromise the Klan went into the 1924 Primary election.41

The success of Jackson in the Primaries made Stephenson confident of his own power. He apparently felt he could defeat the national Klan hierarchy. Within two weeks after the Primaries in May, Stephenson called a meeting of the Klan's local leaders at Indianapolis, and took those units that would go with him out of the Klan officially. The confusion was compounded when Stephenson

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41 This is the story told by D. C. Stephenson when he was interviewed in prison by Arthur Gilliom. Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of David C. Stephenson, 18 ff.
still called his group the Ku Klux Klan. During the summer the slate of candidates Stephenson's machines had nominated within the Republican Party was favored by both the Evans wing of the Klan and the Stephenson wing. When the election was won in the fall, it was Stephenson's state candidates who won, but at the local level, most of the men who were to come to the state legislature were Evans' men. So when the legislature met, the two wings of the Klan were locked in a tight battle with one another for ultimate control of the organization.

The Evans' Klansmen came to Indianapolis for the 1926 session of the state legislature with sure control of a majority of the members of the House of Representatives. They introduced into the House a series of bills that they styled the Klan's "Americanization" program. The items in the Klan's program were these. 42

1. The Religious Garb Bill--A bill aimed to prevent any person who wore any items of religious garb or vestment from teaching in the Public Schools. It was aimed at some nuns who were teaching in Dubois, Spencer, Perry, Crawford, Floyd, and parts of Dearborn and Martin counties. 43

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42 Lest the reader got lost: both sections of the Klan wanted these bills. They embodied the Klan program of legislation. The fact that Stephenson's Klansmen would not support this program for political reasons does not alter the fact that they, too, wanted it to pass even while voting against it.

43 This bill was defeated by the Senate, passed by the House and then lost in the Senate on a second test, 19-17. Indianapolis News, January 21, 1925 and February 17, 1925.
2. **The Public School Graduate Bill**—This bill would have provided that teaching licenses in Indiana might be granted only to those who had been graduated from the public schools of Indiana or other states. Automatically, parochial or private school graduates would have been eliminated.44

3. **The Uniform Textbook Bill**—This would have made it compulsory for the parochial and private schools of the state to adopt the same text-books as those used in the public school systems.45

4. **Textbook Commission Bill**—With the passage of this bill a textbook commission would have examined all the texts in one area of knowledge and a list of four of these texts then would have been selected. From these four the teachers and school systems would have been required to make their selections.46

5. **The Bible-Reading Bill**—This bill would have made it mandatory that the Bible be read each day in the public schools of the state without comment from the reader. On this bill there was a bitter battle.47

6. Also a part of the program was a bill to allow the state schools of higher learning to permit students to elect and obtain credit for Bible study in schools conducted by organizations

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44 *Indianapolis News*, January 23, 1925.
45 *Indianapolis News*, March 9, 1925.
46 Ibid.
47 The bitterest of all the fights was over this. The House passed three variations of this bill, and the Senate killed each one. *Indianapolis News*, February 25, 1925.
outside the school system. The Klan also attempted to create, by legislation an entirely new board of education and attempted to pass a formula whereby students in the public schools could get released time for religious education. Last, the Klan sought support for a bill requiring students of all Indiana's schools to study the national constitution. Only in this last instance did the Klan succeed in putting legislation on the books.

The reason the Klansmen failed was Stephenson. He always maintained that he was not a bigot, that he was not interested in fighting Catholics, Negroes, Jews or others. What he wanted was power and wealth. The Klan was a convenient means of attaining them so he used it. When the vote on these bills came Stephenson controlled the Senate and killed each one. Stephenson probably did not dislike them nor disapprove of their principles, but he found them too controversial. He was after other specific

48 Indianapolis News, February 5, 1925.
49 Indianapolis News, March 5, 1925.
50 Both the House and Senate passed the released time bill (two hours a week off in a school district if 40% of parents request it), but Attorney-General Gilliom's legal opinion was that it was an infringement on the church-state separation historically accepted in the society, so Jackson vetoed the bill. Indianapolis News, March 12 and 14, 1925.
51 The only Klan item to become law was this one. Indianapolis News, March 9, 1925.
legislation, and he wielded his power over the whole legislature during the session. These bills would have caused bitterness had they been passed and some of the support Stephenson wanted on other issues would have evaporated had his Klan supporters approved the bills. When he used his strength to kill them in the Senate, he created a power situation to his liking. His Klan followers went along with his decision to kill the Klan bills because they trusted him even when they wanted the bills to pass. And the Klan's opponents who opposed these religiously discriminatory bills swung to Stephenson's support on other issues because of his aid in this battle. It was a desirable power situation that "Steve" turned to his advantage.

During the 1925 session of the legislature Stephenson made friends and he made money by selling influence and making decisions during the legislative session. He did not, so far as is known, set foot in the legislative halls during the entire session. But legislative leaders came to his office in the

---52 Stephenson sold influence to make money. He is reported to have made enormous wealth out of the Klan. There is no doubt that he made a goodly sum out of the propagation drives and his out of the commissions. But he made more wielding power at the State Legislative sessions in 1925. Examples of what he wanted was to change the state highway commission so that he could pack it with his own men. The most lucrative contracts written in the 1920s were for the roads needed for the new automobiles "Steve's" road-ripper bill, as it was called, failed of passage because too many of the legislators were committed to the group then in control of the commission, but it indicates the type of legislation "Steve" was for. This information comes from Marion County Grand Jury transcripts and is not legally citable.
Building for instructions regularly, and they were close enough to be called in at any time. Stephenson made a real stake by selling influence during this session of the legislature. In addition, he wielded the power he so coveted. He got what he wanted in most cases; the Klan folk who had elevated him to his position of power got little of the legislation they craved.

And there was no second chance. This session of the legislature proved to be the only chance the Klan ever had in Indiana to control some of the policies governing the public schools. Near the end of the 1925 legislative session D. C. Stephenson's empire collapsed. Within one year he was eliminated completely from the Indiana picture, and when he went under, the Klan went with him. Stephenson's fall was the second situation that made the enactment of the Klan program impossible in Indiana.

**D. C. Stephenson: Death of a Salesman**

At the height of his power Stephenson fell. At exactly the moment that he was wielding the power he so loved he lost it.

No one really knows much about the personal character of D. C. Stephenson. Most estimates of his personality stress his ambition and his overwhelming urge to wield power, to control people. There seems to be no question that he had ambition of this nature. But coupled with such a strong personality trait were certain flaws in his personality. He probably was an alcoholic, and there were suggestions circulated that he had once been under
treatment for alcoholism. The fact that he was drinking heavily when he had Madge Oberholtzer with him on the train to Hammond went unchallenged in the court record. And he loved the physical gratification to be gained from sexual contact. Coughlan called Stephenson oversexed, and perhaps he was. Certainly he was married twice before he was thirty, and he lived a fast, loose life in Indianapolis at the height of his power. He owned a mansion in one of the most fashionable suburbs around Indianapolis, Irvington, an upper middle-class area, and it was said the lights were never off in the house while he lived there. He apparently knew many women in Indianapolis well, and changed his favorites frequently. So long as he was careful in his conquests, and picked carefully the women whom he made his companions, he was all right. Who could attack him? He was the law. But at the critical moment when he might have gone on to become a real dictator of the Huey Long stripe, he erred. He picked the wrong girl, and he got careless in what he did.

Madge Oberholtzer was the daughter of a respectable family who lived near Stephenson's home in Irvington. Her father was a civil servant in the railway mail service. Madge had attended Butler College in Irvington, and had gone on to business school. She had taught in a rural school and had worked for a time in Indianapolis.

53 Booth, Mad Mullah of America, 132; Monteval, Klan Inside Out, 34; and Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation all discuss this factor in "Steve's" behavior.
54 Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo" in Leighton, Aspirin Age, 124.
as a secretary. Eventually she took a job at the Statehouse in Indianapolis where life was a little less dull. As an ex-teacher she got a position with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. She was working at that job when Stephenson met her. At that time she was twenty-eight, a spinster, and not likely to catch any young man or to appeal to many in the future. Her photographs show her as a buxom girl, five feet and four inches tall and a robust 145 pounds, with a long thin nose and a careless bob. No rumors connected her with any unladylike conduct, and she was just another state worker until January 12, 1925.

In her death-bed statement Madge said she first met "Steve" at the Athletic Club banquet in January, 1925. Stephenson had been the most important person there, and in the course of the evening she had arranged to be introduced to him. Thereafter, he took her to several parties and the acquaintance developed into a luke-warm affair. On the night of March 15th Madge testified that she had been out and had returned home at about ten o'clock to find an urgent telephone message from "Steve" asking her to come to his house about "an important matter". Going there with Earl Gentry, one of Stephenson's body-guards who came to pick her up, she found

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The following section of the thesis represents a summary of the statement Madge Oberholtzer made just before she died in the presence of witnesses and with her attorney, Asa J. Smith, present. The original of this can be found in several sources. The Indianapolis News printed it with a few elisions in the interest of public morals on June 16, 1925, on the first page. It can be found in the court records in Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana, May 16, 1933 to December 22, 1933, Vol. 205 (Indianapolis, 1934), 165-182.
Stephenson at his home, obviously under the influence of alcohol, insistent that she drink with him. When she refused she was "forced" to take three drinks. After that Stephenson, gun in hand, announced that she was going to Chicago with him that night on a train. Under duress furnished by Stephenson and his two body-guards, Madge went to the train station with Stephenson and boarded the train with him.

Her deathbed statement then said that she was forced to accompany the three men—Stephenson, Gentry, and Klinck—to their drawing room on the train and there:

Stephenson took hold of the bottom of my dress and pulled it up over my head. I tried to fight but was weak and unsteady. What I had drunk was affecting me. Stephenson took all my clothes off and pushed me into the lower berth. After the train had started Stephenson got in with me and attacked me. He held me so that I could not move. I... do not remember all that happened. He chewed me all over my body, bit my neck and face, chewed my tongue, chewed my breasts until they bled, my back, my legs, my ankles and mutilated me all over my body... 66

Madge reported that they kept her on the train overnight, but got off the next morning at Hammond, Indiana, before they crossed the state line. There they went to a hotel where Stephenson paid no further attention to her. His two henchmen tried to ease her pain, and one of them took her out to a drug store to get medicine. While there she bought a box of bi-chloride of mercury tablets, a poison, and when she returned to the hotel room, she took six of

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66 Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana, May 16, 1933 to December 22, 1933, Vol. 205 (Indianapolis, 1934), 165-182.
them. During the afternoon she became violently ill from the slow-
acting poison, and began to vomit steadily. Stephenson had gone
out, but when he came back and saw her he became alarmed. He asked
her what she had done, and when she told him, he told his body-
guards that they were leaving for Indianapolis immediately.
Madge said that he told her that they would have to get married,
but she refused. They got a car, and drove back to Indianapolis
in one long trip, stopping nowhere along the way. She said she
begged to be taken to a doctor, but that he would not do so unless
she consented to marry him first. Apparently not realizing the
seriousness of her condition, Stephenson held her prisoner in an
attic above his garage on his estate in Irvington for several days
while attempting to get her to marry him. When she refused, he
would not take her home nor would he get a doctor for her despite
her condition. When it was apparent that she was not going to
live, he had one of his men take her home where he dumped the
girl unceremoniously and walked out. Before she died, she lived
long enough to make a complete deathbed statement to her attorney,
Asa J. Smith, about what had happened. She was conscious and
rational during the whole discussion, and he recorded her statement
in front of witnesses and she signed it before she died. Asa J.
Smith, an established Indianapolis trial lawyer with a good practice and
a respected reputation, took the deposition.

On the basis of Madge’s statement, Stephenson was arrested.
It is not possible some thirty years later to realize the sensation
the arrest of D. C. Stephenson created. He was thought to be above
the law; if not above it, he was the law. But he was arrested first for assault, and then when the girl died he was indicted for second degree murder. The charge would have been first degree, but it was evident that Madge Oberholtzer had taken the poison by her own hand.

Stephenson took the case calmly. He was confident that he could not be convicted in the state of Indiana. If by some strange chance conviction should be the result of the trial, he was certain that his own hand-picked governor, Ed Jackson, would pardon him. He took the precaution to have the case venued to Noblesville to take it out of Indianapolis, but he was completely confident he would be acquitted all during the trial.

D. C. Stephenson's defense attorneys based their defense upon the fact that Madge Oberholtzer had manifestly taken the poison herself, and was not forced to do so. Therefore, she had committed suicide and that was that. The coroner of Marion County, Paul F. Robinson, testified that his verdict was suicide. He said that the mercury had caused her death; she had purchased it and had taken the mercury herself. She was, therefore, a suicide.57

The prosecution contended that the mercury had not been the

57 The testimony of the witnesses is summed up in The State of Indiana vs. David C. Stephenson, et. al., in the records of which are in the Hamilton County Court House at Noblesville, Indiana. Since they are still in short hand, they are not available to the general student of history. The best transcript lies in the Supreme Court case where testimony was summarized by both sides in their briefs. Reports of Cases... in Supreme Court, Vol. 205, 142 ff.
cause of death; that, everything else being favorable, she would have recovered from that. But everything else was not favorable. She had been badly bitten upon the breasts, back and other parts of her body by D. C. Stephenson, and those wounds had infected. Stephenson had persistently refused to give her medical care, as evidenced by her deathbed statement, and the infected wounds, inflicted by the defendant, had been the cause of death. The jury decided that the wounds had been the cause of death, or had played a part in it, and convicted Stephenson of second-degree murder while freeing his two henchmen who had been on the train with him. The fact that Stephenson refused to take the stand and testify in his own defense was variously taken as an admission of guilt and a fear of facing a hostile attorney, or it was taken as an indication of how certain "Steve" thought acquittal was. There is no question that the verdict of guilty shook him when it was announced by the jury foreman.

Stephenson was sentenced to life imprisonment and went off to prison to wait out a certain pardon that never came. Month after month passed with Stephenson expecting Governor Jackson to reach out and rescue him from his cell. But no pardon ever came. After some months Stephenson began to hint that he had collected blackmail evidence against most of the active politicians in the state and would release it to legal authorities if he were not pardoned. Eventually he did just that, but that will be considered below.
Was Stephenson Guilty?

Was Stephenson guilty of the crime of which he was convicted? The court decided that he was and he was imprisoned for life. Stephenson and his followers claimed he was "framed" and had been railroaded to prison to remove him from the political scene in Indiana. What is the evidence on each side?

The state convicted him of assaulting and harming Madge Oberholtzer to the point where her life was forfeited. He contributed further to her death when he refused to allow her to have proper and prompt medical attention. The state stressed that Madge Oberholtzer had been a model young woman, that never a breath of scandal had touched her. She had never been known to step outside the rigid moral bounds of the community, and was the possessor of a good name. Therefore, the overnight trip with D. C. Stephenson that she admitted she took had obviously been one that she had been forced to make. Evidence of this was clear in her wounds and in the fact that she was so badly treated that she died from the effects of the trip. Further evidence was the fact that Stephenson, who had been headed for Chicago on that fateful night, chose to stop at Hammond, Indiana, before he crossed the state line and made himself liable to Mann Act charges. Therefore, Stephenson had known what he was doing, had been perfectly aware of his position, and had been morally and legally responsible for her death.

In 1940 Stephenson's supporters published a small book that summarized the claims of the Stephenson aides that he had been
"framed" and rail-roaded to prison. The villain in the plot they identified as the national Klan hierarchy with whom Stephenson had fought bitterly in 1923-24. His supporters said that Hiram Wesley Evans, the Imperial Wizard and the implacable foe of D. C. Stephenson, had had Stephenson forced out of the Klan in 1924 as he had forced William Joseph Simmons out earlier. Evans, they said, had boasted that he would use the traditional Klan technique of "hanging a woman around his neck", and would force him to pay dearly for the harm he had done the regular Klan movement in Indiana when he split with Bossert and took Indiana Klansmen out of the regular organization. Stephenson's supporters noted that just before he was indicted for this murder charge a woman claiming to be a former wife of his had shown up in Indianapolis, and had filed suit for divorce and support on grounds of desertion. Stephenson claimed that the woman came from Little Rock, Arkansas, and was sent to Indianapolis to embarrass him as his trial opened. Little Rock, Arkansas, he noted, was the home of Judge Comer, the attorney for the bitterly hostile national Klan. A series of spite cases that Stephenson had once filed but which had lain dormant in the

58 Robert A. Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, (privately printed, Huntington, Indiana, 1940). Butler was Stephenson's private secretary at the height of Stephenson's career. This is a searching analysis, and a convincing one, that outlines the conditions of the trial and the course of the testimony, pointing out areas of doubt and a number of questionable decisions.  
59 Indianapolis News, March 19, 1925.  
60 Ibid.
courts for two years were suddenly resurrected and pushed to a
decision to bring additional publicity to bear on him, his
supporters added. 61

Worst of all, however, were the Klan threats on his life and
the Klan's ability to arouse community antipathy toward him.
Stephenson had no sooner been arrested, he said, than mass
meetings were held that whipped up public opinion against him.
One meeting of 600 persons, not Klansmen, was held that had been
deliberately promoted by the Evans wing of the Klan. In addition,
women's clubs and other do-gooder agencies were urged to flood the
newspapers with resolutions denouncing him. 62 His efforts to fight
these attacks could not be effective, he said, because he could not
get out of jail on bail to fight the charges in person. Bail was
denied to him from the first. When his case was venue to Noblesville,
he learned that Evans and Bossert had descended upon the Hamilton
County Klan, a unit that had become more or less inactive, and had
re-organized it quickly. On the floor at Klan meetings in Marion
and Hamilton County he was passionately denounced and feeling was
deliberately stirred up against him. The Hamilton County Klan
purchased for $1250.00 a day on the Chautauqua then in session at
Noblesville for a Klan day the Sunday before Stephenson's trial.

61 Indianapolis News, May 2, 1927. See also the issue of
June 19, 1925.
62 See the issues of the Indianapolis News for April and May,
1925 for examples of these resolutions that were passed. Specifi-
cally the issues of April 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 30 and May
7, and 11, 1925.
was scheduled to begin. The series of meetings, all of which the Klan officials opened to all citizens and at which Hiram Wesley Evans spoke, were used to stir up every manner of loathing against "Steve". From that community, on the following day, a jury to try him was to be picked.

Stephenson added that he was both threatened and blackmailed during his duress. He said that from the time he was forced out of the Grand Dragonship he had been hounded by Asa J. Smith, a Klan attorney. Smith warned him that the Klan was going to "hang a woman around his neck", but that this could be avoided if certain conditions were met, including the payment of a sum of money to Smith. When he finally refused a last appeal in the Hamilton County jail, he said, he was warned he would be destroyed.

On two occasions he said his life was threatened. Klansman Robert McNay, a minor official in the regular Klan hierarchy, gave a false name to the jailer and visited "Steve" in the Hamilton County jail. McNay warned him that he would be shot if he dared to take the stand in his own defense. Later, on Klan Day in Noblesville, while the crowd was walking around the building and down the street, a little knot of Klansmen in their robes gathered just below Stephenson's cell window and shouted to him from behind.

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63 A Klan Day was held at Noblesville on August 9, 1925. See the Indianapolis Star, August 10, 1925 and see the account of the effect of the day upon Stephenson's situation in Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, 23.
64 Ibid., 23-5
65 Ibid., 25.
their masks that he and some of his friends would be shot if he took the stand to testify. As a result of these threats against his life, he had not taken the stand to tell what he knew about that night on the train. 66

Stephenson's supporters at the time tried to blacken the reputation of Madge Oberholtzer. They circulated stories that she was well known by many men and had a constant procession of "friends". 67 If she was not of this nature is it likely that she would have answered a call and have gone to the home of a bachelor unaccompanied at ten o'clock at night? They suggested that she had known Stephenson much more familiarly than she admitted in her statement. 68

Stephenson himself would not talk about her then or after that. He said that he had been on the train to Hammond that night, but not with Madge Oberholtzer. 69 He had been in company with the wife of a friend of his who was in serious trouble and whose problems he was attempting to solve. His sense of honor would not allow him to divulge her name. He would have been able to clear everything without revealing her identity if his only really sound witness had not been murdered in Indianapolis before his trial took place. 70

66 Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, 27.
68 Ibid., 197.
69 Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, 56.
70 Indianapolis News, July 3, 1925. A woman named Mrs. Edith Irene Dean was killed in Indianapolis on July 2, 1925. Whether she really had anything to do with Stephenson or whether she lent herself well to his case by dying is not known. She met a violent death, and was obviously murdered. The case was never solved.
Stephenson to this day maintains that the story he refused to tell of that trip to Hammond would clear him. He insists bitterly that the Klan "got" him with a woman. In Indiana many believe him. Maybe it is the American tendency to side with the underdog, maybe it just seems that no man in his position could have been so foolish, so utterly insane as to have pulled a stunt like this.

John Bartlow Martin, reporting from Indiana in 1947 summed up with the statement that Stephenson wrote a note to a newspaperman: "I should have been put to jail for my political activities, but I am not guilty of murder." Martin said "many Hoosiers agree".\textsuperscript{71}

The Indiana Klan after Stephenson

The conviction of Stephenson killed the Indiana Klan. If Stephenson had been convicted of robbery, of graft, of corrupt practices in political affairs, the Klan might have survived his arrest and conviction. But the repulsive character of the case drove Klansmen out of the Klan in droves, and swept support of all kinds away from the Klan. From a peak strength of close to half a million members in 1924 the Klan dropped within a year after Stephenson's conviction to a few thousand members.\textsuperscript{72}

The exodus was general. In addition to the membership that fell away, so did the politicians. Frank Baker, the Democratic boss of the state, said, "We don't want the poisonous animal to

\textsuperscript{71} Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation, 199
\textsuperscript{72} Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Hugh "Fat" Emmons, 46.
crawl into our yard and die". Those who had mere months before sought the favor of the Klan and the endorsement and aid of Stephenson vanished into limbo. All that was left were a few fanatical groups in some of the cities and towns that tried to rally the Klan on the issue of the public schools, and the regular Klan leaders who remained to fight over the spoils.74

Even the regular leaders of the Klan found little that they could do. The Klan elements split apart with local leaders fighting for what spoils remained. Joe Huffington and W. Lee Smith fought over the corpse of the Klan and watched it die in their clutching grasp.75 By the time the 1927 legislature assembled, the Klan was a forgotten issue. One rugged individual, a hold-over from the 1925 session, introduced a bill to make all teachers in the state be graduates of the public schools.76 But instead of tense, fighting support he was mocked, and other members, mockingly, reminded him that those days were over. By 1927 the Klan had died out to all extents and purposes. A few

73 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Hugh "Fat" Emmons, 46. See also Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo", in Leighton, Aspirin Age, 127.
74 The Klan remained active in Indianapolis into 1927, for example. The author has in his possession a slate of candidates that Klansmen favored in the school board elections in Indianapolis in 1926. This ticket, called the "Protestant School Ticket" is reproduced below in the following chapter.
75 For some of the details for the battle over control of the Klan after 1925 see the testimony of "Pat" Emmons on this point. Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Hugh "Pat" Emmons, 143-165, especially.
76 Indianapolis News, January 26, 1927.
remnant organizations, some still calling themselves the Klan, others taking other names like the Red Star Association, or the St. Joseph Valley Tabernacle Association, continued to hang on. In some cases it was a continuing interest in the Klan ideology, and a reluctance to give up the crusade. More often the remnant organizations continued to hang on because in its days of success the Klan had made money and some of that money had been invested in property. This still needed an organization to hold the title to it, and some persons maintained the organizations to reap slim financial pickings. So, on into the thirties, into an era to which the Klan did not belong, some groups lasted. By the mid-1930s even they had disappeared.

In 1928 historians have pointed to the Klan and said it was a factor in the middlewestern states in the defeat of Al Smith. If by that they mean that the Klan in earlier years created an atmosphere which made it easy to arouse fears of Al Smith, a wet and a Catholic, they are correct. But if they mean that the Klan organization in any of these states was strong enough to work as an organized group for the defeat of Smith, they are wrong. The Klan died in the Middle West long before 1928. And the trial and conviction of D. C. Stephenson was the major cause of the decline.

77 The Red Star Association was a segment of the Indianapolis Klan. Indianapolis News, May 13, 19 .The St. Joseph Valley Tabernacle Association was the St. Joseph Valley Klan (South Bend) re-organized. See the testimony of "Fat" Emmons, the leader of that Klan and Association, before the Reed Committee, Reed Committee Hearings, 2035.
D. C. Stephenson: Prison and Revenge

D. C. Stephenson out-lived the Klan. As late as 1950 Stephenson was still holding headlines in Indiana.

In 1925 he had marched off to prison certain that he would be speedily pardoned by his own governor, Ed Jackson. After waiting for months and finding that not only was he not going to get his pardon from the governor, but that he was being held under much tighter security guard than any other prisoner, he began to send word outside the prison walls that he knew much about the personal lives and political deals that the current crop of politicians in Indiana had made. He told Thomas H. Adams of the Vincennes Sun-Times that he had evidence in some "little black boxes" that he had been collecting for years. Adams worked for more than a year and a half to bring about an investigation of the Klan and its political tie-ups. He met bitter opposition from all directions who urged him to let sleeping dogs lie, or who wanted nothing more than a whitewash investigation. Adams, a life-long Republican, realized that it would be in his own party that the revelations must come, but he worked on for

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One of Stephenson's charges was that when he was sent to the Michigan City State Prison in 1925 the warden was changed from a long-time civil servant to a political appointee. It is true that on June 2, 1925, Ed Fogarty, warden for fifteen years, resigned to take up "splendid business opportunities in Chicago". His place was taken by Warren Daly assistant warden for twelve years at the prison. Indianapolis News, June 2, 1925. Every time Stephenson appeared outside the prison walls, he was held incommunicado. See, for example, Indianapolis Times, July 7, 1927. His defense is filled with accounts of the special treatment he was subjected to in prison. Butler, So They Framed Stephenson, 48-60 especially.
exposure as a matter of public honor. Success was attained when the far more powerful Indianapolis Times, under the leadership of editor Boyd Curley, took up the cry and forced the case open again.

The Times was so forceful and successful in its campaign in 1928 that it won the Pulitzer Prize for journalism for that year. Curley succeeded in needling until a Grand Jury finally called upon Stephenson for his evidence. The Mayor of Indianapolis, John Duvall, was found to have promised the Klan in 1925 that (a) he would allow the Klan to name 85% of his administration's appointments (b) he would stand by the Klan on any dispute with George V. Coffin (c) he would appoint no Roman Catholics to responsible positions, and (d) that he would give Klansman Bedford a real automobile for obtaining the support of George Coffin for Duvall. Coffin led the other faction of the Republican party in Marion County. In addition, a written statement turned up in which Duvall had promised D. C. Stephenson that Stephenson could personally appoint certain men to specific offices. Duvall was convicted of violating the Corrupt Practices Act, and sentenced to thirty days in the county jail.

Evidence of corruption reached a number of other men in the state capital, but the highest man touched was Ed Jackson, the Governor. Attorney C. F. Christian testified before the Marion

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79 Indianapolis News, July 30, 1927.
80 Indianapolis News, May 17, 1927.
81 Indianapolis News, October 7, 1926.
82 Indianapolis News, October 14, 1926.
County Grand Jury that he had visited Stephenson in the Noblesville jail and had seen him pinning checks to some papers. When he asked him what he was doing, Stephenson replied "I am getting my ammunition ready". He then showed Christian scores of documents, agreements that he had in his cell with him. He testified:

Steve then showed me some of the letters and checks which were piled upon the bunk in that cell. I have no idea as to the number of them, except that the bunk which they were on was about 6-1/2 feet long by 3-1/2 feet wide was stacked with checks and papers, some of which I examined in a casual manner. Among these papers Stephenson selected one check, which was payable to Ed Jackson, for $5,000.00. Here also was another check the amount of which, I do not remember which was payable to Ed Jackson.

The Grand Jury tried to take action on the basis of a check for $2,500.00 that Stephenson wrote in favor of Jackson. When charged with accepting checks from Stephenson, Jackson at first denied it, and then later admitted that he had received $2,500.00 at one time. But that money was for a horse. Where was the horse? Well, "the Senator" a few months before had choked to death on a corn cob.

Obviously guilty of violating the Corrupt Practices Act, Governor Jackson was saved by the Statute of Limitations. More than the permissible two years had elapsed since his actions and he could not be prosecuted. Angry newspapermen and citizens of all types called upon him to resign, but he did not. He

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83 Indianapolis News, October 14, 1926.
84 Indianapolis News, October 14, 1926.
85 Indianapolis Times, July 14, 1927.
86 Indianapolis Times, February 17, 1928.
continued to serve, and finished his term as governor.

Stephenson, meantime, had failed to open the prison gates by threat. Wearily, he turned to the courts. In the intervening years, from 1925 to 1945, he filed more than forty court actions pleading persistently that his original trial had been biased and prejudiced. Once, in 1931, he was brought back to Noblesville to have a Justice of the Supreme Court hear his case, but the verdict again went against him. For more years he served time in prison.

Year after year he served. Political party succeeded political party, governor followed governor. The Republican governor that followed Jackson would not pardon nor parole him, and the series of Democratic governors of the 1930s would not parole him. McNutt, Townsend, Schricker—all would not touch him nor his case. In the war years Governor Gates, a Republican, would not hear him. Finally, in 1950, when Governor Henry Schricker was serving his second term, he offered parole to D. C. Stephenson.

The conditions under which Stephenson was paroled were peculiar. He was to leave Indiana forever; he must never again set foot in the state under any circumstances. To do so would be a violation of his parole, and would lead to re-imprisonment. Stephenson moved out of Indiana to Minneapolis, and

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87 In Weaver, Ku Klux Klan In Indiana, Appendix C, 271 is a record of all of Stephenson's court actions to 1939. There were more before he was paroled in 1950.
88 On March 22, 1950, D. C. Stephenson walked out of the Michigan City prison on parole. Every paper in the state probably carried that story, but see South Bend Tribune, March 22, 1950.
for a time worked there as a printer. Then he moved back to Carbondale, Illinois, just across the Wabash from Indiana, and finally crossed back into the state. He was seized, his parole cancelled, and he is at present back securely behind bars. No one knows why he violated parole to return to the Hoosier state. All that is certain is that Indiana did not want him back.

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In Kokomo, Indiana, the Klan held its greatest rally on the day "Steve" was inducted as Grand Dragon. The Klan purchased Melfalfa Park in Kokomo where that memorable event took place. Coughlan, a Kokomo boy, describes the scene today:

And today, in Kokomo, the Klan is only an old memory. The Reverend Everett Nixon carried on for years as secretary of the Melfalfa Park Association, trying to hold together the property and the few believers. But he failed, and now the park is overgrown with brush, deserted and decayed, its sagging pavilion a meeting place for bats and owls. 89

And in the Michigan City State Prison D. C. Stephenson waits for a freedom that will never come again.

89 Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo", in Leighton, Aspirin Age, 128.
CHAPTER FIVE

KLAN TECHNIQUES IN INDIANA POLITICS:
A CASE STUDY IN POLITICAL TECHNIQUE

I AM THE LAW IN INDIANA: 1

The organization known as the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is not in politics, neither is it a political party.... 2

Mind you...it is not to be understood that the Klan is in politics or about to enter into politics.... The Klan teaches that the rights of American citizenship is fulfilled at the ballot box....

It is ridiculous to say that the Klan was not in politics, and was not using its influence and its money, and everything it had, men, money, and influence, and power, and machinery wherever it decided to elect a man. 4

The rapid growth of the Klan to strength and power in Indiana in less than three years was a remarkable sight for Hoosiers to witness. Before 1922 no one would have believed that a secret society preaching fear, distrust and suspicion could come into Indiana and gather up perhaps half a million Hoosiers into a vast network of local clubs.

1 D. C. Stephenson is reputed to have said thousands of times that he was the law in Indiana.
2 An "Announcement" by the Imperial Wizard, printed in the Wisconsin Kourier, September 5, 1924. This official statement of Klan policy can be found in nearly every piece of Klan literature that appeared.
3 Walter Bossert, Grand Dragon of Indiana, and W. Lee Smith, Chief of Staff, to all Exalted Cyclops, Kligrapps, Protestant Ministers, Realm and Volunteer Speakers, October 18, 1924. (Official Document #19), Gilliom's Case Against the Indiana Klan.
It must have seemed as fantastic to other observers of the Hoosier scene as it did to Lowell Mellett as he watched the Klan grow to the peak of its strength in the last months of 1923.⁵ At that time it must have seemed that the Klan had spent its force, had made its dramatic impact on Indiana society, and was soon destined to vanish through the loss of momentum that must come when the Hoosiers who could be attracted to the Klan had all joined. But such was not to be the case. Although new membership did not come in as rapidly in 1924 and 1925 as it had earlier the Klan leaders proved themselves able to hold their tightly-knit organization and to keep it functioning efficiently. And it is in these two years 1924 and 1925 that the major Klan events took place that have made the Klan a folk legend throughout the Hoosier state.

Two of the Klan achievements became folk-legends in Indiana. The first, the Klan's rise to control of the political life of the state, was historically most important, but the second, the meteoric rise of D. C. Stephenson to a virtual dictatorship of the Hoosierland, was the more dramatic. David C. Stephenson organized within the Klan a well-oiled and fantastically efficient political machine, used it to capture control of key nominations on the Republican ticket in the 1924 May primary elections, and through the victories of these persons in the November elections, gained control of the Indiana political scene. How this was done, what techniques were used, how a secret organization

⁵ Mellett, a native Hoosier who had been out of Indiana for several years, was astonished when he returned. His greatest amazement came from the seriousness with which Hoosiers accepted the Klan's posturing. Lowell Mellett, "Klan and Church in Indiana", Atlantic Monthly, 132: 586-92 (November, 1923).
could and did operate effectively in the political arena, is laid bare by the available historical evidence. Because the historical field does not often produce such complete knowledge (particularly where a secret society is involved, because the political techniques were so significant in the Indiana Klan story, and because, from the standpoint of Political Science, this material is unique it is included here as a case study in political tactics. This material is supplementary to the preceding chapter where the rise and fall of D. C. Stephenson and the Klan was traced and it is necessary as an aid to understanding both Stephenson and the Klan because it demonstrates how both operated.

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The Klan in every state passed through two stages in its development. In the first, both the Klan’s leaders and the Klansmen in the ranks were more interested in expanding the membership of the organization than they were in using the massed strength of the order for any specific purpose. The entire set of resources of the Klan—time, money, leadership talent, and men—was devoted to recruiting efforts. In the second stage of Klan development, the leaders of the state Klans sought to turn their organizations into the political field, in part to give the membership of the Klan something to do after the appeal of recruiting was gone, and in part to use the Klan’s strength for some purpose before it collapsed.

For at least two years, ordinarily, the Klan worked for expansion. The tale of Klan efforts to expand in Indiana is told above in the
preceding chapter. Both Klan leaders and Klan members in the ranks had a stake in Klan recruiting efforts. The Klan leaders at all levels operated on a commission basis. New members meant a livelihood. Most of the Klan's leaders worked full time at their Klan jobs, and the commissions received from their out of the initiation fees were their only financial reward for their work. In some few instances, leaders in the lower echelons of the Klan hierarchy received a small regular salary for their work, and at the upper levels the leaders regularly received generous expense accounts from the national office, but the only certain source of income that Klan leaders could count upon was that received from a split of the ten dollar Kleektoken paid when a new member joined the Klan. In addition to financial considerations, however, many of the Klan leaders were sincerely concerned with the ideals of the Klan and sought to build a strong organization to push the Klan goals. And some of the Klan leaders had ambitions that a strong large organization could push--the desire to hold political office and a hope to use the Klan to sell influence or other considerations of like nature. For these reasons expansion was pushed persistently in the first years of Klan growth by the Klan's leaders.

Members of the Klan had a stake in Klan expansion, too. Because most of those who worked faithfully for the Klan were convinced that the Klan was fulfilling a necessary function and role in American society, they worked long hours at building up the strength of the organization. In numbers alone lay the road to power and to the things they sought. There were more selfish reasons involved, of
course, in many instances. When the Klan expanded the leadership circles widened, and opportunities for quick financial gain spread to larger circles of Klansmen. And finally, a large membership meant that local Klansmen could control their own affairs. Until chartering was achieved by a local unit, that unit was helpless within the Klan. Members could be inspired to work for a larger membership through consideration of the need to acquire a charter from the national organization. For these reasons ordinary Klansmen in the ranks also worked feverishly to expand the membership of the Klan in its first stage.

As a result of these drives, the first years of Klan work in any middlewestern state were devoted to an expansion theme. In Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin this period of expansion lasted from two to three years. Eventually, however, a point in time would be reached when few more men could be found who would join the Klan. At that point, a shift in emphasis was necessary. Some device had to be provided for leader and member alike that could call forth the same drives for work and loyalty within the organization that recruiting had been able to call forth. In the second stage Klan leaders turned Klan attention to politics to fill that role.

**General Pattern of Klan Political Action in Indiana**

Samuel P. Huntington has suggested that there are four tactics that can be and have been used successfully by minority groups and reform movements to obtain their political goals. These are

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(a) nonpartisan tactics: active work within one or both of the major parties to nominate the organization's candidates in the primaries and to elect them to office on the major party ticket in the general election, (b) balance of power tactics: wait until the major parties make their nominations and then throw the support of the group to the candidates most favorable to the group's program. (c) sorehead tactics: if the group's candidates lose in the primaries, enter them as independents in the fall and work for their election at that time, and (d) third party tactics: the formation of a third party expressing the views of this group only, a party of principle in the European sense.

The Klan made extensive use of both the nonpartisan tactics and the balance of power technique. Standard operating procedure developed by the Klan in Indiana can be summarized thus: before the primaries the Klan carefully ran its collective finger down the list of candidates for any office to see what candidates had filed; then the Klan collected certain specific items of information about these candidates and summarized it to see how they stood on matters the Klan considered significant. When this survey was completed, the Klan had one of two choices—it could go along with the candidates who had filed, choosing one or more for each office who were acceptable to it to receive the Klan's support. Or, if none of the announced

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The Klan at no time would sponsor or support a third party movement. Klan leaders insisted that the Klan work within the major parties. There are no instances that show that the Klan ever deviated from this stand. In this sense the Klan followed the lead of the Anti-Saloon League, a most successful model in the 1920s.
candidates were acceptable, Klansmen could convince a fellow member to file for the office and run against the men listed. Whatever choice was made, the Klan supported in the primary election the man most favorable to its program. This procedure was followed for all offices and for the candidates of both major parties. After the primary elections, the Klan began the whole process over again. The successful candidates for all parties were scrutinized; their attitudes were determined; and the Klan selections were made. Never, in any case, did the Klan suggest running either an independent candidate or creating a Klan third party in the general election if the Klan choice was defeated in the primaries. The Klan was willing to accept the results of the primaries and to support the most favorable man, a man who might conceivably be, in fact, coldly neutral toward the Klan, but at least more favorable than his more anti-Klan opponent.

Thus, by carefully choosing the men it would support, and by occasionally putting forth a candidate of its own, the Klan was able to use the balance of power technique with considerable success. This is precisely labor's old tactic of rewarding one's friends and punishing one's enemies, but for the Klan, because of a larger membership and a stronger devotion to principle, it worked more successfully for a short time. Furthermore, the relatively even balance of the major parties in the middle 1920s made this tactic more powerful than it might have been under other circumstances.

In operating in this way the Klan faced one problem not usually faced by minority groups or reform movements. Because the feeling
The success or failure of the Klan's nonpartisan and balanced power tactics depended upon its ability to acquire information about the various candidates and to use the information to gain votes. The questions that Stephenson and the Klan had to settle were (a) what type of information was needed as a basis for selecting favorable candidates, and (b) how was the Klan to make the final choice of its candidates known to its members so that they could vote properly.
The question of whom to endorse was a delicate one. It must be remembered that no local Klan was a unified group. Each Klan contained men who were nominally Republican in their political beliefs, others who were Democratic, even some who were Progressives or Socialists. Each Klan held farmers, workers, shopkeepers, merchants, lawyers and ministers. The economic level of local units ran from the middle to very near the bottom of the economic-social scale.

While the members of every Klan were all nominally Protestants, the Baptists did not drop their views on sprinkling when they met the Methodists or Presbyterians in the Klavern. In fact, there was little actual unity on specific issues within any Klan local. With a group of men so different in their stands on similar issues, how could any sort of consensus be reached that would lead to common action by the group?

Though the Klansmen differed on specific issues of every day life, they could agree on the symbols which they followed, and on the general ideals of the Klan. Indiana Klansmen could achieve a loose consensus around these symbols.8 All Klan members, whatever else they might be, were white, they were native-born, and all gave lip-service to one or another of the Protestant churches. All Indiana Klansmen thought that they represented the present generation of that old American stock that had settled this wild

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8 Despite the differences present among Klansmen, the degree to which Klansmen would cooperate once a decision was reached was amazing. Once a candidate had been designated as the Klan's choice, the argument ceased, the ranks closed, and Klansmen voted as Klansmen.
land in the early days. "We believe that the pioneers who built America bequeathed to their own children a priority right to it, the control of it and of its future, and that no one on earth can claim any part of its inheritance except through our generosity." These common strains of belief cemented Klansmen together, and enabled them to act in a common cause in selecting candidates for their support.

D. C. Stephenson built up an elaborate political organization within the Indiana Klan that he called his "Military Machine". As a part of this complicated system each local Klan unit was required to set up a political committee to conduct elections in its community. As one of its major responsibilities this committee was assigned the task of collecting the desired information on candidates from all over the state who hailed from that Klan's district. The information wanted about these candidates was the following:

1. Race.
2. Native-born or alien.
3. Marital status and number of children, if any.
4. Religious affiliation of wife.
5. Place where children attended school (private or parochial).
6. Fraternal affiliations.
7. Wet or dry.
8. General reputation in the community.
9. Standing in his profession.
10. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE KLAN.

10 The Military Machine is described in detail below, ff.
11 This is a composite list constructed from a personal examination of a large number of Information Sheets, Questionnaires, and Information Bulletins circulated by the Klan. Not all of these items appeared each time, but they are the items most often asked and most often utilized for or against the candidates.
Of all the items the last was considered most important by Klansmen. Klansmen recognized the value of having a friend in public office. A man could be forgiven a deviation in some of the other areas if he thought the Klan was a useful organization. Klansmen, faced with intense opposition in many communities, devoted more of their time to supporting their friends than they did to ferreting out hidden Catholic or alien influences in American life.

At first Klan efforts were amateurish. Originally this information was collected by sending out questionnaires to the candidates. This method of collecting the information speedily proved unsatisfactory. In the first place candidates often chose to ignore the questionnaires. When this happened, and the Klan had not collected the required information through other channels, the Klan leaders felt that the only safe course was to recommend to their members that the man be "scratched" (Indiana political jargon meaning "do not vote for him"). Sometimes a candidate sent back a flat refusal to furnish the information requested from him. Whenever this happened, Klansmen suspected that they might be casting aside men who might be valuable to them. Furthermore, even when the questionnaires were returned to Klan offices, the political committees were never certain that the information volunteered was correct or complete. Since the candidates knew the source of the

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12 For some of these questionnaires see the Indianapolis News, October 31, 1922; or the Detroit Free Press, March 2, 1924.

13 The candidates who refused to answer the Klan questionnaires were "scratched" on the Information Sheet reproduced here in photostat. Note that not all are "scratched". Some the Klan apparently approved of despite their refusal to cooperate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republican Ticket</th>
<th>Democratic Ticket</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A For United States Senator</td>
<td>1B For United States Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERT J. BEVERIDGE (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>DANIEL M. Batten (PROTESTANT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A For Secretary of State</td>
<td>2B For Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED JACKSON (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>DANIEL N. Line (PROTESTANT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A For Auditor of State</td>
<td>3B For Auditor of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>WILLIAM O. OLIVER (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>ROBERT BRACKER (PROTESTANT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4A For Treasurer of State</td>
<td>4B For Treasurer of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORA J. DAVIES (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>GEORGE H. DEHORITY (PROTESTANT)</td>
</tr>
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<td>4B For Clerk of Supreme Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>PATRICK J. LOWH (ROMAN CATHOLIC)</td>
<td>ZACHARY A. DUNGAN (PROTESTANT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4A For Joint of Public Instruction</td>
<td>4A For Joint of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENJAMIN J. HOBBS (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>DANIEL C. LUMENTI (PROTESTANT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A For Judge of Supreme Court, Second District</td>
<td>7B For Judge Supreme Court, Second District</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAVID A. MYERS (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>JOSEPH N. DDSA (ROMAN CATHOLIC)</td>
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<td>8A For Judge Appellate Court, First Division</td>
<td>8A For Judge Appellate Court, First Division</td>
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<td>BABSON A. BIER (NO INFORMATION)</td>
<td>WILLIAM D. BRIDWELL (NO INFORMATION)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9A For Judge Appellate Court, Second Division</td>
<td>9A For Judge Appellate Court, Second Division</td>
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<td>CHARLES F. HARRIS (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>JOSEPH GOLDSMITH (CANDIDATE DESIRED TO GIVE INFORMATION)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10A For Judge Appellate Court, Second Division</td>
<td>10A For Judge Appellate Court, Second Division</td>
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<td>VALERIE S. LIVENGOOD (NO INFORMATION)</td>
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<td>11A For Judge Appellate Court, Second Division</td>
<td>11A For Judge Appellate Court, Second Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALFRED A. NICHOLS (NO INFORMATION)</td>
<td>EDWIN M. McCANN (NO INFORMATION)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12A For Representative in Congress (The Congressional District)</td>
<td>12A For Representative in Congress (The Congressional District)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL MUSHKIN (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>JOSEPH J. ZORK (ROMAN CATHOLIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13A For Judge Probate Court</td>
<td>13A For Judge Probate Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAURICE E. DASH (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>HAROLD K. BACHBLOCHER (PROTESTANT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16A For Prosecuting Attorney</td>
<td>16A For Prosecuting Attorney</td>
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<tr>
<td>(First Circuit)</td>
<td>(First Circuit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16A For Judge Superior Court, First Circuit</td>
<td>16A For Judge Superior Court, First Circuit</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAMES K. LEATHERS (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>SAUL D. CLARK (PROTESTANT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16A For Judge Superior Court, Second Circuit</td>
<td>16A For Judge Superior Court, Second Circuit</td>
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<tr>
<td>LINDSAY N. HAY (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>EMILY W. CHAMPIONS (PROTESTANT)</td>
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<td>17A For Judge Superior Court, Third Circuit</td>
<td>17A For Judge Superior Court, Third Circuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYDNEY L. MULLER (PROTESTANT)</td>
<td>EDWARD W. LITTLE (PROTESTANT)</td>
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</tbody>
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questionnaires, they might feel that on one or two critical items they could veer just a little from the truth, or withhold some information that the Klans considered significant. And finally, how can you determine a man's reputation in his community, his standing in his profession or even his attitude toward the Klan by asking him? It did not take the Indiana Klansmen long to develop better techniques for gathering information about political candidates.

D. C. Stephenson tightened the lines of organization by making the whole membership of the local Klan responsible for the collection of the desired information. If one of the Klansmen knew a candidate, he volunteered the desired information to his local Klan's political committee. If none of the Klansmen knew the candidate men were sent out by the political committee to investigate him. From whatever source information came, it was discussed fully upon the floor of the Klavern:

Q. And were politics discussed on the floor of the Klavern?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Once, or more than once?
A. Many times.
Q. And what would be the line of discussion...
A. The discussion had to do with their favor or unfriendliness or unfriendliness to the candidate... The different speakers who knew the different candidates, were called upon to voice their views concerning their knowledge of the different candidates, as to whether they were friendly or unfriendly to our proposition... All of the talks emphasized the absolute necessity of perfect harmony within our ranks, and all joining in the support of certain men in the primary in order to get our own men elected in the primary.
Q. Was there anything said as to what should be the attitude toward those candidates who were understood to be unfriendly?

A. They were instructed by all these men who spoke, to not vote for them.  

Stephenson realized that the local political committee was the backbone of his organization. It had to function well at the local level in screening candidates, preparing slates, and in getting out the vote where it counted—at the precinct polling places. Through his channels of communication within the Military Machine he kept constant pressure on the local Klans to make them use their political committees until they became efficient and knew their job. Orders for information were sent down to the local units to force them to operate. One of Stephenson's set of Field Instructions ordered the local units to:

Secure and transmit to State Headquarters the name, address, rank of office, nationality, place of birth, age, political and religious affiliations of the following individuals:

(a) County officials
(b) City Officials
(c) District Court Officials
(d) School Boards
(e) School Faculties
(f) Truant Officers
(g) Police force

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14 Gillicom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Depositions of Samuel Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 57-60. The questioner is Attorney-General Arthur Gillicom; the witness is Bemenderfer.
(h) Library Board

Do not fail to state the religious affiliations of the wife and the school affiliations of the children of each of the above classified officers, as well as the attitude of each toward this organization...

If the information requested by Stephenson were not forthcoming quickly, he knew his machine had a weak point. Then he pressed insistently to force it to function.

We have not received a reply from our letter to you of September 13, wherein we requested that you give us certain information relative to Arthur L. Gilliom who is a Republican candidate for Attorney-General. By your failure to give us this information you are placing us in an embarrassing position for the reasons that Klansmen throughout the state want to know something about who the various state candidates are....

We cannot understand why it is necessary for us to write you continuously relative to the information on Arthur L. Gilliom, candidate for Attorney-General. This matter is of vital importance. The boys throughout the state are demanding that we get this information to them...

When the necessary information on the candidates had been gathered by the local Klans, it was prepared and made available

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15 This is paragraph 5 of Field Instructions #3 from the office of D. C. Stephenson, Grand Dragon, Realm of Indiana. These instructions were handed out to all Kleagles, Exalted Cyclops, and Kligrappes of the local Klans on May 6, 1923. This entire document is considered of such importance that it is included in this thesis in full as Appendix A below. When he was asked if the Delaware county Klan #4 complied with these orders, Orion Norcross, Kligrapp of this Klan, said that they certainly had. Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Depositions of Samuel B. Bemendorfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 160-161.

16 Walter Bossert, Grand Dragon of Indiana, to the Kligrapp of St. Joseph Valley Klan No. 1, September 30, 1924, Gilliom's Case against the Klan.

17 Walter Bossert, Grand Dragon of Indiana, to the Kligrapp of St. Joseph Valley Klan No. 1, October 8, 1924, Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan.
as slates. For candidates for state offices the information was placed in the hands of the state officials. The local political committees drew up their own slates for offices in their territories. The men whom the Klan would support were selected on the basis of this information, and prepared lists of these men were sent out to Klansmen in the form of Information Bulletins. Local Klans furnished their members with comparable materials. According to D. C. Stephenson these slates were made by the joint action of all the units of the Indiana Klan:

The slates were made during my regime by a Slate convention. A convention called twenty delegates from each county. Those delegates were elected by the County organization, and assembled in a central point, Indianapolis, usually, and there they had supplied them all the information that we had assembled on all candidates, going to the proposition of their qualifications for the office they sought, and what their attitude was toward interference or non-interference with the Klan, and all that sort of thing. And when the names and that information was laid before the convention, then they decided, as in the general election of 1922, whether the Democrat or Republican who sought that particular office would be indorsed. 13

Accompanying the Information Bulletins that went back to local Klan leaders was a set of instructions. These instructions told Klansmen precisely what to do in every case that might arise.

13 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 96. Stephenson expressed doubt that these conventions were always honestly run, but thought that most of them were. Certainly they were better than the system of endorsement used after Stephenson was forced out—a technique whereby the candidates which the Klan would support were selected arbitrarily by the Grand Dragon. Men were selected by W. Lee Smith or his Lieutenants not on the basis of what they might do for the Klan movement, but upon what arrangements they had made with the Grand Dragon personally. This arbitrary choice of candidates caused some Klans to drop out of the organization. See the action of the St. Joseph Valley Klan No. in 1926. Testimony or Emmons before the Reed Committee, 2027, ff.
in connection with the use of the *Bulletins.*

The information contained upon these candidates has been compiled after giving the matter, particularly their attitude toward the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, careful and deliberate investigation. We think that the information contained in this report upon these candidates is unbiased, unprejudiced and authentic.

You will note from reading the report that many candidates have something said about them regarding their attitude toward the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; you will further note that reports on certain candidates make absolutely no mention of their attitude toward the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Where there is absolutely nothing said about a candidate's attitude toward the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan that candidate is a Klansman. You know that we cannot publish in any way the fact that a man is a Klansman. By 1926 the instructions, through long experience, had become more specific:

Where a man is reported as favorable, he has manifested concern and is interested in our education and Americanization program. He will assist and otherwise lend his influence to all practical, sound programs which we undertake.

Where a man is reported neutral, he takes no stand or attitude in any way upon the program of our organization. He is rather indifferent or does not consider the organization an important factor in American life.

Where a man is reported as unfavorable, he has expressed himself as being against the organization and will not cooperate in any way or lend his influence for the program of the organization.

Where there is absolutely nothing said in these reports about a candidate's standing upon the organization, then that candidate is a Klansman.21

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19 The state office of the Klan collected information only on state and national candidates. It was the policy of the Klan to make each local Klan responsible for the handling of the county and township tickets.

20 Walter Bossert, Grand Dragon, Realm of Indiana, to All Grand Officers, Great Titans and Exalted Cyclops, October 18, 1924, Gillion's Case against the Klan. Italics in this quotation are the author's.

21 W. Lee Smith, Grand Dragon of Indiana, to all E. C.'s /Exalted Cyclops/, and members of the Political Committees. Undated, but sent out just prior to the Primary Elections in 1926. Emmoms Testimony before the Reed Committee, 2032.
According to the testimony of Pat Emmons, one-time Exalted Cyclops of the St. Joseph Valley Klan No. 1, Klansmen interpreted these instructions just as they read. Questioned by Senator Reed as to the meaning Klansmen gave to them, Emmons explained:

The Chairman: [Senator Clyde Reed of Missouri]: And as to the meaning of the description in regard to Mr. Watson, "He is favorable", what did that mean?

Mr. Emmons: That he would do anything along the line for Klanscraft; he would go down the line for the organization. That is our instruction.

The Chairman: Did that mean that the Klan should support him?

Mr. Emmons: Yes, sir....

The Chairman: What does that [that "he is neutral"] indicate to the Klan, that they will support him or not support him?

Mr. Emmons: No; if we have some one favorable along the line, we will support the favorable.... We have had preached to us by their speakers all over our state and over the Nation. If we can get a man that is favorable, that is the man to support. If we have none of them favorable, we should support those that are neutral....

The instructions of which Emmons spoke were directions for the use of the Information Bulletins which summarized the information the Klan had collected. Excerpts from two of these bulletins read as follows. The first items appeared in the Information Bulletins put out by the Klan in the 1924 election in Indiana.

PRESIDENT--REPUBLICAN
CALVIN COOLIDGE, of Massachusetts, Lawyer. Born Plymouth, Vermont, July 4, 1872. Governor of Massachusetts two terms. Vice President of U. S. Became President of U. S. October 3, 1923. He has assumed a neutral attitude toward the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan....

GOVERNOR--REPUBLICAN
ED JACKSON, of Indianapolis, lawyer. Elected Prosecuting

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22 Testimony of Hugh Pat Emmons before the Reed Committee, 1934.
Attorney Henry County, 1900. Re-elected second term, 1902. Appointed Judge at the age of 33 years of 53rd Judicial District. Elected to same office for full term. Nominated and elected Secretary of State 1916. Served as Major in the World War. Appointed to office of Secretary of State on death of Wm. A. Roach. Nominated for Governor of Indiana 1924. He is a self-made man and has always been a thorough gentleman, capable attorney and honest public official. He is a member of the Christian Church.

GOVERNOR--DEMOCRAT

DR. CARLETON B. McCULLOCH, Indianapolis, Indiana.

He was born in Wisconsin in 1871, and is now and has been for a number of years a practicing physician and surgeon in Indianapolis, Indiana. He is considered as a capable high grade physician. He served in the World War and reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He is a member of the Congregational Church; also a member of various civic and social organizations.

He is antagonistic toward the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; has openly and publicly denounced the Klan and otherwise stated publicly that if elected governor of Indiana he will exert his best efforts and energies toward the end of eliminating the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from the State of Indiana.*

This was the form used in 1924 under Stephenson. Later, under Bossert and W. Lee Smith, the style changed somewhat, but the content remained approximately the same:

CANDIDATES FOR U. S. SENATE--LONG TERM

REPUBLICAN

JAMES E. WATSON, Rushville, Age 61 years. He has been in public and political life for such a length of time that every man and woman in the state who is interested can easily ascertain his record. He and his family are Protestant. He is a 32nd degree Mason. He is dry. He has by his service and vote supported measures looking to the building of American constitutional principles. His services have been satisfactory. He voted NO on the World Court issue. He is favorable.

DEMOCRAT

ALBERT STUMP, Indianapolis. Age 38 years. He has been

---23 Information Bulletin issued by the Klan to local officers such as Exalted Cyclops, Kligrapps, and Kleagles for the 1924 general elections in the state of Indiana. These items can be found in the first five pages of the Bulletin. Bulletin in personal possession of Dr. Joe Norris of Wayne University.
a practicing attorney in Marion County for a number of years. He is considered a capable attorney and enjoys a fair practice. He has never held public office; he has been a candidate on various occasions for certain public offices but never successful. He is a Mason and a member of other fraternal organizations and is otherwise active in church work and civic life. He bears a splendid reputation. He is dry. He is neutral upon the World Court issue. He is neutral.

DEMOCRAT--
A. C. WOOD, Angola, He is approximately 55 years of age. He has been a practicing attorney in Angola for a number of years, and enjoys a fair practice. He is considered a fair lawyer. He and his family are Protestant but take very little, if any, interest in church work. He is a Mason. Many reports state that he is an infidel or that he has peculiar religious beliefs. He bears a good reputation. Reports are that he assumes a neutral attitude upon the wet and dry question and other reports are that he is very liberal. He assumes an antagonistic attitude.

This technique worked well when the candidates involved were not Klansmen. But if a Klansman wished to run for office, what appeals for support did he make to the Klan organization? He first had to write a letter to his local Exalted Cyclops requesting the endorsement of the Exalted Cyclops and the Political Committee.

One such letter, from W. T. Quillim to his Exalted Cyclops, Grover A. Smith, E. C. of the Marion County Klan, read:

This is to advise the election committee of my candidacy for State Senator from Marion County, subject to the Republican Primaries of May 6th. My platform can be said to be made up of but one plank and that plank is this: I agree, if nominated and elected, to support the platform and program of our next governor, Ed. Jackson. It will avail the organization but

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Information Bulletin issued by the Klan to local officers such as the Exalted Cyclops, Kligrapps and Klegles for the 1926 General Election in Indiana. The items quoted here are scattered throughout the Bulletin. The Reed Committee, 2038. See also Who's Who with Hoover, the Republican Candidates, 1928, for the November 5, 1928 Election. See the publication of the same group for 1930. For 1928, publication in personal possession of Dr. Joe Norris, of Wayne University; for 1930, publication in personal possession of the author.
little to elect Mr. Jackson and not place in the General Assembly men who will support him in the advancement of the interest of good government. I stand pledged heart and soul to the principles of our organization and I seek this office not with the thought of any selfish gain, but to the end that it will enable me to contribute to the promotion of those principles." 25

Asked what the full procedure was in cases like this, D. C. Stephenson said,

The political committee referred to in this letter passes upon the candidates, and announces the endorsement of the Klan. Provided the name of the candidate was endorsed by the political committee, to which he refers in the letter, it is given, to what is called the military machine, together with the endorsement of the political committee and the endorsement of the Exalted Cyclops... The endorsements of the political committee and the Exalted Cyclops are passed out through this military organization to the membership. 26

Asked if this was a typical letter in such a situation, Stephenson replied that it was "Except the mildness of the letter.... Usually the letter carries a pledge to appoint officials supported by the Klan." 27

Candidates for public office in Indiana who were not Klansmen were often tempted to seek the organized support of the Klan. If the Indiana Klan agreed to throw its support behind them it asked specific "contracts" of support and "cooperation" on the part of the candidate:

Q. And state, if you know, what the practice was on the part of the Klan in Indiana while you were an officer... as to placing those whom the Klan supported under obligation to the Klan with respect to nomination of public officers?

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25 W. T. Quillen to Grover A. Smith, Exalted Cyclops, Marion County Klan, March 15, 1924, Gilliom’s Case against the Klan.
26 Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 78, Gilliom’s Case against the Klan.
27 Ibid., 78
A. The practice was to take contracts from them, in which they agreed, in case of their election, to appoint only those approved by the Klan. In the case of Congressmen, through the Great Titan of the Congressional District; in the case of the Governor, through the Grand Dragon; in the case of a Mayor of a city, through the leader of the unit that covered his city.\textsuperscript{28}

One such contract came to light in 1926 when the Marion County (Indianapolis) Grand Jury was investigating charges of corruption in Indiana. At that time D. C. Stephenson, through a newspaper publisher from Vincennes, Thomas Adams, turned over to the Marion County Grand Jury a contract that John H. Duvall, the Mayor of Indianapolis, had made with him in 1925 just before Stephenson's arrest. This letter is illustrative of the sort of political bargains driven by the Klan for the support of the organization:

\begin{quote}
In return for the political support of D. C. Stephenson, in the event that I am elected Mayor of Indianapolis, Indiana, I promise not to appoint any person as a member of the board of public works without they first have the endorsement of D. C. Stephenson.

I fully agree and promise to appoint Claude Worley as Chief of Police and Earl Klinck as a Captain.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

The regular agreement was usually less specific than this one. It merely required that all appointments that were made by men elected to office through Klan support should be "100\%"; in short, Klansmen.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[28] Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 79.
\item[29] Indianapolis News, October 7, 1926.
\item[30] Gilliom memorandum of Klan practices, Ku Klux Klan Papers, Archives of the State of Indiana.
\end{footnotes}
Under such conditions most Indiana politicians, once they had chosen to make their peace with the Klan, had no alternative but to remain loyal. Most of them knew that they were surrendering their freedom of action—but the alternative was to be beaten for the office they sought. Few had the courage of Lawrence Lyons. Lyons, in 1923, was chairman of the Republican State Committee when he joined the Klan on "a case of snap judgment". He decided within a few weeks that he had been wrong, and he sent a letter to Tolerance, the bitterly anti-Klan weekly, announcing his resignation. It cost him his political career; he was ousted as chairman of the Republican State Committee, and never once thereafter was he heard from again politically. Lyons had escaped, but at a prohibitive cost—his political career. This was a price most politicians refused to pay. For the one Lyons who broke the chain there were scores who failed in courage when the time for the final break came to them.

Indianapolis News, March 30, 1923. P. J. Orm, onetime Grand Dragon of North Dakota said after he had left the Klan, "A man seeking public office is a fool to permit himself to consider the Klan's support. When the Klan elects a candidate for office, it usually dominates him. He is easily coerced into doing as the exalted cyclops or some other official of the hooded order dictates. The club of publicity is continuously brandished over his head. 'If you don't do as we tell you, we will reveal your connections with the Invisible Empire,' says the white-clad political wire-puller. The politician who joins hands with the white gorilla soon learns that it is nearly impossible for him to get away from the monster. He doesn't dare to jump the fence, in that the hooded beast stands ready and willing to broadcast facsimile copies of his membership application in such ways as to leave the impression that the expose came from some source other than the Klan. The harm done is obvious. The politician in vain tries to inform the public as to the facts, but they fall on deaf ears. He presents a pathetic figure. The Klan is now against him and the anti-Klan opposes him. What can he do? Nothing." This appeared in the last of a series of eight articles that P. J. Orm wrote for the Minneapolis Daily Star, May 22, 1926.
This whole system of selecting candidates for Klan support, either from within Klan ranks, or outside, worked successfully in most cases. However, under some circumstances it broke down. For instance, Klan support was eagerly sought in some areas. Who then should get Klan support when there were two Klansmen seeking the support of the organization, or when two candidates appeared, each of whom had strong support within the Klan? Some of the battles for office within the Klan were so fierce that the choices made by the political committee were not accepted when they reached the floor of the Klavern. In some cases the issue was settled by a secret vote of the Klansmen who were members of the unit. This solution was adapted to Indiana conditions after being developed in Texas by Klansmen there who faced the same problem.32 There had to be a procedure for handling the situation because Klansmen ran for office themselves, or ran their candidates believing with Pat Emmons of the St. Joseph Valley Klan that "at all times we believed in going down the line back of any man, regardless of his politics, if he was a real Klansman and could match cards."33

All of these preparations went on behind closed doors unknown to the public. When the Klan was ready to make public its choice of men for the various offices, Klansmen or non-Klansmen, it was time for the Military Machine in its full might to swing into action. The Military Machine was the organization within the Klan which made

32 Louisk, Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania, 98.
33 Hugh Pat Emmons before the Reed Committee, 2028.
this whole elaborate procedure for selecting candidates meaningful and made success possible. The Military Machine was the ward organization of the Klan and to understand the Klan's political effectiveness in Indiana one must understand the nature of the Military Machine that Stephenson constructed.

The Military Machine and the Delivery of the Vote

The ward-heelers and door-bell ringers of the Klan were the members of the Military Machine. These were the men who did the active political work of the Klan at the local levels. Klan leaders would have planned and schemed and boasted in vain but for the members of the Military Machine who made certain that voters got to the polls and voted correctly. Without them, the political program of the Indiana Klan would have ended in failure.

The Military Machine was the creation of D. C. Stephenson, his peculiar contribution to the art of Klancraft. When questioned about his Military Machine, he testified:

Q. Now state, if you know, who made the plans for such an organization?
A. I made the plans for the one in Indiana.
Q. And have you been describing the one in Indiana?
A. I have been describing the system that was adopted nationally.
Q. Was the system that you had laid out in Indiana adopted by the other states?
A. In part, but Evans incorporated with it the old Russian secret police system... a circle within a circle; a spy to watch every leader. 34

Stephenson added that he had helped to put the plans for the military organization into force in "every county of the state of Indiana and in several other states". 35

34 Gillion's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 96. Questioner is Attorney-General Gillion.
35 Ibid., 78. Although Stephenson said that he helped set up Military Machines in other states, none of them ever functioned in
What was this Military Machine? It was an organizational structure based on the political sub-divisions of Indiana that would enable the Klan "to control the politics of Indiana".36

D. C. Stephenson said that it was

organized by placing over the state, separate from the Grand Dragon, the leader of the Military Machine, who directed the Congressional districts. They were presided over by a district chairman called a Colonel in the Military organization; and under him each county had a Major, and each township or ward of a city, had a Captain, each precinct had a Lieutenant; and each Lieutenant had his precinct divided up, based on population, and every twenty people—every twenty voters—persons over the voting age, there was a Sergeant over; he divided them into four units, making five people to each block, and over that five put a Corporal.37

Stephenson began the organization of the Military Machine as early as 1922 when he was Kleagle over only a part of Indiana.38

Orion Norcross, one-time Kleagle under Stephenson and later Kligrapp of the Delaware County Klan #4, testified that orders to set up a Military Machine had already gone out before the general elections of 1922, and that it had been in operation in that election in embryo form.39 The structure of the Military Machine was set up in this manner in Muncie (county seat of Delaware County).

On the morning of October 25, 1922, Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Exalted Cyclops of Delaware County Klan #4, took from the mail box of that Klan in Muncie an envelope from Klan headquarters in Indianapolis, addressed to him as E. C. Opening it, he found a

any really effective way. One was constructed in Ohio, but it failed to produce many votes.

36 So Stephenson told Norcross, one of his Kleagles, Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Depositions of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 185.
37 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 97.
38 Ibid. 101.
39 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 166.
Indiana

Klan Provincial Divisions, used for Political Purposes
(Reed Committee Hearings, 2015)
letter and two blue-prints. These were the first instructions sent to the Delaware County Klan ordering the building of a Military Machine in that county. The letter was from Stephenson, then the King Kleagle of Indiana, and read:

I am enclosing you herewith two blue-prints, one of which shows the outlay for a city or community and a ward or township, down to the precinct and the block. Over the county you will place your chief executive; over the ward or township you will place a captain; over each precinct you will place a sergeant and over certain subdivisions therein which might be described as blocks, you will place your other subordinate commanders. Then over each two wards or two townships you will have another directing head who is a major. These majors in turn are to report directly to the staff as explained on the second blue-print.

If you will follow the outline of these blue-prints, using the T-1 blanks and setting in your subdivisions as outlined, I am positive you will be able to perfect a machine which will challenge the admiration of our most overbearing and intolerant enemies.

The blue-prints which accompanied the letter sketched the general structure of the organization desired. Norcross noted that Stephenson had said when discussing the blue-prints with him some time before this that "this was the kind of organization he wanted". The blue-prints are reproduced on the following two pages.

When Stephenson began constructing the Military Machine he made certain his instructions were carried out. Stephenson knew that the mere fact that he had ordered the Klans to set up a Military Machine was no guarantee that it would be done. He knew there would have to be continuous pressure put on the locals to see that they

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40 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 166.
41 Ibid., 166.
Table of Organization of the Klan’s Military Machine

- T - 1
- Staff
- Major and Staff Ward or Township
- Captain Ward
- First Lieutenant Two
- Second Lieutenants Four
- Sergeants (sic) ?
- Corporals ?
- Kaliviers (sic) ?

(1) (2) (3) Precincts by Districts — two or more

Deposition of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, Exhibit 3-A, Gilliom's Case Against the Indiana Klan.
Diagram of Political Districts

Ward or Township

Precinct

Block

Deposition of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, Exhibit 3-B, Gilliom’s Case against the Indiana Klan.
followed through and actually set up the machinery requested. It became a matter of insistent hammering and pounding home the fact the machine was necessary to the success of the Klan in politics. From the latter part of 1922 on state headquarters fired reminder after reminder to the local Klans that they must comply with the orders to set up this organization and harden its muscles by giving it work to do. By the time the machine was needed in 1924 it was functioning so smoothly that the Klan swept the elections and "put across" Ed Jackson as Stephenson had hoped they could. The type of pressure Stephenson exerted can be seen from these excerpts from Mandates, Bulletins, and letters he sent out to the local Klans.

On Wednesday evening, October 10th, 1923, a special representative of the Grand Dragon's office will be in your county and you are, therefore, hereby directed to immediately issue a call for a meeting of all your county officers and all officers of the military machine to be held at county headquarters upon the date above specified.

The special field representative who will address your organization has a vital message to bring you of a nature which cannot be transmitted other than by word of mouth....

Arthur Gilliom asked Norcross:

Q. Did you hear the message that could not be transmitted other than by word of mouth...?
A. Yes....A speech urging unity of action and working harmoniously in this military committee....For the

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44 The Grand Klaliff and Grand Kligrapp to Orion Norcross, October 1, 1922 (Official Mandate #2), Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan.
purpose of controlling the voting and for putting into offices of the men who were favorable to the Klan... 45

A little later came:

A survey of many organizations of the Realm of Indiana indicates that the Military Officers of your organization are not being called upon to serve as they should. The Military coordinating machinery is the most important and should be kept busy and should be given sufficient opportunity to develop its strength and harden its muscles for the battle which so rapidly approaches... 46

Stephenson made an effort to see that the military structure was completely staffed by calling for the names of all men appointed to the various officer ranks and requesting a list of their "addresses, phone numbers, occupations, for whom employed, politics and official title in township and precinct. It is imperative that we have this list at once..." 47 Stephenson wanted an organization that he could control merely by picking up one of the battery of telephones he kept on his desk. Samuel Bemenderfer told of a conversation he had with D. C. Stephenson in 1923 when the "Old Man" was perfecting the organization in Indiana:

He said there was to be established a telephone system which would go directly from his office to the headquarters of the different officers in each county, which controlled the military organization and the instructions would go direct from his office over this private wire to every county in the State, and in turn, from the military directory in each county, they would go direct to the other officers, and it would pyramid—each man would be responsible to get that message to his officers, and in that way carry the instructions of the state office into

45 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Testimony of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 196.
46 Grand Dragon to All Exalted Cyclops, Klaliffs, Officers and Members of the Invisible Empire, Realm of Indiana, January 14, 1924. (Official Mandate #61), Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan.
47 Grand Dragon of Indiana to the Exalted Cyclops, January 18,
every precinct and, in fact, to every block in the county, inside of thirty minutes...for the purpose of controlling the election.48

D. C. Stephenson was convinced that the Klan could give him control of Indiana; the Military Machine was his means for seizing control. He made the units of the military organization at the local level his ward organization. It was his hope that he could make "the military machine as big as the Klan" in every community.49 He did not succeed, of course, but at times in cities such as Muncie, he did succeed in getting a strength of more than 250 actively at work in the machine.50

Stephenson did not have it entirely his own way as he worked on this. Bemenderfer, E. C. of the Muncie Klan and a Lieutenant in the Military Machine, told of an argument that he had with his superior and some of Stephenson's lieutenants in the Indianapolis office of the Klan over the lists of names and addresses Stephenson had demanded. Bemenderfer refused to turn over his lists. He insisted that he feared that "Steve" would use this information to switch support from certain candidates at the last moment.51 In the end, however, the Muncie Klan went along with the whole machine.

1924 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan. 48 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Depositions of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 53-54.

49 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Hugh Pat Emmons, 353.

50 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Depositions of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Norcross, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 41.

The activities of the Military Machine consisted of the following:

The purpose of it was to get the vote out; to distribute slates; to distribute literature supporting the candidacy of individuals endorsed by the Klan; and for the purpose of reporting upon the probable strength of candidates supported by the Klan and do any and every thing that would be done by a normal political organization in an effort to elect a slate.\footnote{22}

Probably the commonest function of the Military Machine was the circulation of Klan slates. These slates, which took many forms, were the Klan's method of telling the public not yet naturalized into the Invisible Empire what votes the Klan wanted them to cast. The local slates drawn up in each community were prepared from (a) information gathered locally for the county and township officers and political committees, and (b) from the Information Bulletin sent out from state headquarters for state and national officers. The slates usually indicated in some way the Klan choices,\footnote{53} sometimes by giving one item of information about the candidate such as "Mason" or "Roman Catholic" or similar items of this type. Several of the slates appear on the following pages. "One so called slate gotten out by the Klan was to keep all Polish people from going to the polls."\footnote{54}

\footnote{22} Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 98.

\footnote{53} This was the method used by the Starke County Klan. Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Depositions of Samuel H. Bemenderfer, Orion Noceroos, Edward Stilson, and Thomas W. Swift, 213.

\footnote{54} Item taken from the typed memorandum on Klan affairs, prepared by Arthur Gilliom as Attorney-General of Indiana. Boxed with the Ku Klux Klan Papers in the Archives of the State of Indiana.
Once these slates were made up and printed it was the duty of the Military Machine to see that they were placed in the hands of all Protestants in the community. The Klan felt it had to have the votes of all Protestants, not just Klansmen:

You must realize that we cannot win this fight with the Klan vote alone. We must secure all Protestant support and get the information to all Protestant people relative to our program and the men whom we will support....

Ingenious means were found to put Klan slates in the hands of Protestants. At all polls the Klansmen had their workers, distributing slates to voters as they approached the polling places. The Klan developed a method of rolling their slates tightly, fixing them firmly between the jaws of a clamp-type clothes pin (or sliding them into a conventional V-shaped clothes pin), then passing along the streets at dawn on election day, pitching these "clothes-pin" slates onto the porches of the sleeping voters. Pat Emmons of South Bend reported that through men in their Military Machine the Klan in the 1924 primaries obtained access to all Sunday School papers for the Protestant churches in South Bend. Working throughout the night on Saturday before the election, Klansmen slipped a Klan ballot into each Sunday School Paper. When the good church-going Protestants opened their papers after church that Sunday, a Klan slate stared back at them from the pages of their paper.

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55 Grand Dragon of Indiana to all Klansmen, October, 1924, (Official Document #24), Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan.  
56 Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Testimony of Hugh Pat Emmons, 99.
PROTESTANT SCHOOL TICKET

What You Have NOT Been Told About Center Township Ticket

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPUBLICAN</th>
<th>DEMOCRAT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trustee</td>
<td>Trustee</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMELIA HARDING</td>
<td>HANNAH A. NOONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eastern Star)</td>
<td>(Catholic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>Assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANK D. BRATTAIN</td>
<td>JOHN C. McCLOSKEY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Shrine)</td>
<td>(Catholic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>WALTER S. GLASS</td>
<td>JOHN F. MANNING</td>
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<td>(Shrine)</td>
<td>(Catholic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Constable</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRANK HAWKINS</td>
<td>STANLEY L. McMAHAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mason)</td>
<td>(Catholic)</td>
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</table>

—INVESTIGATE FOR YOURSELF—

Trustee employs all township school teachers and authorizes all poor relief.

Assessor is the one who puts the valuation on your property.

Justice of the Peace is the only township judge.

Constable is the only township arresting officer.

FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING STATE AND COUNTY TICKETS LATER.

Pull Down the FIVE KEYS As Shown Above FOR BETTER SCHOOL CONDITIONS
D. C. Stephenson said that about twenty thousand dollars was spent in the off year elections of 1922. "That only covered the printing of slates and the distribution of them, was all. Nothing more direct that that."\(^{57}\) In 1924 the Klan alone in Indiana spent about $85,000 to elect its candidates and Stephenson himself spent even more.\(^{58}\)

As in all political organizations, one of the ever-present problems was to muster full voting strength at the time needed. The Military Machine had the responsibility of seeing that all who needed it had transportation to the polls. The Military Machine accepted the task and fulfilled its responsibility. The success of the Klan in politics attests to its efficiency.

Finally, as in the case of all political machines, the Klan's Military Machine was as honest as the men of whom it was composed. In many places it was impeccably honest; in others it took advantage of its every opportunity. Emmons said that Joe Huffington, the successor to W. Lee Smith as Grand Dragon of the Indiana Klan, told him that the election of Herbert Males as Mayor of Evansville had taken "a lot of whiskey and money and stuffing of ballot boxes."\(^{59}\)

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\(^{57}\) Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 99.  
\(^{58}\) Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of D. C. Stephenson, 102. At the time of this election Stephenson and Evans were battling for control of the Indiana Klan. However, they reached a truce during this campaign by which Stephenson agreed to run the Military Machine and Evans' Grand Dragon, Walter Bossert, agreed to take orders from Stephenson. Thus both Stephenson and Evans supported the same candidates, and they won easily. Stephenson's deposition, 99-100.  
\(^{59}\) Gilliom's Case against the Indiana Klan, Deposition of Hugh Pat Emmons, 395.
On the whole, for the time that it existed intact, the Military Machine performed well. The degree of thoroughness shown by Stephenson is indicated by the fact that the Women's organization of the Klan had a political machine operating in which women took care of other women's children while they voted, and then had the favor returned so that their own vote could be counted. 60

The Military Machine of B. C. Stephenson in Indiana was a successful social invention. It served its purpose of transferring power from legitimate channels to special channels created by a secret organization. The successes of the machine have been noted in the preceding chapter. Socially it is interesting because it was thoroughly constructed, led with imagination, and was a model that might at any time be copied by any other pressure group that wishes to transform itself into a political force. The ultimate collapse of the machine came not because its structure was faulty, nor because its techniques failed, but rather, because the Klan movement from which it gained its strength die out. As the Klan faded, so did the machine. But the residue it left was to plague Indiana folk for another political generation and beyond.

60 The Gilliom Memorandum, The Ku Klux Klan Papers, Archives of the State of Indiana.
CHAPTER SIX
THE KLAN IN OHIO

RESOLVED—that we the members of the NEW ERA KLAN #208 Realm of Ohio believe that the Weaver Bible Bill # is for the betterment of the State of Ohio.¹

If "a man is known by the company he keeps", it is equally as true that one is known by the company one keeps away from. Note the classes fighting the Klan, then draw your own conclusions.²

RIDE WITH US

Niles, the steel-making town of less than 20,000 today had taken on a war-time appearance. Strangers in town received the cold stares that suspected spies were treated to in the days of the World War when they came to the war capitals of Europe....³

The Ohio and Michigan Klans were identical with the Klans of Wisconsin and Indiana in many ways. The leadership hierarchy in all four states was controlled by D. C. Stephenson who held propagation rights to the whole middlewestern area.⁴ This guaranteed that similar personnel would hold positions in the hierarchy of each of these states, and guaranteed that the policies decided upon by that leadership would be practically identical in operation in all of the

¹ In the Library of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Library File #2088, No. 2, Ku Klux Klan, 1924, there is a letter addressed to the Honorable George Bender, State Senator at Columbus on official Klan stationery dated February 2, 1929. It is obviously a form letter that was sent out to elicit support for the perennial Bible Bill that was presented year after year in both houses of the State Legislature.
² Kourier Magazine, 1:29, (December, 1924).
³ Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 30, 1924.
⁴ D. C. Stephenson had the propagation rights to 23 states assigned to him as his share of the booty when Simmons was moved upstairs to Imperial Emperor in 1922. Ohio was included in his territory as were all of the other states with which this study is concerned. While he did not make all nominations to Klan offices in these states, he had the power to veto any candidate suggested by any other person.
And so it worked out. The Klan's methods for choosing the group to which it would appeal, of selecting the appeals to be directed to that group, and the methods of procedure for bringing in the members were standard throughout the Middle West. The organizational pattern of the Klan machine in the Klan realms of these four states was the same—the military type of structure with power concentrated in the commanding office and with all orders filtering down through the ranks to the lower levels. The pattern of Klan activities, too, varied little from one state to another in the Middle West. Monthly, bi-weekly or weekly meetings provided social entertainment for interested men; auxiliaries of the men's orders provided social activities for their wives and children. The usual forms of Klan action prevailed; monster rallies, parades, initiation rites performed semi-publicly, "cooperation" with local law-enforcement officials in the protection of community morals, and participation in state and local politics were all patterns of Klan activities known everywhere in these four states. In political action the Klans of Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan fought for the same goals—to elect friendly members to the legislatures, or to elect those who were at least not hostile to the Klan; to work for legislation favorable to the Klan and to prevent the passage of legislation harmful to it; to seek legislation that would aid the public school system and to seek to place some form of Protestant worship into the public schools; and everywhere to elect local officials who would allow the

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5 The degree to which the leadership was the same in these middle-western states is illustrated by the movement of Charles Lewis. He first joined the Klan in Pennsylvania, then moved to Michigan as a trouble-shooter for Stephenson. Later he moved to Wisconsin and for two years he was Grand Dragon of that Klan. Then he returned to Pennsylvania where he eventually dropped out of Klan work.
local Klans to carry on their activities in peace, without molestation. And finally, in all of the Middlewestern states, the Klans were devoted to the principle of opposing the Catholics in every aspect of life in which the Catholics chose to be active. Especially vigorous was the Klan's opposition when the Catholics took a stand on education. In these and numerous other activities the Klans of the states of Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan varied but little. A description of one state Klan almost serves to describe the routine activities of the Klan in other middlewestern states.

Yet in some ways, these Klans did differ significantly. In the main, the differences grew out of the social situation in which each of these Klans was forced to operate. In Wisconsin the Klan performed in a state that was almost entirely rural and small-town, and in which its activities could be directed toward making the local communities feel secure even though a Klan existed in their midst. In Indiana, the Klan also worked a predominantly rural, small-town Protestant beat, but when the Klan organization became the means by which one man sought to gain pre-eminent power in the state, the activities of the Hoosier Klan were re-directed entirely toward that end. In Ohio, the Wisconsin-Indiana pattern of rural-small-town activities carried on in mainly Protestant communities was continued but with a significant variation in the eastern half of the state. In the Mahoning Valley the social situation was not rural, nor was the bulk of the population Protestant. This variation in the social situation changed the character of the Klan's operations there, and this was significant because the eastern counties of Ohio were the areas of the Klan's greatest strength in the Buckeye state.
In Michigan the Klan was also in part a rural-small-town movement in predominantly Protestant territory, but again a peculiar situation that had developed in Detroit just before the coming of the Klan changed the character of the Klan movement in that city. And Detroit was the key Klan unit in the Wolverine state. Thus, it is apparent that there were differences in Klan patterns in these four states, but that most of the differences can be traced to the changes in social alignments in the areas involved.

The Klan Organizes in Ohio

No direct evidence available indicates when and where the Ohio Klan was born. In September, 1921, the Chief of Police of Cleveland interviewed Charles W. Love, the Grand Goblin of the Ohio Klan for more than four hours. Grand Goblin Love told the Chief that he had come from Indianapolis where he had first become a Klansman; that he held jurisdiction over the seven states of Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia; that in his domain there were about 50,000 to 70,000 members; that in Ohio at that time there were about 15,000 members and that in Cleveland there were about 1000 members; that estimates of his local officials of about 4000 members in Cleveland were far too "optimistic"; that in the whole United States there were about 700,000 members; and that the Klan had had an organization in Ohio for less than a year—about eight or nine months.\(^6\) This is the first available statement by a responsible leader of the Klan who was in a position to know

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\(^6\) Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 30, 1921.
where and when the Klan originated in Ohio, and something of its early progress.

Charles Love was not a successful salesman of the Klan, and in the spring of 1922 he was replaced at the head of the Ohio Klan by Dr. C. L. Harold of Columbus. Dr. Harold proved to be little better as a salesman, and soon was replaced by D. C. Stephenson who had joined the Indiana Klan early in 1922 and had proved to be tremendously successful as an organizer. During the summer of 1922 Stephenson headed both the Ohio and Indiana Klans and made his office in Columbus, but by fall he had made the decision that his future lay in Indiana and he deserted Ohio for Indiana. He did not desert the state completely, for even though he left, he continued to hold loosely the reins of power in the Buckeye state. But for all practical purposes Wayne Osborne took over direction of the Ohio Klan, and first, as King Kleagle and then as Grand Dragon, Osborne did an efficient job of administering the Ohio Klan.

Under Osborne all counties in the state were organized, and thus to some extent the Klan was active everywhere. The estimates of Klan strength in Ohio range from 500,000 members on down to half that figure, but it is evident that Ohio was one of the strongest Klan states in terms of numbers in the entire nation.7 Indiana might have enrolled more members, and it is certain that the Klan in Indiana was more powerful socially and politically, but, granting these facts, the Indiana Klan was the only Klan unit to exceed Ohio.

D. C. Stephenson, whose figures are reliable when he was in a

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7 See the estimates made in Monteval, Marian (pseudo.), The Klan Inside Out (Claremont, Oklahoma, 1923), 23, and Booth, Edgar Allen, The Mad Mullah of America (Columbus, Ohio, 1927), 127.
position to know (and he was in a position to know about Ohio) stated that the Ohio Klan had about 350,000 members, counting the women and the junior members, and that seems like a reasonable figure, one in line with the level of Klan activity. 8

The main areas of Klan strength in Ohio can be deduced indirectly. In 1924 a man entirely unknown in Ohio politics flashed out of nowhere to gain more than 100,000 votes for the gubernatorial nomination in the Republican primaries. This man, Joseph B. Seiber, ran as a Klansman, and all the appeals he issued for persons to vote for him stressed either his "favorable" attitude toward secret organizations, or emphasized his Protestantism and his complete support of the public schools. An analysis of his vote indicates that the Klan was present to some extent throughout Ohio, but that the Klan had most of its strength concentrated in three areas: (a) the Mahoning Valley, around Cleveland and Lorain, and in the far northeastern counties near the Pennsylvania border, (b) the rural central counties of Knox, Licking, Muskingum, Perry and Athens, and (c) an area of western Ohio, the counties of Montgomery, Clark and Greene, that area of Ohio in which the cities of Springfield and Dayton were located. 9 This analysis is supported by the fact that most Klan events that attracted attention to the organization took place in one of these areas. The map on the following page shows the counties in which the Klan showed its greatest political strength, and thus presumably its greatest overall strength (based upon the Seiber vote.)

8 Testimony of D. C. Stephenson, by deposition, in Pittsburgh Federal Court, Ku Klux Klan vs. Strayer, Case #1897 in Equity, 126. 9 See discussion of the Seiber gubernatorial race and the map accompanying it, below, next page.
Main Areas of Klan strength
(As revealed in the vote for Sieber)
The Klan's Routine Activities

As the Ohio Klan grew, Ohio citizens were treated to the usual
round of Klan meetings and parades. One of the more impressive Klan
displays came in May 1923, when several thousand Klansmen marched
around the capitol square in Columbus in a demonstration of strength.
For thirty minutes the white-robed marchers strode quietly around
the streets of Columbus, four abreast, arms folded, with everyone
except the leaders masked. The crowd in the Columbus streets was
larger than anyone could remember, even for a circus parade, and
the auto jam was called the worst since the dedication of the foot-
ball stadium at Ohio State University.

There were scores of well-publicized Klan gatherings in Ohio,
but probably the largest Konklave was the Klan meeting at Buckeye
Lake, near Newark, in August 1925. Newspapers reported that on some
days of the week-long encampment there were up to 75,000 persons
present during the day and evening. At that meeting the Klansmen
held picnics, and initiations and paraded for their own benefit,
held lengthy sessions of Klan business at which they discussed the
goals of the Klan and the need for the Klan in American society.
Glenn Carter, the Grand Dragon of Nebraska, told assembled Klansmen
that to unmask (as Klansmen were doing at some places) was suicide
and that the Klan was needed too much in America to risk destroying
itself. Klansmen discussed ways to eliminate reflections cast upon
Protestant ministers in motion pictures, and means to obtain the
aid of Protestant ministers in helping to further the religious
aims of the

10 Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 7, 1925.
Klan. At this Buckeye Lake meeting the "Kight Riders" made their most prominent appearance as a part of the Ohio Klan.\(^\text{11}\)

Other notable incidents that concerned the Klan were the Springfield raid in which the headquarters of the local Klan was raided, and the local leagle, W. M. Cortner, was arrested on a charge of riotous conspiracy for planning to lead a parade. The Klan's list of membership cards and lists of prospective members were seized and released to the press. This was the first seizure of Klan records by police officials anywhere in the nation. In a decision handed down by Judge Golden C. Davis, Cortner was released and Klan property restored when the Judge declared that it was absurd (and illegal) to arrest anyone for riotous conspiracy before any meeting or riot had taken place.\(^\text{12}\)

In another incident at the Ohio River city of Portsmouth, 270 men and 68 women were arrested on the streets of the city for "obstructing" traffic when they were parading, masked, to the corner-stone laying of the new First Lutheran church. After being marched 20 blocks and booked, the charges against the Klansmen were dropped without trial or prosecution.\(^\text{13}\)

Opposition to the Klan on the part of officials was common. In Ohio the opposition that the Klan feared most arose in the State Legislature. In February, 1924, a bill to regulate the Klan was introduced into the House of Representatives in Columbus. It would

\(^{11}\) Newspaper accounts of the Buckeye Lake meeting can be found in the following editions: Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 26, 27, 29, 30, and 31, 1925.

\(^{12}\) The story of the raid on the Klan headquarters is best reported in the Springfield (Ohio) Daily News, February 15, 1923. A discussion of the issues involved can be found in the Springfield (Ohio) Daily News, February 20, 1923, and in a broader vein in the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, February 22, 1923. The record of the trial appears in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 23, 1923, and the decision throwing the case out of court in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 23, 1923.

\(^{13}\) See the Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 29, 1923.
have required that any secret society "into which members should be
elected, initiated or admitted in accordance with a secret constitution,
secret laws, secret regulations or secret prescribed ritualistic cere-
monies...." should file annually with the secretary of State a complete
list of its members and officers with a statement containing the name
of the association and the place of its regular meeting. The bill
would have made the list of names available to public officials, but
would have classed it as "confidential" and thus restricted it. The
introduction of the bill threatened to destroy the Klan in Ohio, but
Klan strength and sentiment in the Legislature was already strong
enough, in early 1923, to kill the bill overwhelmingly, 81 to 26.

The fact that the Klan could defeat a bill to harm it so decisively
in the state legislature furnishes further evidence of the strength
of the Klan in Ohio. At least it indicates how strong the Ohio
politicians feared it might be! Only a handful of them dared vote
for a bill that would have regulated the Klan in some ways. In voting
this way and refusing to act against the Klan, the legislators were
acting in line with the wishes of Klansmen and their friends. Out
of fear of Klan retribution they acceded to their wishes.

But in so voting these legislators did not represent all of their
constituents. In Ohio there were thousands of individuals who
despised the Klan and wanted it destroyed. They were unorganized
and unable to put pressure upon public officials to force them to
take action. But despite their inability to use pressure or maybe

14 Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 7, 1923.
15 Only in Kansas were the enemies of the Klan able to bar the
Klan from existing through state laws to control it—and there only
after the Klan had passed its peak of strength and power. Yet in
every state the attempt was made.
because of this very helplessness, they wanted to find some way in
which to express their resentment of the Klan. Occasionally a chance
came for them to do so. When it did, they were quick to seize it.

The finest instance of the boiling over of this smoldering hatred
of the Klan is the boycott that anti-Klansmen levelled against the
Budd Dairy Company of Columbus when the Budd Company inadvertently
allowed itself to become associated with the Klan in the public mind.
Klan boycotts against certain merchants and businesses were an old
story in the 1920s (see footnote 16, this chapter). The massed
strength of the Klan could be thrown against an unfriendly merchant;
it was easy because the Klan was organized. In the case of this
boycott against the Budd Dairy, the opposition was unorganized, un-
controlled. The actions taken by thousands of Columbus citizens were
a spontaneous expression of a deeply rooted resentment and fear,
and of a wish to strike out against the Klan and hurt it, destroy
it. As one of the few recorded instances of the expression of this
underlying bitterness, the boycott against the Budd Dairy is important
historically.

In the 1920s, the Budd Dairy Company was one of the established
dairies of Columbus. The Budd Company operated principally in the
northern and eastern sections of the city. The clientele of the
dairy was chiefly among the foreign-born elements of the city, the
Roman Catholics and the Negroes. None of these groups in Columbus
had ever openly indicated that they resented the Klan's activities
although they were the groups the Klan "marked" for attention. The
Budd Company became involved in an expansion program that laid open
the bleeding sores the Klan created wherever it operated.
The owner of the dairy, William Budd, in 1922, became interested in marketing a soft-drink known as "400". He paid a Chicago firm $2,600 for the exclusive use of the recipe in Ohio, and spent several thousand dollars in advertising, and laid out more than $50,000 for delivery trucks and the equipment for bottling the drink. In a short time, the Budd Company became so heavily involved in producing "400" that the soft drink became its main product.

The market responded fairly well to the "400" but not as well as Budd had hoped. So, Budd offered the drink free to churches for their social affairs, to fraternal orders for their picnics, and to all similar gatherings. He included the Klan in his offer and got permission from Klan officials to distribute his product at Klan meetings around central Ohio. Budd felt that this permission put the dairy under some obligation to the organizations that allowed him to distribute his product at their affairs and when a member of the staff of the Fiery Cross came to ask William Budd to take an advertisement in the paper, he felt morally bound to do so. The advertisement of the Budd Company appeared in the issue of the Fiery Cross of August 31, 1923. The ad did no more than announce that the Budd Company made "400" and described the drink. It gave no endorsement to the Klan in any form, but it might as well have done so in light of the reaction the ad produced.

The effect was instantaneous. The Budd Company suffered under one of the quickest and most complete boycotts ever recorded. One of the foremen of the dairy said that "It did not seem possible that it could be done as it was. The paper was put on sale on Friday. On Saturday morning, early, customers began calling into the office
by phone ordering milk stopped. This continued through several days
and was almost continuous. Generally they stated frankly that their
action was due to the 'ad in the paper'. Nothing could convince
these people—Negroes, foreign-born, and Catholics—that approval of
the Klan was not implied in the placing of the advertisement. The
company sent out representatives all along the company's routes to
talk to people and to try to convince them that no personal preferences
for the Klan were involved, but the company's representatives had
scant success. They convinced a few, but most of the company's clien-
tele would not be convinced. Confectionaries and drug stores took
up the boycott, and stopped buying milk and cream. One person who
dropped the dairy's products commented, "Well, I never believed in
paying people to injure me. When I know they are doing it and I can
find any way to protect myself I'm going to do it. Likely there are
plenty of others from whom I am buying who are Kluxers but if I don't
know it, I'm not so much to blame. But when I do know it, I am not
going to help him along...."
The dairy was almost driven to the wall,
but managed to hang on to enough of its business and to restore enough
more to keep going. The economic boycott was frequently practiced by
Klansmen against the businesses of Catholics, Jews and aliens, but few
cases of opposition boycotts were as effective as this one. 16

16 This incident is reported, along with other instances of minority
group reactions to the Klan in J. Wesley Hatcher, The Effect of Coercion
upon the Attitudes and Organization of the Oppressed Group. (Unpublished
Hatcher reported in 1925 that "The economic boycott is systematically
employed by the Ku Klux Klan. In Columbus, Ohio, there was printed by
the Klan and distributed among its members an 'approved-list' of dry-
goods merchants, grocers, bankers, barbers, teachers, preachers, lawyers,
shoe-shine parlors, etc. Those whose names do not appear on the list
are, of course, not approved and consequently are boycotted by all
loyal Klansmen. To the effectiveness of the boycott certain merchants
The Klan enters the Political Field

In Ohio as everywhere in the Middle West the Klan entered the political contests as soon as it had strength enough to feel that it might be successful. In Ohio it began to enter local elections as early as 1922 in some areas, and by 1923 it had begun to score some significant triumphs. As an example, in the mayoralty elections in the Mahoning Valley in November, 1923, the Klan elected the mayors of the five largest valley cities—Youngstown, Warren, Niles, Canton and Akron. The Klan celebrated its victory with a parade in Youngstown designed to show the whole valley its strength. The Klan leader in the Valley, "Colonel" E. A. Watkins, announced that he had held a meeting with the mayors of the five valley cities and that they had decided to attempt to establish a municipal policy for all of the valley cities. They would work for such things as a common water authority, a common police bureau, and other developments that would tie the cities of the valley together into a tightly knit unit. 17 This was one of the significant political triumphs of the Klan at the local level, but throughout the state in 1923-25 the Klan enjoyed wide success in the election of local officials.

On the state level the Klan was never as successful as it was in either Wisconsin or Indiana. The Ohio Klan was organized politically in the same manner as the Klan was in Indiana by Stephenson of Columbus can testify. As a means of concealing the significance of the list from the uninitiated and covering the thinly veiled conspiracy, it is printed in a small book bound in a plain unlettered green cover. It is without title and without heading. If by accident it should fall into the hands of an "outsider", it is without meaning...." Hatcher, The Effect of Coercion upon Suppressed Groups, 35.

17 Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 11, 1923.
but the organization did not operate effectively. Failure was due to the fact that the Ohio block system was not closely controlled and forced to function. As a result, the Klan came up with few surprises in state politics.

In the 1924 gubernatorial primaries the Klan pulled its one minor triumph. Joseph B. Seiber of Akron ran for governor with the announcement that he would be glad to accept the votes of all citizens including Klansmen. The response to his appeals and to the efforts of Klansmen who came out strongly for him surprised political veterans of Ohio politics. Completely unknown two months before the primaries, Sieber, running in the Republican primary, polled more than one hundred thousand votes against a man who had previously been governor and who was widely known and well liked around the state. The results of the election are interesting—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry L. Davis (former Governor)</td>
<td>176,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph B. Seiber</td>
<td>101,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James A. White</td>
<td>98,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homer Durand</td>
<td>54,820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This result was almost exclusively due to a heavy Klan vote for Seiber. It marks the only concentrated Klan vote ever cast in Ohio. By 1926 several candidates claimed Klan support, and there was no one candidate upon whom the Klan concentrated its vote. Just this once it was possible to see the strength of the Klan in Ohio when it was massed behind a particular candidate.19

The results of the election are revealing. A map showing the

18 Carl Wittke (ed.), The History of Ohio, (Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio, 1941-1944), 643.
19 Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 1, 1923.
distribution of the voting for Seiber appears on the page following. The coloring of the map indicates the following facts: there were 40 counties that cast less than 400 votes for Seiber; these 40 counties cast only 10,121 of the Seiber votes. In the remaining 48 counties Seiber received 86,220 votes. Of these 48, one county, Summit, (his home county) gave Seiber more than 10,000 votes, 3 counties gave him more than 5000 but less than 10,000, 19 counties gave him 1000 to 5000 votes; and 25 counties gave him 400 to 1000 votes. In the 40 counties that did not support him well, Seiber averaged only 4.25 votes per precinct, but in his home county he received 38.04 votes per precinct, and in the 19 counties that gave him more than 5000 votes, he averaged 11.64 votes per precinct. If however, from this last group of counties Cuyahoga county where Cleveland is situated and Hamilton county which contains Cincinnati are subtracted, Seiber’s vote per precinct rises to 17.74. These figures indicate that Seiber made a strong run, and that in the absence of a strong candidate such as Davis, he might well have won the gubernatorial nomination.

While Seiber did not become governor, the Klan picked up many seats in the Ohio State Legislature. Enough so that when the 1925 session of the legislature arrived, Ross Buchaman’s Bible Reading Bill received strong support. The support for it was strong enough to force its passage by both houses. The so-called Buchaman Bill, the really hot issue of the 1925 session, provided that at the opening of school each morning the teacher in the room should read ten verses.

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20 The records of the fight over the Bible Bill are in most of the Ohio papers for the months of February and March, 1925. See particularly these editions: The Ohio State Journal (Columbus, Ohio) February 25, 1925; March 10, 1925, March 25, 1925; April 18, 1925.
from the Bible without comment or bias. Opponents of the bill insisted that it is impossible to read anything "without comment", and the bill was construed by Catholics and Jews as a direct slap at their religions since the Bible specified for use was the King James version. After the bill was introduced, the opponents of the bill used every parliamentary trick they possessed to by-pass the bill, even successfully voting to table it at a time when most of its supporters were absent from the House. But the supporters of the bill filibustered for a week, and had enough members of the House of Representatives in their camp to carry on their filibuster indefinitely, and so the opponents of the bill compromised in order to get to work on necessary legislation. Ultimately, the House passed the bill, the Senate passed the bill, but Governor Donahue vetoed it as "unnecessary". A year later the bill was back in the House with strong backing, but the backbone of its support had been shattered by the governor's veto, and it failed to pass. Never again did it pass the house although it remained a perennially thorny issue for several more sessions of the legislature.

The Mahoning Valley in eastern Ohio produced a Klan disturbance that was unlike anything else connected with the Klan in the Middle West. At no time in the Middle West did the Klan run to violence; but in the Mahoning Valley one of the most violent riots of the 1920s was brought about by the presence of the Klan. In most areas of the Middle West the Klan was strongest in territories where the old native Protestant stock and culture were dominant; but in the Mahoning Valley the cultural type that produced the Klan was in a distinct minority. As a rule the Klan did not gain a foothold in the industrial areas.
because it was essentially a rural-small town movement; but in the Mahoning Valley it gained a strong foothold in one of the most heavily industrialized areas of the nation. In these ways the Mahoning Valley Klan and the events associated with it were unique and vastly different from the events that made up the history of all other Klaans in the Middle West.

Because the Klan in the Mahoning Valley was so different, intensive treatment has been given to the social situation in which the Klan there developed, to its rate of growth, and to the events of its history. This has been done because this was the area of Ohio where the Klan was strongest, and the area in which the Klan hung on longest in Ohio society. Explanations for Klan strength in such an unusual area is necessary to understand the multiplicity of Klan motivations. Where social movements move in an average course their history can be treated cursorily once the general pattern is known. But when the trend of their development is vastly different, then explanation must be made. Hence the extended analysis offered of the history of the Klan in the Mahoning Valley.

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The Niles Riot

The Mahoning River valley lies in the northeastern quarter of Ohio. The valley begins a few miles south of Cleveland and wanders south and east until the river joins the Ohio River near Youngstown. To most of the eastern border sections of Ohio, along the Mahoning itself and even down along the Ohio proper, south of the actual junction of the
two rivers, residents of eastern Ohio give the name "the Mahoning Valley". This valley has one of the most strategic economic locations in the nation. The valley at its northern end joins the industrial complex centered around Cleveland and Lorain. At its southern end it joins with that vast industrial-mining complex centered on Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and Charleston and Wheeling in West Virginia. The Mahoning Valley, then, is the link between two of the largest industrial areas in this nation. As this link, it was inevitable that it, too, would become heavily industrialized.

The industrialization of the valley commenced during the early years of the twentieth century. The first World War gave the process a tremendous boost, and by the years of the Klan in the early and middle twenties the Mahoning valley was already a highly industrialized area. The industries that moved to this site were almost all complementary to the two industrial complexes lying north and south--the valley provided much of the smelting and milling capacity needed by the Cleveland and Pittsburgh complexes. The treatment of iron and steel predominated, but in addition to basic plants of this type there were factories that provided feeder products to the mills and still others that took the products of the mills and fabricated them into finished products. The valley was, in short, a complex unit itself, industrially balanced, and it was significant even without its relationship to the accompanying areas. In general, above Youngstown the valley towns were smelting areas; below Youngstown, milling.


22 It was at Youngstown that the famous "Little Steel" strike of 1937 took place at the plant of Youngstown Sheet and Tube.
in the valley were Youngstown, Warren and Niles, but other Ohio cities that were generally thought of as belonging to the valley were Massillon, Canton, Alliance, East Liverpool, Portsmouth and Steubenville. Examples of the industries that found homes in the valley were: Republic Steel with its secondary plants scattered in Massillon, Warren and Canton (main plant and office at Cleveland); Carnegie-Illinois' major plants at Mingo Junction and Martins Ferry; Vier Tin-Plate at Steubenville and Timken Roller Bearing Company at Canton. In addition to these industrial giants, smaller feeder and fabrication industries abounded in the valley. While the Mahoning Valley was growing as an industrial center down through the first World War, it was in the early years of the 1920s that the Mahoning Valley experienced its greatest industrial expansion as new plants moved into an area so well supplied with industrial facilities and advantages.

The coming of industry to the Mahoning Valley during and after

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23 On April 11, 1960, the author interviewed Colonel Wade C. Christy of the Ohio National Guard in the office of Captain William B. Haines, also of the Ohio National Guard. Colonel Christy has been a life-long resident of the Mahoning Valley, and was, at the time of the Niles riot, the commander of the Youngstown unit of the Ohio National Guard. During the week before the Niles riot Colonel Christy was Governor Donahoe's special investigator in Niles. He remained in Niles from Monday until Saturday of riot week observing developments and when the riot broke out, he commanded the Youngstown troops in quelling the rioters. Governor Donahoe then appointed him to conduct a National Guard investigation of the riot. For the two weeks following the riot Colonel Christy was in Niles subpoenaing witnesses. The interview with Colonel Christy and the National Guards' record of the investigation have been heavy contributors to this description of the Niles riot. Information from the interview will be noted as Christy Interview. Notes of the interview are in the possession of the author. Much of the description of the Mahoning Valley given here is from the Christy Interview. In precise, military English the Colonel described the economic and social situation of the Mahoning Valley in the early 1920s as a background for his description of his role in the Niles affair.
World War I brought vast social changes for the cities of the valley. Industrialists and manufacturers sought labor for their mills from every available source. Farm boys from the area and from all over Ohio were lured into the mill towns by the prospects of high money wages; the young men of the valley towns themselves turned to the mills as a vocation but still the mills needed men. These two sources furnished only a trickle where a river was needed. Industrialists turned to immigrants as their main source of labor and encouraged immigrants to come and settle in the towns of the valley. It was the immigrant hordes who fed the mill fires and handled the heavy labor of the steel mills; they came into the mills in numbers that were uncountable. Magyars, Croats, Italians and Slavs of all descriptions poured into the valley, and by the early 1920s these nationality groups had come to represent a majority of the population in several of the towns in the valley.

These newcomers were different in cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds from the old settlers of the valley towns. Their coming changed the social character of the entire valley. Most of the immigrants were of the "new" stream of immigration—eastern European, peasant in economic class, Catholic in religion, and provincial in outlook. When they moved into a city, they tended to flock together into "sections"—an Italian section, Polish section of "Hunky-town". In their sections of the town they tended to remain isolated from the community, content at least for the first generation or two with the life that they had brought from the old country. The older elements of the cities' population resented this isolation (while still rejecting the immigrants socially, they complained about their exclusiveness),
and they resented the differences in culture and culturally conditioned attitudes that came up day after day. The older elements of these towns were from the stream of "old" immigration that had settled in the valley before the turn of the century. This original segment of the population tended to be Protestant in religion, middle class in social and economic attitudes, descendants of immigrants from the northern and western European areas. But the greatest differences in the two groups was in the fact that the older elements were by the 1920s thoroughly acculturated, and secure in their social situation. The newer groups were insecure and showed the attitudes of inferiority, and the resentments and aggressions associated with such insecurity.

There had been few clashes between the old and the new in the population of these towns before the 1920s. The reason was simply that until the end of the World War not enough of these "strangers" had come into any of the towns to raise serious issues of class position and of control of the towns. As long as the older elements of the population remained secure and unchallenged in their control of the communities, socially, economically and politically, tensions might exist, but would never assume serious proportions. When, however, the flood of immigrants came to these towns during and after World War I, and when that flood threatened to sweep away the control of the older group over the towns, then trouble began to brew in earnest. The older elements in the population faced their decision squarely and chose to stay and fight it out rather than to surrender to the newer groups coming in or to leave the valley. The first half of the 1920s saw this ethnic-religious-social-economic conflict at its peak. By the middle twenties most of the towns of the valley had been divided
into hostile camps, camps that lived side by side but in no sense together.

Into this fertile field the Klan wandered in 1922 seeking patronage. The Klan could offer organization to the social groups that felt at the moment most pressed by the developing circumstances. As a result, Klan organization in the Mahoning Valley was astonishingly successful. The first Klan unit in the valley was formed in Steubenville in 1922, and within a year that Klan had spread units to all the other cities of the valley. Within a year the Klan was such a powerful organization in the valley that in November, 1923, at the municipal elections the Klan was able to win for its candidates the mayoralty office of the valley's five major cities—Younstown, Warren, Niles, Steubenville and Canton. The Klan was aided in the valley by a remarkable leader, Colonel E. A. Watkins who was a sort of Ohio Stephenson, but the Klan could have succeeded in the area without much actual proselytizing. The conditions were ripe and only the opportunity was needed to push people into the Klan at the rate of several thousand each week in the years of 1923 and 1924.

Colonel Christy noted that "Colonel" E. A. Watkins was an intelligent and able man. He was a most effective platform speaker who sold himself and his ideas. He was almost entirely anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic in his approach. Watkins claimed to have been the head of Colonel Allenby's S-2 (Intelligence) units in the Near East during World War I. Colonel Christy said he ran a check on Watkins through regular Army channels and learned that he had been with Allenby in the Near East, but in a non-combatant outfit, not as head of S-2. Christy Interview. Incidentally, Watkins, the Klan's most successful salesman in the Mahoning valley, was foreign born, and not himself a member of the Klan. Christy Interview and Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, November 2, 1924.

Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 11, 1923.

On October 26, 1924, the Mahoning County Klan celebrated its second anniversary with a meeting at Canfield at which Grand Dragon Osborne was the principal speaker and at which the 86 charter members of the Mahoning County Klan were in attendance. Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 25, 1924.
The Klan's success did not go unchallenged. When it became evident that the Klan was reaping heavy rewards in the valley, opposition from the immigrant group began to form. Resentments rose to a high level as the foreign-born in the communities of the valley wondered what the designs of the Klansmen were against them. In August, 1923, a street fight broke out in Steubenville over the issue of the Klan. The Klan had more or less asked for a quarrel, and when it came they could not have been much surprised. On this particular occasion Klansmen from West Virginia and Pennsylvania drove into the main streets of Steubenville with electric lights in the forms of crosses blazing from the sides of their automobiles. The crowds that watched them arrive and drive to the Klan hall for a meeting jeered them as they moved down the street. But no resistance was offered until the meeting broke up and the Klansmen headed home.

The meeting lasted for three hours, and while no violence occurred during that time, a crowd of men gradually formed on the street outside the Klan's hall. When the meeting broke up at 10:45 p.m. and the Klansmen filed out to their cars to return to their homes, the crowd numbered more than a thousand. One of the leaders of the street crowd came over to the lead car and asked the driver of the car if he had served in World War I. Upon receiving an affirmative answer, the man then asked if the Klansmen were not ashamed to display the American flag as they did. (Some Klansmen in the parade of cars had flags draped over their hoods and some had those little flags that are used to decorate cars stuck around their cars.) When the Klansmen said that they were proud to display their flags, the leader of the street crowd and some of his cohorts sprang into action. They seized the first car and
turned it over on its top. Then they reached inside and dragged out the four Klansmen and began to give them a thorough beating. At this signal the whole street turned into a brawling, fighting mob scene. The melee lasted better than forty minutes before police could bring it under control, and during that time at least four persons were seriously hurt (hospitalized) and more than fifty persons were bruised, cut or harmed in some way.  

This incident crystallized the Klan’s opposition. A month later in September, several societies of immigrants in Steubenville formed an organization that they called the "Knights of the Flaming Circle". Within three months this organization was rivalling the Klan in members as the foreign-born rushed to join. The purpose of this organization was simply to oppose the Klan at every turn. Any one could join who was not eligible for Klan membership. In practice, it was composed almost entirely of Roman Catholic groups in the valley area. It centered around the Knights of Columbus as an organizing group just as the Klan centered around the Masonic Lodge. Only the leaders ever wore regalia, and then only over the head, but all members of the Flaming Circle wore a six-inch orange circle over their hearts, and from this came the name. Occasionally in the next year the Circle paraded in the cities of the valley, and it was thought by residents of the valley that at some time in the future a clash of the two organizations was inevitable, and that clash, when it came, would be bitter and violent.

27 Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 24, 1923.
The Niles Riot of November 1, 1924, was the expected clash.

All the tensions in the Mahoning Valley came to a head during the political campaign of 1924. In September the leaders of the valley Klans called upon Mayor Harvey Kistler of Niles to ask him if they might stage a parade through the streets of Niles from 2:30 to 4:30, Saturday afternoon, November 1. This was the last Saturday before the elections, and Klan officials intended that the parade should advertise Klan candidates in the local elections and point up the Klan role in the elections. The parade was to be a part of a tri-state Klan meeting to be held that same Saturday at a large field about a mile north of Niles. The Mayor gave his permission for the parade, and Mahoning Valley Klansmen started preparations for the big event.

Two weeks before the date scheduled for the parade, the Knights of the Flaming Circle passed the word around the communities of the valley that they, too, intended to parade down the main streets of Niles at the same time and the same day as the Klan paraded. When the neutral residents of the valley towns became aware of the developing situation, they were shaken. They had had enough experience with the Klan and the Circle to know that if both organizations were to be on the streets of the same city at the same time, the only possible result would be bloodshed and violence. Unless something could be done to prevent the Klan from marching a knock-down, drag-out battle was certain.

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29 Niles was one of the smaller valley towns, but it is located about midway between Warren and Youngstown at about the geographical center of the Mahoning Valley. The majority of the population was foreign born in 1924, and the feeling in the town was very rabid. Colonel Christy noted that in the 1920s he attended baseball games in Niles at which the feeling was so rabid and the spirit so partisan that opposing teams were afraid to play there. Christy Interview. See preceding page for map of the Mahoning Valley.

30 On October 24, 1924, Mayor Kistler said he had issued a permit for a Klan parade more than a month before and he saw no reason for cancelling
If the Klan marched valley residents knew, nothing on earth could prevent the Flaming Circle men from meeting them in force. A committee of Niles citizens interested in contacting anyone who could call off the parade was formed immediately. A member of the committee told everyone freely that it was absurd to think that the Klan and the Circle could hold meetings at the same time and place without trouble coming. He echoed, in general, the attitude of the more rational citizens of the area. To stop the parade was essential; if that proved impossible, provision must be made for adequate police protection to make certain that the situation did not get out of hand.

Mayor Kistler of Niles did not become concerned with the situation that was in the making until early in the critical week before the parade. Then he began to cast about for ways to obtain aid. On Monday he requested Chief of Police Powell of Youngstown to assign all of the police that he could spare from the Youngstown force for duty in Niles the following Saturday. After debating a day or two, Chief Powell decided that to assign men to Niles was to leave Youngstown naked and unprotected and he refused to comply with Kistler's request. 31 Mayor Kistler on the same day took note of the circulars that had appeared on the previous Saturday announcing the parade of the Flaming Circle and said that he would under no circumstances allow them to parade at the same time as the Klan. 32 But when questioned, he admitted that

31 Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 24, 1924.
32 The Saturday before the week of the parade placards of the Flaming Circle appeared on telephone poles all over Niles announcing a parade for the following Saturday at the same time and place as the Klan parade. Permission was never asked to hold their parade and the Mayor made it clear that no parade permit would be issued for that time. The placards advised all persons to leave their women and children at home if they appeared in Niles on November 1, 1924. Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 24, 1924.
he had no concrete plans for stopping the Circle from coming to Niles and attempting to stage their parade.\textsuperscript{33} It was apparent that his course of action was indefinite and that he was casting about in the dark for whatever aid he could find.\textsuperscript{34}

On Tuesday the Flaming Circle leaders indicated that no trouble would occur if the Klansmen marched unmasked, in the parade. Since this promise had been made by the Klan, fears were temporarily allayed. However, the peace of the community was shattered and all fears multiplied when on Tuesday night a bomb was exploded on the porch of the mayor's home.\textsuperscript{35} The porch and a part of the front of the house were destroyed, but the Mayor and his wife, asleep in an upstairs bedroom, were uninjured. The whole community trembled.

Governor Donahoe sent investigators to help Chief of Police Rounds of Niles investigate the bombing, but they found nothing that would serve as a clue to the source of the bomb.

Rumors began to reach the governor that there would be a massacre in Niles unless he dispatched troops to the city. He refused to take any action without a specific request from local authorities and none was forthcoming. He did send Colonel Wade C. Christy, commander of the National Guard unit in Youngstown to Niles to investigate and

\textsuperscript{33} In a background article concerning the Klan riot, the Cleveland Plain Dealer declared that the Flaming Circle had been formed at Steubenville about a year before the Niles riot; and that it had been formed only to cause trouble. It sought only to parade on the days and at the places where the Klan paraded in order to start a fight. During the year of their mutual existence there had been a long series of fights between the two organizations. The most serious before the Niles riot occurred on June 21, 1924, when a tri-state Klanclave was held near Cleveland, and street fighting broke out between the two organizations. Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 2, 1924.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{35} Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 29, 1924.
keep watch over the situation, but beyond that he refused to go. 36

Even when Mayor Kistler on Thursday requested him to send troops to
patrol the streets of Niles on Saturday, he refused. Governor
Donahey said that legally it was impossible to send troops until
rioting had actually broken out and the peace had been broken. He
added, to reassure the community, that units of the National Guard were
stationed in Warren (one infantry company), Ravenna (one cavalry troop),
Alliance (one ordnance detachment), Canton (one troop of cavalry and
four infantry companies), and Barberton (one cavalry troop). Any one
of these units could be alerted and could be in Niles within two hours
without previous notice, General Henderson, State Commander of the
National Guard, added. 37 Governor Donahey, in a public statement, said
that he was holding the Mayor of Niles and the Sheriff of Trumbull
County, John Thomas, strictly accountable for whatever happened in
Niles on Saturday.

Sheriff Thomas of Trumbull County entered the picture when Mayor
Kistler called upon him to take major responsibility for keeping the
peace. The Sheriff was confident that it was a job within his power
and capabilities. He told anyone who was interested that nothing out
of the way would happen because he knew these people. He had been
raised with them, he said, and he knew how they would react to any

36 Colonel Christy reported that he was sent to Niles on Monday.
Christy Interview. The announcement that Christy had been sent was
not released to the papers until Thursday. Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram,
October 30, 1924.
37 Sheriff John Thomas was a big, red-headed man, bluff in manner,
but kind, and in general, competent. He had complete confidence all
week that he could handle the people of Niles, no matter what developed
on the following Saturday. It was with the greatest reluctance that
he yielded to the better judgment of others and called in the National
Guard after the riot had broken out. Christy Interview.
situation. He would simply deputize sufficient individuals to keep order and these men, with police authority, would be scattered here and there throughout the crowd. If trouble came, they would swing into action immediately. As the week went on, however, observers noted that he was not successful in deputizing many men from the city of Niles nor from the surrounding territory.

On Wednesday a meeting of citizens was held. Early in the week petitions had been placed on the streets, petitions requesting the mayor to revoke his parade permit and call off the whole affair. At the meeting of about seventy-five interested persons, mostly businessmen, the mayor declared that the petitions failed to carry enough signatures to be convincing, and he flatly refused to cancel permission to hold the parade. When the mayor's stand was made known, businessmen announced they would not open on Saturday and officials of the McKinley Monument (the former president was born in Niles) announced that the Monument would not open Saturday all day. The following morning Mayor Kistler announced publicly:

As mayor of the city of Niles, no one deplores more than I the unenviable notoriety and publicity that has been given the fair name of our city.

Weeks ago, after due consideration, permission was granted for a Klan parade. The state and district officers of this body have since decreed that this shall be an unmasked parade and that everything shall be conducted in a way as not to arouse passion or trouble.

No formal request for a Flaming Circle parade has been brought officially to me and no refusal made. I did say, and I believe that in the interest of peace and harmony I was correct in the stand taken, no permit would be given for two organizations

38 Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 31, 1924.
39 Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, October 29, 1924. Enterprising insurance agents solicited the merchants of Niles to sell them riot insurance. Reports were that they had a brisk sale!
to parade at the same time. I further expressed a willingness to grant the Flaming Circle the same rights and privileges for a parade and assemblage, provided it could be staged at some other time.

Up to the present time, I do not feel that any condition has arisen that should cause me, as Mayor of Niles, to revoke the permit granted the Klan for a parade between 2 and 4 p.m. Saturday, November 1. If the citizenship of this and surrounding communities will be cool-headed and tolerant, no unpleasantness need arise.

We are all Americans, whether of the Klan, the Flaming Circle or of that great group of our citizenship that holds allegiance to neither. Let us be law-abiding and broadminded and be willing to extend constitutional rights and prerogatives to every group of whatever race, color or creed.

Friday the atmosphere grew tense. Colonel Christy of the National Guard remained in Niles observing developments for Governor Donahay. Sheriff Thomas moved around the city continuously, searching for a means to keep the peace and for more deputies to help keep it. He attempted to act as a soothing influence on the seething town, and to ease the growing tension. To this end the Sheriff called in Fred Warnock, the leader of the valley Klan, and after a long discussion the Sheriff was informed that the Klan would under no circumstances, call off the parade, but that Klansmen would agree to march unmasked and with their arms not folded across their chests. Further, no Klan "police" would be present, and there would be no attempt made to have Klan "police" direct traffic at the street corners during the parade as the Klan had done at other Ohio and Indiana cities when parading. The Sheriff took these terms to the leaders of the Flaming Circle, but found them totally unwilling to call off their plans for resistance if the Klan was going to parade. When these stands were known, Mayor

40 *Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram*, October 31, 1924.
Kistler retired from the scene and left the whole situation in the hands of the county's executive officer, the Sheriff. When Saturday dawned, the Sheriff found himself in charge of a rapidly deteriorating situation.

Saturday was a perfect day for a picnic and parade. The sun was bright and warm and there was no hint of snow or rain in the air. Some Klansmen had gathered at the Klan field just north of Niles on Friday evening to get the place in readiness, and to set up tents for headquarters. They anticipated (and got) a crowd of about thirty thousand. In Niles, whole families began to desert the town and seek refuge elsewhere in anticipation of trouble to come. Some Klansmen began to arrive early, by eight o'clock in the morning. Those who came down the valley from the North, from Warren or Akron or Cleveland, came to the field before they hit the city of Niles, and they encountered no trouble. It was the Klansmen who came up the valley from the south and who attempted to drive through the city of Niles to the Klan field who met the full force of the Flaming Circle's open hatred.

At six in the morning more than 1700 members of the Flaming Circle attended Mass in the Italian Roman Catholic Church as "Catholics do who expect to die." By 6:30 in the morning crowds had already begun to

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41 For a Klan account of the Niles riot see the Klan pamphlet entitled The Truth About the Niles (Q.) Riot, November 1, 1924, (n.p. m. d.). The only copy of this pamphlet known to the author is in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress.

42 Colonel Christy said he observed this, and the quotation is his. Christy Interview.
mass around the street corners in Niles, and it quickly became apparent
that these were Circle men. As these small groups grew by the
addition of new members, and as they milled around and talked and
boasted, these crowds began to work themselves into a slowly growing
anger, into a sort of frenzy. Sam Brown of Niles reported that he
was out early in one of these crowds and had met Mike Hogan, a good
friend. "I say 'Hello, Mike' and he says 'Sam'. I said 'You were
at the peace meeting weren't you?' 'Yes' and he says 'Well, if they
parade, it will pass over my dead body'. And with that he turned
away from me and something struck me in the side, and his left hand
was in this position in his coat. Now whether he had a revolver, I
don't know, but there was something hard...." By mid-morning the
crowds on the streets of Niles were large and noisy and had concentrated
around the street corners, but no trouble had broken out on the streets
by ten o'clock.

43 The Knights of the Flaming Circle had hired gunmen from a New
York syndicate to come to Niles and lead them. Colonel Christy said
that he knew this to be a fact--one of his closest friends had been
in the Circle and had told him how the syndicate billed the Circle
for the services of their gunmen (payment was never made). Christy
Interview.

44 Sam Brown's report and others that follow are taken, verbatim,
from testimony offered in the National Guard investigation of the riot.
This investigation was conducted immediately after the riot, in the
week following. The records of the investigation run to 392 pages of
testimony, all given under oath. Despite a refusal on the part of
witnesses to admit that they recognized anyone involved in the riot,
these records are valuable for the descriptions of the riot offered.
The records of the investigation were classified "Secret" by the Ohio
National Guard, but special permission was granted to the author to
use the materials unrestrictedly when permission was asked. Hereafter
these records will be referred to by the following citation: Niles
National Guard Investigation, Testimony of John Doe, (page).

45 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of Sam Brown,
332. Colonel Christy said that one old resident of Niles told him
that he had lived in Niles for 17 years and he would gladly die before
he would ever allow Klansmen to parade down the streets of his city.
Christy Interview.
Anna Wendell of Niles drove out to the Klan grounds with some baked goods about ten-thirty. There was no trouble there then, but already a large number of Klansmen had arrived, and off at the edge of the field a hostile crowd had started to gather. She said she saw no weapons on the Klan grounds in the morning. "I did later in the evening, when they said they were coming up to attack us. They had us lying down on the ground...between seven and eight in the evening. I did see some arms then, but they had been sworn in...", she said. In the crowd that was gathered around the field "The most I saw were foreigners. There was one little fellow there, he had a black moustache. He said, 'Me wait for Ku Klux; me wait for Ku Klux; me kill Ku Klux...".46

The crowds grew thicker on certain corners of Niles. On some corners more than two hundred men massed grimly. The strategy of the Flaming Circle was to throw a blockade across town, and to close off from the south all routes out to the Klan grounds about a mile north of the city. George Alexander of Niles described the scene in the morning.

"Well, I walked on down into the bunch of fellows that were standing there, and I recognized a good many of them, and most of them had guns on them, and the most of them were carrying their guns out in the open, and one thing that I remember was that one fellow had his gun in his pocket, one pocket, and one in the other, and it wasn't very long until an Essex touring car drove up on the opposite side of the street and the whole gang at once seemed to recognize this as sort of an ammunition car, and everybody commenced to holler; 'Get the rifles', and ten or fifteen of them rushed over to this car and pulled a bunch of rifles out of it. I don't know whether there was any ammunition or not, but I seen them loading the rifles just after...."47

46 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of Anna Wendell, 123.
47 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of George Alexander, 208.
Shortly after this, the cry went up that the town was in the hands of the Flaming Circle.\textsuperscript{48} "I just went in to set down for lunch, and they hollered that the town was in the hands of the Flaming Circle, and that attracted attention and we all went out...most of the crowd,... the majority of them, were young foreigners.... There was four young Italians that was out in the street there stopping these cars. What they said to them I don't know, but it was their main object to get, from my observation it was their main object to get Pennsylvania cars, and they would stop them and they searched them. There wasn't a great many that argued with these boys....\textsuperscript{49} This was what R. L. McCorkle of the Niles Trust Company saw as he watched the scene develop on his street.

The Circle stopped and searched practically every northbound car on the streets of Niles. If Klan regalia were found, the treatment given Klansmen was harsh. The Klansmen were beaten, their robes taken away (often wrapped around telephone posts), and they were warned to get out of town. Some were merely turned back, but if the Klansmen resisted they were certain to be beaten as the crowd grew more courageous with success. Any Klansman who attempted to go through the town got increasingly harsh treatment as the mood of the crowd grew more bitter. A. W. Gibbs reported:

Well, I seen one car come up Linden Avenue and they tried to stop him and he wouldn't stop, and there was two in that machine, and that would be about 150 feet from where I stood, and they began firing into the machine, ten or twelve, and

\textsuperscript{48} Colonel Christy said the Circle held the town in almost a state of siege. Christy Interview.
\textsuperscript{49} Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of R. L. McCorkle, 15.
they got this one through the back, and I helped place him in a car and some woman took him away....And they commenced shooting. They shot his tires off, and there was another one came up then, just a few minutes, and they beat him over the head with a shot gun....Well, he had the robe, and they tore it out of there and wrapped it around a telephone pole....

Dr. John A. Claypool told of trying to get through town to go to Youngstown that afternoon. Coming to the corner of Robbins and Linden, "I saw three or four with 45's, probably, being handled around pretty freely." He estimated that the crowd at that corner was at least a hundred, but that they had not molested him at all because they recognized him as a doctor. Besides, he was going the other way, south toward Youngstown. He didn't recognize any of the crowd, nor did his wife, "She was watching the men, and she was scared stiff...."

F. M. Woodworth of Niles watched the scenes on the streets and he saw a car going at a high rate of speed crash through the crowd at one corner. The men at that corner hopped on cars and gave chase, and soon returned, pulled a man out of the car and shot him right then. To the query as to whether there were police officers around he answered, "Yes, there were two police officers there at the time this fellow was shot....They were on the east sidewalk....They were right there....They stayed right on the sidewalk....

The effectiveness of the blockade was remarkable. By noon the Circle had the town sewed up tight. Elmer Jones of Niles tried various ways to get across Niles in his car, even through a back alley, but the "opposition" had blocked that as well as the streets. He could

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50 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of A. W. Gibbs, 183.
51 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of Dr. John A. Claypool, 36.
52 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of F. M. Woodworth, 49.
not get through and out to the Klan field. He called out to the field for assistance in getting through the crowd, but by 1:30 in the afternoon no aid had come. Down around Linden avenue he saw "these foreigners threatening people trying to go through the line. The first thing I saw them do was stop a machine. One man had a shot gun there pointed at them and the other fellows had revolvers, and they searched the machines. They practically pulled people out of the machines, took their robes and their suitcases, and I can't say they took any guns from the people, but in one case I saw them stop one young man in a machine, and he gave some resistance, and I saw the fellow hit him across the forehead with the butt of the gun....\textsuperscript{53}

R. L. McCorkle saw one act of violence that surpassed most witnessed during the day.

Yes, he argued there quite a little bit with the, then they searched his car and they found a robe and a gun, and after they found this they commenced beating him on the head with their guns...\textsuperscript{\textit{this fellow} was in the car, and there was two or three of the gang on this other side. They belted this fellow over the head pretty good until he flopped over, then the fellows on the other side turned the car over on its side...then they let the fellow crawl out...I didn't see what became of him...\textsuperscript{54}

V. B. McDaniel of Youngstown, a Klansman, was the man so beaten, and he verified McCorkle's story during the investigation of the riot made by the National Guard,

A. There was a few cars right ahead of me that they didn't stop. They let them go right on by, and then they stopped me and asked me where I was going, and I told them I was going out to the grounds, and then one man walked in front of the car and shot twice toward the ground.

\textsuperscript{53} Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of Elmer Jones, 21.\textsuperscript{54} Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of R. L. McCorkle, 17.
Q. Do you know whether he shot a hole in your tires or not?
A. Why, one of my tires is down....
Q. (What about the rest of the men?)
A. All the rest of them were small men, short and fairly about what the average short man is, and they were Italians, every one of them, there wasn't an American looking man in the bunch that I saw.
Q. And after they stopped your car what did they do to you?
A. They jumped on each side of the car, and put guns to my head. I saw four guns. I don't know whether there was any more or not and they opened a satchel we had in the back of the car with my robe in it and saw the robe and said 'Here it is.' and they then searched me and went to beating me.... They started punching me with fists, and when they found out I didn't have any weapon on me, they took hold of the barrel and used the butt to beat me.
Q. Then what did they do with you after they beat you up?
A. They tried to pull me out of the car and I hung on and they tipped the car over and I walked out between the windshield and the top and started to walk away, and I got part way down the street and they came and stopped me again and took my pocketbook and looked in it, but there was no money in it and they gave me back my pocketbook without taking nothing out of it, and they reached in my inside coat pocket and pulled out some cards, and they asked me where I was going. I told them I was going home, and the fellow says, 'Well, that's right and don't come back here again today.' And I went down there a few steps and saw some people in front of a house watching it and I hollered across the street to them and asked them if they would let me wash my face because my face was all covered with blood, and when they said yes, and I went in and washed up and borrowed a cap from them to wear home....

The Klan was not entirely acquiescent in the treatment meted out to its members. After what was happening in Niles became apparent some of the Klansmen rallied and came up with a machine gun. Arthur J. Lynch, a reporter from the Youngstown Vindicator, described what happened when that weapon was brought into play.

A. (He moved into the crowd of men to talk to the leaders) And as fast as strangers were found in the crowd, they were run out. They started to run me out time and time
again, and somebody would holler: 'He is all right', and I was more or less nervous all the time myself. There was so many guns bristling. I didn't know what to think.

Well, I was standing there, talking to this Italian, and a car started to come down Main Street toward the intersection of Federal...A little Ford truck, and on that truck, right on the back of it, right back of the driver's cabin in front, was apparently a box, and on top of that was one of those riot guns that the police use, that isn't stationary but can be moved from one side to another.

Q. Did you see this yourself?
A. Yes, sir. This thing came right down this curve and nobody paid any attention to it until they got probably within about the next intersection there, and then this fellow in the back let loose twenty or thirty little shots, and they drove right down to there, and when he got there he opened up on this gang, and he fired back and forth; I made for the filling station, and people dropped; I don't know whether they were hit or whether they were just scared, but he opened up on them, and these fellows all cut loose and they started shooting down in the street there, and I would say that about a half a dozen fellows were hit there; I saw them coming around with blood on their hands, and pulling up their soaks, and this little Italian there fell. He emptied his rifle, and then he went down. He was just ready to fire. He was on his knees, and he got caught apparently in the belly, because he grabbed his stomach....

From about noon on this stopping of cars, searching of autos and their occupants continued. Sheriff Thomas battled against a situation that was completely out of his control. He roamed the streets, arguing with the men doing these things, and attempting to reason with them, but they simply brushed him off. The men he had deputized to help him were petrified with fear. They stood around on the curbs watching but doing nothing to halt the disturbances raging around them. Some of them took their badges off their coats and put them into their pockets to keep from being identified as officers. Police protection for

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citizens of the community was completely gone. And Sheriff Thomas had to face the situation alone, for the mayor had left town in the morning with no forwarding address.

Colonel Christy and the Sheriff started patrolling the streets together as soon as word was received of what was happening. The Colonel said that he and the Sheriff were walking down one street when they heard two quick pistol shots. "There are two dead Klansmen", remarked the Sheriff. Upon investigation they found two Klansmen who had been shot in the stomach. They were rushed to a hospital in a critical condition, but they lived. (The Colonel remarked that he saw no reason why the men had not finished the Klansmen off then—the temper of the crowd was right and the opportunity was certainly there). Even streetcars were searched, handbags opened, and offenders who possessed any piece of Klan regalia, or were displaying any part of Klan uniform, were pulled out of the street cars and summarily beaten.

The climax of the riot came, when early in the afternoon, Klan "Police" made their entry on the scene. These Klan "police" were men who had joined the Horse Thief Detective unit of the Klan, and who had paid Colonel E. A. Watkins $7.35 to join and $10.00 for a peace bond. Colonel Watkins assured them that they were then members of the Ohio State Police and that they had the power to carry weapons and carry on all the activities of police officers. To show their authority they wore little slips of ribbon in their lapels upon which was printed the words "Klan Police". A group of about eighteen or twenty of these Klan police came into Niles on the interurban from the southern part

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57 Christy Interview.
of the valley, and started to walk through town to the Klan field.

The men of the Flaming Circle heard of their presence, and about a hundred men detached themselves from patrol duty in the streets and started out, armed to the teeth, to have it out with these most-hated elements of the Klan. They caught the Klan "police" at a bridge near the north end of Niles. A merchant located near the bridge told of the coming of the Circlemen,

Well, they come running down there jabbering; I would say that the majority of them had guns in their hands. Came running down there and I thought—the first thing I thought was they were running toward us; we had our American flag flying over the building and I guess several of them didn't like that any too well; and I thought they were coming to us, but I went back and shut my machine down and went back and went into the place of business and stood there in the doorway, and they went all around us, all over our property, but I noticed one object was back of us, between us and the corner, and I went to the east side of our building, and I saw a group of perhaps—I didn't count them—but I would say roughly, fifteen or eighteen men, something like that, that had white ribbons on them;...There was probably 15 to 18 men, and this crowd surrounded them; I didn't know there were so many different kinds of guns [he rushed to the phone and called for help] then it was only a short time until machines came from town, and Sheriff Thomas, I recognized him, got out of the machine and other men with him I don't know.

The next thing I knew, this crowd, seemed working with the assistance of the crowd of foreigners—they looked like foreigners to me—had this crowd of fifteen men lined up there on the street, and it seemed they didn't want them to get across the bridge, and they lined them up and what looked to me like Sheriff Thomas and the Chief and these others, disarmed or searched them, and the men were taken away, but I didn't see any attempt to take a gun away from a foreigner of that other crowd. That seemed to be malicious toward this crowd that came down through the field.... there was no attempt, so far as I could see. It looked as though everybody there of those in authority were friendly to this foreign crowd that were armed to the teeth, and they seemed to be working together.58

58 Niles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of John Rose, 148-9.
At the call of John Rose, Colonel Christy, Chief of Police Rounds, and Sheriff Thomas had sped out to the bridge where this scene occurred. Colonel Christy said that about a hundred of these Nilesmen had lined up across the road ahead of the Klansmen and there they stood shouting, screaming, chattering in Italian, cursing and working themselves into a frenzy of rage. "I never heard such yelling and screaming in all my life, before nor since," said the Colonel. The Sheriff, with considerable presence of mind, saved the situation from a massacre by promptly disarming the Klan "policemen" and marching the whole crew of them off to jail. This prevented a mob scene right then and it convinced Sheriff Thomas that stronger force was needed to cope with the situation than his meager force of deputies.

He turned to Colonel Christy and asked him to call in the National Guard. Within minutes Colonel Christy was on the telephone, the guard units in Akron, Warren, and Youngstown were alerted, and force was on its way to Niles.

An hour later, about 2:30 in the afternoon, the first troops arrived in Niles. The first unit to arrive was the unit from Warren and they had made excellent time assembling and moving into the city of Niles. When they moved down the main streets of the town they met no resistance. The troops coming up from Youngstown, arriving later, said that they had been met at Guthrie, a small town outside of Niles, by a motorcycle policeman who had told them, breathless and frightened, that there was a massacre going on in Niles and that they

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*Christy Interview. Colonel Christy said that one sight he will never forget was an Italian with a pistol in each hand and a butcher knife clutched between his teeth.
must go in prepared to shoot to protect themselves. So machine guns
been mounted on the hoods of the machines, and the troops moved into
the city from the south cautiously, step by step, prepared to sweep
the streets with machine-gun fire. 60

Both sides accepted the imposition of a higher authority. In
fact, there was a genuine sigh of relief from both sides. Both groups
had been urged on to action by such a state of dare, of braggadocio,
that neither side had dared to think of backing down of their own
volition at any point. For instance, despite the reports of terrible
blood-letting that had sifted out to the Klan field during the after-
noon, when Colonel Christy went out to the Klan field to inform Klan
leaders that the National Guard was taking over and that there would
be no parade, Klansmen were grimly lining up in ranks of four to march
through the enemy fortress of Niles. The Colonel went to the tent
where the Klan leaders were assembled and told them to call it off,
They did, with genuine sighs of thankfulness. There had been no doubt
in their minds that some people were going to be killed if they marched;
but march they would have if there had been no imposition of orders
from above to call off the parade. The leaders of the Flaming Circle
took the news of the intervention of the Guard without comment, but
also with obvious relief. It was a welcome truce.

An interesting side-light on the Guard's intervention was the
fact that a company of the National Guard had been with the Klansmen
on the Klan field and had been all decked out in Klan regalia ready

60 Christy Interview.
to parade when the order came that the Guard, including their unit, had been alerted for service. The presence of Guardsmen in the Klan was not unusual, for crosses had been burned often at Camp Perry, the Guard headquarters, and some units were known to be almost exclusively Klansmen. At any rate, the men in this unit stripped off their Klan regalia, jumped into their cars, sped back to Akron, grabbed their National Guard uniforms, and donned them en route back to Niles! They appeared late, but in full uniform and in good order, on the streets of Niles within three hours after they had been called off the Klan field. 61

The interposition of the Guard marked the end of violence. For a week thereafter troops patrolled the streets of Niles, but then the Guard was withdrawn, and peace was restored. The National Guard, under the direction of Colonel Christy, conducted an investigation, but learned little enough about the identity of persons who had taken part in the beatings in downtown Niles. So, no indictments were brought; the riot ended the high tension that had existed in Niles for months and much was forgotten. Psychologically, at least, relief had been found.

A summing up indicated that twelve persons were hurt enough to require hospitalization. Others were wounded, but not seriously enough to require hospitalization. How much higher these figures would have been if all men who needed attention had received it is not certain. The men of the Flaming Circle were reluctant to report for medical attention because in that way they could be identified later. Most

61 Christy: Interview.
of them went home to their section of town and became lost as statistics. If wounds were serious enough to require attention they went to doctors in other cities. None of these out-of-town doctors were questioned by the investigating board of the National Guard. It is certain, too, that some of the men who were beaten and who came from other valley towns or from Pennsylvania and West Virginia did not report to the doctors in Niles, but went on home to their family physicians. As a result, statistics on how many were hurt yield only a minimum figure, doubtful in its accuracy.

This marked the peak of Klan strife in eastern Ohio. For three more years, until about 1927, the Klan dominated the valley, but never again did it push itself into such a position that it could not retreat from a situation as it had done in the case of the Niles riot.62

Perhaps the worst legacy of the Niles riot is indicated in the testimony given to the National Guard investigators by Catherine Bruder of Niles. She lived on one of the corners where some of this searching and beating took place. A man came up to her during the afternoon and handed her two guns in full view of everyone watching. He said, "Here, Catherine, take these and protect yourself."

Q. Was that man who handed you a gun a foreigner or an American?
A. My sister said he was a foreigner; I couldn't tell.
Q. He talked to you, did he?
A. He just said: 'Here, take this, Catherine; protect yourself.'
Q. Are you a Catholic?
A. Yes, I am.
Q. Have you had any trouble with your neighbors up there?
A. They don't speak to me now....

62 From 1924 to 1927 the Klan dominated the Mahoning Valley towns politically. No one could be elected to office without the support of the Klan. This fact, and the fact that Klan officials in the valley towns clamped down tight on the Knights of the Flaming Circle after...
The Niles riot represented the climax of the Klan's career in Ohio. Never after that violent Saturday afternoon did the Klan and anti-Klan forces clash head-on. Later struggles were confined to the election campaigns or to attempts to push legislation through units of local government. The Klan remained a part of the Ohio scene for several years after 1925 but declined steadily after 1926. By 1926 the Ohio Realm was down in membership to about three hundred, and to a few local organizations concentrated in the eastern section of the state.64 The Ohio Klan finally disintegrated to one local at Dayton that lasted through the 1930s, and to a group of "Night-Riders" that held on at Bellaire. This organization was the product of the "Knight-Rider" outfit that made its first appearance at the Buckeye Lake meeting of the Klan in July, 1925.65 In its later years it turned to a career of terrorism and affiliated with the Black Legion in Detroit. But that is a bit of the Ohio Klan's history best understood after the whole history of the Klan in Michigan has been presented.

\[\text{the Niles riot account for the fact that the Klan and the Circle never again met. The Circle ceased to be important after the Niles affair. Christy Interview.}\]

\[\text{64} \quad \text{Miles National Guard Investigation, Testimony of Catherine Bruder, 219.}\]

\[\text{65} \quad \text{Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 18, 1929.}\]

\[\text{See below, 289.}\]
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE KU KLUX KLAN IN MICHIGAN

All children residing in the state of Michigan between the ages of seven years and eighteen years shall attend a public school until they have been graduated from the eighth grade.

Do you mean to tell me that you, an officer, of the Klan didn't have a copy of the constitution and couldn't see one?

I do, and I wasn't the only one.

Communism must be destroyed! (The Night Riders)

RIDE WITH US

The object of this order is to: Promote, protect, and preserve Protestantism; to create and guard the welfare of the Protestant people socially as well as politically. This order owes no allegiance to any foreign or world power except that of God and the United States of America.

The Klan Comes to Michigan

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan met only moderate success in its efforts to gain strength in Michigan. For this there are probably three major reasons. Timing in Michigan was bad; dissension in the

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1 This was the form the Klan's school amendment took in 1924 when the Klan attempted to abolish the private and parochial schools of Michigan by forcing all children to attend the public schools. See below.

2 In the Gilliland case against the Michigan Klan the presiding judge at one point interrupted testimony to make the enquiry noted above. This incident illustrates again the degree of control that Klan leaders held over the whole organization, and indicates one of their methods. See below, for an account of this court case.

3 In the 1930s the character of the Klan movement began to change. While still remaining pro-Protestant, it became more a patriotic organization than a nativistic; more an anti-Communist organization than an anti-Catholic one. This message was left in Grand Circus park in Detroit at the depth of the depression in 1933 when the Communist party was having its greatest success in the Detroit area. Detroit Times, March 31, 1933.

4 This was the announced purpose of the United Brotherhood of America, known better as the Black Legion, the major remnant group that survived after the Klan organization itself was defunct.
leadership hierarchy extended down through the ranks of the Klan and injured morale; and Michigan's population, with the exception of a few special groups, did not seem attracted to the Klan.

The Klan came to Michigan as early as it did to the other middle-western states. By the time of the Congressional investigations in September, 1921, the Klan already had established an organization in the state and had a few thousand members, mostly in the Detroit area. But for two years thereafter the Michigan Klan languished. The Klan's drive to obtain a large membership began late in Michigan, perhaps too late. Strong organizational campaigning did not begin until late in 1923 and early 1924, and by that time the crest of the Klan wave had passed by in the Middle West. It was a bit too late for successful, large-scale expansion of membership into a new realm. The reasons why the Klan postponed organization activity in Michigan for


5 Advertisements were appearing regularly in the Detroit newspapers at this time. Under a picture of a Klan Knight on a rearing horse such as appears at the beginning of each of the chapters of this thesis, appeared a block ad that read "100 PER CENT AMERICANS ARE WANTED, NONE OTHERS NEED APPLY, KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN, Address P. O. Box 602, Detroit, Michigan." The advertisement quoted appeared in the Detroit Free Press, September 17, 1921, but the ads were in several editions of that paper for that month. As was common at the time, the Congressional investigation of the Klan caused Michigan's public officials to look into their closets to see if Michigan had a Klan. When it was apparent that Michigan did have a Klan, like a chorus the officials from the Governor down denounced the organization and warned Klansmen that they would not be tolerated. These statements appear throughout the month of September in the Detroit papers. A reporter from the Detroit Free Press contacted Klan officials who told him that the Klan had been active around Detroit for about four months (by September) and that in Detroit there were about a thousand members. Detroit Free Press, September 26, 1921. While exaggerated undoubtedly, this statement plus other evidence gives clear proof that a Klan unit existed in Detroit by September, 1921.
so long are not clear but are probably due to the fact that the Klan expanded, generally in a south to north direction. Wisconsin and Michigan, because they were so far north, received attention from the Klan leadership group later than did Ohio and Indiana. In addition, the Klan in the Middle West had only a limited number of Kleagles available to use for organizational work. As long as these men had the lucrative territories of Ohio and Indiana to k lux, it was difficult for Klan leaders to transfer them to territories like Michigan where profits might be uncertain and considerably less.

Contributing to the modest success of the Michigan Klan was the factor of internal conflict. Internal dissension did not usually break out within Klan ranks as long as the Klan was expanding, money was pouring in, and the organization was securing more members than it was losing. Conflict usually broke out when the number of new members and their accompanying ten dollar kloektokens began to fall off. Klan leaders at that point fell to quarreling over the division of the meagre spoils, and to accusing one another of not doing the best possible job of recruiting new candidates for the Klan. The Michigan organization because it grew slowly and provided relatively few profits to be divided, was troubled constantly with low morale and the shifting of command assignments.

Evidences of the internal conflict within the Klan are present in the legal briefs filed by Nicholas Sowder and his wife in suits against Charles E. Lewis and Daniel Rhodes, co-heads of the Michigan Klan, operating in Michigan before 1926 under the corporation name of the National Research Bureau, in which they sued for salaries they claimed the Klan had contracted for but then refused to pay. The Sowders
had come from Detroit where Mr. Sowder had been co-ordinator at Cass Technical High School to Grand Rapids to work in the Klan's state headquarters, in June, 1924. They charged that Rhodes had employed Mr. Sowder at $60 a week to "take charge of the furnishing and routing of speakers and engaging in the propaganda work of the Ku Klux Klan, the distribution of its literature and supplies" and Mrs. Sowder to serve as typist and stenographer in the Klan state offices. Since such employment involved some risk of loss of status, a bonus had also been promised each of them for coming into the employ of the Klan, they charged. Michigan had not been a fertile field for Klan organization work, they stated, and at the time that their employment had been severed they said the Klan membership in Michigan had been only about 75,000 men. They further charged that Walter Bossert, head of the propagation bureau of the Klan nationally and at that time Grand Dragon of the Indiana Klan, had held a conference at Grand Rapids during the period of their employment at which Bossert had officially transferred Charles E. Lewis to Wisconsin. Rhodes (who had employed the Sowders) had been "bucked out" of the Klan, Paul A. Beckett of Jackson had been made King Kleagle of
Michigan, the Reverend J. C. Rinehart had replaced Sowder in his Klan job, and Mrs. Sowder had been dismissed as stenographer. As a result of the case, in which none of the facts alleged were denied by Klan officials except their obligation to pay the Sowders, the plaintiffs were paid in full for the time of their employment, but received no bonus for their Klan work. The testimony at the trial indicated that the Klan had made extremely slow progress until that time in Michigan, outside of Detroit, and that the discharge of Lewis and Rhodes was directly traceable to their failure as organizers in Michigan.

A later series of suits filed in the Wayne County (Detroit) courts revealed more of the reasons why the Klan failed to prosper in Michigan. The most significant of these Klan cases was that filed by Clayton C. Gilliland, formerly an attorney for the Klan in the Detroit area, who sued for compensation for work performed for the Klan. In the testimony offered in the trial the following facts about Klan growth in Michigan were brought out. The Klan had come to Detroit

8 The successful defendants' argument was that the Sowders had known how risky Klan employment was, and had been warned that within the Klan conditions changed very rapidly. Thus, when they were removed, it was only what they could have been expecting and they should receive no pay for their loss. Grand Rapids Press, February 4, 1925.

9 The case from which much of the information immediately following is taken is Clayton C. Gilliland vs. The Symwa Club and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., a Michigan Corporation, filed and tried in the Wayne County Circuit Court. Trial took place in January, 1930. This trial lasted for more than a month and many witnesses testified, all of whom had been active in the Michigan Klan. The information buried in the court reporter's notebooks is invaluable, but in present form unavailable. No transcript was ever made of the testimony, and the author was unable to find a means to pay for the preparation of a transcript. As a result, newspaper accounts of the case have had to serve as a substitute for the best evidence. Another court case in the Wayne County Circuit court that would yield information if transcripts were available are Henry C. Warner vs. Arthur S. Nichols, Garfield A. Nichols, Ira W. Stout, James W. Gray, Robert J. Wittman, Roy C. Small, and the Symwa Club, a Michigan corporation, The Wayne County Provisional Klan; Wayne County Provisional Klan of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc.;
through the establishment of a provisional Klan organization created in 1921. The slow growth of that organization led to its dissolution after the November elections in 1924. The old members of the provisional Klan formed a club they labelled the Symwa (Spend your Money with Americans) Club, and new members who were initiated into that organization came in under the impression they were joining the Klan. In about a year the national Klan came back into the picture, applied for and received a corporation charter to do business in the state of Michigan, and took over the Symwa Club and its assets. Gilliland had worked for all three organizations, and he sued these organizations because he insisted that he had been promised compensation for his work, compensation that none of the three organizations was willing to pay.

In the course of his testimony Gilliland produced evidence to show that in many respects the Michigan Klan had become only a means by which individual members of the organization could put over deals that would bring them profits. Klan officers insisted that these

Lodge #35 of the Knights of the Great Forest, successors to the Symwa Club, the provisional Klan and the Incorporated Klan, filed in the Wayne County Circuit Court in March, 1928 and tried in July 1928.


The Klan received corporation papers in Michigan on March 13, 1925. Shortly thereafter the Symwa Club was merged with the Klan corporation. For the incorporation see Detroit News, March 15, 1925; for the merger of the Symwa Club, see testimony of the Klan's attorney in the Gilliland case, Oscar Heggblom, reported by Detroit News, January 24, 1930.

Clayton C. Gilliland was hired as an investigator by the Klan officials to see what deals were being pulled under cover of the Klan. His testimony thus has credence. Testimony of Clayton C. Gilliland, Gilliland vs. Symwa Club et. al. as reported in Detroit News, January 22, 1930.
were deals put over by individuals in the Klan, and that the Klan organization itself was not responsible for them. But they did not deny that they had occurred, nor that they themselves were involved in some of them.13 Gilliland's list of deals included these items:

1. The "Middle Belt Road deal"—About $50,000 of Klan money was used to purchase a tract of land on the Middle Belt Road in Detroit. This land was to be subdivided and sold, and the profits were to be used to build a mighty temple "like Solomon's" in Detroit for the Klan. But the real estate firm managing the transaction for the Klan, Goodyear and Stevens, had the deed to the plot transferred to the names of Manly G. Caldwell and James B. Schaeffer, the leaders of the Detroit Klan. Caldwell and Schaeffer intended to reap the rewards from the sale of the lots rather than to turn them over to the Symwa Club. Under pressure Goodyear and Stevens finally reclaimed the contract for the Klan, but the story leaked out, and the Klan in Detroit was badly injured.14

2. Theron Gray, a clerk for the Ford Motor Company, testified that he sang baritone in a Symwa quartette that had developed a repertoire of Klan patriotic songs. This quartette travelled from one Klan meeting to another in Michigan and performed for Klan audiences. The quartette was propositioned by Ira Stout, a Kleagle in the Detroit area, to make records of their songs to be marketed nationally to Klansmen. Grey went east to contact some of the larger

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13 Testimony of Phillip A. Callahan, Gilliland vs. Symwa Club et. al. as reported in the Detroit News, January 25, 1930.
14 Testimony of Clayton C. Gilliland, Gilliland vs. Symwa Club et. al. as reported in Detroit News January 22, 1930.
recording firms, but none were interested in recording the songs of the quartette. He returned to Detroit, organized the Cross Music and Record Company to make and sell the quartette's recordings. Stock was issued and sold to Klansmen, but no records were ever made and no money was returned.15

3. Some money was collected from Klansmen for the purchase of a Klan airplane, but no airplane was ever bought nor money returned.16

4. There was a deal to sell members lots around a small lake in Oakland County, Schwartz Lake. Klansmen who could not afford the full payment for the lots were allowed to "reserve" a lot for an initial payment as low as a dollar. A series of "part-pay" cards were kept, and about $11,000 was collected. But then there was a fire, the cards were lost in the fire, and the records were impossible to untangle. Restoration of monies was never attempted.17

5. Contributors to another fund gave a dollar to buy a cardboard lapel button in the shape of a "gold brick" to show that they had bought a brick for the new Klan temple. Such a temple was never built, and no money returned.18

6. A $225,000 stock issue was issued and almost all sold to buy the Saginaw Star, a small newspaper, to be converted into a Klan newspaper to circulate among Michigan Klansmen. Not one single edition ever came off the press, and the stock was never reclaimed.19

15 Testimony of Theron Gray, Gilliland vs. Symma Club et al., as reported in the Detroit News, January 25, 1930.
16 Testimony of Clayton C. Gilliland, Gilliland vs. Symma Club et al., as reported in the Detroit News, January 22, 1930.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
7. Some money of the Women's Klan of Michigan had fallen into Klan hands, and its return was stalled for some time, but a lawyer hired by the women forced restitution of it. 20

8. A welfare fund was created out of which "flowers were bought for persons who were neither sick nor dead."21 This fund was collected by passing the hat at meetings and often the fund had as much as $500 credited to it, but it was always broke.

9. Somewhere between $3000 and $5000 was collected to aid James Hamilton in his campaign for governor in 1924, but it was not spent for that purpose.22

These charges and the fact that Klan leaders did not bother to deny them when they were made under oath in a court trial (they even admitted being implicated in some of them) indicated two things quite clearly. The Klan did not meet with much success in Michigan, for when the Klan was successful to any degree at all it yielded such heavy profits that petty deals like these were not necessary to make a good thing out of the organization. And secondly, these deals themselves, and the leakage of knowledge about them to Klan members, kept the morale of the Michigan Klan low and prevented a more rapid growth.

In the light of such evidence, to what size did the Klan grow in Michigan? Various estimates exist, all of them suspect in some ways.

20 Testimony of Clayton C. Gilliland, Gilliland vs. Symwa Club et al., as reported in the Detroit News, January 22, 1930.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
D. C. Stephenson said the Michigan Klan was "about the same size as the Indiana Klan". Since he had given the figure for Indiana as 315,000, that was his estimate of Klan membership in Michigan. This figure seems far too high. Stephenson's testimony was reliable only where he had direct knowledge of the situation, and Stephenson actually had had little contact with the Michigan Klan even though he had been nominally responsible for the propagation of the state.

D. C. Stephenson had spent too much of his time in Ohio and Indiana to know much of what was taking place in Michigan. The estimate given by Henry C. Warner in connection with his court case against the Klan, 265,000, seems closer to the actual number of persons initiated into the Michigan Klan. Even that seems high when compared to the figure offered by the Sowders from their experience with the Michigan Klan. They said the Michigan Klan had had only about 50,000 members when they worked in Klan headquarters in Grand Rapids in the summer of 1924. The Sowders work in Klan headquarters gave them the best opportunity to know what figures were relatively correct. Since these figures specified a figure of 50,000 as late as the summer of 1924, it is doubtful if the Klan ever reached a membership total in Michigan of more than about 75-80,000. The investigator working in Michigan comes to feel that the Klan must have been relatively small and unimportant in the state outside of Detroit, for records of Klan

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23 Testimony of D. C. Stephenson, by deposition, Pittsburgh Federal Court, Ku Klux Klan vs. Strayer, et. al. Case #1897 in Equity.

24 This figure is contained in Warner's Bill of Complaints filed with his suit against the Klan, Henry C. Warner vs. Arthur S. Nichols, et. al, as reported in the Detroit News, March 28, 1928.

25 Testimony of Nicholas M. Sowder, vs. Charles E. Lewis, Daniel E. Rhodes, et. al.
activity are extremely thin. Even the newspapers who gave space everywhere to Klan news had little to report. Supporting this impression is the fact that a figure of about 75,000 corresponds roughly to the figure of final membership in Wisconsin, a state that was about equal to Michigan in population eligible for Klan membership and which was also kluxxed late. Therefore, maximum Klan strength probably was not more than 80,000 at its peak in Michigan.26

Where was the greatest concentration of Klan strength in Michigan? The best guide to strength seems to be through an analysis of the votes cast for avowed Klan candidates running on state-wide tickets. Strong support for these candidates could only come from a Klan stronghold because of the wide-spread antipathy for the Klan in the whole country. Fortunately, such figures are available. The only election in which the Klan in Michigan could muster enough strength to present a threat strong enough to make the Klan the issue was in the Republican primary election in August, 1924.27 In that election the Klan superseded everything else as an issue. Party lines were wiped out as nearly all voters went into the Republican party to vote for or against the Klan and its candidates. The Democratic

26 The author cannot conceive of a Klan larger than about 100,000 members that had as little influence on Michigan society as the Michigan Klan did. None of the evidences of Klan size are apparent in Michigan; victories of the Klan in elections, control of municipal governments, large quantities of newspaper space, violent speeches of denunciation by anti-Klansmen--none of these are apparent. If the Klan was larger than 100,000 members in Michigan, then the tenure of Klansmen within the organization was unusually short and the turnover extremely rapid. Considering the morale of the Michigan Klan organization, this is a possibility, but more likely, the Klan was simply small in numbers.

27 In that election, according to the political writer for the Detroit News, party lines were completely ignored, and voters flocked into the Republican primary to vote for or against the Klan. Detroit News, September 21, 1924.
vote was reduced to near zero as the Klan made its only bid for power in the state.

The Klan had two candidates running in the Republican primaries. The Michigan Klan was split into two wings, and each wing supported its own candidate. The one Klan candidate was James A. Hamilton; the other was the Reverend Frederick A. Perry of Adrian. The largest Klan vote cast for these men was in central Michigan in and around the cities of Lansing, Flint, Saginaw, Jackson and Kalamazoo, and in the metropolis of Detroit. Ingham County, in which Lansing is located, proved to be the Klan stronghold in Michigan. The Klan polled 16,515 votes for Reverend Perry out of a total vote of 30,400 votes scattered among nine candidates. Three Klansmen out of four running in the county elections won, and another with Klan endorsement won without trouble. Ingham County thus was probably the strongest Klan area in the state outside of certain wards in the city of Detroit. In Lansing where the Republicans had normally a 2000 vote plurality the Republican primary vote was so heavy that more than 25,000 persons came to the polls, just 3000 short of the total registration for both parties in the city. Other areas of Klan strength in the state, as revealed by the vote for Hamilton and Perry, in addition to the central Michigan area, were parts of the Thumb district and a few counties along the west coast from Muskegon north. There the major population group of that area, the "Holland Dutch" took to the Klan and joined in large numbers. The map on the following page

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28 Detroit News, September 21, 1924.
29 Ibid.
30 Dr. Lewis C. Fuller, director of the Michigan Historical Commission who watched the Klan develop and die through the 1920s, indicated that the area of the Lake Michigan shore above Muskegon was the heart of the Klan strength as he remembered it. That, he said,
Main Areas of Klan Strength
As Revealed in the Vote
for Hamilton and Perry
indicates the areas of major Klan strength in Michigan.

The Klan's behavior was routine at most points in Michigan. Michigan citizens witnessed Klan parades, large Klan gatherings for picnics, barbecues or other social events, saw crosses burned at scores of places around the state, and watched Klansmen work at local elections to elect men friendly to their cause. 31 Responses to the Klan were quite normal. The enemies of the Klan in the state legislature forced through a statute making it an illegal act to appear masked in public. 32 Michigan was one of the few states in the nation where the Klan was so weak that it could not prevent the passage of such a law. Not that the law ever harmed the Klan; the Klan simply ignored the Burns law and wore masks whenever they pleased. 33 The Klan insisted upon helping police enforce the prohibition laws, and occasionally trouble came out of the fact that Klansmen took the law into their own hands. 34 But all these activities were quite normal for the Klan anywhere and were not alarming nor significant.

is the strongest area of concentration of "Holland Dutch" in the state. This is corroborated by the result of the 1924 Republican primary vote. Detroit News, September 20, 1924.

31 For random stories concerning local Klan attempts to elect Klansmen to local offices see: Detroit News, January 2, 1925; Detroit Free Press, March 2, 1924; New York Times, July 17, 1925; Grand Rapids Press November 8, 1924; New York Times, November 7, 1925; and New York Times, September 12, 1924. Also, see the Detroit papers at each Detroit election from 1923 through 1926.

32 The Burns Law, which prohibited the appearance of masked men in public in Michigan, became law on August 21, 1925, but had no effect on Klan growth in Michigan because enforcement was left up to local officials, and they would not enforce it against the Klan. Detroit News, August 29, 1923.

33 The day following the passage of the Burns Law Detroit Klansmen defied it and no attempt was made to enforce the law. Detroit News August 30, 1923.

34 In Muskegon State Police conducted a series of raids based upon evidence of bootlegging produced by Klansmen. Klansmen accompanied the Police, in the cars. Before the night was over the Police had tossed the Klansmen out of the cars because they attempted to tell the police how to conduct the raids. Detroit News, December 3, 1923.
Prominent citizens denounced the Klan, and Klan leaders accused them of persecution, but through it all the Klan kept right on its merry way.

The most important action initiated by the Klan and carried through was the Klan's attempt to abolish and outlaw the entire parochial and private school structure in Michigan. In pushing this program the Klan picked up the program of action that had had a long history in Michigan before the Klan came. As in Oregon, where the Klan took over a Masonic program and gained legislation requiring that all children attend the public schools, the Klan in Michigan took over a program that had been for some years the pet scheme of James A. Hamilton. In 1920, long before the birth of the Klan in Michigan, James A. Hamilton, operating as the head of the Wayne County Civic Association, circulated petitions and obtained enough authentic signatures to get a proposed amendment to the state's school laws upon the ballot for referendum vote in the elections of 1920. The proposed amendment would have wiped out the parochial and private schools and would have called for the purchase of their assets by the public school system. The amendment was soundly defeated in 1920. Hamilton ran for governor with the amendment as his program and polled 21,963 votes to 29,281 for the winning candidate, Alex Growbeek, in the Republican primary. From 1920 to 1924 Hamilton kept putting forward his anti-parochial school program, and by 1924, despite one loss to the attorney-general, he was able to get it on the ballot for

Stories concerning Klan parades and gatherings and troubles connected with the Klan's parades through cities are too numerous to need specific references; any examination of Michigan papers will yield information of this sort. None of the meetings or parades produced anything violent in Michigan; there was no violence at all connected with the Wolverine Klan.
referendum vote in the November election in 1924. He was able to obtain enough signatures to initiate the proposed constitutional change because the Klan rallied its forces behind his program and provided him with the signatures necessary. During those years Hamilton successfully fought down as inadequate the Dacey bill in the state legislature which would have put rigid restrictions on the private and parochial schools but would not have abolished them. During his campaigns he faced riots and at least twice was forced to flee cities ahead of angry crowds, reportedly made up mostly of Catholic supporters of the parochial schools. By 1924 Hamilton was a strong Klansman and was heading the Michigan Public School Defense League.

The proposed amendment that appeared on the 1924 ballot read, "All children residing in the state of Michigan, between the ages of seven years and eighteen years, shall attend a public school until they have graduated from the eighth grade." The attacks upon this proposed amendment were of the bitterest kind imaginable. The most telling argument was probably the one advanced by the newspapers in the Detroit area that if the public schools had to purchase all parochial school buildings and grounds, and take over the education of a hundred thousand more students of the parochial schools, the tax rate of the citizens of Detroit would be doubled. At any rate, the amendment became the hottest issue of the election campaign in 1924. When

35 The full page advertisement placed by the Citizens Private and Parochial School Committee in the Detroit News, November 1, 1924, best illustrates the arguments raised against the proposed amendment; it would cost too much, it was not necessary, and it was probably unconstitutional.
the vote was counted, the amendment had lost by a three to one margin. Hamilton and the Klan refused to concede defeat and kept up their agitation into 1925 when the United States Supreme Court declared the Oregon action against the parochial schools of that state unconstitutional in early 1925, the agitation ceased. Klansmen still did not like the parochial schools, but they could not find legal means to abolish them.

The Klan in Detroit

The center of Klan strength in the state of Michigan was in Detroit. Ordinarily the Klan was not successful in the large metropolitan cities of the North. Chicago did not support a Klan, nor did Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, nor St. Louis. Klans were successful in metropolitan areas only if there were special circumstances that could give them strength. In Milwaukee the German population and the Socialists gave the Klan strong support. In Indianapolis the overwhelmingly Protestant character of the population and the strong overtone of new residents of the city from southern Indiana and Kentucky gave the Klan strength. In Detroit the special circumstances that prepared the way for rapid Klan growth was the tremendous influx of Negro population in Detroit from 1916 to 1925. That, plus the accompanying migration of southern whites built up a social situation ready made for the Klan to exploit.

Detroit had always had a small but substantial Negro population. As one of the termini of the underground railroads before the Civil War Detroit citizens had aided hundreds of Negroes in their escape.

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36 Pierce, Governor of Oregon, et. al. vs. The Society of the Sisters of the Holy Name, 268 U. S. 510.
from slavery. Many of the Negroes chose to remain in Detroit rather than to migrate to Canada, and a substantial Negro colony had developed in Detroit in the nineteenth century. Until about 1910 little note was taken of them, and they suffered practically none of the discriminations present in the South. In 1910 there were 5,741 Negroes in Detroit, all of them living in a small area in the near north-eastern section of the city, an area about a dozen blocks square bounded by Brush, Napoleon, Hastings and Brewster Streets on the west, south, east and north. The number of Negroes in Detroit had remained about the same for over two decades and did not increase appreciably until 1916. Until that time Detroit's industrialists preferred immigrant to Negro labor and had done nothing to encourage Negro migration to Detroit.

With the coming of the World War I industrial boom, and the closing off of immigration due to the war, Detroit's industrialists

Statistical information upon the increase of Negro population in Detroit are readily obtainable because the growth in numbers has been so pronounced. In the offices of the Michigan Historical Commission there are dozens of manuscripts that were brought together and edited by Dr. Louis Fuller, the director of the Commission, for publication as the Michigan Encyclopedia. Money has never been available, so these manuscripts are as yet unpublished. An anonymous manuscript entitled Negro Migration to Michigan, 1916-1930 lies in those files, and it contains all the statistics desired for a study of this phenomena. Broader details are available in J. F. Thaden, Population: Composition and Trends (1880-1930), also in manuscript in the files of the Michigan Encyclopedia. The same material is available in a drastically reduced form as J. F. Thaden, Population Trends in Michigan, (Agricultural Experimental Station, Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Sociology Section, East Lansing, Michigan, 1933). Negro population statistics are also available in June Baber Woodson, A Century with the Negroes of Detroit, 1830-1930, (Unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan, 1949). This thesis was written with a point of view sympathetic toward the Negroes' problems, since Mrs. Woodson is herself a Negro. For Negro reaction to the problems presented by the Klan and by other social issues in Detroit, Mrs. Woodson's thesis is invaluable.
turned to methods for encouraging Negroes to migrate to Detroit. Advertisements were placed in southern papers, labor agents were sent into southern states with guarantees of free transportation north to Detroit, Negroes already in Detroit were encouraged to write south to their families and friends to urge them to move north for the opportunities available there. All these methods proved effective in luring Negroes north. For the mass migration that followed, economic reasons were important but social reasons were probably more significant. Negro labor could obtain wages just as high in the mills of Birmingham, but because of the lack of social restrictions the North offered, the southern Negro preferred to move north to seek employment. While Chicago, Cleveland and other metropolitan areas received large numbers of southern Negro migrants in the decade from 1915 to 1925, no city approached Detroit in the overwhelming number of colored persons arriving to work and live.

From 5,741 in 1910 the Negro population of Detroit grew to 40,838 in 1920, to 81,831 in 1925 (based upon school census) and to 125,066 in 1930. The increase in Detroit over the fifteen years was 1990%, the largest increase felt by any metropolitan area. Compared to this figure was a general population increase of only 236% in the population of the city of Detroit. From 12 Negroes per thousand in the population of 1910 the number of Negroes rose to 77 per thousand in 1930. The social situation that resulted from such mass migration was ugly and menacing.

Woodson, Century with the Negroes of Detroit, 68. See also Louise V. Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward, (Columbia University Press, 1950), 27.

Ibid., 73.
Until 1926 these 80,000 Negroes were crowded into a small ghetto in the northeastern section of the city bounded by Macomb (south), Hastings (east), Brush (west) and Rowena (North), an area of not more than fifty city blocks. This ghetto was only slightly larger than the Negro area had been when 5000 Negroes crowded into it in 1910. The Negroes, further, had to share this district with the Jewish population of the city in a ratio of about 70% Negro to 30% Jewish. Negroes were not allowed to rent in any other area of the city, yet in those ten years from 1915 to 1925 when thousands of Negroes were crowding into the Detroit Negro district hardly a new house was built in the area. The result was unbearable congestion and living conditions that were a disgrace to any city. Out of these grew an irresistible urge on the part of the Negroes to push out, to find housing in some other area of the city.

The Klan came into this social situation. The Klan appealed to those persons who were of an economic level little higher than the Negroes and would be affected if the Negro district expanded. The Klan appealed especially to the thousands of southern whites who had accompanied the Negroes north, also seeking better economic and social possibilities. These men from Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama flocked into the Klan in large numbers. They helped the Detroit Klan stand guard against Negro movement out of the restricted Negro ghetto.

This friction concerning housing built up pressures that were

40 Ibid., 83.
41 Ibid., 75.
42 Ibid., 94.
unbearable. The Negroes constantly sought to get one of their number to settle in a new neighborhood by purchasing a home there, then have others follow him into the area until a colony of Negro settlement could be established.\footnote{Ibid., 103.} Klansmen set themselves to the task of preventing the movement of that first person or family out of the ghetto, knowing that once the dam had burst, there would be no chance of stopping the flood. In 1925 this ugly situation exploded into violence.

Dr. Alex Turner, a prominent Negro physician, bought a home in an area exclusively white. Immediately he was attacked by a mob of whites and was forced to vacate.\footnote{Ibid., 104. See also the unsigned manuscript, Negro Migration to Detroit, 21, for a slightly different perspective.} A few weeks later one James Fletcher purchased a home outside the Negro district, and was met with such resistance that in the battling that accompanied it one white boy was shot through the thigh.\footnote{Woodson, Century with the Negroes of Detroit, 104.} Two months later, in the summer of 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet purchased a home outside the Negro district in an exclusively white neighborhood. Within a week the home of Dr. Sweet was attacked by a group of white men led by Klansmen which broke the windows in the Sweet home and threatened further damage if Sweet did not move the next day. When Sweet refused to move, the mob gathered the following evening to wreak more damage. But Dr. Sweet had gathered together eight fellow Negroes and they were inside the house, armed, ready to protect Sweet's property. When attacked, they fired over the heads of the white mob, but when seriously threatened, they shot into the milling mass of white men.\footnote{Unsigned manuscript, Negro Migration to Michigan, 22.} One man was killed and a number
injured. Henry Sweet, the brother of the physician was tried twice for the murder of the mobsman, each time with Judge Frank Murphy presiding. When Clarence Darrow and Arthur Garfield volunteered their services as defense attorneys, the Sweet trials became national attractions. Two hung juries failed to convict Sweet, and the defense plea that "a man's home is his castle" apparently saved Sweet from conviction. The immediate result of the rioting was that Negroes in Detroit were promised and given police protection that had previously been refused them. Later, when Detroit's Negroes could find homes to buy, they could move into them with assurance that the police would protect their investment as they did that of everyone else. The result was that in a few years there were several Negro colonies in Detroit and its ring of suburbs, and the social pressures of the tight housing situation were broken.48

Mayor John Smith of Detroit gave public statement to the worry of all of Detroit's citizens over the whole situation when he made public a letter he had written to the Detroit Commissioner of Police. In his letter he said that he felt the occurrences of the past week arose from a "situation in Detroit that was very serious`. "In every great metropolitan city, racial groups antagonistic by inheritance, habits and customs must live together. They are mutually dependent for economic existence...but they also have deep seated prejudices...which...they cannot control in moments of passion and mob excitement." While protection of the law must be given every

47 Woodson, Century with the Negroes in Detroit, 105.
48 Ibid., 105
citizen as a duty and will be given in every case henceforth, Smith said, it was certainly bad that because of pride or other reasons of vanity Negroes had to move out of their own districts. He laid the blame for trouble squarely upon the Detroit Klan. In a moving document of some length he outlined in detail the nature of the problem and warned the Police Commissioner that if law and order were not enforced, someone else would have to be appointed to do the job in line with the duties and responsibilities of public officials. From that time until 1943 the Negroes in Detroit received almost complete police protection, and the immediate tensions were weakened.

With the settlement of the Negro housing problem (at least in part), and the failure of the anti-parochial school amendment, the Detroit Klan lost its two great issues that had brought in most of its members. As a result the Klan in Detroit went into rapid decline within a year after the Sweet violence. It was at less than half its peak strength in 1926 and down to a few hundred members by 1928.50

The Klan dies in Ohio and Michigan

In their concluding phases the Klans of Michigan and Ohio drew together before they both went their own way to oblivion. For a short time in the 1930s the two states had organizations under the same head, but the character of these Klan units was such that their life was bound to be short. And so it was.

1925 marked the peak year of Klan strength in Michigan. After that year the Klan remained only as a minor irritant in Michigan

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The Smith letter was published in the Detroit Free Press September 13, 1925. The author judges the letter to be significant enough to be quoted in its entirety and so includes it as appendix A. Here is its full form. The following

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society. Occasionally a cross was burned, a parade was held, or a note was left after a fiery cross had been touched off to notify an individual that the Klan was "interested" in them. In 1926 there was a marked decline in interest on the part of Klansmen and a decrease in the number of active Klansmen. In the following two years the Klan organization in Michigan was reduced to a pair of units in Detroit and Flint, and they were barely clinging to life.

In Ohio the story was much the same. The Klan declined precipitously after 1926. For a time it retained some strength in eastern Ohio, but by 1930 it was down to an organization of Klansmen in Dayton, and a group of "Night-riders" that operated out of Bellaire under the direction of Dr. William J. Shepard. The end of the Klan movement was apparent in Ohio by 1930.

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50 Testimony of Clayton C. Gilliland, Gilliland vs. Symwa Club et. al., as reported in the Detroit News, January 22, 1930.
51 In 1927 the Klan in Detroit caused a minor disturbance when it tried to march down Woodward Avenue in Detroit despite the fact that Detroit police had denied them a permit. Detroit News, July 17, 1927. When John Lodge was to replace John Smith (Catholic) as Mayor of Detroit in 1928, eighteen crosses were burned throughout Detroit at midnight of inauguration day. Detroit Free Press, January 11, 1928. A cross was burned on the lawn of James A. Webster, a negro, who was running for school inspector in 1931. Detroit News, February 28, 1931. As late as 1933 a small riot occurred when a Klan unit planted a fiery cross across the street from a meeting of the Unemployed Council of Clawson (Michigan), a Communist organization. This precipitated a battle between 150 Klansmen and 50 Communists in which two men were badly beaten. Detroit News, January 12, 1933. Other items of this sort appeared occasionally in the newspapers--just enough to show the continuation of a Klan unit in the Detroit area.
52 Detroit News, February 18, 1932.
53 Dr. William J. Shepard came to the Buckeye Lake meeting at Newark, Ohio, at the head of a group of Klansmen who had made robes of Klan cut out of black material. They called themselves the "Knight-riders", and the novelty of the garb was so attractive to many Klansmen that units were formed of these men who later were called simply Night-riders. A picture taken at Buckeye Lake in 1925 is reproduced on the following page. Later these units shrank with the Klan. Newspaper reports, especially those that concerned themselves with the trial of Virgil Effinger, head of the Ohio-Michigan Black Legion, speak of the violence associated with the Night-riders, but no accounts
But the Night-riders and a group in Detroit closely affiliated with them held on into the mid-1930s. The group of men in Detroit called themselves the United Brotherhood of America, but became better known after 1936 as the Black Legion. Both the Night-riders and the Black Legion represented the final culmination of that tendency in the Klan that was apparent everywhere—the tendency to resort to violence when hidden behind a mask. In the Middle West violence played small part in the Klan units during the years of Klan strength because the more stable type of men in the movement would not permit it. But by the 1930s the stronger-willed men with sounder judgment had dropped their affiliation with the organization. The men that remained were the firebrands, the unstable, the neurotics who found violence and persecution of others a tonic for their egos.

The story of the Black Legion broke in 1936. Charles Poole, a WPA worker, was shot down deliberately without even a Kangaroo court passing judgment upon him. Someone, a person who remained anonymous throughout the entire affair, accused Poole of being unfaithful to his wife. While both Poole and his wife denied it, no attention was paid to their word. Poole was shot in a sadistic revival of cold-blooded witch-hunting and puritanical exorcism of evil.54 Of violence were discovered in this investigation. One unit of the Night Riders persisted until the mid-1930s around Bellaire, Ohio, but the Black Legion disclosures killed it. For accounts of these things, see Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 29, 1936; June 4, 1938; December 15, 1938; May 24, 1940; and June 23, 1940.

54 The Black Legion disclosures came during May 1936. Many editions of Michigan newspapers of that month contain stories on the disclosures. See especially the full account in Detroit Free Press May 23, 1936. Imperial Wizard James A. Colescott denied that the Klan had anything to do with the Black Legion (despite the evidence that it certainly did). See Detroit News, May 30, 1936. The Detroit News (May 31, 1936) echoed Detroit's reaction to the Black Legion with the column head by Carl Muller that read "Black Legion makes Klan look like Cream Puff!"
The story of the Klan activity in the 1930s broke forth then to a wondering nation. The Klan in the 1930s in the industrial areas where it still operated had turned to anti-communism as its main theme. To the best of its ability it tried to organize men into clubs whose purpose was to oppose the growth of the CIO because they insisted the CIO was Communist-dominated. While the Klan's efforts in this area were pathetically weak, they fitted the turn taken by ultraright-wing organizations in the 1930s when they opposed Communism as a first duty. Anti-Communism replaced anti-Catholicism as the main line; violence replaced ordered activity as the main action pattern.

The Black Legion was broken, and in its fall the Night-riders passed away. That left Klan organizations only at Dayton and at Detroit as semi-active Klan units during the 1940s.55 With the coming of war in 1941 the Dayton unit died a quiet death and the Klan passed out of Ohio Society. In 1942 Charles Spare, the Detroit Leader, rebelled against taking the orders of James A. Colescott, the Imperial Wizard of the remnant national Klan, and bolted with his handful of Klansmen to form the United Sons of America.56 With that revolt, the Klan ceased to have an

55 Testimony of James A. Colescott before A Congressional Committee, 1947. Colescott said that in the early 1940s his strongest Klan area was Florida, but his greatest increase in strength had come in Michigan. Ibid., 1946. He added that he had many men in the labor unions in Detroit to watch the Communists. Ibid., 1946.

56 In June, 1943, the Detroit News put in a long distance telephone call to Colescott at Atlanta, Georgia, to determine if the charges of R. J. Thomas of the UAW-CIO were correct that the Klan was fomenting strikes in war industry. Colescott replied that the Klan unit in Detroit had been broken up by the rebellion of the Detroit leader, Charlie Spare. Spare had objected to the Klan's circulation of an excerpt from Kiplinger's book, Washington is Like That, in which
organization in the Middle West. The years of fear, anxiety and
dread were over.

But not quite. As late as 1949 someone in Michigan continued
to file the annual report that is necessary to keep any organization
alive on the books of the Secretary of State of Michigan. Each
year someone filed papers that kept alive a Klan organization in
Michigan.

Waiting?

For What?

Kiplinger charged that the New Deal was trying to mongrelize the
south by coddling the Negro. Spare took his men into a new organ-
ization, the United Sons of America, and that ended the Klan in
Michigan. Colescott said that although he could organize a new
unit in Detroit at any time, he had refrained from doing so because
if none existed the CIO could not make charges of any real importance
against the Klan. Taking the whole interview with a grain of salt,
it does seem clear that the Klan ended in Detroit in August, 1942,
and that marked the end of the Michigan Klan. See the Detroit News,
June 10, 1943.
CONCLUSIONS

The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s must be considered from two levels of analysis. At each level certain generalizations can be made that are justified from the research completed for this thesis. The first set of conclusions about the nature of the Klan concerns its operations as a social movement operating in a limited area within a specific span of years. The second series of conclusions concerns the Klan as a type of movement that is becoming increasingly familiar in American society in this century, the ultra-conservative, near-fascist, authoritarian movement of which the latest promises to be the "For America" organization.

The Ku Klux Klan as a Specific Social Movement

Two widely-held misconceptions about the Klan movement of the 1920s must be eliminated before the real Klan movement can be seen. The first of these, not as widely held now as it was in the early 1920s, has to do with the relationship of the Klan to the historic American culture. This view of the Klan held that it was a parasitic growth upon the American social structure, that the Klan was new and strange and "foreign" or "alien" to American life.

The proponents of this point of view insisted that the Klan had no historical roots in American life, that it had no real base for its growth in the society of the 1920s. The Klan, analysts held, represented an unhealthy growth in the body of American society that had to be cut out by the knife before the body could be restored to health.
The New York World and a professional ex-Kleagle named Henry Fry must take responsibility for this interpretation of the Klan. Fry was an ex-Kleagle who found it profitable to tell the "inside" story of the Klan for years after he had left it. He was like our present professional ex-Communist; he merely operated a generation earlier. His first disclosures were to the New York World, but later he published under his own name an analysis he called the Modern Ku Klux Klan. In both these efforts and in the years of platform lecturing on the Klan that followed he maintained that the Klan was an alien influence that had just arisen to plague this country. The New York World accepted his information early in its investigations of the Klan in the South and apparently absorbed along with his information his attitude about what the Klan represented. As a result the World's articles that won the newspaper a Pulitzer prize and a lasting fame described the Klan as alien to American life, "a cancer eating its way into the vitals of society".

The World's investigations were made in 1920 and early 1921 and the articles were published in the autumn of 1921. From that time until the mid-1920s this interpretation of the Klan was the standard one. One can find it repeated in nearly every magazine article or newspaper story on the Klan published during those years. It was not until John Hoffat Mecklin denied it in his analysis of the Klan in 1924 that it began to disappear. Mecklin, in The Ku Klux Klan, noted that if the Klan were as alien to American life as
previously represented it would be simple to deal with. But, he added, it was the fact that the Klan represented so many things so distinctly American that made it so difficult to handle, and impossible to eradicate by the technique of "exposing" it.

The investigator of the Klan movement today has more material available to him than had Fry, the World, or Mecklin even though they were contemporaries of the Klan. After an analysis of that material one must agree with Mecklin that the Klan was thoroughly American, and represented long trends in American social development. The Klan represented a fundamental re-grouping of a series of forces that had long been present in American life. The Klan used a series of ancient hates and prejudices to establish itself in local communities. Anti-Catholicism, the most potent of these, had a long history. That history reached back to the American Protective Association of the 1890s and the Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s, even to the religious wars that had sprung from Martin Luther's famous theses. Anti-Semitism, less important in the Klan, but still used, was not old in this society despite a long tradition in European countries. Apparently active discrimination began about 1870. The tendency to look down on the Negro was much older. Severe treatment of the Negro to keep him in line socially had a time-honored approval in southern states. As for the immigrant, resistance to the alien invasion had begun shortly after the Civil War and had grown steadily in intensity from that time on. The Klan utilized these and other deep rooted American traditions in its drive for power. Nor was this all. The small
social group organized around a community issue is essentially the voluntary association common to American life from earliest colonial days. The sense of "we-ness" that Protestants have long felt was the glue that held the movement together. Clearly, then, the Klan was thoroughly American, and a continuation of American themes. The ghost of the Klan as "foreign" or "alien" should be laid by this time. But in interviewing persons during the course of this investigation, and in talking to people about the Klan, it was apparent that the interpretation that was fixed by the World and Henry Fry still holds strong in many persons.

The second conception that must be eradicated is the conception that the Klan was essentially a terroristic movement devoted to a technique of violence. This is the most persistently held image of the Klan today. The first picture that comes to the mind of an average person when he hears "Ku Klux Klan" is a noose, a bucket of tar or a whip; or, the same threat in slightly altered form, a parade, a night raid, or a burning cross. There is some justification for this attitude toward the organization, but not enough to justify the prevalence of this image to the virtual exclusion of others.

The Klan did use violent methods in the 1920s. But only once, in a limited area, and in connection with a specific social problem where the use of violence to settle that issue had had long social approval. The Klan used violence and intimidation in its treatment of southern Negroes immediately following the first World War.
Unfortunately, it was this phase of Klan activity that received almost unlimited publicity (through the World's investigations and the Congressional investigation that followed), and from this the image of the Klan was culturally set. After that sole outburst of violence on a massive scale (there were a few isolated instances thereafter) on the part of Klansmen, it was never again a technique used by Klansmen to gain their ends. But the later phases of Klan activity have not been as well publicized, and have not been strong enough to wipe out the initial image.

The use of violence in the South for a time as response to a specific social issue illustrates so much about the Klan that it is worth some detailed attention. Negroes had been drafted in World War I as service troops. They were kept in segregated units in the army and were used as "housekeeping" troops. A considerable number of Negroes was drafted, most of them from the South. In their army experiences, and particularly overseas, the Negroes saw that they did not necessarily have to suffer the treatment regularly accorded them in the South. They became resentful about their imminent return to southern conditions. Southern whites also realized that the war years and service outside the South were going to cause a rift in the pattern of usual Negro-white relations. A crisis in race relations was shaping up after the World War and both Negro and white knew it.

Most white troops returned home from the war and were demobilized in 1919, but the service troops—(Negroes) had to close down the
camps both overseas and here at home, and they were among the last to receive discharges. They did not begin arriving back in the South until the very end of 1919 and most came back home in 1920. As anticipated, many of the Negroes who had lived outside the South during the war were "uppity", surly, and antagonistic. In 1920 the expected crisis began to shape up as the returning soldiers were joined by returning war workers who had come back South when their war jobs were terminated. These, too, brought with them new attitudes toward race relations. The answer southerners accepted was to use the revived Klan with the older Klan's techniques of violence added, and in 1920 and 1921 they beat down Negro social resistance with force.

For the short time that the Negro issue was uppermost in the southern states the Klan was addicted to the use of violence. The image of the Reconstruction Klan emphasized violence as a means of solving the Negro problem. It is unfortunate that at just that time (late 1921) the New York World and the United States Congress chose to investigate the Klan. Their reports fixed the Klan as a terroristic organization in the public mind. But the South was the only area in the country that produced a systematic use of violence by Klan units. In the North the Klan records do not show more than a half dozen isolated and non-typical instances in which the Klans used violent means to attain their goals. Threats and intimidations were used, but threats are not violence. The Klan walked into pitched battles with anti-Klan forces at Niles, Ohio, and at Carnegie, Pennsylvania. In Detroit the Klan was mixed into a riot
brought about by conflict between Negroes and whites who had moved from the South and had brought with them their ancient prejudices. In South Bend, Indiana, there was a minor scuffle between the Klan and its opponents, and in Boscoebel, Wisconsin, a minor altercation. But when you have named those incidents, you have named all the violence associated with the Klan in the entire Middle West. And for a movement as large as the Klan, operating in these four states, that is hardly a record of terrorism.

So this image, as well as the conception of the Klan as "alien" or "foreign" to American life, must be laid aside if one is to understand what the real Klan movement was like.

What was the Ku Klux Klan?

Basically, the Klan was a revolt of disturbed citizens\(^1\) in the early 1920s against "something". An indefinite term is justified because Klansmen were individuals actively in revolt against many things in the culture. There was no one Klan pattern. In some senses it is possible to maintain that there was no "Klan movement" at all, just many local Klans.

The post World War I period was disturbing in many ways to Americans of the Middle West. The abortive end of World War I had left unsatisfied the emotional tensions that the hatreds of the war period had built up. Release of these tensions was then turned inward against fellow Americans. The Red Scare of 1919 was one example of the distrust of fellow Americans that plagued the society

\(^1\) By the use of the term "disturbed" citizens here I do not mean to imply the word "unbalanced" or "mentally ill". The word "worried" would be an acceptable synonym.
for years after the war. The farm depression that began in 1921 contributed to the feelings of insecurity and resentment. Farm depressions are also destructive of the security of small-town folk, and they, too, were disturbed during the 1920s. The attacks upon religion that came from two sources--from Modernism and from the secularization of the society--worried the folk who were to become Klansmen. The spectacle of William Jennings Bryan in the witness chair at Dayton, Tennessee, standing fast against the forces of change and re-interpretation in American society, typifies the Klansmen as they grimly faced a world in which they were insecure economically and shaken in many ways by attacks upon their basic attitudes and values.

The contribution of the Klan in these years was the fact that it offered an organizational means by which these fears and resentments could be turned into active aggressions. The Klan came into any community with a bag of techniques for relieving tensions. The Klan's program was widely varied, and attractive to many persons when presented to them. The Klan could offer to the disturbed peoples who joined it several convenient scapegoats--Catholic, Jew, Negro, or foreigner. Action is a cure for tensions so the Klan offered several means of taking action to relieve the tensions--crusades against vice, against bootleggers, against Catholics in the field of education, against crooked politicians in the political arena. It could offer a return to the social pleasantries that city folk laughed at--picnics, barbecues, parades, ceremonies. It could
offer what so many small-town folk liked so well—the pageantry of a lodge, the ritualism of the Klan "work". The Klan could offer these within an organizational structure that promised to give unity and strength to the whole movement and to restore American society to a pattern of which Klansmen approved. Is it any wonder that many thousands of rural and small-town folk joined, and that many regretted the passing of the Klan when it died out?

Klan leaders were wise in their handling of the local Klans.

The local Klan unit in its community was the heart of the whole Klan movement. The Klan of Madison, Wisconsin, Evansville, Indiana, or Marion, Ohio, was the "Klan" that was the important unit. The local unit was the part of the whole that touched the lives of individuals both within and outside the Klan. By its actions it could make the whole Klan movement palatable to the community in general and to Klansmen in particular, or it could make the movement despicable.

The local Klan was so important in the operation of the Klan nationally that local units were virtually autonomous in their operations. This seems peculiar because on paper at least the Klan was controlled tightly from the top. The Klan's organizational structure emphasized the unity of command to be found conventionally in military organizations. Klan leaders always described their organization as a military-type organization. The structure of the Klan was built to provide a direct chain of command from top to bottom that could be depended upon to send any order down through the ranks without question. The Imperial Wizard at the head of the
whole Klan controlled the state leaders, the Grand Dragons; they in
turn controlled absolutely the provincial heads, the Grand Goblins;
and they controlled the Exalted Cyclops', the heads of the local
Klans. In principle there was no deviation from the practice that
the national or state Klan controlled all Klan business. But in
practice it did not work out that way.

The national Klan leaders learned very early, at least by
the time that the local southern Klans chose to use their units to
control the Negroes of the south in 1920 that local leaders and
ordinary Klansmen in their own communities knew what issues would
bring people into their Klan. Since the leaders of the movement
were concerned more than anything else with the expansion of the
Klan's membership lists, they seldom interfered with the wishes
of local leaders. They went along with their local representatives
both in setting up local Klan units and in maintaining them after
they were firmly established, but then they stepped back to let
local leaders set the tone of the local Klan.

Klan Kleagles were sent into new communities with orders to
find persons favorable to the Klan, and to build a nucleus around
them. Generally the Protestant ministers were approached first,
along with the members of the local Masonic Lodge. When men at
least friendly to the Klan were found, the pitch for an organization
built by these local individuals was made. The Kleagle did not tell
them what issues they were to emphasize. He said, in effect, that
the Klan stood for many things. That in standing for those things,
their opposites were sometimes opposed—that is, to be for
Protestantism was to be against Catholicism. He suggested that their new unit could become anything that would fit into the Klan ideology. He would himself (and he knew the state Klan would) help the local unit in starting up, but neither would dictate what the Klansmen should do in their home communities.

Generally, it worked out that way. In a state like Indiana where D. C. Stephenson was Grand Dragon more control over local units was exercised than usual because Stephenson wanted the Klan to become a tightly-knit political machine. But in other areas like the Fox River valley in Wisconsin nothing was done to check local Klans of that area when they brought in "Fat" Malone to speak even though his talks were so vituperative that he hurt the Klan as a whole wherever he appeared. Whatever conditions the locals created, they were clearly reflections of local wishes.

This is the reason why the Klan appeared to be so different in every community. In the South the Klan was anti-Negro because that was the local issue of importance for a time. Later that theme was changed to a political one and there were areas of the South in which the Klan was merely a parading, posturing fraternal order. In the Middle West the Klan was generally anti-Catholic for the most part, and grew upon that theme, but it was primarily anti-Negro in Detroit, and anti-alien in eastern Ohio. The Klan was opposed to the local ruling group in Oklahoma, and was anti-oriental in California. In community after community the Klan was a successful defender of public morals as it upheld the prohibition laws, or
took action in situations where others would not act. The Klan's program was flexible; its approach completely pragmatic. The Klan's program was centered around the possible; around whatever would work in a specific situation.

In sum, then, to understand the Klan one must concentrate upon what was happening in the 1920s to the people in the small-towns and hamlets. What made these folk seek an outlet for their tensions or troubles through the Klan movement? In addition, it is important to understand how Klan leaders were able to identify potential sources of tension in a community and to raise those potentials to actual performances. Klan activity resulted from a two-way process: the individual's acceptance of the Klan as an answer to some problem he faced, and the Klan leaders' ability to create the problems that would make men come to join.

It is not possible to make such general statements about "Klansmen" without some qualms. Klansmen were not always economically insecure, and many were not troubled. The reasons why individuals joined the Klan are varied, but it is possible to establish a six-fold classification into which most Klansmen could be fitted. First, sincere, honest Protestants who were concerned over one of the Klan's problem areas--the activities of Catholics, Jews, Negroes, etc. Second, a violently "anti" group. These were the haters, the psychopaths who moved into the movement to use it to cut their aggressions upon other groups. Third, citizens who were pressured into joining. Employees with a Klan employer, ministers
in whose churches most of the congregation had joined, school
teachers who felt they had better join in an area favorable to the
Klan. Fourth, those persons who joined out of love for the lodge
functions; those who liked ritual and ceremony for itself. Fifth,
political opportunists who saw that the Klan meant votes, and
would follow the slogan "if you can't lick them, join them".
Seeing no way to lick them.... Sixth, the promoters of the 1920s,
those men who used the Klan as a product to be sold, and who operated
the Klan on commission much as they would have operated a more
legitimate business enterprise.

These are some of the major conclusions that can be made
about the Klan as a specific social movement operating within
a limited span of years. There is one other level of analysis
that must be treated.

The Klan as a Militantly Conservative Force in American Society

In the last thirty-five years a noticeable increase can be
found in the number of ultra-conservative, right-wing groups
that have taken roots in one area of American society or another.
The Klan was one, and it was followed by some of its own off-shoots
like the Black Legion in Michigan and the Knight Riders in Ohio.
But in the late 1930s these groups increased in number. The
Silver Shirts, the German-American Bund and the America Firsters
were all widely known in the 1930s, and there were others. There
were two dictatorships established in the states of this country--
the full-blown one of Huey Long and the nearly-established one of
D. C. Stephenson. There were organizations of special type like the Christian Frontiers. Since World War II there have been the Columbians, an abortive attempt to re-establish the Klan that failed, and the big movement of this period, the McCarthy -led anti-Communist movement.

The Klan's place in this listing is not clear and the only conclusion that can be drawn from the present research is that the Klan belongs in this classification. The Klansmen were ultra-conservatives, fighting to retain a life that they believed threatened. They were willing to use any means available to reach their goals although they did not preach revolution nor use violence. They were ultra-nationalistic, and used nationalism as a weapon. The Klan movement thus clearly belongs with this over-all group, but so little is known about this group of organizations as a whole that it is difficult, in fact, impossible, to make a general statement concerning the group or the Klan's place in it.

Suggestions for further Research

At least two projects need to be done before an understanding of the Klan movement can go much farther.

a. A series of community studies has to be made in which the social foundations of the Klan movement are studied. Concentration will have to be on the individuals who joined the Klan—why they joined, what they expected the Klan to do for them, some analysis of the social class and economic status of these people, and an attempt to find out what specific things were causing problems in their
town or village at the time.

b. A long-term study of the growing right-wing conservative, near-fascist groups in our society. As a growing social force those groups as a whole need study to determine historical cause, pattern, relative increase in size, and likely point at which they will become a critical force in the society. This study has been too long delayed, and would seem to be more urgently needed than the first suggestion.
APPENDIX A

This set of Instructions was given to Klan leaders in Indiana on May 6, 1923, just exactly one year before the Klan won the primaries of 1924. It is significant in that it set the pattern for what was to be the Klan procedure in Indiana as the Klan grew. It is highly illustrative of the Klan mind.

NOTE.

The following instructions were issued Sunday, May 6, by G-I-N for the guidance of all organizations. This program must be adhered to without fail and the officers of the State and each county and individual organization will be held strictly accountable for compliance with these instructions.

Failure on the part of those responsible for the achievement of the purposes set forth, and the establishment and functioning of the machinery necessary to produce satisfactory and efficient results, within a reasonable period of time, will be sufficient cause for dismissal from office and the election of successors, or, in case of insubordination or indifference, a suspension or complete withdrawal of charter.

It should not be necessary to emphasize further the vital character of the task before us nor the untiring application and energy necessary for an achievement so worthy of this organization and redounding so gloriously to the honor of those who will lay their energies and hearts upon the altar of this high purpose.

Each organization will forthwith:

1. Establish each week a program in which one outstanding thing for the betterment of the community will be accomplished. (Such service may be rendered by aiding the public schools, ministerial associations, or any benevolent organization, or any civic body in the attainment of objectives falling within the above.

2. Make a written report each week to State Headquarters, outlining the activities and accomplishments for the preceding week. (This report should be mailed not later than Tuesday night of each week, covering the activities of the preceding week.)

3. Procure the name, address, and vocation of every individual of voting age, in each county, township, and precinct, falling within the following classifications:
(a) All Aliens or Foreigners.
(b) L. W. W's, Bolsheviks, Reds or Agitators.
(c) Every bootlegger, or other individuals engaged in any way in the manufacture, sale, or distribution of liquor.
(d) All owners, operators or inmates of houses of prostitution.
(e) All Jews.
(f) All Negroes.
(g) All Roman Catholics.

4. Secure accurate reports and evidence of meetings of any association, group, gathering or organization of whatsoever nature interested in or connected with the propagation, development or protection of the interest of any group, or groups classified under paragraph 3 of these instructions. Wherever such evidence is secured, make a written report to the state office covering the nature and location, hour or meeting and what transpired.

5. Secure and transmit to State Headquarters the name, address, rank of office, nationality, place of birth, age, political and religious affiliations of the following individuals:
   (a) County officials.
   (b) State Officials.
   (c) District Court Officials.
   (d) School Boards.
   (e) School Faculties.
   (f) Truant Officers.
   (g) Police Force.
   (h) Library Board.
   (i) Fire Department and so forth.

Do not fail to state the religious affiliation of the wife and the school affiliations of the children of each of the above classified officers, as well as the attitude of each toward this organization. (If antagonistic to our organization, state clearly the character of his attack upon us, and what you are doing to combat it.)

6. You will secure and transmit to State Headquarters the name and address of every newspaper published within the bounds of your territorial jurisdiction together with:
   (a) Its political policy.
   (b) Name and address of controlling stockholders, or owners.
   (c) Name, Address, Nationality, and religious affiliation of the editors whether "for" "neutral" or "against" us and whether editor is a member of our organization.
   (d) Political chairman's names, Etc.

7. Each county organization will regulate with entire conformity to State jurisdictional rulings, the conduct of its members wearing regalia.
(a) Activities at all meetings in the rooms.
(b) When on Parade, which shall be held only with knowledge of proper city or county officials.
(c) At funerals.

8. You will transmit to the state office each week a complete report, covering the following: The name, number and offense committed, by all law violaters arrested within your territorial jurisdiction; what part your organization took in bringing about these. In the absence of any law violations report, as usual stating this fact. Wherever arrests are made, give the nationality, religious faith, whether "first offense" or habitual violaters of the law; and whether the party arrested is operating for himself as "Principal" or is merely a tool for someone else.

9. You will, at least each week, hold a regimental staff meeting. The minutes of each meeting will be properly written and transmitted to state headquarters. This report will cover pointedly the following activities.
(a) co-ordination between units.
(b) Stimulation of interest in subordinate units.
(c) Training of subordinate units.
(d) Recapitulation of reports sent in by subordinate units, regarding the various activities of the enemy as classified under paragraphs #3 and #4.

10. In writing to any state or county headquarters or officers of this organization regarding matters other than those purely personal, you will address correspondence to the proper post office box number, placing no name upon the outside of the envelope, except in the case of registered mail.

11. This recapitulation shall be properly prepared and five original typewritten copies will be made, and distributed in the following manner:
(a) Two copies will remain in the local office; one to be kept in the bank vault for permanent record and one to be used as a circulating copy among the officers of the organization, charged with the various activities relating thereto.

(b) Three copies will be sent to state headquarters; one for permanent state record, one for circulating copy for state officers charged with the responsibilities relating thereto, and one to be sent as permanent record to the national office. Wherever state or national assistance is needed in combatting problems, state this clearly in the report.

12. Each county organization will accept the decisions of its Field-Man, or in his absence the E. C. as final in reference to all local matters. However, should
any obvious injustices be perpetrated by such officer or officers an appeal from such decisions may be had by properly stating the facts in writing to state headquarters.

13. No county organization will permit any individual within its territorial jurisdiction to speak in public as its authorized representative, unless such speaker has been properly O.K.'d by State Headquarters.

14. Each county organization will report to state headquarters all activities of a charitable nature for and during the preceding week.

THIS COMPLETES FIELD REGULATIONS NO. 3

Bear in mind constantly that single-handed enthusiasm, inspired by justice and spurred on by the conviction of eternal right will move mountainous barriers where an army of ordinary workers would not create a tremor of interest.

It was the enthusiastic sincerity of Napoleon that conquered Europe and it was the burning torch of enthusiastic devotion which emblazoned in letters of fire the teachings of the Master; and it will be enthusiasm which will keep aglow the torch of patriotic devotion so deep-set in the Spirit of the Klan.
Much of the material used in this paper is fugitive material that exists at one source only. In this bibliography the following principle has been followed: if the source is major and involves a major collection of Klan material, the location of that source has been given as well as the bibliographical information; if the source does not involve a large collection of source material, only the bibliographical information is given. In case the source is desired, it will be given readily by the author of this thesis who can always be reached through records of the Department of History, University of Wisconsin.

There is no general bibliography of Klan material. The only bibliography in print is Julia Emily Johnsen (Compiler), Ku Klux Klan, (The H. W. Wilson Company, 1923). This compilation was done too early in the Klan movement to be of value, and it lists only the sources readily available through reference materials in any library.

There are no general histories of the Ku Klux Klan movement. The best general work is John Moffatt Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind, (Harcourt Brace and Company, 1924), but this is more a sociological and social psychological interpretation of the movement than a history. Nonetheless, it is perceptive and a significant contribution written at the time the Klan was at its peak. Emerson Hunsberger Loucks has made a distinguished study of one state Klan, Pennsylvania, in

Much of the official literature of the Klan is available at the Library of Congress. The Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc. (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1921) is the official constitution of the Klan. Slight revisions of that constitution were made in 1928 and in 1934. The constitution of the women's order, The Constitution and Laws of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, (Little Rock, Arkansas, 1934) is substantially a re-written version of the regular Klan constitution. The fraternal features of the Klan stand out in these special Klan publications: Kloran: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (first degree), Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Atlanta, Georgia, 1916):
a variant form of the first degree is, Kloran: Knights Kamelia, Primary Order of Knighthood (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, n. p., n.d.). This may have been the first degree for women, but the publication gives no indication. A third form, Kloran: K-Uno (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., n.p., n.d.) is evidently a part of a later
series: 

Kloran: K-duo - Knights of the Great Forest, (second degree), (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., n.p., n.d.);
Kloran: K-Trio - Order of American Chivalry, (third degree), (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., n.p., n.d.). Further Klan fraternalia:
Klan Building, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1924); Delivery of Charter, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1923). The above represent distinct ceremonies that the Klan used for special occasions or instructions on "Klancraft". Some materials on meetings held by Klansmen are:
Minutes of the Imperial Kloncilium, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Meeting May 1 and 2, 1923, which ratified W. J. Simmons' Agreement with the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, together with certified copies of all litigation instituted by W. J. Simmons Against the Imperial Wizard and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1924) and Papers Read at the Meeting of the Grand Dragons, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, at their First Meeting; together with other Articles of Interest to Klansmen, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1923).

A majority of the above documents are available at the Library of Congress but sources for the remainder are so scattered that they will be given on request.

The Klan published many papers and magazines. Many of the
state Klans published a weekly paper, copies of some of which no longer exist. For instance, the Fiery Cross, Ohio edition, published at Columbus, has vanished completely. The best of the remaining collections of Klan newspapers is the complete file of the Indiana edition of the Fiery Cross, (1922-1925,) available from the Indiana State Library on microfilm. There was a national edition of the Fiery Cross in the 1930s, but no copies have been found. Sometimes individual printers published a Klan newspaper to sell to Klansmen although they had no official sanction. Such was the Badger-American, a publication out of Milwaukee, that, while Klan-like, was not officially sanctioned. The Wisconsin Historical Society has a complete file of the Badger-American. The Klansmen read three magazines regularly. The most widely read was The Kourier Magazine. This was published by the Klan press at Buckhead, Georgia, from December, 1924, to November, 1936. There were also occasional state editions of the Kourier, as for example, the one issued in Milwaukee called the Wisconsin Kourier. Scattered issues of this are available at the Wisconsin Legislative Library. Of much more violent character was The American Standard edited by C. L. Fowler from February 9, 1924 to December 15, 1925. The Library of Congress has a complete set of The American Standard, as has the Cleveland Public Library. The Fellowship Forum, a weekly magazine devoted to a discussion of fraternal affairs, began publication in 1921 and is still being published. It was recommended to Klansmen as a "proper" magazine when the Klan's own publications began to die.
The Klan officially published a series of pamphlets covering the Klan position on many topics. Examples of these are: Hiram Wesley Evans, *The Attitude of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan toward the Roman Catholic Hierarchy*, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1923); Hiram Wesley Evans, *The Attitude of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan toward the Jew*, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1923); Hiram Wesley Evans, *The Attitude of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan toward Immigration*, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1923); Hiram Wesley Evans, *The Public School Problem in America*, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1924); and Hiram Wesley Evans, *The Menace of Modern Immigration*, (n.p., n.d.)

Klan sympathizers added their unofficial interpretation in books such as Reverend Samuel Campbell, *The Jewish Problem in the United States* (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1923), and *America for Americans*, (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., Buckhead, Georgia, 1922).

Klansmen in the Klan or those who had left it for any one of a hundred reasons wrote of their experiences in the Klan or "exposed" it. The best of these works are the following. William Joseph Simmons, after he was finally ousted from control of the Klan remained a mystic and a Klansman at heart but was embittered at his loss of control of his organization. His two books reveal his state of mind: *The Klan Unmasked*, (William E. Thompson Publishing Company, 1923), and *America's Menace: or, the Enemy Within*, (Bureau of Patriotic Books, Atlanta, Georgia, 1926. Paul M. Winter was the
Grand Dragon of Pennsylvania when he wrote *What Price Tolerance*, (All-America book, lecture and research bureau, Long Island, New York, 1928), a defense of the Klan. Blaine Masé was a Klansman and District Attorney of Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, when he defended the Klan in *Ku Klux Klan: Friend or Foe, Which?* (Hebrick and Held Publishing Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1924). Henry Peck Fry, the former "Captain" Fry, was the Klagle of the Klans in the south who took his story to the New York World and launched the World's investigations of the Klan in 1921. His evidence in book form is *The Modern Ku Klux Klan* (Small, Maynard and Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1922).

Two embittered books designed to "expose" the Klan in all its treacheries, by former Klansmen, are Edgar Allen Booth (obviously a pseudonym), *The Mad Mullah of America*, (Boyd Ellison, Columbus, Ohio, 1927), and Marion Monteval (pseudonym), *The Klan Inside Out*, (Monarch Publishing Company, Claremore, Oklahoma, 1924). While probably not himself a Klansman, Stanley Frost wrote with Milton Elrod, editor of the Indiana *Fiery Cross*, as his silent collaborator. He wrote many magazine articles interpreting the Klan favorably, but his thought is summarized in *The Challenge of the Klan* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1924). Winfield Jones, *Knights of the Ku Klux Klan* (Toossin Publishers, 1941), is a free-swinging defense of the Klan. In Klan publications after 1941 Klansmen were urged to buy this book.

The material listed above will give a good picture of the general Klan movement, and illustrate the ideological and fraternal
bases for the Klan. But to learn what the Klan did in the states where it was strong the best sources are court cases and congressional investigations, in each of which Klansmen were sworn to give accurate testimony (with the threat of perjury present). The famous Congressional investigation at which William Joseph Simmons out-talked the Congressmen was U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Rules The Ku Klux Klan; hearing, (October 11-17, 1921), 67 Congress, 1 Session (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1921). The Klan actions in Texas in connection with the election of a Texas Senator was investigated at great length in U. S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Privileges and Elections. Hearings: a Senator from Texas. 68 Congress, 1 Session, May 8, 9, 12, 13, 14 and 16, 1923), pts. 1-3, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1924). In 1926 a Senate sub-committee came to Indianapolis to investigate Klan activities in the election of James E. Watson. Those hearings yielded some of the best information available on the middlewestern Klans. U. S. Congress. Senate. Special Committee, investigating expenditures in Senatorial Primary and General Elections: hearings; 69 Congress, 1 Session. (October 18-27, 1926), (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1926).

Almost every state had its court cases in which the Klan was involved as either plaintiff or defendant. For most of the court cases and testimony see below in the bibliographies for the several states. One court case, however, yielded so much material that it is the richest single Klan source yet known. This case was never tried, but represents a collection of
testimony gathered by the Attorney-General of Indiana, 1925-29, in preparation for an ouster case against the Klan. This material is available on microfilm from the Indiana State Library and is catalogued as The State of Indiana v. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a foreign corporation; Hiram Wesley Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; Joe M. Huffington, Grand Dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Additional materials associated with this case and equally valuable are the Ku Klux Klan Papers in the Archives of the State of Indiana.

This list of materials gives a view of the Klan nationally. For specific references to the Klan in the Middle West, see the bibliographies for the Klan movements in each of the separate states just below.
Materials for a history of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Wisconsin are adequate if not plentiful.

The best collection of Klan documents is in the possession of a Wisconsin citizen who prefers to remain anonymous. The author was given permission to use the material freely as long as the source was not disclosed. This collection has been referred to in the footnotes as Private Collection A. Included in the collection are several hundred items—Bulletins, Special Orders, Information Sheets, recruiting materials, and the Klan handbills advertising various Klan activities—all issued by the Klan in the years from 1923 through 1926. Further Klan material of a primary nature is available in the Badger-American, a Klan newspaper issued monthly from April, 1923 through August, 1924. The Wisconsin State Historical Society has a complete file of the Badger-American in its newspaper collection. While the Badger-American was not an official publication of the Wisconsin Klan Realm, it was looked upon favorably by Wieseman while he was King Kleagle and was circulated among Wisconsin Klansmen. The paper contained information about Klan meetings, and news about the activities of the various Klan units in the state. Its tone was viciously anti-Catholic; it was so much more anti-Catholic in tone than any other Klan document uncovered in Wisconsin that it does not seem representative of the Klan movement as a whole in the Badger state.

The best source that reveals the intrigues and political maneuvering within the Klan itself, plus statistics on membership and monies collected, is the series of nine articles by Russell Lynch. Mr. Lynch,
at present the sports editor of the *Milwaukee Journal*, joined the Wisconsin Klan at Racine and transferred his membership to Milwaukee when he moved there. He was on close terms of friendship with the Milwaukee and state leaders of the Klan and was in position to know the internal affairs of the Klan. In 1928, after the Klan had practically ceased to exist in Wisconsin, Lynch published nine articles in the *Milwaukee Journal*. These articles appear in the April 8-16 editions of the *Milwaukee Journal*. The author had an interview with Mr. Lynch on July 13, 1960, in Milwaukee and is convinced of the authenticity of the information published.

Court records in Wisconsin yield considerable information on the activities of the Klan. In 1946 Attorney-General John E. Martin of Wisconsin initiated a case in the Wisconsin courts to vacate the Klan’s corporate charter. In connection with this case, the Attorney-General amassed a file of information on the Klan and its activities in Wisconsin in the 1920s. File #6469 in the Attorney-General’s office in Madison, is available to interested persons. The file contains a long interview with Ralph Hammond, the Grand Dragon from 1926-30; a shorter interview with Ralph Twining, the Klan’s lawyer from 1923-26; and interviews of lesser scope with other surviving Klan officials. The interviews would have been more useful had the men who made them, all young attorneys attached to the Attorney-General’s staff, known something about what to ask and what to expect. Their long searches for violence and conflicts brought on by the Klan were all lost effort. Nonetheless, the interviews are useful.

Court records themselves yield information. The Shields case is given in full in "George Shields vs. the State of Wisconsin".
The two presentations of the case differ in details only a little, but the interpretations placed on the events by the attorneys vary considerably. For the decisions and shorter accounts of the action at Boscobel, see "George Shields vs. the State of Wisconsin", 204 Northwestern Reporter 486 ff. The briefs in the Malone case appear in "Malone vs. State of Wisconsin", Cases and Briefs v. 1603, 192 Wisconsin 339-396. The decision and arguments of counsel appear in "Malone vs. State of Wisconsin", 212 Northwestern Reporter 879 ff. Records of the two above cases are still extant in the Circuit Courts of the state of Wisconsin, but in the references given the evidence has been transcribed from the shorthand of the court reporter to written English. Records of the Rist case filed against the Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin) are still in the court file of that case in the Dane County Circuit Court under the title Fred J. Rist, vs. the Capital Times Company, a Corporation. The case was settled out of court, but the records of the case were not withdrawn from the court. In the records of the case there is a long deposition by Fred Rist, Klansman and private detective, under examination by hostile counsel that contains pertinent information on the activities of the Madison Klan. In 1924 Fred Groelle filed a case in Circuit Court in Milwaukee against certain Klan leaders, but the records of this case, (Frederick F. Groelle vs. William F. Wieseman, Benjamin Bellows, Albert A. Giese, A. C. Schroeder, Harry J. King, A. M. Pfitzinger, Robert T. Rice, Walter B. Barker, A. E. Schimmel and W. Gollert) have been withdrawn from the court.

The Civil Service Commission file on the Hearings of the Complaint of Alex J. Cobban (1923) contain peripheral evidence on the operation
of the Klan.

Newspapers were filled with Klan news during the 1920s. The Wisconsin Legislative Library kept a thorough clipping file on the Klan for the Wisconsin legislators, and this file is the best collection of Klan newspaper items in existence in Wisconsin. The author checked the clipping files kept by the following newspapers in their own libraries; Milwaukee Journal, Milwaukee Sentinel, Capital Times, (Madison, Wisconsin), and the Wisconsin State Journal, (Madison, Wisconsin). The files of clippings kept by the newspapers themselves were less complete than the file possessed by the Legislative Library.

Information of a biographical nature upon most of the major characters in the Wisconsin Klan can be gained through the use of the biographical aid, Wisconsin Notes (Madison, Wisconsin, many volumes). The Wisconsin Blue Book (State Printing Board, Madison, Wisconsin) for the years 1922 through 1927 contains each year's history of the state including full election returns and articles of interest on Wisconsin events of the times.
The materials on the Indiana Klan represent the richest single collection of Klan material in the entire country.

In 1927 Arthur Gilliom, then the Attorney-General of Indiana, began a series of investigations of the Indiana Klan that were designed to produce evidence for an ouster case to be laid against the Indiana Klan corporation. The case was never tried, but the testimony and other materials accumulated for its prosecution constitute the finest single source of information on the Ku Klux Klan that exists anywhere. Mr. Gilliom travelled around the state taking depositions from individual Klan leaders by putting them under oath, and then encouraging them to talk about the Klan. Gilliom's investigations were exploratory; his questioning of sworn witnesses was designed to get them to disclose what they knew about the Klan in Indiana. Mr. Gilliom was exceptionally well informed on Klan subjects, and his questions were perceptive. Thus, the testimony elicited has exceptional value. These materials can be found as two separate sources, both available at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis. The depositions taken constitute more than 2000 pages of testimony in the files of The State of Indiana v. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a foreign corporation;

Hiram W. Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan;

Joe M. Huffington, Grand Dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

This case was filed as #41769 in the Marion County Circuit Court (Indianapolis) but was venued to the Hamilton County Court at
Noblesville. When the case had not been tried at the end of his term as Attorney-General, Arthur Gilliom removed the records of the case from the court and filed the testimony among his personal papers. He has since donated it to the Indiana State Library where it is now available on microfilm. The remainder of the material collected for the prosecution of the case, including notes made by Gilliom on Klan procedures and techniques, and additional letters, notes and addenda are collected as the *Ku Klux Klan Papers* in the State Archives of Indiana.

The best evidence on how the Indiana Klan was built up is available in depositions given by D. C. Stephenson under oath in two separate courts actions. The first is a part of the record in the *State of Indiana v. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, et. al.*, noted just above and is a part of these papers. The second was taken in connection with the Klan suit filed in Pennsylvania as an equity case, *The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc. v. Rev. John F. Strayer et. al.*, Case #1397 in Equity in the Federal District Court, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In each of these depositions Stephenson testified at great length about his role in the Indiana Klan, and about the operations of the Indiana Klan under his direction. Further information concerning Stephenson's role in the Klan, and about him personally can be found in the records of *State of Indiana v. David Clarke Stephenson, Earl Klimok and Earl Gentry* in the Hamilton County Circuit Court at Noblesville. This is the case in which Stephenson was convicted of second degree murder. The records of this case are still in the court reporter's
short-hand and not of much use to one without the ability to read short-hand, but the entire testimony in the case can be found in the briefs filed in the appeal of that case to the Indiana Supreme Court. In somewhat abbreviated form these records are printed in *Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana, May 16, 1933 to December 22, 1933*, 205:165-182 (Indianapolis, 1934). Further information about D. C. Stephenson of a primary nature can be found in Robert A. Butler, *So They Framed Stephenson*, (privately printed, Huntington, Indiana, 1940) and Harry E. Hodsdon (compiler), *Stephenson was Framed in a Political Conspiracy*, (La Porte Press, La Porte, Indiana, 1936). Butler's little book is the classic defense of Stephenson and outlines in detail the evidence that Stephenson was "framed" and rail-roaded to prison to eliminate him from the political scene.

Dr. Joe Norris, of Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan, owns a sizeable collection of fugitive Klan documents. His collection consists mainly of Klan-printed ballots and election slates. His father was a job printer who did Klan work regularly. In the course of this investigation some fugitive papers have come into the possession of the author and are available from him.

A valuable published source of information on the Indiana Klan is the U. S. Congress. Senate. *Special Committee Investigation Expenditures in Senatorial Primary and General Elections*, hearings, 69 Congress, 1 Session, October 18-27, (28), 1926. (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1926). These hearings, known in the
press as the Reed hearings, were held in Indiana to investigate the part played by the Klan in the election of Senator James E. Watson. Klan leaders and officials testified on a variety of subjects, all testimony given under oath.

The Ku Klux Klan published in Indiana from 1923 to mid-1925 the Fiery Cross, a weekly newspaper. A complete file of this paper is on microfilm in the Indiana State Library. The Fiery Cross was the official organ of the Indiana Klan, and as such contains much information of value. It is a unique source for understanding Klan psychology. The Klan also published a defense of its action at South Bend, The Truth about the South Bend Riot (no place, no date), a copy of which is in the Library of Congress.

Norman F. Weaver, (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1947), is the only extensive research done into the role of the Klan in Indiana society. A very brief and general history of the Klan movement as a whole with emphasis on Indiana can be found in Robert Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo", in Isabel Leighton, The Aspirin Age (Simon and Schuster, 1949), 105-130. A brief account of the Indiana Klan's history, with emphasis upon the trial of D. C. Stephenson, is in John Bartlow Martin, Indiana: an Interpretation (Knopf, 1947), 184-201. Emerson Hunsberger Loucks, The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania, (Telegraph Press, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1936) has some useful information on the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana scattered through the account of the Pennsylvania Klan's history.
Two "exposes" of the Klan in general that drew a large proportion of their material from Indiana are Edgar Allen Booth, *The Mad Mullah of America* (Boyd Ellison, Columbus, Ohio, 1927), a rambling account of the life and alleged designs of D. C. Stephenson. The author had to be a Klansman to have the information he disclosed, but his writing is at times incoherent. An account concentrated upon the southern Klan, but with peripheral information on D. C. Stephenson is Marion Monteval (pseud.), *The Klan Inside Out*, (Claremore, Oklahoma, 1924).

The best account of Indiana society in the 1920s is the special study of Muncie by Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown* (Harcourt Brace, 1924). This has scattered materials on the Klan. Useful also is John Bartlow Martin's interpretative history of Indiana noted above.

Newspapers are of value. Particular use can be made of the files of the Indianapolis *News* and the Indianapolis *Times*. The *News* is useful in general, and gives the best coverage of any Indiana newspaper of events in the state. The *Times* conducted a campaign against political corruption in Indiana in 1927-8, and the Klan was heavily tied into that. The files of the *Times* for those two years are valuable. The Kokomo *Daily Tribune* has many good Klan items, and the Noblesville *Daily Ledger* contains superb coverage of the Stephenson trial held in Noblesville in the autumn of 1925.

Dozens of magazine articles discussed the Klan in Indiana. The best of these are two articles by Max Bentley, "The Ku Klux
Klan in Indiana”, McClure’s Magazine, 57:23-33 (May, 1924); and
"Let’s Brush them Aside”, Collier’s, 74:21 (November 22, 1924).
Others of value are: Louis F. Budenz, "Scandals of 1927--Indiana”,
Nation, 125:332-3 (October 5, 1927); and "There's Mud on Indiana's
White Robes”, Nation, 125: 81-2 (July 27, 1927); Elmer Davis,
"Have Faith in Indiana”, Harper's, 153:615-25 (October, 1926):
Morton Harrison, "Gentlemen from Indiana”, Atlantic Monthly, 141:676-
86 (May, 1926); Lowell Mellett, "Klan and Church in Indiana”,
Atlantic Monthly, 152:686-92 (November, 1923); Dixon Merritt,
"Klan and Anti-Klan in Indiana”, The Outlook, 144:465-9 (December
8, 1926); A. W. Taylor, "What the Klan did in Indiana”, New

Among general commentators on the Klan attention should be
called again to the articles by Stanley Frost that dealt with the
Indiana Klan. Frost wrote with Milton Elrod in silent collaboration,
and Elrod was the editor of the Klan’s Fiery Cross. The Frost
articles are these: "Klan Shows its Hand in Indiana”, The Outlook,
135:187-90 (June 4, 1924); "When the Klan Rules”, a series appearing
in the Outlook in these issues: 135:674-6; 135:716-18; 136:20-4;
136:261-4; 136:308-11; 136:350-3; (December 19, 1923 to
February 27, 1924). See also Stanley Frost's book on the Klan,
The Challenge of the Klan, (Bobbs-Merrill, 1924).
Bibliography

THE KLAN IN OHIO AND MICHIGAN

The materials for Klan history in these two states are scarce. Despite proportionately more effort spent than spent in Wisconsin and Indiana, no more sources of information than these below could be found.

Ohio

The best general collection of Klan material in Ohio lies in File #2088 in the Library of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The clippings from the Plain Dealer and from other newspapers make a formidable collection of newspaper materials, all neatly catalogued and classified.

For general materials on the Ohio Klan there are little more than additional newspaper sources. The files of the Ohio State Journal are useful generally. For specific incidents other newspapers contribute special local information. For instance, the Springfield (Ohio) Daily News for February to April 1923 carries close coverage of the raid on Klan headquarters in that city and the ensuing controversy.

For the special situation in Columbus concerning the Budd Dairy Company the best source is J. Wesley Hatcher, The Effect of Coercion upon the Attitudes and Organization of the Oppressed Group, (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Library of the Ohio State University, 1925). Supplementary sources are the local Columbus newspapers.
The most striking incident in the Klan's Ohio career was the riot at Niles, Ohio, just before the general election in 1924. Fortunately, excellent source material allows complete coverage of the Niles riot. On April 11, 1950, Colonel Wade C. Christy, the commander of the National Guard contingent that quelled the Niles riot was interviewed by the author. Colonel Christy also was the special investigator appointed by Governor Donahey to conduct the state's investigation right after the riot. That investigation, the testimony of which is filed as the Transcript of Evidence taken by Military Investigation Board appointed by General Orders #7, Headquarters, Provisional Brigade, Niles, Ohio, November 3, 1924, is still classified as secret, but permission was given the author to use the material without restriction. The files of the Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram, the Mahoning Valley's largest newspaper, are excellent in covering the emerging riot situation from August through December, 1924. The Klan published its own account of the riot as The Truth About the Niles (O.) Riot, Nov. 1, 1924.

Michigan

The best general source of information about the Michigan Klan comes from the Library of the Detroit News. The News has a clipping file of newspaper accounts that is not equalled by any newspaper except the New York Times. The Detroit Times and Detroit Free Press files are also useful.

The best evidence for the activities of the Michigan Klan
comes from three court suits filed against the Klan in the state.

The most useful is \textit{Clayton C. Gilliland v. Symwa Club, Ku Klux Klan A Michigan Corporation} in the Circuit Court of Wayne County (Detroit), case \#117851. The Symwa Club was a Klan "front". The initials meant \textit{Spend Your Money with Americans}! A second case for which no transcript is available is \textit{Henry C. Warner vs. Arthur S. Nichols, Garfield A. Nichols, Ira W. Stout, James W. Gray, Robert J. Witteman, Roy C. Small, and the Symwa Club, a Michigan corporation; The Wayne County Provisional Klan; Wayne County Provisional Klan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc.; Lodge \#35 of the Knights of the Great Forest, successors to the Symwa Club, the provisional Klan and the Incorporated Klan}, filed in Wayne County Circuit Court in March 1928 and tried in July, 1928. The third case is \textit{Nicholas M. Sowder vs. Daniel E. Rhodes and Charles E. Lewis, co-partners doing business as the National Research Bureau}, Circuit Court for the County of Kent (Grand Rapids), Law Case \#28850. Sowder's wife, Vivian, filed a parallel case against the same defendants. Within the files of these three cases lies a great deal of Klan information concerning the Michigan Klan. But all of these cases were recorded in Pittman shorthand, and few today can read that system. In addition, no appeals of these cases were ever made, hence, the usual transcripts were not filed.

The situation in Detroit is illuminated by the use of the following materials. June Baber Woodson, \textit{A Century with the}
Negroes in Detroit, (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Wayne University, 1949) is a fair history of the Negroes over 100 years in Detroit, but has adequate information on the Sweet Case. Additional sources include Louise Venable Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward, (Columbia University Press, 1930) which contains figures on the Negro advance to Detroit. Helpful, too, is the Michigan Encyclopedia, an unpublished project in the files of the State Historical Society in Lansing. There are several useful monographs in the Encyclopedia, including an anonymous contribution, Negro Migration to Michigan, 1916-1930, and J. F. Thaden, Population: Composition and Trends. This monograph was later published by the Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Sociology Section, East Lansing, 1933, as Population Trends in Michigan.
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