THE KU KLUX KLAN IN EASTERN KANSAS

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CONTENTS

Introduction

The idea that lawfully constituted authorities cannot cope with problems of public safety, crime, racial unrest, or immorality is a recurring theme in American history. Some Americans have responded to real or illusory crises by organizing outside the established political system to impose their concept of law upon the community. These "citizen bands" have appeared, disappeared, and reappeared at frequent intervals to excite and confuse the American people. This study will focus on the Ku Klux Klan, a secret order which usurped the law during Reconstruction, disappeared, then reappeared in the 1920's to produce public division and organized conflict until it disappeared from the public scene in the 1930's.

The development and aims of the Klan can best be examined through a concentrated "grass roots" history. This study of the Klan of the 1920's will, therefore, focus on the counties of Douglas, Miami, Linn, Bourbon, and Crawford in eastern Kansas. Kansas was chosen for this study because it has been suggested that Kansans exemplify the sentiments of the American people at a particular time. John J. Ingalls wrote:

> For a generation Kansas has been the testing ground for every experiment in morals, politics, and social life. Doubt of all existing institutions has been

> respectable. Nothing has been venerable or revered merely because it exists or has endured.[1]

By examining the motives which led the leading citizens of eastern Kansas towns to become knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a key may be found to explain the reason for the rapid expansion of the secret order to nearly every town in Kansas by 1924 with close to 100,000 members, with 4,600 in Crawford County alone.[2] By studying the activities of the Klan in Kansas, the reason for the nationwide acceptance of the organization may be discovered. A thorough study of the Kansas Klan may also determine if the secret order was a product of the confusing times following World War I or simply an extension of older secret fraternal orders which had similar aims and ideals. Finally, by studying the decline of the Invisible Empire in eastern Kansas, the causes for the failure and disappearance of this order based on anti-democratic principles may also be discovered.

Because no history of the Ku Klux Klan in eastern Kansas has been written, the major sources of this study will be contemporary newspapers and interviews with those who lived in the area during the "twenties." Since it is very difficult to get those who are still living who were

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[1] John James Ingalls, "Kansas 1541-1891," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 86 (April 1893), p. 707.

[2] The Independent [Mulberry, Kansas], March 27, 1925, p. 2.

alleged members of the Klan to admit that they were once klansmen, the primary sources in this area are practically nonexistent. Two newspapers representing both the Klan viewpoint and the anti-Klan point of view will be used extensively in this study. They are The Independent, a Klan newspaper first published in September 1923, and the Mulberry News, an older weekly, edited by Millard F. Sears who was an outspoken opponent of the Klan. The Independent nearly put Sears out of business, but it was forced to cease publication when the Klan began to decline.

A massive revival of the Ku Klux Klan, or more likely a counterpart of the secret organization, is never an impossibility in the United States. A study of the conditions which made it possible for the Klan to experience its successful revival in the 1920's may lead to some revealing conclusions on the probability of a Klan revival, or that of some similar organization, in the future. Because the Klan nearly paralyzed the democratic processes of government and controlled the economic life of many communities in Kansas in the "twenties," it merits in-depth study.

Chapter I

In December 1865, six restless young former Confederate army officers founded the Ku Klux Klan at Pulaski, Tennessee. It was simply a social club in the beginning. The members met in secret, called themselves klansmen, and dressed in fantastic costumes. When klansmen rode about the countryside at night their costumes had the unexpected result of frightening the newly-freed Negro into orderly and submissive behavior. After the Klan began to oppose Reconstruction policies, it spread to nine southern states. Soon waves of violence--lynchings, beatings, burnings, and mutilations--against Negroes spread throughout the South. When the Congress passed laws to curb the Klan in 1870-71, the Grand Wizard, Nathan Bedford Forrest, ordered the Klan dissolved and it slowly faded away.

According to Forrest, the Klan had been a law-and-order organization to restore authority to insecure and fearful southern whites. The "organization was got up to protect the weak, with no political intention at all. . . ."[1] Stanley F. Horn, in the Invisible Empire, also indicates that the Klan was organized for " . . . the

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[1] David M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), p. 21.

protection of the Southern white people during the years when they had no other protection, and the prevention of the political overmastery of the white citizens by the blacks."[2] The Reconstruction Klan operated outside the law to achieve its purpose, but in the minds of Klansmen what they were doing was right and the end justified the means.

Interest in the mysterious order did not die when the Ku Klux Klan was disbanded. In 1879 Albion W. Tourgée wrote A Fool's Errand, a popular novel of the Reconstruction era in which the Klan played an important role. Steele MacKaye suggested collaboration with Tourgée on a dramatization of A Fool's Errand and the play opened at Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia on October 26, 1881. After one successful season, all efforts failed to keep the play alive.[3]

The twentieth century revival of the Klan has been credited by various writers to three men--Thomas Dixon, Jr., D. W. Griffith, and William J. Simmons. Dixon, a Baptist minister from North Carolina, wrote The Clansman, a romantic novel of the Ku Klux Klan. He adapted the novel, which portrayed the redemption of the South by the Klan, to

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[2] Stanley F. Horn, Invisible Empire: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan 1866-1871 (Montclair, N. J.: Paterson Smith, 1969), p. 376.

[3] Steele MacKaye and Albion W. Tourgée, A Fool's Errand, ed. Dean H. Keller (Metchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1969), pp. 1-17.

the stage. Although his efforts to organize a movie company to film the story failed, D. W. Griffith, Biograph's talented young director, succeeded in creating a two-hour-and-forty-five minute epic movie of The Clansman which he called The Birth of a Nation.[4]

The Birth of a Nation was a triumph in the South, but northern viewers were indignant. The film was egged in New York City, rioted against in Boston, and almost banned by the Massachusetts legislature. In order to fight the opposition to the film, Dixon ~~and Griffith~~ called upon President Woodrow Wilson and Chief Justice Edward White, both southern born, to view the movie. With their "official" approval, the picture opened again in New York City. Before it was retired to the art theatres and film clubs, The Birth of a Nation had grossed almost 18 million dollars. Dixon was urged to revive the fraternalistic order, but when it was revived, it was by a man who had failed at almost everything he had ever tried.[5]

William J. Simmons was Alabama born and reared in the tradition of the Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan. He dreamed of founding a fraternal order based on the Klan principles for years before he successfully revived the Invisible Empire. After 12 years in the ministry, the

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[4] Chalmers, pp. 23-26.

[5] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

Alabama Conference of the Methodist Church voted in 1912 to deny him a pulpit because of inefficiency and moral impairment. He tried his hand at selling for a time and finally found his calling in the field of fraternal organizing. He joined the Woodmen of the World, several varieties of Masons, a veteran's organization, and a score of other fraternal societies, as well as the Congregational and Missionary Baptist Churches. He held 23 degrees in seven fraternal orders. When asked his profession Simmons always answered, "I am a fraternalist."[6]

Simmons was not content with simply being a member of various orders. His ultimate goal was to found his own fraternal society. When he was hospitalized for three months after an automobile accident, he worked out the details for the twentieth century Ku Klux Klan. In an interview with William G. Shepherd in 1928, Simmons explained that his idea for the motto, "Non Silba Sed Anthar," was part Latin and part Saxon. Simmons also "dreamed up" the emblems, tokens, rituals, and regalia during his recuperation. His ideas were copyrighted and he later received $90,000 for the copyrights.[7]

The first fiery cross of the revived Ku Klux Klan

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[6] William G. Shepherd, "How I Put Over the Klan," Collier's, XXCII, No. 2 (July 14, 1928), p. 32.

[7] Ibid.

was burned on the top of Stone Mountain near Atlanta on an icy-cold Thanksgiving day in 1915. Sixteen Atlanta businessmen took the oath before a makeshift altar and became the first members of the Invisible Empire.[8]

Neither Thomas Dixon, Jr., nor D. W. Griffith had the slightest idea that The Birth of a Nation would trigger a revival of the Klan in the South. When the film was scheduled to open in Atlanta on December 6, 1915, "Colonel" Simmons published an advertisement announcing the formation of the Ku Klux Klan which read, "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan . . . A High Class Order for Men of Intelligence and Character . . . The World's Greatest Secret, Social, Patriotic, Fraternal, Beneficiary Order."[9]

The advertisement was crudely drawn, but soon 90 men had paid ten dollars to become members of Klan Number 1 in Atlanta. The members purchased a costume for $6.50, and 40 members signed for $53,000 in life insurance.[10] Simmons said later, " . . . there were no rough neckers, rowdies, nor yellow-streaks admitted. . . . It was an order of and for men who were one hundred per cent American and no other."[11]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[11] Ibid.

The Klan used various publicity schemes at first to attract attention. Simmons used cheap press-agent tricks to lead klansmen to believe that there were 7,000,000 members in the order instead of 600,000.[12] To create an air of mystery about the Klan, Simmons claimed, "I am he who from the realm of the unknown wrested the solemn secret from the grasp of night and became the sovereign Imperial Master of the Great, Lost Mystery."[13]

Secrecy appealed to Simmons; thus, members of the Klan were not allowed to identify themselves or other Klan members. Simmons instituted a spy system within the Invisible Empire. He planned for each Klan unit to have one or more secret agents who would report only to him. Ultimately he planned that the Klan would have 50,000 spies to report the misconduct of the citizens throughout the United States. Simmons's plan was to have the Klan agents make their secret reports on law violations, acts of immorality, law evasion, non-Americanism, and non-conformity to a Klan secret service headquarters in every state. The headquarters in each state would then report to Simmons.[14]

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[12] Ibid., p. 6

[13] Ibid., p. 5.

[14] Ibid., p. 9.

World War I provided the Klan with the direction it was to take after the war. Klansmen were urged to contribute to the war effort. Enemy aliens, slackers, idlers, unpatriotic citizens, immoral women, and evil-doers of every description were special targets of the Ku Klux Klan. Yet, by 1920 the Invisible Empire was still a close-knit organization with only a few thousand members. New members had to be recruited if it was to become the national beneficent order that Simmons intended.

Simmons was probably sincerely interested in the welfare of America and planned to establish hospitals, schools, and other beneficial institutions; yet, he was too much of a dreamer to organize and direct a powerful membership campaign on a nation-wide basis. For this work he engaged a fraternal salesman and publicity man, Edward Young Clarke, and his business associate, Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler, to head a huge membership drive. Clarke and Mrs. Tyler immediately organized a recruiting army to fan out over the country to enlist new members for a ten dollar membership fee each. By 1921 between 85,000 and 100,000 new members had accepted knighthood in the Invisible Empire.

The Ku Klux Klan became a flourishing business under the direction of Clarke and Mrs. Tyler, but by September 1921 they were under investigation for immoral conduct, and Klan finances were the subject to close public scrutiny in a series of articles in the New York World and the Journal-American. The hooded order was next brought before a Congressional investigating committee to answer charges of illegal commercial gains by a beneficent order. Although the Klan invited investigation, the inquiry was dropped when a bill was introduced to investigate the finances of other fraternal orders. The publicity from the investigation was exactly what the order needed. The Ku Klux Klan began to add members steadily from that time onward.

The Simmons, Clarke, and Tyler partnership was in a precarious position in the spring of 1922. Tyler and Clarke were again charged with immoral conduct and the former resigned. Simmons, who held both the title of Emperor and Imperial Wizard, was persuaded to take a vacation. Clarke, as Imperial Wizard pro-tempore, came to rely more and more upon ex-detective Fred Savage and Dallas dentist Hiram Wesley Evans to run the Klan. While Simmons was slowly losing his power in the Klan, Clarke was challenged by ambitious klansmen who were more concerned about their own welfare than the good of the organization. When Simmons returned to his desk in the fall of 1922, he

was forced to call a national Klonvocation.

At the Klonvocation, the dreamer Simmons, clashed with practical men in the Klan and came out second best. Colonel William Joseph Simmons had built up his fraternal order to the point that it was taking in $35,000 daily, then he suddenly found himself on the outside looking in. In a surprise move, the Dallas dentist, Hiram Wesley Evans, secured enough votes to be elected Imperial Wizard. Simmons was permitted to retain the title of Emperor. It was an empty title, however, for the Imperial Wizard controlled the purse, and thus the Ku Klux Klan. Simmons no longer controlled the order he had founded.[15]

In an interview in 1928, Simmons explained that he tried to warn klansmen how his order had been swindled away from him in order to make money for the new leaders. "I tried to tell klansmen," he said, "what had happened to the Klan, but I couldn't get a hearing."[16] Then Simmons wrote a book to tell klansmen the truth, but Evans issued an order banishing anyone who read it. Simmons concluded, " . . . it (the Klan) is dead to every original program

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[15] William G. Shepherd, "The Fiery Double Cross," Collier's XXCII, No. 4 (July 28, 1928), p. 8.

[16] Ibid.

and purpose."[17]

By 1922 the Klan, under its new leadership, had begun to spread rapidly into nearly every state in the Union. That year the Klan first made its appearance in eastern Kansas. It is this Ku Klux Klan, under new leadership and with a new purpose, with which we are concerned in this study.

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[17] Ibid., p. 47.

Chapter II

Governor Henry J. Allen was a bitter enemy of the Invisible Empire before it was organized in Kansas. He was aware of Klan activities in other states, and he was determined to oust the organization should it establish itself in the state. The governor was notified in July 1921 that klansmen from Oklahoma and Texas were moving northward to organize the Klan in southern Kansas.[1]

The Klan unit at Pittsburg in Crawford County was among the first to be organized in Kansas. Soon other railroad towns, including Arkansas City and Coffeyville, had Klans which were controlled from the regional sub-office in Kansas City, Missouri. In a clandestine effort to conceal the Klan's expansion into Kansas, local organizations were assigned names such as the "Sunflower Club" of Wyandotte County, "The Bourbon County Industrial Association" of Fort Scott, and the "Southwest Trade Association" of Caney.[2]

Soon, however, there was no doubt of the Klan's existence in southeastern Kansas. On February 16, 1922,

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[1] Kirke Mechem, ed., Annals of Kansas 1886-1925, II (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1956), p. 303.

[2] Chalmers, pp. 143-44.

250 masked members of the Ku Klux Klan marched openly with a flaming cross at the head of their parade in Caney.[3] In May 1922, Dr. Harry Graham of Boston, Massachusetts, debated the merits of the Ku Klux Klan with Harry B. Burton, mayor of Kansas City. Graham, a Klan organizer, held that the Klan worked for social purity, white supremacy, the welfare of the nation, and the Constitution of the United States, but Burton insisted that the Klan was un-American, cowardly, and oppressive. Shortly after this debate organizers appeared before the ministerial association in Emporia and declared that the Klan upheld law and order, opposed Catholicism, and stated that members were recruited chiefly from among the Masonic order. The Emporia ministers denounced the Klan.[4]

On September 5, 1922, hundreds of white-robed klansmen held a meeting at Winfield after a plane dropped pamphlets announcing the place and date of the meeting. Initiation ceremonies for 200 new members were held a week later near Newton, where the first issue of the Jay Hawk American, a Klan newspaper, appeared on the streets.[5]

Shortly thereafter, Governor Allen was notified that

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[3] Mechem, pp. 303, 318.

[4] Ibid., pp. 322-23.

[5] Ibid., p. 328.

some Arkansas City residents had been threatened with tar and feathers, for alleged offenses, in letters signed by the Ku Klux Klan. Allen sent J. A. Mc Dermott, judge of the Industrial Court, to investigate activities in Arkansas City.

In October 1922, two young women members of the Methodist Church in Prescott, Kansas, were brought before the church congregation to be tried for unbecoming conduct. During the trial, 27 men wearing white robes and hoods drove into town from the West, entered the church in a single file, and marched to the table where the presiding officer was sitting. Each of the white-robed intruders, without speaking, deposited a coin or a bill on the table. Before leaving the church, the leader of the group paused and announced solemnly, "In the name of justice." The men in white then got into their cars and drove out of town toward the West.[6] Although the Klan was not known to exist in Linn County before this time, the members of the Methodist Church at Prescott clearly recognized the men in white as members of the Ku Klux Klan.

On October 15, 1922, Governor Allen sent Judge Mc Dermott to Liberty, a small town ten miles north of Coffeyville to investigate Klan threats against the mayor, Theo-

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[6] "Ku Klux Klan at Prescott," La Cygne [Kansas] Journal, October 13, 1922, p. 1.

dore Schierlman. He had refused to allow the Klan to use a building he owned for a meeting place. A group of masked men, believed to have been klansmen, seized Schierlman and horsewhipped him. At Coffeyville less than two weeks later, Governor Allen asserted in a speech that the Ku Klux Klan had introduced into Kansas "the greatest curse that comes to civilized people, the curse that rises out of unrestrained passions of men governed by religious intolerance and racial hatred." He promised that officers of the Klan would be expelled from the state.[7]

Less than a month after Governor Allen made his Coffeyville speech, ouster proceedings against the Ku Klux Klan were filed with the Kansas Supreme Court by the Attorney General on the grounds that the Klan was a Georgia corporation unauthorized to operate in Kansas.[8]

In spite of ouster proceedings against the Klan, more than one hundred members of the Ku Klux Klan paraded at Douglass a short time later. The members were dressed in the full regalia of the order and wore masks, but no disturbances occurred.[9] It was clear that the Klan was becoming well established in southern Kansas, notwithstand-

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[7] Mechem, pp. 329-30.

[8] Ibid.

[9] La Cygne Journal, October 6, 1922, p. 2.

ing Governor Allen's efforts to exclude it from the state. He had good reason to oppose the Klan, for it had already entered the 1922 primary primaries.

Orin B. Strong, editor of The Independent, told of the Klan's efforts to defeat Phil Campbell, who had been involved in the "malicious persecution of the organization in the governmental probe and hearing before the House Investigating Committee."[10] As early as July 1922, Strong learned that the Ku Klux Klan had united with labor forces to defeat Campbell. Campbell was beaten, and on the day of the general election the efforts of the Invisible Empire were again evident. Strong was in Pittsburg discussing business with a banker when he learned of the Klan's victory in the general election. A big man, sweating freely, burst into the banker's office and cried, "H___, we're whipped--the Klan is casting its vote like a lead slug and it's hitting with a dull thud."[11]

In March 1923, H. H. Kitchen, organizer of the Ku Klux Klan in Topeka, was sentenced to the Shawnee County jail after he refused to divulge the names of Topeka klansmen. Kitchen told the commissioner of the Kansas Supreme

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[10] The Independent, January 9, 1925, p. 2.

[11] Ibid.

Court, S. M. Brewster, that he had taken the Klan oath which prohibited his naming the 140 Topekans who had signed the charter application. When he was asked if he thought that his oath was more binding than the oath he had given to the state as a witness or above his duties as a citizen of the United States, Kitchen replied that it was. He declared that the oath of a klansman "Taken before God" absolved him from his oath as a witness in court. Kitchen was then ordered back to jail on contempt charges. John S. Dean and W. L. Wood, attorneys for the Klan pleaded futilely with the court for Kitchen's release on the grounds that the charges were unrelated to the ouster case which had been brought against the Klan.[12] A week later klansmen at Topeka defied the state by lighting a huge fiery cross that could be seen from a great distance. At this burning of the fiery cross, many Topekans took the secret oath and swore allegiance to the Invisible Empire.[13] On April 4, 1923, the attorneys for the Ku Klux Klan admitted that there were more than 30 Klans with thousands of members in the state.

On April 30, 1923, the state began hearings on the activities of the Ku Klux Klan at Kansas City. S. M.

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[12] La Cygne Journal, March 9, 1923, p. 2.

[13] Mechem, pp. 354-55.

Brewster, former attorney general, presided.[14] Because the state of Kansas was attempting to oust the Klan on the grounds that it was a foreign corporation, a new organization, the "Ku Klux Klan of Kansas," asked for a charter from the state charter board. The men who incorporated the order, J. C. Hopkins, L. F. Lutz, F. B. Crolle, Claude F. Higgins, and Harland A. Bullock, were all Kansas City, Kansas, men who had been members of the old Klan. They claimed to have retired from the Georgia organization in order to organize a new secret society in Wyandotte County in 1922.[15]

While the suit brought against the Klan in Kansas proceeded slowly, the Klan continued to add new members. The Oswego Democrat reported that it was no longer a secret that a Ku Klux Klan organization was being perfected in Oswego and the surrounding vicinity. Several preparatory meetings had been held with speakers making "One Hundred Per Cent American" speeches. The first indication that the Klan had been organized in Oswego came when a fiery cross appeared as a floral offering at the funeral of a well-known citizen of Oswego.[16]

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[14] Ibid., p. 357.

[15] La Cygne Journal, May 11, 1923, p. 2.

[16] "Here, There, and Everywhere," The Louisburg Herald, quoted from the Oswego Democrat, June 14, 1923, p. 2.

In June, 400 new members were initiated at one meeting in Wichita.[17] In the same month, the first meeting of the Ku Klux Klan was held in Drexel, Missouri, on the state line. A number of influential Drexel citizens were reported to be Klan members. At the same time, it became known that the Klan had been established at Cleveland, Missouri, another small town on the state line, and that several citizens of Louisburg, Kansas, had attended these meetings and were interested in organizing a Klan in their community.[18] In July, it came to public attention that the Klan was organized in Shawnee County.[19] The Klan held a huge celebration and barbecue in Pittsburg for members of the Invisible Empire, and thousands of members from all over the state attended the meeting.[20] When the attorney general ruled that klansmen could not wear masks, 1,200 robed and hooded knights openly paraded Topeka's streets in defiance of the ruling.[21]

In order to bolster the Klan in Kansas, Hiram Wesley Evans, the Imperial Wizard, delivered a speech in Topeka on August 6. He declared that the Klan was not in politics, but that it wanted the right men in the

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[17] Mechem, p. 362.

[18] Louisburg Herald, June 21, 1923, p. 2.

[19] Mechem, p. 362.

[20] Ibid., p. 364.

[21] Ibid.

right places.[22] Shortly thereafter, the Topeka Klan claimed 5,000 members, and a Ku Klux Klan wedding ceremony was performed near Chanute in an open air auditorium with more than 3,500 hooded and robed klansmen present.[23]

In September 1923, the Klan began to issue The Independent at Mulberry. The paper's editor wrote:

> The battle between the Ku Klux Klan and its enemies at Mulberry has now entered its second stage. The friends of the Klan have printed the first issue of their paper, The Independent. The editor of The Independent is Rev. E. H. Given. He extols the Ku Klux Klan and explains that Roman Catholicism and the liquor elements are the Klan's most bitter enemies. . . .
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> Mulberry enjoys the distinction of being the only town in this part of the country where the friends of the Kluxers have started a paper. This has come about very largely perhaps, because the News, Editor Sears' paper, has not been much inclined to give the Kluxers a chance to put their side of the case before the community.[24]

Thereafter, The Independent carried Klan news. In February 1924, the paper began to arrive in the homes of subscribers under new ownership and management. Dr. J. F. Sandidge, head of the Klan at Mulberry, purchased the paper, and Orin B. Strong became the new publisher. Strong said later, "This newspaper is not an official organ of the Ku Klux Klan. . . . We propagate the Klan message to the people of this county just as we would any other demo-

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[22] Ibid.

[23] La Cygne Journal, September 14, 1923, p. 2.

[24] The Independent, September 28, 1923, p. 1.

cratic set of aims and ideals.[25]

On Friday, September 28, 1923, The Independent described an initiation ceremony held in Pittsburg:

> A class of 279 candidates was initiated into the county organization of the Ku Klux Klan at an open air ceremonial held at the fairgrounds Wednesday night. The candidates, more than 100 of them from Mulberry and vicinity, were taken into the mysteries of the order by the light of the large fiery cross of the order, which burned from the time the ceremonial started until the order ended its service for the night.
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> The Girard chapter of the order served the visiting Klansmen and the candidates with hot coffee and sandwiches, and cigars were much in evidence. . . . The fairgrounds grandstand was seated with women members of the "Women of the Ku Klux Klan." They were invited to attend the ceremonial in a body. The initiation ceremonial was out of hearing distance of the visitors. The initiation was handled by the Pittsburg team.[26]

While the Ku Klux Klan appeared to be growing as fast as its organizers could initiate new members into the secret order, a small group of citizens in Crawford County met at Owl Hall in Mulberry for the purpose of forming a society to counter the activities of the Klan. The chief organizer was Millard F. Sears, editor of the Mulberry News. According to the Fort Scott Bourbon News, which Sears claimed was the only paper in southeastern Kansas besides The Independent which supported the Invisible Empire, the Loyal Constitutionalists were fighting a losing battle. The Fort Scott Bourbon News was quoted in

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[25] Editorial, The Independent, August 24, 1924, p. 1.

[26] Ibid., September 28, 1923, p. 1.

the Mulberry News:

> The Mulberry News, anti-Klan and the Mulberry Independent, pro-Klan, have been warring, relentlessly. The editor of the News, Mr. Sears, has in imitation of the Klan formed an organization of his own with a few dozen members. He calls them the Loyal Constitutionalists. Hugh Lardner and Henry Gott, local attorneys, have been speechmaking for the "Cons." The Kluxers import speakers. The Klux have about 600 members (too high by 400--Ed.) in Mulberry, and the "Cons" have about 150, it is reported to us. In each issue of the News the editor flays the Klan and praises the "Cons."[27]

Sears maintained that the Loyal Constitutionalists was a patriotic organization to oppose the "Cult that would bind this free land of ours with a philosophy which springs from greed, bigotry, and intolerance and tends to overthrow all that our forefathers had beneficiently builded for us."[28]

The Mulberry, Kansas, chapter of the Loyal Constitutionalists adopted their constitution on August 24, 1923.[29] The October 12, 1923, issue of the Mulberry News published the "Purposes and Creed" of the Loyal Constitutionalists. The organization announced that it was a patriotic order for justice and all Constitutional rights.

The Klan Independent also told of the formation of the Loyal Constitutionalists. Under the headline "Anti-Klan Crowd Holds Meeting in Mulberry," the story read:

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[27] Mulberry [Kansas] News, November 30, 1923, p. 1.

[28] Ibid. [29] Ibid., October 12, 1923, p. 1.

> Extensive advertising of a meeting of an organization known as the Loyal Constitutionalists for Mulberry last Friday resulted in an audience estimated at 150 persons, but by actual count said to have numbered 86, gathering at Owl Hall for the purpose of hearing E. E. Haney, an attorney of Girard, condemn the Ku Klux Klan in no uncertain terms. Haney spoke for about an hour and in that time reviewed every charge of brutality brought against the Klan, but in his talk failed to comment on the recent riots at Carnegie, Pa., Perth Amboy, N. J., and Steubenville, Ohio.
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> Haney, who developed to be the principal speaker of the occasion devoted considerable eloquence to the fact that the klan members were hooded and masked, in most of their public appearances and often referred to the klan as an organization, of which its members wore "pillowslips" over their heads. The committee on arrangements, in its advance work apparently failed to properly instruct the "leading" members of the organization, on the proper time to applaud the speaker and he was often forced to bring about a rather prolonged pause in his talk, in order to give the chairman and other organizers an opportunity to start the tumult of enthusiasm.[30]

In the fall of 1923, Klan chapters were known to exist in many eastern Kansas communities, and where they did not exist, it was probably because the organizers were unable to be everywhere at once. In September, the Ku Klux Klan advertised openly in the local newspaper at Colony.[31] In Garnett, members of the Invisible Empire met at the Anderson County Courthouse and did not attempt to hide their identities.[32] It was reported in the Miami

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[30] The Independent, September 21, 1923, p. 1.

[31] The Louisburg Herald, quoted from the Le Roy Reporter, September 27, 1923, p. 2.

[32] Ibid., quoted from the Ft. Scott Tribune.

County Osawatomie World that the Klan was perfecting a ladies' auxiliary throughout the county.[33]

In November, in what was termed one of the most remarkable gatherings of klansmen ever held, more than 250 Exalted Cyclops, Field Representatives, and national delegates met at Emporia. Grand Dragons from the states of Georgia, Wyoming, Alabama, Oklahoma, Illinois, Arkansas, Oregon, and Washington attended. The sessions lasted two days, and more than 400 delegates represented 215 communities in the realm of Kansas.[34]

During the meeting N. C. Jewet, Grand Dragon of Oklahoma, attempted to answer the many questions about the difficulties the Klan was having in Oklahoma. General Nathan Bedford Forrest, Grand Dragon of Georgia, talked freely and frankly about the early history of the Klan and discussed the problems of Klan Number 1 of Atlanta that had resulted from the actions of certain members.[35]

Hon. Z. A. Harris, a national lecturer of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; the Kilgrapp of Pittsburg Klan Number 22; George C. Mc Carron, Imperial Representative; the Exalted Cyclops and Klan Giant of Coffeyville

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[33] Ibid., quoted from the Osawatomie World.

[34] The Independent, November 30, 1923, p. 1.

[35] Ibid.

Klan Number 27; and Fred M. Compton, Exalted Cyclops of the Atchinson Klan, also spoke at the convention.[36] The Klan ignored William Allen White's attack on the Invisible Empire when it met in Emporia.

On February 29, 1924, The Independent announced that the Klan was making arrangements to purchase the fair grounds at Pittsburg. Strong wrote:

> The fair grounds at Pittsburg, on 24th St., in the North part of the city is being purchased from the association this week by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.
>
> At the time of writing the deal has been practically closed. It is understood that the purchase contemplates the erection of a temple and a place of assembly on the grounds. The fiery cross will burn every night according to the men closely associated with the Klan movement.[37]

It is evident that the Klan was well established in Pittsburg by 1924. The fiery cross burned nightly and hooded, masked, and robed members of the Invisible Empire met regularly; but the Klan organizers still had many small eastern Kansas towns to bring into the Empire.

The first indication that the Klan had supporters at La Cygne in Linn County came when the Kansas City Times carried a news item on April 11, 1924, about a threat to a rural school teacher. The Times reported that the

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[36] Ibid.

[37] The Independent, February 29, 1924, p. 1.

teacher, Arlene Scott, had received a series of threatening letters from the Ku Klux Klan following the murder of her aunt, Ella Scott. Irate citizens of La Cygne demanded that the slayer of Ella Scott be brought to justice and a $1,000 reward was offered. Ellison Scott, Ella Scott's husband, was arrested, and when it was learned that Scott and Arlene Scott had registered as husband and wife at a Fort Scott hotel, many citizens of the community demanded that Miss Scott, too, be brought to trial. According to Miss Scott's attorney, John Hall, citizens near La Cygne were aroused and armed guards had to be maintained at the country school where she was teaching. The following story appeared in the La Cygne Journal:

> From one to three men have maintained an armed vigilance at the school since a masked man dressed supposedly in the regalia of the Ku Klux Klan called there February 27 at 1:45 in the afternoon, and handed Miss Scott a letter. Her attorney states the letter was typewritten and supposed to have been signed by representatives of the Ku Klux Klan.
>
> The letter says the Klan organization represents law abiding citizens and warns Miss Scott she "mustn't set her foot inside the school again, or her punishment would be such she wouldn't forget for fifty years.
>
> Miss Scott's authorized statement made public tonight by her attorney, John Hall, says in part. "February 27 I was teaching the country district school two miles east of my home in Linn County, where I was born and reared. I had fourteen pupils and was engaged in giving them examinations. At 1:45 o'clock in the afternoon someone knocked at the door. I went to the door and opened it, and was confronted by a rather large man, slightly stooped, robed in white. His face was almost concealed.
>
> "He did not speak to me, but handed me a letter, signed Ku Klux Klan and immediately left. I feel sure I recognized him, from what I could see of his

face, size, posture, and carriage. I was able also to obtain something of a description of the automobile that stopped in front of the schoolhouse. Some of the neighbors also obtained part of a description of the car.

"The letter warned me that I never should set my foot in that school house, and made many other threats. These threats were under the penalty I would not forget for the next fifty years and also other penalties were threatened.

"The letter further pretended that it was written by law abiding citizens who stated they had the backing of 60,000 members of the Ku Klux Klan.

"The orderly condition of the school was, of course, interferred with and the children, as well as myself, were badly frightened.

"There was no telephone at the schoolhouse, but I sent word to others who came and remained until the close of school that day."

Miss Scott charges the sheriff of the county arrested her November 23, 1923, taking her from the school while she was without enough apparel to keep her warm. Her statement reads: "He came to the schoolhouse in the school hours and arrested me on the charge that I was guilty of the murder of Ella Scott. I was not given permission to notify my parents as to where I was being taken. Some children attempted to escape the schoolroom in order to notify my parents, but the children were forcibly prevented by the sheriff who took hold of them.[38]

Ellison Scott was released on bail. The public followed the trial in the newspapers and large crowds from La Cygne attended the sensational trial. Scott was found guilty of his wife's murder and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

In July 1924, the La Cygne Journal announced the official arrival of the Ku Klux Klan at La Cygne in a

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[38] La Cygne Journal, March 21, 1924, p. 1.

large advertisement which read, "Watch for the Fiery Cross. Don't fail to come to hear Rev. Floyd Evans, a national lecturer talk. Everyone invited to come. Watch for the fiery cross Wednesday night, July 9."[39]

A large crowd estimated at 1,500 persons attended the meeting at the city park in La Cygne on the night of July 9. Rev. Evans and Rev. Phillips, organizers of the order, made rousing speeches on Americanism, and after the open air general meeting was over, a closed meeting was held at the opera house where about forty members were taken into the secret society of the Invisible Empire. It was estimated that the Klan would have 200 members at La Cygne within a few weeks time.[40] On July 25, Rev. Cody, a national lecturer from Independence, Kansas, spoke before a large crowd at the La Cygne city park. After this meeting, the Klan intermittently published notices of special lodge meetings at La Cygne.[41]

During the last week of April, the Mulberry Klan entertained members of visiting Klans at the Miller brothers' property north of Mulberry. 1,811 automobiles passed through the gate that led into a large pasture, and hundreds of others passed by the gate. A large cross,

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[39] Ibid., July 4, 1924, p. 1.

[40] Ibid., July 11, 1924, p. 1.

[41] Ibid., July 25, 1924, p. 1.

burning brightly, could be seen for miles. The American flag was raised high above the cross. Strong of The Independent described the meeting:

> The Mulberry Klan, the largest in the county outside of Pittsburg, was out in full force. Girard, Liberal, Minden, Franklin, Frontenac, Lamar, Cherokee, and other points were represented well, while Pittsburg sent some hundreds of people, including the band, drill teams, and the chief executives of the central organization. A number of prominent men of the state in church and school affairs were present.
>
> Robed Klansmen directed traffic on the streets of Mulberry and at the point of entrance to the grounds. The formation was circular inside the grounds. The first row of cars being more than a half mile in circumference and the second and third rows in proportion. The large crowd was handled without accident or an altercation. Klansmen with robes and crosses were welcomed in Mulberry by townspeople and occasional cheers could be heard as the streets were blocked by hundreds of cars.[42]

Shortly after the meeting at Mulberry, the first open air Klan meeting at Fort Scott was held on Evergreen Cemetery Road property. The meeting proved to be a political gathering. A large crowd assembled before a 35 foot electric cross over which the American flag had been draped. After a short program, the president of Pittsburg Business College, Professor Errabo, introduced Mart Montee, the mayor of Pittsburg, who hoped to become a candidate for governor and was seeking the votes of klansmen. The main speaker of the evening was Dr. E. H. Given, pastor of the United Brethern Church at Pittsburg and Klan writer

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[42] The Independent, May 2, 1924, p. 1.

for The Independent. Given was campaigning for a seat in congress from the third district on the Citizen's ticket.

In July, Sears, editor of the Mulberry News, informed his readers that the Ku Klux Klan managers of the Citizen's ticket were Jonathan G. Miller, A. H. Carl, and Dan Wooley. Apparently these men needed no introduction to the residents of Mulberry and were well-known and influential members of the community.[43] The editor of The Independent described the Millers as "excessively rich."[44] These managers hoped to present an endorsed Klan slate of candidates to the voters in the general election in November.

Heth Carl was running for county attorney on a law enforcement platform on the Citizen's ticket. The Klan strongly supported him and made it clear that its first concern was for the enforcement of the prohibition laws. Carl, a former resident of Mulberry, was supported by both Democrats and Republicans, including Dr. J. G. Sandidge, a Mulberry surgical specialist and Klan leader. His assistance no doubt helped to elect Carl, for Sandidge was respected by most Mulberry residents.

The Klan slate included the following candidates: Lance (Pittsburg) for sheriff; Charles Coughenour (Pittsburg) for commissioner of the Third District; Sam Webb

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[43] Mulberry News, July 11, 1924, p. 1.

[44] The Independent, July 31, 1925, p. 8.

for clerk of the District Court; A. B. Carpenter for commissioner of the Second District; John Vivian for justice of the peace; Charles Fowler (Mulberry) for probate judge.[45]

The Klan favored Leonard Boyd (Pittsburg) for county clerk and D. H. Morgan(Pittsburg) for justice of the peace in the county. Professor Errabo, J. Steinhauser, and Ross Scott, secretary of the Klan in Pittsburg, were the Klan choices for committeemen in Pittsburg. Leonard Boyd was the Klan candidate for the city clerk of Pittsburg.[46]

On August 8, 1924, Sears admitted that the Klan had done much better in the primary election in Crawford County than he had expected. The main objective of the anti-Klan forces had been to keep the Klan from dominating the nominations on each ticket, but the election results showed that the Invisible Empire exercised considerable strength in both parties. Although Sears failed to publish the results for the various offices, he reported that klansmen deserted some of their Democratic candidates at the last minute and asked for a Republican ballot. "It is claimed that because of their desertion of their Demo-

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45 Ibid., July 31, 1925, p. 8.

46 Mulberry News, July 11, 1924, p. 1.

cratic candidates who had expected their support, their influence in the Klan will rapidly reach the point of zero," Sears wrote.[47]

The greatest victory for the Ku Klux Klan was the nomination of A. H. Carl for county attorney. "The results show that the Klan forces put forth their greatest efforts for this man," wrote Sears.[48] Charles Fowler was selected to be the Democratic candidate for probate judge. His opponent in this race was M. F. Sears of the Mulberry News. Leonard Boyd led his opponent two to one for the nomination of county clerk, but Lance, who was bidding for the sheriff nomination, lost to Sheriff J. D. Turkington.[49]

One of the most interesting races in the 1924 election was for governor. The Republican candidate, Ben Paulen, neither rejected nor accepted the Klan vote. When he denied that he was a member of the Klan, he always added "at this time." The Klan was thought to be responsible for Paulen's nomination in the primary, and according to David Chalmers, "It seemed, in late summer of 1924, that the Klan was on the march in Kansas and nothing could stop it."[50]

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[47] Ibid., August 8, 1924, p. 1.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.,

[50] Chalmers, p. 145.

Fearing a Klan victory, William Allen White, publisher of the Emporia Gazette and "Kansas keeper of the nation's conscience," entered as an independent candidate for governor. Although he did not expect to win, he conducted one of the most colorful campaigns that the state had ever seen. Determined to defeat the "Organization of cowards," he set out with his wife and son in his Dodge touring car and covered the state, making delightfully original campaign speeches for six weeks. He would tell his listeners:

> The gang rule first came into the Republican party last May when a flock of dragons, kleagles, cyclopes, and fuzzy furies came to Wichita from Oklahoma and held a meeting with some Kansas terrors and whambedoodles. . . . later the cyclopes, Kleagles, Wizards, and willopusvallupuses began parading the Kansas cow pastures, passing the word down to the shirttailed ranger that they were to go into the Kansas primaries and nominate Ben Paulen.[51]

The anti-Klan people loved this kind of talk from William Allen White, but Kansas klansmen at the national klonvokation in Kansas City, Missouri, carried a black coffin bearing the name of Charles B. Griffith, Attorney General, and led a goat labeled "William Allen White."[52] The editor of The Independent described White as "sleek and fat" in the following article:

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[51] Ibid., pp. 146-47.

[52] Mechem, p. 389.

> Bunkum Bill White, pictured by an acquaintance, as a man who some years ago, saw him licked by a woman whom he had outraged in public spirit; sleek, fat, and imperialistic; a knocker, a kicker, and bushwhacker, seems to be, at last, fully exposed to the people.
>
> White represents the Kansas City Star in Kansas. This self-same Star is supporting the Klan-endorsed candidate in Missouri. White is the author of anti-Catholic writings. Yet, he bids for Catholic vote--votes for it against Jonathan Davis, the democratic nominee. What a travesty!
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> . . . . . .
>
> . . . Bill White's candidacy is a double-crossing crooked candidacy. . . . White is being pushed by the Kansas City Star to trim the very people he claims to be catering to.[53]

In spite of White's attempt to kill the Klan with ridicule, Ben Paulen was elected governor of Kansas by a plurality of 140,541 votes over incumbent Democrat Jonathan Davis. Paulen received 323,402 votes in the gubernatorial contest, but White surprised everyone by carrying Ellis County and receiving 149,696 votes.[54]

W. L. White wrote of his father's campaign:

> Although Paulen was presently elected, my father received about the same number of votes as the Democratic candidate; and he felt that the hundred and fifty thousand-odd votes which he had piled up had demonstrated to politicians that the Klan endorsement was, in fact, a handicap as there was in Kansas a larger anti-Klan vote than there were Klansmen. At all events, the Klan presently disappeared from Kansas politics; and on May 5, 1926, my father fired

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[53] The Independent, October 24, 1924, p. 2.

[54] "Klan Struck Powerful Blow in the State," The Independent, November 28, 1924, p. 1.

> in the Gazette his parting shot: ". . . The Kluxers in Kansas are as dejected and sad as last year's bird's nest, afflicted with general debility, dizziness on going upstairs, and general aversion to female society."[55]

Lieutenant Governor Chase, the Klan's choice, received a plurality of 181,867 votes. The Independent reported that a new high in majorities had been set for Klan candidates. Strong said:

> The inroads made by the Ku Klux Klan into the pluralities of candidates it opposed were manifest in the elections of Charles B. Griffith, attorney general, Frank J. Ryan, secretary of state, and Jess W. Miley, superintendent of public instruction, by pluralities ranging from 14,000 to 26,000 while their mates on the Republican ticket were rolled into office by pluralities of 85,000 to 181,000.[56]

The Klan also claimed responsibility for the victory of Senator Arthur Capper, a long-time winner in the state. In the election of the Republican presidential and vice presidential candidates, Calvin Coolidge and Charles Dawes, the Invisible Empire again rode on the shirt tails of certain winners. According to Henry J. Allen, owner of the Wichita Beacon:

> It was given out quietly in the last days of the campaign that the Klan had endorsed President Coolidge.

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[55] William Allen White, The Autobiography of William Allen White (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), pp. 631-32.

[56] The Independent, November 28, 1924, p. 1.

> This was obviously a band-wagon move, as the leaders knew that Coolidge was sure to be elected anyhow, and they wanted to get some of the glory. Senator Capper, Republican of Kansas, was endorsed also as a bandwagon proposition, as his opponent was scarcely known. His record for being unbeatable made him the natural heir to the Klan support.[57]

Although the Klan claimed victories in the election of 1924, the re-election of C. B. Griffith as attorney general was of great importance, for he was investigating the Klan and had been instrumental in attempting to oust the organization from the state.

In October, 1924, Charles H. Mc Brayer, Grand Dragon of the realm of Kansas, published the Klan's stand on the ouster suit in newspapers throughout Kansas. Addressed to "All Hydras, Great Titans, Furies, Giants, Exalted Cyclops, Terrors, and Klansmen," the letter was a defense of the Klan and an appeal for justice and fair treatment. It was an important piece of Klan propaganda. Mc Brayer reviewed the history of the ouster suit brought against the Ku Klux Klan and stated that the charges against the Klan were contained in two counts. The first charge brought against the Klan was that it was operating in Kansas without a charter. The Supreme Court of Kansas had not rendered a decision on this count. The second charge was that the Klan was "a criminal organization,

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[57] "Klan Victories and Defeats," The Literary Digest, LXXXIII, No. 8 (November 22, 1924), 16.

violating every law known to God and man, and many of them enumerated." The state found the organization not guilty on the second count and dismissed the petition.[58]

In November, the arguments based on the findings of S. H. Brewster, commissioner appointed by the Supreme Court to hear the testimony in the Klan ouster suit, were presented to the State Supreme Court. The report recommended that the Klan be required to obtain a charter to do business in the state, but stated that no evidence had been offered to show that the Klan had coerced citizens.[59]

In January, the Supreme Court declared that the Ku Klux Klan was a sale's organization, and as such it needed permission to do business in Kansas. The Klan interpreted the court's decision as a victory, but the press saw the decision as the first step in ousting the society from the state. The Klan had been charged "with many outrages," Strong wrote in The Independent, but following two years of investigation, by both hostile and friendly forces, the Klan had been completely exonerated. Strong said, "It naturally follows that if the Klan must charter, so must all other organizations in the state."[60] Unless the Klan

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[58] La Cygne Journal, October 31, 1924, p. 2.

[59] Ibid., November 14, 1924, p. 2.

[60] The Independent, January 15, 1925, p. 1.

was exempt, the Shriners, the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and numerous other fraternal orders would be forced to secure charters because they, too, purchased regalia and other paraphenalia outside of Kansas and could be defined as a business, not a benevolent society.

On January 23, 1925, Strong wrote again:

> Before the charter controversy is settled there will probably be a different charter board. There is no farfetched method by which the Klan will conform with state and national laws. If this requires a charter, the Klan will get a charter by national supreme mandate. . . . It will probably take more than two years to get a decision on the next one.[61]

A month later the State Senate voted 23 to 14 to pass a bill to permit the Klan to operate in Kansas without a charter. This action was no doubt the result of pressure from other organizations which would also have to obtain charters if the bill was defeated. Thus, with the Klan "respectable" in the eyes of many Kansas citizens, applications for membership began to increase. Strong said that 37 men applied for membership in the Invisible Empire at Mulberry the morning following the Senate's action.[62]

The Ku Klux Klan applied for a Kansas charter in May. G. Clay Baker, state senator from Shawnee County,

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[61] Ibid., January 23, 1925, p. 1.

[62] Ibid., January 15, 1925, p. 1.

filed the application with the charter board. The board had previously refused to grant the charter to the Independent Klan of America and a local Klan in Wyandotte County, but the new application was made on the regular form prescribed for foreign corporations desiring to be admitted to Kansas. The purpose of the corporation was listed as follows:

> Nothing except such as is incidental to the carrying out of its purposes as a mystic, social, patriotic, benevolent association, the conferring of initiation and degree rituals, fraternal and secret obligations, words, grips, signs, and ceremonies, and the promotion and establishment of subordinate organizations in accordance with the provision in its charter.[63]

Klansmen met openly throughout Kansas without fear of arrest or persecution. A meeting of the Klan at Girard was so largely attended that many klansmen did not remain to hear the speakers because they could not find standing room in the theatre in that county seat town. Strong observed that 1,500 klansmen at one meeting was a large gathering for an organization which the press claimed had been "ousted from the state."[64]

By 1925, the Crawford County Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Kansas Realm, No. 22, boasted that it had the largest membership in the history of the organization. The head of

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[63] Ibid., June 5, 1925, p. 5.

[64] Ibid., February 13, 1925, p. 1.

Klan No. 22 was Albert Scates and the secretary was Ross Scott. The klavern had been moved from the fair grounds to North Broadway in Pittsburg.[65]

By 1926, the political faction and the Headlight faction, which appeared to have been a radical group of lecturers and writers who created divisions in the local Klans, had been forced to leave the Klan at Pittsburg. Strong observed, "During the three years of life in this county, the organization has faced many tricky issues. It has been compelled to take drastic measures when internal dissension threatened." He said that members had become more independent and no longer tended to vote in blocs but voted as they pleased and endorsed whom they considered to be "clean government candidates," whether they were members of the Klan or not. "Headlight speechmakers are not inside to make revolutionary utterances, or to promote private wars of their own," he concluded.[66]

The fiery cross continued to burn nightly at the baseball park in Pittsburg in spite of the fact that some businessmen believed that business would have been better

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[65] Ibid., January 9, 1925, p. 2.

[66] Ibid.

if it had been removed. To strangers the burning cross was a novelty. Klansmen in Crawford County explained that they just liked to see the emblem of their order displayed as a form of friendly greeting.[67]

Thus, by 1926, the Klan began to take on the look of other fraternal orders of the day. The Klan adopted a policy of cooperating in all public improvement projects and abandoned its earlier hatreds. The Invisible Empire, it seemed, was an accepted social organization.

The nomination of Al Smith, a Catholic and hero of the Eastern big cities, for President of the United States in 1928 regenerated the old Klan fear and hatred for Catholicism. Although the Klan disapproved of Herbert Hoover's internationalism, at least he was a Protestant and safely dry. Even William Allen White, long a foe of the Klan, described Al Smith as a representative of the saloon and gambling interests and feared that Smith would, if elected, nullify the Eighteenth Amendment by some "legal trick."[68] The World's Work, another old enemy of the Klan, explained that the Klan would oppose Al Smith because he was "inextricably allied with bossism, with nullification,

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[67] Ibid., March 26, 1926, p. 1.

[68] Matthew and Hannah Josephson, Al Smith: Hero of the Cities (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 382.

with aliens, with priest-rule."[69]

David M. Chalmers summed up the election of Herbert Hoover thus, "In the end, the old-stock native America and prosperity were too much for the Irish boy from the Lower East Side. . . . In 1928, probably no Democrat could have won. . . . However, the Klan did not deserve any important share of the credit other than having helped condition the American people to such campaigns."[70]

There is no definite date for the death of the Invisible Empire in eastern Kansas. After the election of Hoover, the Klan simply faded more and more from the public view. The order appeared to be thriving in the spring of 1928, but by the depression years it had all but ceased to exist. Horn wrote of the original Klan, "It was; then it was not--no man could say when the one condition ended and the other began."[71] The Kansas Klan of the 1920's, too, ". . . was; and then it was not."

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[69] "The Ballots Behind the Ku Klux Klan," The World's Work, LV, No. 3 (January 28, 1924), 252.

[70] Chalmers, p. 303.

[71] Horn, p. 373.

Chapter III

R. Lofton Hudson, in Helping Each Other to be Human, said:

> Often we dislike people because we fear them. . . . We fear the communists--and rightly so--therefore, we hate them. Catholics and Protestants fear each other; each blocks the other's program and are diametrically opposed on many issues. No amount of sentiment can avoid that painful fact. Real love might teach us to live in peace, but whoever creates a sense of insecurity in another will arouse his dislike.[1]

Fanaticism and fear both played major roles in fostering the Ku Klux Klan movement in eastern Kansas during the 1920's. Many Americans were disillusioned and had a deep sense of insecurity during the period following the First World War. Because of their insecurity, many of the leading small town citizens turned to the organization which appeared to preserve the status quo. Many persons who did not join the movement actually had the same insecurities, but they were not "joiners" and did not wish to be identified with the radical Klan organization. Some simply did not share the fears of their neighbors and refused to hide behind sheets and pillowslips.[2]

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[1] R. Lofton Hudson, Helping Each Other to be Human (Waco, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1970), p. 73.

[2] Personal Interview, Omar Nichols, September 19, 1969.

To understand the causes of fear in Kansas during the 1920's it is necessary to study contemporary Klan literature. There was very little in the Klan writings to indicate that the Negro was a cause of insecurity. Most small towns had "Jim Crow" laws, and Negroes knew that they did not dare stay overnight in these towns. Negroes who lived in the towns of eastern Kansas were spoken of as "our colored" and they "knew their places" as surely as the southern Negro knew his. Thus, the old fear of miscegenation and Negro rule that had prompted the establishment of the original Ku Klux Klan was non-existent in Kansas in the twentieth century.

There were, however, deep-rooted fears and insecurities among Kansans. The chief fears of the Ku Klux Klan related to prohibition, Catholicism, and immorality. There was also a hint of fear of communism, immigrants, labor organizations, Jews, and corrupt government in Klan literature.

Perhaps to identify those the Ku Klux Klan hated most would establish those the Invisible Empire feared most. Although most Klan writers began by saying that they were not anti-Catholic, they ended by condemning the Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church represented the greatest single threat to Anglo-Saxon-protestant values. The Roman church could, many Kansans

firmly believed, destroy the United States. The Klan intensified their fears of Catholics. Protestant ministers had, for years, linked the anti-Christ and the Beast of the book of Revelation with the Catholic Church and the Pope. It took little persuasion on the part of Klan writers to convince protestants of all denominations that the last days had arrived and that the Pope could overthrow the government of the United States as easily as the Communists had seized Russia.

Even those klansmen who did not view the Catholic Church as a major threat believed that Catholics owed their first allegiance to a foreign power; therefore, Catholics could not be "100 per cent" loyal to the United States. The editor of The Independent wrote, "The only objection of the Klan to the Catholic Church is that its policy is dictated from a foreign country. . . . The Catholic Church is Roman in conception and Roman in government."[3]

In 1923, Hiram Wesley Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, wrote in an article, "Klan Principles Must Rule," for Klan organs throughout the United States that, "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan hold that the doc-

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[3] The Independent, May 15, 1925, p. 1.

trine of the Catholic Church is that the pope is God's divinely appointed representative on earth, and has the right of control over states; that doctrine is dangerous to this or any other free country."[4]

The Catholic Church was later the target of the Klan Wizard. In an article which appeared in the December 28, 1923, issue of The Independent, he wrote:

> The knights of the Ku Klux Klan make this solemn pronouncement, that until such time as the Roman Catholic hierarchy announces Christ's doctrine of supremacy of State over Church in governmental affairs, we shall steadfastly oppose the political interference of Roman Catholic organizations in political matters in America. If this is to bring upon us the heavy weight of Catholic persecution, it is a cross which we will bear.
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> . . . . . .
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> We cannot allow any world wide system of religious teaching, highly organized and entirely secret, to gain control of the free channels of government in America. The free public school system of America is the singular God-given instrument with which the forces of superstition, ignorance, and fanaticism have been beaten to their knees; and any man of any sect, anywhere who lends his voice, his money, or his influence to the suppression or hindrance of this great educational system is an enemy to this country and ought not to be permitted to preach a doctrine subversive to its principles.[5]

Orin B. Strong defended the Klan principles in The Independent in 1923:

> The Crawford County Klans have clashed more violently with the Catholics than with any other opposition. . . . but we could not conscientiously vote any other

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[4] Ibid., December 21, 1923, p. 1.

[5] Ibid., December 28, 1923, p. 1.

> way except against the parochial schooling system or the monopolized Catholic political system of block (sic) voting. We firmly believe that the Catholic people, in the mass, will in time throw off the power vested in the priesthood, and take unto themselves this power.[6]

E. H. Given, minister of the United Bretheren Church at Pittsburg, explained why the Klan limited its membership to protestants:

> The reason that Catholics can not join the order of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is that only Gentiles and Protestants can join under the constitution and by laws of that order. It is not anti-Catholic. The Klan is not fighting Jews. The Jews in many places are fighting the Klan. . . . A Gentile can not join a Jewish organization. It would be folly for a Gentile to fight a Jewish order because he could not join.[7]

Given believed that the Bible is the basis of all government and should be read every day in the public schools "because it does not discriminate in any way, but is the code of all moral law."[8]

H. A. Strong, another contributor to the Klan organ at Mulberry, wrote in 1924 that the Ku Klux Klan was against the Catholic Church and "Popery" because the Catholic "system" was threatening American principles of equality and democracy. He believed that the "rising of the Klans" was a crusade against despotism in the Catholic

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[6] Ibid., May 30, 1924, p. 1.

[7] Ibid., September 14, 1923, p. 1.

[8] Ibid., September 7, 1923, p. 1.

Church and called for an enlistment of "100 per cent American" citizens in the Invisible Empire. The Klan, according to Strong, had a mission to curb Catholic power in America. He would rid the United States of the "foreign" hierarchy which was attempting to control economics, politics, and religion in the United States. Strong wrote that the Catholic Church was using "the great sacred order of Knights of Columbus" in order to gain control of the Democratic party, through bloc voting, in order to rule America.[9]

In May 1924, Strong said:

> The Pope created two new American Cardinals the other day; these high church "princes" were not chosen by American Catholics, but named by a foreign potentate, in the most absolute and autocratic manner. Great Americanism that!
>
> This grand church imperial, is too exclusive, and un-American to use the common schools, to educate its children, unless it can control these schools and use Catholic teachers.
>
> Everybody else in America uses the public schools; only the exclusive Catholic; he has to have his parochial school where from earliest age he can school American children in the un-American system, common to Catholic policy and ideals, wholly at variance with American ideals and policy.[10]

Joseph Moffat Mecklin, in The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind, with respect to the estab-

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[9] Ibid., July 11, 1924, p. 1.

[10] Ibid., May 9, 1924, p. 1.

lishment of the Ku Klux Klan in Topeka, said, "As near as we know, the formulation of Klanism here is fear and suspicion of the Roman Catholic Church."[11]

Mecklin attributed the rise of the Klan to public intolerance in general, and especially toward the Catholic Church. He attempted to show that the Klan drew its inspiration from ancient prejudices and concluded that the Klan was not alien to American society, but a "recrudescence of forces that already existed."[12]

Thus, Klan publications and lecturers transmitted a message that reinforced the member's fear of the Catholic Church. Speakers often lectured for several hours on this single topic. In Liberal, Kansas, T. G. Barlow, a national lecturer from Kansas City, spoke for two hours, ". . . and in that time explained in detail the principles of the klan as an organization and its policy towards the Catholic Church."[13]

M. F. Sears, the publisher of the Mulberry News, asserted that many "good" people joined the Klan because

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[11] Joseph Moffat Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind (New York: Harcourt Brace, and Company, 1924), p. 34.

[12] Ibid., p. 13.

[13] The Independent, December 21, 1923, p. 1.

they believed that the country "is standing in the shadow of a peril, although that peril is in fact no more tangible than the lurking presence of the Bogey Man."[14] He ridiculed the idea that the Pope was going to move his headquarters to Washington within six months as the Klan organizers were warning the residents of Mulberry in 1923. Sears wrote, ". . . it is time for every newspaper in the land, big and little, to get busy and tear the mask from the faces of these migratory marplots."[15]

Not all of the Ku Klux Klan members in eastern Kansas waged a bitter "hate campaign" against Catholics. In September 1923, the Knights of Columbus and the knights of the Ku Klux Klan at Colony advertised a benefit ball game to be held to aid the Jewish relief fund.[16] In Garnett, members of the Invisible Empire and members of the Catholic Church met at the Anderson County Courthouse in order to adopt a set of resolutions to help preserve peace and harmony in the community. Both sides denounced the radicals who had invaded their community and had

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[14] Mulberry News, August 23, 1923, p. 2.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Here There and Everywhere," The Louisburg Herald, quoted from Le Roy Reporter, September 27, 1923, p. 2.

stirred up strife and hatred among peaceful neighbors.[17]

By 1925, the tone of the Klan articles had begun to soften toward the Catholic Church, and writers sometimes admitted that perhaps the Klan had been a bit bigoted in the beginning. The Crawford County Klan paper reflected:

> The Klan, in this county, has gradually assumed an air or permanency. There is no particular fight left here. . . . Today the Klan in this county is as conservative as the other Protestant fraternal organizations. . . . Credulous Klansmen now know that there are no guns stored in the basements of the Catholic churches, and credulous Catholic mothers know that their children will not be kidnapped by hooded Knights after nightfall.[18]

In 1926, a Klan newspaper reported on the organization's increased tolerance, "Catholics are not being denounced by Headlight henchmen as 'Red necks' and 'Fish-eaters.' It is a very much improved condition."[19] It is unlikely that the following letter "to the editor" of a small town paper published in 1923 would have appeared three years later:

> Well, a few more words about our preacher. He was born and raised by Catholic parents down in Texas. He says he has seen the Christian missionaries visit the

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[17] Ibid., quoted from the Ft. Scott Tribune.

[18] The Independent, December 11, 1925, p. 1.

[19] Ibid., February 12, 1926, p. 1.

> Mexican residents of their city and distribute the Bible, and the old priest of the Catholic Church would follow up and take the Bible from the poor Mexicans, and he has seen the Catholic priests burn the Bible by the hundred. He has shown up some bad things on his parental church.[20]

As the Klan matured and became a part of the fraternal scene, it ceased to fear the Catholic Church. The radical speakers against the Catholic Church failed to produce any concrete evidence that the Pope was going to overthrow the government of the United States, and Klansmen gained confidence and lost their feelings of insecurity.[21] By 1926, Klansmen no longer believed that the birth of a male child in a Catholic family was celebrated by burying a gun and ammunition beneath the church in preparation for the day when the government was to be overthrown on behalf of the Pope.[22]

Coupled with the idea that Catholics were less than one hundred per cent American was the idea that patriotism was limited to white, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon citizens of the United States. Thus, an exaggerated sense of patriotism permeated all Klan literature. A writer for the Klan

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[20] Letter to the Editor, Drexel Star, November 3, 1923, p. 1.

[21] Personal Interview, Omar Nichols, September 19, 1969.

[22] "Why They Joined the Klan," The New Republic, XXXVI, No. 468 (November 31, 1923), 322.

organ at Mulberry wrote in May of 1924, "Is it wrong to awaken patriotism and Christianity in the hearts of men?"[23] Another writer stated:

> The Klan teaches that the rights of American citizenship should be exercised to the fullest degree by all loyal Americans so that foreign and un-American influences shall not control the destinies and sap the loyalty of this nation.[24]

The importance of patriotism in the Invisible Empire cannot be overlooked in a study of the Ku Klux Klan in eastern Kansas. The rituals of the Klan were steeped in patriotism. The following editorial illustrates the influence of patriotic rites. The story was called "The Lesson."

> And sometimes we wonder why Americans--real Americans oppose the lesson of the Ku Klux Klan.
>
> Not long since we saw 5,000 men in full regalia. Twenty bands were playing "The Star Spangled Banner." The military step was perfect. Each step was in unison. Every robe was snow white, with red dash, made by the insignia of the order and of democracy, setting off the intense white. On every side were silk flags--large ones, the American flag.
>
> In the lead of this parade were 300 horsemen, all mounted on grey or dapple grey horses. The bridle reins were decorated with little flags. Every tenth rider carried a large American flag.
>
> Every 100th man carried a minature fiery cross. Gigantic spot lights played over the scene.
>
> At the end of the street was a large flag pole, the upper end of which was more than 100 feet in the air. From this was suspended an American flag of 20X40 feet in dimensions. Upon this flag a dozen spot lights were playing. As the parade neared the

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[23] The Independent, May 2, 1924, p. 1.

[24] Ibid., September 28, 1923, p. 1.

> flag a dozen buglers stepped into the light. They were costumed in white garments. Their military bugle call rose shrilly over the softer "Onward Christian Soldiers" of the leading band. A space was cleared as if by magic in front of the flag and two hundred men arranged themselves in a formation spelling out the words--"Americans on guard." It was an inspiring sight.
>
> "Is there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, This is mine own, my native land?"
>
> What a lesson in patriotism this! There were no scoffers there.[25]

The patriotic spirit of the Klan during the 1920's was not a new element in eastern Kansas. During the months prior to the entry of the United States in World War I, lecturers made "one hundred per cent American" speeches in theatres and opera houses throughout the Midwest. An advertisement which appeared in the Drexel Star on November 29, 1917, read:

> Darius A. Brown Coming: Darius A. Brown of Kansas City will address the people of this vicinity at the Bryant Theatre on Friday night, November 30th, under the auspices of the National Defense of which John Showalter is chairman. This will be a rousing patriotic meeting and every liberty loving person with a drop of American blood in his veins should be present. No Admission. It is important that you be there.[26]

When the United States entered the war in 1917, Red Cross centers sprang up in every small town and community. Fraternal orders were extremely patriotic. In

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[25] Ibid., October 24, 1924, p. 2.

[26] Drexel Star, November 29, 1917, p. 3.

November 1917, the Bryant Theatre at Drexel advertised the showing of "Civilization" which was described as a film spectacle even greater than "Birth of a Nation." The advertisement urged the citizens, "If you have one drop of American blood in your body, see 'Civilization'."[27]

Kansans were proud of their patriotic spirit in 1917, and those who did not support the war wholeheartedly were considered less than 100 per cent American. Young men who did not readily volunteer in the service of their country were called "Yellow Streaks" and they often found a yellow streak painted on their gates, their mailboxes, or on their houses. One young man who appeared reluctant to serve his country awoke one morning to find a yellow streak painted completely around his house. There was frequent talk of "tar and feathers," but there is no evidence that the threat was actually carried out.[28]

The telephone operators of the locally owned and operated telephone company, the Farmer's Mutual Telephone Company, repeatedly warned Dr. A. C. Wunnicke

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[27] Ibid., November 1, 1917, p. 3.

[28] Personal Interview, Golda Johnson, September 1, 1969.

against the use of the German language over the telephone. When the doctor objected to the draft and the sending of American soldiers to France, he was branded a "German spy" and received so much abuse that he was finally compelled to publish the following notice in the local paper:

> Dr. A. C. Wunnicke wishes to state that the statement circulated that he is a German spy is a falsehood and that he will prosecute to the full extent of the law any one making such statements. Furthermore, he states that he was born in this country. His ancestors were of French and Polish descent, his great grandfather being on the staff of Napoleon and was with him at the capture of Moscow. He says he can remember his mother telling how Napoleon took off his helmet so that the doctor's great grandsire could fill it with snow to melt to quench their thirst on a long march in the winter months.[29]

Another notice addressed to the "voters of Cass County" during the war informed the people, "Loafing and idleness is a crime and non-essential effort is criminal under the present conditions."[30]

Yet another example of the extreme patriotism of Americans during World War I is found in a notice which was labelled "Unpatriotic Patriotism." It read:

> One of the most unpatriotic things people can do is to put sin in the place of patriotism. When people start giving card parties to raise money for such sacred causes as the Red Cross, it looks to us like all sense of self-respect of that community has been

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[29] Drexel Star, December 16, 1917, p. 1.

[30] Ibid., June 27, 1918, p. 1.

> lost. . . . but thank God for communities like Drexel where card playing and dancing is not tolerated.[31]

Thus, when E. H. Given described the qualifications for Klan membership in 1923, it was nothing new to small townspeople. Rev. Given wrote:

> Every man of the order takes his stand upon the highest ideals for the purest type of American patriotism.
>
> They stand upon the Declaration of Independence as the basis of all popular government.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We stand for the American flag. . . . We have but one flag, and it the universal flag, and it calls to the nations of the world, "Don't tread on me." The price of the flag was the blood of our fathers.
>
> To those who would undermine the free institutions we say "Hands off," and we will defend the free institutions against every foe, whether it be political or ecclesiastical.[32]

A Klan gathering in Crawford County in May of 1924 best describes the patriotic sentiments of klansmen. The writer for The Independent described a meeting of the Klan:

> Last Monday night the Klans of Crawford County and some of those of Barton County, Mo., assembled at the newly-purchased Klan home in North Pittsburg--the Fair Grounds.
>
> It was a mighty gathering!
>
> If the opposition of the Klans could have stood to the fore and identified every face that passed through the well-guarded portals--faces of 3,000 American men --hundreds of them young men, virile men, strong men--men who fought in the Argonne, at Chatieu Thierry, and men grey at the temples who fought in the Spanish American war--and just a few, a very few who wore the Blue and the Grey in 1861. Americans every one.

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[31] Ibid., March 21, 1918, p. 3.

[32] The Independent, September 7, 1923.

> What a revelation it would have been for some of the carping critics who talk and know not whereof they speak. Could the critics then have been piloted through the outer and the inner walls of men to the very center--to the base of the American flag--to the very center of Klandom, as it were. The head critic, with realization dawning within him, would have said--Here is an organization that exemplifies patriotism. Then, after an early ritualism, when 3,000 voices welled up on one great volume of sound, "My country 'tis of thee
> Sweet land of liberty."
> The critics would have bowed their heads, or joined in that great spontaneous burst of national song. Who denies the right of a Klansman to exemplify the American flag! Who denies the right of a Klansman to sing America! Who denies the right of the chaplain to pray for the weal of America![33]

David M. Chalmers in Hooded Americanism said, "Although vice was always a matter of interest, the bond which united Klansman and churchman was a common struggle against demon rum and its minions."[34] Nowhere is this more evident than in eastern Kansas.

Prohibition appealed to Klansmen and would-be Klansmen alike. Throughout Kansas the W. C. T. U. had been organized to put an end to "this great evil--the liquor traffic."[35] Sermons were preached against the sale of alcoholic beverages in most protestant churches, and prohibitionists found many willing disciples in the war against the "wet forces."

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[33] Ibid., May 2, 1924, p. 1.

[34] Drexel Star, November 15, 1917, p. 1.

[35] Chalmers, p. 248.

Before the Klan came to Kansas, a woman who lived in a tent in Miami County went to the Justice of the Peace in Sugarcreek township. She said her son had become intoxicated by drinking liquor at a "blind tiger" operated in Drexel. Mr. J. H. Rhea, Justice of the Peace, told her that he had no jurisdiction in Missouri and for her to see a Missouri officer. She told him that she could get no satisfaction from the Missouri officials because she did not have sufficient evidence. Shortly after the woman's complaints had been registered, however, the "joint" was visited by persons wearing white robes and white hoods pulled down over their faces. They proceeded to empty the contents from the owner's bottles, then took the operator of the tavern to the edge of town where he was warned to leave town and never to come back. No one knew who the white-robed men were, but the incident went down in the memory of those who remembered the incident as the work of the "white-cappers."[36]

Most small town officials in Kansas shared the sentiments of the Mayor of Drexel. When he learned that there had been strangers in town who had been drinking and had become intoxicated on a Saturday night, he in-

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[36] George Rhea, "History of Drexel," Drexel Star (November 12, 1953), 2.

serted a notice in the Drexel Star which threatened: "Drexel will not tolerate any such performances. This is a prohibition town. Bootleggers should keep away if they don't want to get what is coming to them."[37]

When the Ku Klux Klan became organized in Kansas, it took up the fight against the "liquor traffic." Bootlegging had existed for years in Crawford County; yet, there was but one source of supply for the county, and "drunk after drunk and bootlegger after bootlegger" who appeared in the local police courts told that he "got it in Croweburg or a dozen other places" to the south of Pittsburg.[38] The county had been controlled for some time, The Independent claimed, through a "booze ring." It would be hard to break up for the bootlegger had been protected by men of means and dignity "who handled things, but never appeared in public with dirty hands."[39] In February 1925, a number of raids on a bootlegging ring in Pittsburg were conducted by members of the Ku Klux Klan.

During the first ten days of the "clean-up" of the booze industry in Crawford County by the Ku Kluxers

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[37] Drexel Star, April 13, 1922, p. 1.

[38] The Independent, March 20, 1925, p. 1.

[39] Ibid., February 13, 1925, p. 1.

4,700 gallons of "moonshine" were confiscated. This was in addition to thousands of gallons of "wine, hootch, and other stuff taken."[40] "Naturally the bootlegger and other law violaters have no love for the Klan," wrote a klansman in 1925.[41]

In August 1925, at a local meeting called by the Ku Klux Klan, the Invisible Empire offered financial and moral support to the law enforcement agencies in Crawford County to curb the sale of liqour. The meeting was held at Mulberry, with many non-Klan people present. Those at the meeting wanted strong enforcement of the prohibition law and passed a resolution supporting severe punishment of the constable, Fred Black, and his two deputies if it was proved at their trials that they had accepted bribes. It also agreed to oust Sheriff Turkington from office if it could be shown that he was protecting the liquor interests in Crawford County. Mulberry Klan members were inclined to believe that Black was innocent of irregular practices because he was a Klan member. Instead, they preferred to believe that the sheriff was guilty and was attempting to involve a member of the Klan in the illegal liquor traffic.[42] In a letter to

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[40] Ibid., April 13, 1925, p. 1.

[41] Ibid., March 20, 1925, p. 1.

[42] Ibid., August 21, 1925, p. 1.

the editor of The Independent, a reader expressed the following opinion: "For twenty years Crawford county has been the wettest and possibly the most lawless place in Kansas, if not in the middle west. This condition could not have existed without graft and the purchase of protection by the joint keepers."[43]

Even those who did not endorse the Ku Klux Klan in Crawford County had to admit that the Kluxers had done what the anti-Klan forces and individuals had not been able to do for years--rid the county of the liquor industry. Through the help of Klan-elected county attorney, Heth Carl, and the efforts of the Invisible Empire, the sale of liquor was stopped not only in Crawford County, but to some extent in every other county bordering on Crawford County.

On prohibition the Klan found ready-made allies against liquor. The W. C. T. U., protestant churches, and puritanical citizens of the small towns in eastern Kansas endorsed the Invisible Empire's war on the liqour forces and approved whatever means the Empire used to rid their communities of the "evil of drink." No one questioned the Klan's vigilante-type methods to elimin-

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[43] Ibid.

ate booze, for the end justified the means.

E. H. Given, like many others, attacked the enemies of prohibition through the Ku Klux Klan. He wrote:

> When the governor of the great state of New York defied the dry laws of this country and threw down the challenge to the Anti-Saloon League and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, then it was that the average man who has not sworn his soul away, sought for admittance into this order which was championing the righteous cause in America.
>
> Neither the wet forces of this country, Roman hierarchy, nor the subsidized press, or the politicians can destroy this the most powerful organization on the face of the earth outside of the church of Jesus Christ. This great force standing for the open Bible, pure womanhood and manhood, the American nation, for public schools, government of the people by the people can influence many millions of votes.[44]

William Allen White appears to have been as supportive on the issue of prohibition as Given. White's son wrote, "There were bigots in this movement, but I wonder if any subsequent generation can understand that there were many most earnest, if mistaken idealists who poured into the movement the enthusiasm of a deep hope that Prohibition could abolish alcoholism, and that it would be a tremendous step forward in human happiness."[45]

An editorial in The New Republic explained why people joined the Ku Klux Klan. It was a parochial-mindedness which caused people to long to turn back the clock to

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[44] Ibid., September 14, 1923, p. 1.

[45] White, p. 634.

Victorian times in order to preserve the status quo which seemed in so much danger. The old institutions which had been held dear were threatened by the wildness of youth, the bootlegger, all night auto escapades, petting parties, and bad gin. People, especially in the Middle West, were frightened by the rapid changes which were taking place in society.[46] Even William Allen White, an enemy of the Klan, sensed that the era was becoming morally corrupt. Upon reaching his fiftieth birthday, he wrote:

> Fifty years meant something so new and so sad that I felt upset in bewilderment and something like sorrow. I had crossed the meridian, and I did not like the new country.
>
> And where, in these glittering twenties, were the hopes which I and my kind had held so high in the first two decades of the new century? Looking around me in the gathering roar of prosperity, the only rising political force seemed to be the dark bigotry of the Ku Klux Klan. And other sinister forces of oppression to the free human spirit seemed to be gathering across the seas. Where were our hopes and dreams of yesteryear?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> What a sordid decade is passing! It will be known in American history fifty years hence as the time of terrible reaction.
>
> . . . Corruption is rampant in high places. Special privilege is unleashed and shameless.[47]

There is little doubt that the Klan appealed to many decent small townspeople who wanted to curb the immorality

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[46] "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan," The New Republic, LII, No. 678 (November 30, 1927), 34.

[47] White, pp. 627, 632.

that seemed to threaten the ways of the past. The newspapers and magazines were filled with stories of bootlegging, corrupt government, and immorality in the cities. The mass production of the Model T Ford was bringing changes much too swiftly for the small towns, and one judge became famous when he called the Model T "a house of prostitution on wheels."[48] Naturally, Kansans were frightened and insecure. When the Ku Klux Klan attacked the local undesirables in the tradition of the old vigilante law and order style of earlier days, the Invisible Empire was given a badge of respectability.

When a married man of Drexel began to have an affair with "another woman," the Ku Klux Klan advised the man--in a note--to break off the affair at once or suffer the consequences. Needless to say, the man heeded the advice of the Invisible Empire.[49] According to C. W. Mills, who corresponded with the editor of the Drexel Star about the Klan, a signed letter advising the person to conduct himself properly was usually sufficient notice.[50]

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[48] Norman Mc Kenzie, Secret Societies (London: Aldus Books, 1967), p. 283.

[49] Personal Interview, Olivan Bundy, September 9, 1969.

[50] Letter to the Editor, Drexel Star, October 13, 1923, p. 1.

The Invisible Empire, then, became the keeper of community morals. When anyone stepped out of line, the Klan was there to remind him that his conduct was undesirable. If that failed to change the violater's conduct, the Klan used more forceful means. There is little evidence in the local newspapers of eastern Kansas to indicate that the Klan often had to resort to harsh measures. The war against the Catholic Church was carried on from the pulpit of protestant churches or from the speaker's platform. The battle against immorality was usually conducted subtly. Only against "booze" did the Klan move forcefully from the very first. For the most part there seemed to be a desire on the part of small townspeople to form a society in which they could verbalize their fears and express their love of God and country.

The Klan, of course, was not the only watcher of the morals of the community. The pastor of the Methodist Church at Louisburg, Kansas, called attention to the fact that many in the church were becoming involved in harmful amusements. In Klan-like manner, the pastor, A. J. Cutrell, wrote for the M. E. Church notes:

> For the benefit of some who have been misled by newspaper reports, I call attention to paragraph 69 of the Discipline, which reads as follows: We look with deep concern on the great prevalence of harmful amusements, and lift up a solemn note of warning, particularly against attending upon immoral, questionable, and misleading theatrical motion

> picture performances; against dancing, and against such games of chance as are frequently associated with gambling.
>
> No, Methodist, the ban is not lifted on dancing, neither sin of any other form. We boldly assert, as Methodists, that we are more than ever opposed to taking diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the ballroom or any other sin of diversion, at the same time claim to be a follower of the gentle Man of Gallilee.[51]

Protestant churches had not changed their definition of sin between pre-World War I days, when the Rev. F. R. Covert preached against "Sabbath Breakers" in his Sunday morning sermon, and 1924. Covert warned his congregation against the common sin of Sabbath breaking, and in his sermon he explained that "joy riding, Sunday baseball, picture shows, parks, and Theatres, and all worldly amusements" were sins when enjoyed on the Sabbath.[52]

Klansmen were urged to be on guard at all times against the evils in society. They were advised by lecturers and writers that there was not a local organization in the United States which should sit by idly with the excuse that there was nothing to do. Perhaps the Klan did become the huge secret service organization that Simmons planned, for one Klan writer said, "Many a bootlegger and illicit narcotic dealer, many

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[51] Louisburg Herald, July 3, 1924, p. 1.

[52] Drexel Star, June 7, 1917, p. 1.

a trafficker in the shame of womanhood, many a vagrant, loafer, and thief has met his downfall directly owing to information lodged with the proper authorities."[53] That the Invisible Empire worked with law enforcement bodies, was confirmed in The Independent which declared, "The Klan is also a civic asset in the cause of law enforcement. Klansmen are sworn not only to obey the law themselves, but also to aid the constituted authorities in enforcing them."[54]

One of the first examples of the Invisible Empire's efforts to clean up a community's morals was in Shawnee County where the Klan started a campaign to "clear the highway of spooners" in July of 1923.[55] In November 1924, the Pittsburg Chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, including the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, resolved that the public dance resorts that were operated for profit should be closed. A reporter for The Independent wrote:

> Booze, youth, and ignorance has played a large part in making profitable these debasing episodes. In this community most of the cases of assault between the sexes have followed dances where they got the inspiration for rash and immoral acts. Like the saloon keepers the dance managers have paid no heed to public sentiment.
> . . . . . .

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[53] The Independent, September 28, 1923, p. 1.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Mechem, p. 362.

> Every few days some rotten scandal of lost youth and blasted life comes to the surface. To capitalize the weaknesses and the follies of youth for money is what the K. K. K. and other organizations are trying to break up.[56]

Intense nationalism encouraged Americans to avoid all European complications. A flood of immigrants whose ways were alien to Klansmen and the "Red Scare" were threats to the social order that the Invisible Empire was struggling to preserve. Economists, too, warned of the dangers of an influx of starving Europeans.[57]

The Klan with its "100 per cent American" theme and Anglo-Saxon superiority expounded the threat from unchecked immigration. Their fear of Communist infiltration into America was also invoked to restrict immigration. Karl Schriftgiesser wrote that with few exceptions the American press was filled with terror of Red Russia. "Secretaries Hughes and Hoover spoke often against the Red Menace and Attorney General Daugherty was as excited and as active as A. Mitchell Palmer, his predecessor had been," Schriftgiesser concluded.[58]

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[56] The Independent, November 12, 1924, p. 2.

[57] Arthur Corning White, "An American Fascismo," Forum, LXXII, No. 5 (November 1924), 636-638.

[58] Karl Schriftgiesser, This Was Normalcy (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1948), p. 94.

There is little in Kansas Klan literature, however, to suggest that communism was regarded as a primary threat to society. Robert Murray indicated that there were only a few raids on Reds in the Midwest and "Only in Kansas City was there much activity."[59] David M. Chalmers pointed out that the Ku Klux Klan discovered communism in the 1930's, but by that time the Klan had ceased to be an influential force in eastern Kansas.[60] Thus, the fear of communism was not too significant in causing men in small Kansas towns to join the Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan was strongly anti-immigrant. The attitude of the Klan Wizard, Hiram Wesley Evans, toward immigration was expressed in The Independent. The Wizard stated:

> A large number among the vast hords of immigrants who have reached our shores in the last thirty years have been Catholics. Another larger percentage of this horde have been Jews. In Protestant America we must have time to teach these alien people the fundamental principles of human liberty before we permit further masses of ignorant, superstitious, religious, devotees to come within our borders.
> . . . . . .
> From every angle our country and its institutions are in danger, and no danger is greater or more de-

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[59] Robert Murray, Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 217.

[60] Chalmers, p. 5.

> structive than the infiltration of peoples and ideas which are not American.[61]

On January 4, 1924, his opinions on the subject again appeared in the above paper:

> . . . three millions and more have come--quite enough for today and for fifty years beyond. Until these millions are distributed, Poland, Roumania, and Russia must find other ports of entry for their semitic subjects. The native-born, white Protestant Christian American has all the foreign population of Europe and of Asia that he can digest or assimilate, or even entertain.[62]

Nor did the Klan favor "foreign businesses" in the United States. A news item from the Klan organ in Crawford County discloses the fact that Sears-Roebuck and Company was identified as a "foreign business" taking money from Kansas business. The editor of The Independent reported in 1925 that Sears-Roebuck and Company had installed a $5,000,000 plant in Kansas City. "They're after Kansas money. They're after it hard," Strong warned his readers. In only one day, according to Strong, 85 mail sacks of Sears-Roebuck catalogs had come into the post office at Columbus, Kansas. The editor warned his readers that Sears-Roebuck and Company was a "foreign" company dominated by a foreign power

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[61] The Independent, December 28, 1923, p. 1.

[62] Ibid., January 4, 1924, p. 1.

and klansmen were cautioned against buying from the company.[63]

Although Pittsburg was a mining center and labor there was as well organized as in any other Kansas community, there was little anti-labor sentiment in Klan literature. The members of the Invisible Empire were inclined to believe that strikes and labor quarrels were the products of foreign agitators. On the other hand, a close ally of the Klan was the Associate Industries, made up of packers and railroad men. This association fought labor and "opposed such shocking notions as factory inspection and the minimum wages."[64] In spite of the Klan alliance with the Associate Industries, the labor vote helped the Klan gain its first triumphs at the polls.[65]

In October 1924, the editor of The Independent reported that a very serious "labor debacle" was developing on the local labor scene. A three-year contract had been signed in the 14th district by the U. M. W. A., and the workers were hoping to regain markets they had lost. Meanwhile, a man by the name of Howat

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[63] Ibid., February 20, 1925, p. 2.

[64] Chalmers, p. 145.

[65] Ibid.

was the choice of the Skidmore local for the president of the union, but the other locals did not accept his nomination. The International president favored the election of Howat and subsequently tried to force the other locals to accept the man. As a result, work in the mines was virtually paralyzed. The Independent feared that the intervention of the International president was interferring with the selection of a president and wrote, "This question is not as to the fitness of Mr. Howat for the office of president. There may be scores of other men equally as good. . . but that is not the issue: The issue is whether district 14 U. M. W. A. shall have self-determination or have it imposed upon them."[66]

Strong urged both sides in the controversy to prevent a serious labor dispute in the district. He said:

> To all intents and purposes, as it is told to us, Mr. Howat is a member of the Skidmore local. If Mr. Howat was not acceptable, he should have been stopped at the door. We know nothing of regulations in the U. M. W. A. but we do know equity.
>
> It would please us just as well to see any other man whom the miners select as their President, but to foment a civil war here--a labor war in the district's chief industry, is malicious

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[66] The Independent, October 10, 1924, p. 2.

tomfollery--and this is what it is tantamount to.[67] Strong appealed to the union to decide the matter by a popular vote of the people who paid their dues into the organization. Thus, it would appear that the claims that the Klan was anti-labor in eastern Kansas are not entirely well-founded.

Why did Kansans become members of the Invisible Empire? Was it strictly out of fear and insecurity or were there other factors which caused the ranks to fill so rapidly? According to Stanley Frost, the Klan was expedient. It used bootlegging, high railroad rates, or the latest local scandal to further its cause. The Klan both reflected and exploited unrest and dissatisfaction with the high cost of living, social injustice and inequality, political corruption, hyphenism, disunity and unassimilated and conflicting ideals and standards. The Klan was strong "because it offered what no one else had offered: a solution which was fundamental and all-embracing in that it called for a return to time-honored standards."[68]

The growth of fundamentalism in protestant America also played an important role in the Invisible Em-

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Stanley Frost, The Challenge of the Klan (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Company, 1924), pp. 170-71.

pire. Fundamentalism challenged the new developments and sought to entrench traditional doctrines and practices. It was at times a bitter and divisive movement which was often militant. Its leaders were charged with stirring up conflict as much for the love of a fight as for love of truth. The movement tended to identify Christianity with patriotism and was influenced by the stream of superpatriotism which marked the 1920's. One fundamentalist leader preached "100 per cent Americanism" and said that patriotism and Christianity are synonymous terms just as hell and traitors are synonymous. Although fundamentalism declined rapidly after 1925, its influence continued in certain congregations and small denominations. Many who agreed essentially with its doctrines turned away because they did not want to be associated with its spirit of bitterness and strife. It is not difficult to see the parallels between this movement in protestant churches and the Ku Klux Klan. Like the Ku Klux Klan, fundamentalism introduced harmful tensions into the churches which offset its worthwhile contributions.[69]

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[69] H. Leon Mc Beth, "The Fundamentalist Movement," Source: Church Training, II, No. 2 (January, February, March, 1972), 38-40.

The Ku Klux Klan, then, can be viewed as an inevitable product of the 1920's. Fear and insecurity led many Kansans into the Invisible Empire, but those who became members of the secret order in eastern Kansas were not revolutionaries or simply chronic malcontents but honest laborers and small town businessmen--bankers, ministers, publishers of small town weeklies, lawyers, doctors, and merchants. They were insecure in the present and apprehensive about the future. Insecure and fearful, they turned against that which threatened and was alien to them. When the enemies failed to materialize or were eliminated, the Knights no longer had anything to fear and their crusade collapsed.

Chapter IV

Fear alone, however, cannot account for the spectacular success of the Ku Klux Klan in eastern Kansas in the 1920's, for from its earliest days Kansas produced an environment in which secret societies could thrive. The early history of Kansas is filled with fear, intrigue, vigilance, and the formation of secret orders to protect life and property. The Ku Klux Klan is the last link in a long line of secret organizations which existed in Kansas from territorial days.

Most of the first Kansas residents were single men from Missouri. They formed roving bands called "posses," and they interviewed all newcomers, telling them that death was all that was in store for those who opposed the pro-slavery faction. "Without even the shadow of authority, life was taken and property confiscated by the antagonistic element. The social and political system was unique and peculiar to the country."[1]

Secret Indian treaties made in Washington D. C. were made known to these pro-slavery people through

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[1] William Ansel Mitchell, Linn County, Kansas--A History (Kansas City: Campbell-Gates, 1928), p. 98.

secret organizations. They learned which lands would be thrown open for settlement; moreover, it was desirable that this information reach only those who would strengthen the pro-slavery cause. Naturally, this valuable information was closely guarded so that free-state men did not settle on newly-opened lands.[2]

Free-state people had to organize to protect themselves from pro-slavery forces. Secret anti-slavery organizations, which were formed along the border, were known as "Jayhawkers," Wideawakes," "Redlegs," and perhaps by other names locally. Jayhawkers in Linn County "cleaned up" Linn County and made it safe for anti-slavery people to settle there.[3] The Wideawakes was organized in other northern states and spread to Kansas where it probably absorbed nearly every free-state man in the territory. The Kansas Redlegs was an independent secret military order organized for "desperate service along the Border."[4]

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[2] Ibid., p. 53.

[3] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[4] William Elsey Connelley, William Quantrill and the Border Wars (New York: Pageant Book Company, 1956), pp. 411-17.

Wayne Gard has stated:

> Kansas, born in violence, had vigilance groups almost from its start. These stern plainsmen rid many communities of horse thieves and desperados. As elsewhere, the secret bodies sometimes degenerated into mob rule or were used for private vengeance. But usually they were made up of law-abiding, responsible citizens who wanted only to maintain order and to protect lives and property. . . . Most of them . . . were formed only as occasion arose and were disbanded as soon as their task was done. . . . As lawlessness remained rampant after the Civil War, vigilance committees put one outlaw to death. . . . In the late summer of 1866, while a captured desperado was being taken from Mound City to Lawrence, more than a score of vigilantes seized him from the sheriff. They hanged their prisoner in the timbered bottoms of Big Sugar Creek.[5]

The basic principle of the Ku Klux Klan was the same as that of the vigilantes in that it was extra-judicial. The organization was not a court and it heard no evidence. The vigilantes and the Klan judged and meted out justice on the spot. Thus, like the early vigilantes, the Ku Klux Klan was a law outside the established law and it answered to no higher authority.

William Starr Myers believed that the Ku Klux Klan was an extension of older orders. He considered the Klan a continuation of the "Know Nothing" movement of the 1850's. The Klan had the same objectives and used the same methods to accomplish its goals. The secret grip, passwords, secret signs, and strange rituals were all a

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[5] Wayne Gard, Frontier Justice (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949), p. 195.

part of the Know Nothing order. It opposed the naturalization of foreign-born immigrants and the Roman Catholic Church. These "patriotic Americans" worked secretly. Immigrants were held up by their heels and their heads were soused in buckets of blood from slaughter houses to teach other foreign-born to fear for their lives. The Know Nothing Society professed the highest type of American patriotism; yet, it was essentially based on un-American activities. By its radical acts, religious prejudices, undemocratic principles, and racial hatreds it sowed the seeds of its own failure.[6]

Other writers in the 1920's found a similarity between the Ku Klux Klan and the Know Nothing movement of the 1850's. R. A. Patton said that the selling points of the Klan were the same as those of the Know Nothing party of the fifties.[7] In a study of secret societies in the United States, Noel P. Gist compared the Ku Klux Klan with the Know Nothing order. He said the daily horror of the members of the organization was

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[6] William Starr Myers, "Know Nothing and Ku Klux Klan," North American Review, CCXIX, No. 818 (January 1924), 1-7.

[7] R. A. Patton, "A Ku Klux Klan Reign of Terror," Current History, XXVIII, No. 1 (April 1928), 51-55.

the "specter of the pope."[8]

Another wave of extremism spread over the country in 1882 with a third peak of immigration. As a result, the American Protective Association was organized in 1887 along the same lines as the Know Nothing order. The American Protective Association found many converts in the Midwest and formed yet another connecting link between the early secret societies in eastern Kansas and the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920's. Both the Know Nothing society and the American Protective Association opposed the Catholic Church and had many of the characteristics of the Ku Klux Klan.

Joseph Moffat Mecklin described the American Protective Association as the link between the Know Nothing party and the Ku Klux Klan. It was a secret society which endorsed nativism and opposed the Catholic Church and Catholic immigration. The anti-Catholic sentiment, Mecklin observed, was especially strong in Kansas.[9]

Only Catholics were excluded from the American Protective Association. The only requirement for admis-

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[8] Noel P. Gist, Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States, The University of Missouri Studies, No. 4 (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1940), 283.

[9] Mecklin, p. 138.

sion was that the members owe their primary allegiance to the Constitution of the United States, but members interpreted this requirement to exclude Roman Catholics. The society was nonsectarian and considered the public school the bulwark of American society. The order favored stricter immigration laws and was against the enlistment of non-citizens in the armed forces of the United States.[10]

One of the strongest and most popular of the secret orders in eastern Kansas was the Anti-Horse Thief Association. By 1862, horse stealing had become so common in eastern Kansas that it was necessary for the citizens to band together in order to protect their property. At a meeting of citizens at the home of H. D. Ward, a mile northeast of La Cygne, 80 men were enrolled in the organization to detect and imprison horse thieves. This was probably one of the first meetings to form the lodge which became the state-wide secret order known as the Anti-Horse Thief Association.[11] This organization was still in existence in eastern Kansas in the 1920's. It probably had the longest life of any of the secret Kansas societies

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[10] Richard Wheatly, "The American Protective Association, " Harper's Weekly, XXXVIII, No. 1975 (October 27, 1894), 1017-18.

[11] Mitchell, p. 238.

which came into existence during or shortly after the Civil War.

The Anti-Horse Thief Association was founded with good cause. Wayne Gard wrote in Frontier Justice that horse thieves were a frequent menace in southern Kansas in the seventies.[12] The Association was a fraternal order of the vigilante type inasmuch as it was not an official law-enforcing body but a secret organization which apprehended and arrested thieves. It resembled the Wideawakes, the Jayhawkers, the Redlegs, and the Vigilance Committee formed in San Francisco in 1850 "at a time when adventurers, desperadoes, cheats, opportunists, flesh peddlers, gamblers, and killers were drawn magnetically by the Gold Rush."[13] The Vigilance Committee and the Anti-Horse Thief Association arrested criminals in the name of law and order, even though they lacked legal status. These law enforcement bodies were not regarded illegal, for as Gard wrote, "Every western state and territory had at least a taste of informal law enforcement."[14]

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[12] Gard, p. 198.

[13] "Modern Vigilantes Set For Action." The Kansas City Times, December 28, 1970, p. 46.

[14] Gard, p. 198.

In the 1920's the Anti-Horse Thief Association was a secret order which held annual conventions, participated in local affairs, and apprehended thieves. A horse thief was seldom arrested, but thieves were frequently caught stealing harness or chickens. For the most part, however, the members simply got together regularly to enjoy wolf drives, oyster suppers, and picnics with their friends and families. The New Lancaster lodge in Miami County and the lodge at Washington School in Sugarcreek Township often held joint meetings. At La Cygne the Anti-Horse Thief Association held a Street Fair annually, and still practiced its original function as late as the 1920's. On October 27, 1922, the following article appeared in the La Cygne Journal:

> Charlie White, who entered a plea of guilty on the charge of harness stealing in the district court last week and was sentenced to serve a term in the penitentiary, owes his capture and conviction largely to the efforts of the La Cygne A. H. T. A. lodge which was on the lookout for him from the time it received word of his theft of harness at Spring Hill the week before he repeated the offense at Mound City.[15]

On December 15 of the same year, the La Cygne Journal carried another news story about the activities of the secret society:

> "A. H. T. A. Publishes Law Warning to Owners of Diseased Animals and the Law on Disposal of Carcasses of Same."

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[15] "A. H. T. A. Scores," La Cygne Journal, October 27, 1922, p. 1.

> At the request of the La Cygne A. H. T. A. lodge the Journal prints below sections 3695 and 3702 relating to the disposal of carcasses of dead animal or domestic fowl into river, creek, etc. The lodge hopes to stop these practices without necessity of prosecution, but has determined to prosecute any and all offenders in the future where the evidence can be obtained to secure a conviction.[16]

Most members of the Anti-Horse Thief Association were farmers. Nearly every farmer in the Washington community in Miami County was a member of the lodge and if suspicious strangers lingered too long in the community, their actions were reported to the members. The members were armed in order to arrest thieves. One member of the Sugarcreek Township order claimed that his old-time six-shooter would "shoot six times and throw rocks for ten more rounds."[17]

In addition to the secret vigilante-type of organizations in eastern Kansas, there were many old, respected fraternal orders. By the 1920's, when the Klan appeared in eastern Kansas, the social life of each small community was thoroughly organized. The Masons probably made up the largest fraternal brotherhood, but the Odd Fellows, the Modern Woodmen, and the Knights of Pythias were just

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[16] Ibid., December 15, 1922, p. 1.

[17] Personal Interview, Ed Burson, September 9, 1969.

as active and claimed a large membership.

Members of the secret orders were the leaders in the small communities in the 1920's. Businessmen and churchmen, especially, were joiners. As a rule, farmers joined the Anti-Horse Thief Association, the Grange, or the Modern Woodmen. When the Klan arrived, fraternalists in Kansas became Knights of the Invisible Empire upon the invitation of their friends.[18] Chalmers explains that the "social order was also a basic American way of doing things, a traditional instrument against evil and the weapon of a mass in-group society against corruption, immorality, the outsider, and change."[19] Arthur Corning White asserted, ". . . the middle class American man simply adores ritual, regalia, and 'hokum.' These constitute his greatest social diversion."[20]

For the most part, the leaders in the lodges were important men in their communities, and they became the first to don the "pillowslips and bedsheets." In Drexel, on the Kansas-Missouri state line, it was thought that the mayor, the bankers, church leaders, merchants, and other civic-minded citizens became members of the Klan

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[18] Personal Interview, Omar Nichols, September 19, 1969.

[19] Chalmers, p. 291.

[20] Arthur Corning White, "An American Fascismo," Forum, LXXII, No. 5 (November 1924), p. 638.

because they were first of all fraternalists.[21] The names of many secret orders occur frequently in an early portrait and biographical history of citizens of southeastern Kansas. In addition to the American Protective Association, which was quite active when the history was published, the orders which appeared in the biographical sketches included: Anti-Horse Thief Association, Order of Select Friends, Patriarchs of America, Masons, Odd Fellows, Eastern Star, Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen, Woodmen of the World, Mystic Workers of the World, and many others. In a survey of these sketches published in 1894, 181 of the 330 persons recorded were members of at least one secret order. Many men joined several orders. Joseph C. Wells, an attorney and real estate dealer at Erie, belonged to 22 different lodges.[22]

In 1920, the small town of Drexel with a population of 500 was typical in that it supported ten active churches and at least eight major fraternal lodges. The Coldwater Lodge #485 A. F. and A. M. met on the first and third Monday nights of each month; The I. O. O. F. lodge #638 met on the first and third Thursday nights of each month; the M. W. A. Interstate Camp #163 met on the

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[21] Personal Interview, Omar Nichols, July 4, 1971.

[22] Portrait and Biographical Record of Southeastern Kansas (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1894), p. 404.

second Tuesday; the Knights of Pythias met on the first and third Fridays of each month; the Mystic Workers of the World met on Saturday nights; and the O. E. S. Chapter #218 met on the second and fourth Friday nights. The Fraternal Aid Union, the Anti-Horse Thief Association, the Red Cross, the W. C. T. U., the Royal Neighbors, the Rebekah Lodge, an Alpha Literary Society, the Grange, and the Ladies' Improvement Club also met regularly over a long period of time. In addition to these full-fledged societies, there were a number of Sunday School classes and social clubs which met regularly for a long period of time. Therefore, the social life of the community revolved around its complex system of church, social, and fraternal orders and little else. Chalmers said, "America has long been a nation of joiners, of men bound together for companionship and community purposes."[23] At no time in Kansas history is this more apparent than in the 1920's.

The fraternal orders were similar to the Ku Klux Klan in that they each made use of secret passwords, handshakes, and rituals to bind the members together in the brotherhood. Many organizations restricted membership to those of the white race. The Modern Woodmen defined the white race as "white, with no more than seven-eighths white

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[23] Chalmers, p. 292.

blood and no strain of Negro." The Knights of Pythias restricted their membership to "white" but did not exclude the American Indian. The Order of Odd Fellows excluded those "not of the Caucasion race."[24]

In addition to restrictions on membership, most orders adopted distinctive regalia. The Modern Woodmen candidates were first robed in black, then white. Shriners were handcuffed and attired in white dominoes and slippers when they were taken into that order. Candidates for the patriarch degree of Odd fellows wore long gowns, turbans and sandals. The Knights of Pythias prepared their novices by investing the candidate with a white sash which was draped across his right shoulder to his left hip. For the third degree, a helmet was placed on the head and a shield on the left arm. A first degree Mason was required to go through a ceremony clad in underwear and a slipper on the left foot. A cable tow was placed around his neck and a hoodwink was placed over his eyes. The fraternal apron of white lambskin, an emblem of innocence in the Masonic order, was also worn by the Ku Klux Klan. For ceremonial dress the Knights of Pythias wore elaborate robes of colorful velvet and the Shriners' regalia was equally as regal.[25]

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[24] Gist, p. 283.

[25] Ibid.

All members of secret orders were obliged to memorize long passages of secret ritual. Members of fraternal societies took their responsibilities in the various orders as seriously as they took themselves in the twenties, and most orders claimed to be patriotic and to support the Constitution of the United States.

In 1923, H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan ridiculed not only the Ku Klux Klan but all secret orders in an article for Smart Set, a journal of satirical sophistication. They insisted:

> Not a single solitary reason has yet been advanced for putting the Ku Klux Klan out of business. If the Klan is against the Jews, so are half of the good hotels of the Republic and three-quarters of the good clubs. If the Klan is against the foreign-born or the hyphenated citizen, so is the National Institute of Arts and Letters. If the Klan is against the Negro, so are all of the states south of the Mason-Dixon line. If the Klan is for damnation and persecution, so is the Methodist Church. If the Klan is bent upon political control, so are the American Legion and Tammany Hall. If the Klan wears grotesque uniforms, so do the Knights of Pythias and the Mystic Shriners. If the Klan holds its meetings in the dead of night, so do the Elks. If the Klan conducts its business in secret, so do all college Greek letter fraternities and the Department of State. If the Klan holds idiotic parades in the public streets, so do the police, the letter-carriers and firemen. If the Klan's officers bear ridiculous names, so do the officer's of the Lamb's Club. If the Klan uses the mails for shaking down suckers, so does the Red Cross. If the Klan constitutes itself a censor of private morals, so does the Congress of the United States. If the Klan lynches a Moor for raping someone's daughter, so would you or I.[26]

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[26] Cited in Chalmers, p. 1.

The Ku Klux Klan was formed in the South to protect southern white people during Reconstruction when there was no other protection. Secret orders in Kansas were organized to protect the rights and property of individuals. Their legality was irrelevant because in the minds of the members of the secret orders the end justified the means. The members of the Ku Klux Klan also believed themselves threated and justified in the actions they took in the 1920's. The fact that secret orders flourished in every small community and town in Kansas made it respectable for members to join yet another organization with high principles. An editorial, "Why They Join the Klan" in The New Republic in 1923, explained that it was absurd to suppose that the Ku Klux Klan was composed of the community dregs. It was made up of solid, responsible citizens who were conscientious members of churches. Like other orders the members were first recruited from among the leading citizens and then worked down in the social order.[27] The role of secret orders in Kansas from territorial days until the 1920's was significant in Kansans' acceptance of the Ku Klux Klan.

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[27] "Why They Join the Klan," The New Republic, XXXVI, No. 468 (November 21, 1923), p. 321.

Chapter V

In 1924 nearly 100,000 Kansans owed their allegiance to the Invisible Empire. By 1930 there was little to indicate that the Ku Klux Klan had existed in Kansas.

The order had begun to decline by 1925. By 1928 even the candidacy of Al Smith, a Catholic, for the presidency failed to fire the Klan with the impetus it needed in order to survive. The decline of the Ku Klux Klan set in when its big battles had been won, and it deterioriated steadily until it simply faded away. The Klan did not come to an abrupt end on a specific day in eastern Kansas. To discover the cause of its demise, a number of factors must be taken into consideration.

The adverse propaganda the Klan received nationally as well as the publicity it received locally in papers like the Emporia Gazette and the Kansas City Star simply added fuel to Klan fires in small communities throughout eastern Kansas. Small townsmen believed that the Kansas City Star was allied with "bossism and eastern interests" and was no true friend to midwestern people. Likewise the papers in the East which attacked the Klan were believed to favor eastern banking interests, the long-time enemies of farmers in eastern Kansas. Many Kansans believed that all journalism was under the control of "sinister interests and never

told the truth."[1] They concluded that the truth could best be obtained from local papers or Klan sources. Thus, the publicity given to the Klan in its formative period in eastern Kansas provided evidence that there were many enemies of the Invisible Empire. Threatened and insecure, klansmen were determined to support their order at all costs. The Independent editor wrote in 1923:

> Brain-storms, both little and big, including the little storm arising in Mulberry (Mulberry News) to the great storm center of New York, the Romanized papers, and especially The World, published and controlled by Popery, and wet politicians, are in a measure responsible for the growth of this powerful organization of American people. A righteous movement flourishes under persecution. This is so in the history of the church, and demonstrated by the rapid growth and spread of the Gospel of Christ. When the governor of this great state of New York defied the dry laws of this country and threw down the challenge of the Anti-Saloon League and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, then it was that the average man who has not sworn his soul away, sought for admittance into this order which was championing the righteous cause in America.
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> Every day the press report some shocking deed that has been committed by the Klan. This is stupidity upon the part of the controlled press, in its persecution of this body of citizens, amounts to almost madness, and which persecution is driving millions into this order.[2]

Although Sears missed the point completely, he could see the relationship between persecution and the

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[1] "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan," The New Republic, LIII, No. 678 (November 30, 1927), 34.

[2] The Independent, September, 14, 1923, pp. 1-2.

growth of a movement. He wrote:

> In 1823 there was a movement against the Masons like the one being used by the Ku Klux Klan against the Catholics. The men who wore the square and compass were accused of every imaginable crime. It was told that they had abducted women, they had disembowled their opponents, they were in league with the devil and burned their victims in oil, their ritual was condemned as being sacriligious and atheistic--in short, they were everything that wasn't nice. The result was that they multiplied faster than Belgian hares, and now their temples and mosques are reared through all the large cities in the land.[3]

It is strange that Sears could not see the application of the principle to his own attack on the Ku Klux Klan. The more severely the Klan was attacked, the more determined were its members to uphold it.

Although Governor Allen was determined to stamp out the Ku Klux Klan when it made its first appearance in southern Kansas, there is little to indicate that the suit brought against the Klan caused Kansans to lose their faith in the secret organization. On the contrary, the suit provided the Klan with a great deal of publicity which convinced many Kansans that their freedom to chose to belong or not to belong to the order was at stake. The Klan experienced a remarkable growth while the case was pending in the Kansas Supreme Court. In December 1925, the editor of The Independent declared:

> The Ku Klux Klan of Crawford County is not an outlaw organization and needs no high paid legal defense before

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[3] Mulberry News, May 2, 1924, p. 1.

> the state or the public. Mr. Griffith's ouster is pure fiddlesticks so far as the local organization is concerned. It might be called most any name it chooses to select and continue as it is, ouster, or no ouster. As a law enforcement organization of purely American stock complection there never will be a law passed which will even remotely endanger its existence. If the Klan were to be ousted from Kansas the "Crawford County Law Enforcement League" composed entirely of Klan members could be in operation before the next morning.[4]

Thus, the more the Klan was attacked, the more determined klansmen were to defend their right to become members of the Invisible Empire. A member of the Imperial Klokan echoed the sentiments of Kansas klansmen when he said, "Be well assured that fundamental American rights will be asserted and maintained against any encroachment whatsoever. If enemy influences persist in unwarrented attacks, upon their heads must rest the consequences. There will be no compromise."[5]

In spite of the Klan's growth in Kansas and in spite of the Klan's determination to perpetuate the order, by 1928 the Invisible Empire was tottering and was no longer a threat to democratic processes in the state. Perhaps one of the most important factors in the decline of the Ku Klux Klan was the insistence upon the wearing of the mask. So long as the members wore masks at public gatherings, parades, or forays into the local churches,

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[4] The Independent, December 11, 1925, p. 1.

[5] Chalmers, p. 299.

many who were not members believed that the Klan was an organization made up of cowards. More than one man in the small communities agreed with John Coulter of Drexel who maintained that those who hid behind a mask "must have had something to hide."[6] Another good citizen of a small town in eastern Kansas voiced the opinion that a real man would not have to wear a mask in order to get things done.[7] The mask created not only suspicion and mistrust, but a certain sense of fear, even in those who believed in the principles if not the methods of the Klan.

M. F. Sears, who published the Mulberry News, explained his sentiments about the mask in an editorial in 1923. He wrote:

> In declining today, to sign a petition for permission for the Ku Klux Klan to hold its parade last Saturday, the editor of this paper offered to sign the petition if the Klan would agree to parade unmasked.
>
> The Klan mask is the offender. It is intolerable. It is inconceivable to us how a lot of good men are able to justify themselves in concealing their identity in their activity in any effort they regard as necessary and worth while. Any man with red blood in his veins who accounts the objects of the Klan as essential to the perpetuity of this government or to

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[6] Personal Interview, Aylene Ziegler, September 12, 1969.

[7] Personal Interview, Omar Nichols, September 19, 1969.

> the supression of crime that is threatening the social order, ought to have the courage to get out in the open and make the fight.[8]

In 1924 Sears quoted a leader of a group of men at Joplin, Missouri, who said, "We intend to tear off the masks of secrecy and make candidates come out in the open and state their stand."[9] In 1927 a writer for The New Republic declared that there were those who were determined to stamp out the "rule of mask and lash."[10] Stanley Frost reviewed the retrogression of the Klan for The World's Work in February 1928 and concluded, "The refusal to unmask must be ranked as one of the Klan's greatest and growing weaknesses."[11] Still, the Invisible Empire refused to let its members unmask.

In time many klansmen came to realize that the Ku Klux Klan ran contrary to democratic government. Although the Invisible Empire claimed to uphold the Constitution, the order actually ruled an invisible empire within the United States. The ruler of the empire was in essence a

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[8] Mulberry News, October 12, 1923, p. 1.

[9] Ibid., March 21, 1924, p. 4.

[10] "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan," The New Republic, LIII, No. 678 (November 30, 1927), p. 33.

[11] Stanley Frost, "The Masked Politics of the Klan," The World's Work, LV, No. 4 (February 1928), p. 402.

dictator who was, himself, invisible. This again was in direct opposition to the Constitution and to the principles of democracy. William Starr Myers compared the Ku Klux Klan with the Know Nothing movement of the 1850's and concluded that the Klan would fall of its own weight, for like the Know Nothing organization, which professed the highest type of patriotic and American principles, ". . . it essentially was itself based upon un-American principles."[12]

The Klan not only claimed its first loyalty to the invisible government within the United States, but also chose to ignore the legally constituted law enforcement agencies of the United States and the state of Kansas in order to deal out justice on its own terms. Furthermore, the Klan ignored the right of citizens to a trial by jury, and determined, without a trial, the guilt or innocence of the "condemned" and dealt out threats or punishments at will. With little more than a vicious propaganda squad to provide evidence, old scandals were revived and threatening letters were sent to the "guilty." M. F. Sears warned the citizens of Mulberry, Kansas:

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[12] William Starr Myers, "Know Nothing and Ku Klux Klan," North American Review, CCXIX, No. 818 (January 1924), p. 6.

> Just now the nation is in danger of being thrown and hog-tied by the Invisible Empire, which is even now boasting that it has as its members men on the supreme court bench, two hundred and twenty-seven congressmen and a lot of senators, and that it held its initiation ceremonies in the dining-room of the National capitol.. . . . Governor Walton of Oklahoma . . . published the text of a law showing that where two or more persons appear in public wearing masks for the purpose of intimidating persons or inflicting punishment on persons who had not been tried by the constituted authorities, shall be considered a law-breaker in every state in the Union.[13]

Nor could witnesses who were members of the Ku Klux Klan testify freely in the courts, for as the editor of The Independent explained, "A lawyer wants a 'yes' or 'no' for his record without qualifying it. If qualification is not permitted then there can be no definite answer to the question."[14] It was a well known fact that members of the Klan could not testify and refused to testify against other klansmen and would not reveal the names of other klansmen.

The Ku Klux Klan not only ignored the legally constituted law and system of courts in eastern Kansas and throughout the nation, but also ignored the Constitution which guaranteed civil rights to all citizens. Catholics were persecuted. Blacks were cowed into submissive

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[13] Mulberry News, September 28, 1923, p. 3.

[14] The Independent, March 27, 1925, p. 2.

behavior. Foreigners were excluded. Minorities were treated badly. Oscar Handlin wrote, "The forces of exclusion would not now be denied. . . . The very years that saw the Klan rise to a new membership of almost five million and saw the League of Nations go down to defeat were not likely to see a softening of attitudes toward the foreigners."[15] He concluded, "The foreigner then joined the black as an object of fear and suspicion and the southern congressmen thereafter were among the most vigorous advocates of restriction."[16]

Even Klansmen came to realize, in time, that all was not as it should have been within the Klan. In 1926 the Klan newspaper at Mulberry confessed that the organization there had been exploited by an unscrupulous element within the order. The editor of The Independent wrote about the improvement which had come about after the political element had been removed from the Klan:

> Most Klansmen agree this is an improvement over the old system, whereby designing local politicians exploited the organization through betrayal, duplicity and deceit. Since the elimination of Headlight control of the Klan there has been no political trouble within the Klan--there has been no lying, deceit, or betrayal. . . . Headlight rule in the Klan at one time was so absolute that the fight between the Headlight element came near

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[15] Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951), p. 291.

[16] Ibid., p. 287.

> disrupting the organization. . . . By the process of attrition and elimination the Headlight forces are pretty well banished from Klandom in Crawford County.[17]

In 1923, E. H. Given wrote for the Klan paper at Mulberry that, "Neither the wet forces of this country, Roman hierarchy, nor the subsidized press, or the politicians can destroy this the most powerful organization on the face of the earth outside the church of Jesus Christ."[18] Yet, by 1926 writers for the same newspaper admitted that the Klan had made disastrous mistakes and that many men had left the organization because of the radical element which had taken over the Klan in the beginning. The radical statements of the members kept out many men. Omar Nichols of Drexel said, "Some of the leading businessmen of the town hinted that I should join the Ku Klux Klan, but it was too radical for me. Every time there was a public meeting of any sort, someone got up in a sheet and pillowcase and started making wild statements."[19]

By 1925 the editor of The Independent was willing to admit what everyone in the town probably knew already when he confessed, "When the employers of J. B. Tucker discov-

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[17] The Independent, February 12, 1926, p. 1.

[18] Ibid., September 14, 1923, p. 1.

[19] Personal Interview, Omar Nichols, September 19, 1969.

ered his tendencies and trouble breeding disposition, his services were promptly dispensed with."[20] In this statement the editor frankly admitted that the Klan forces had been wrong when they hired J. B. Tucker as superintendent of schools over the objection of anti-Klan members of the community. Although the Klan paper was willing to admit that the order had sometimes used poor judgment and was eager to bring about a "cessation of hostility between Catholics, Negroes, and others" by 1926, the damage had already been done and the good will of the non-members of the Klan at Mulberry had been lost.[21]

Norman Hapgood and Henry Moskowitz prophesied that the end of the Klan was in sight as early as January 1925 when they wrote for The Nation that the Klan "is so abhorrent to intelligent thinking Americans of all denominations that it must in time fall to the ground of its own weight."[22]

Sears wrote in 1923:

> Many persons who belong to the Ku Klux Klan know that it is not a fair and courageous body, but that it

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[20] The Independent, July 31, 1925, p. 2.

[21] Ibid., February 12, 1926, p. 1.

[22] Norman Hapgood and Henry Moskowitz, "How Al Smith Works," The Nation, CXX, No. 3105 (January 7, 1925), p. 299.

> is cowardly, and the assasin of business and character wherever it gets a foothold, but they have been coerced to become members for fear that their business would be boycotted. . . . they go away leaving the local kleagles and klansmen to plant the fear that unless everyone keeps his mouths shut or joins the klan, he will suffer in a business way.[23]

Apparently the system of boycotting businesses did not cease with Sears's warning, for in 1924 he was telling his readers that the boycott had backfired. Sears wrote:

> As long as boycotting was a game that only they were playing, . . . it was legitimate warfare, but when those whom it was intended to injure countered with the same weapon for defensive purposes, they say it is brutal and un-American. . . .
>
> Mr. Strong is not ignorant of the fact that the Klan is klannish, and that the teachings of the Klan extoll klannishness and urge it as long as it can be maintained successfully. . . .
>
> Here is the way the Klan organizers and officials coach their members to carry on a boycott: "Sell to non-members of the Klan all that you can, but buy nothing from them that you can buy from a klansman here or elsewhere." This they say is not boycotting, but is what is termed "commercial preference."[24]

Further evidence that the boycott, or economic preference failed to bring about the results that the Klan desired is found in an article which appeared in the Louisburg Herald.

> J. M. Lewis, editor of the Kinsley Graphic, says the Ku Klux Klan organization in Edwards cost the merchants of Knisley many thousands of dollars every month. "The Klansmen did a lot of fool things here," said Jim. "They did the things which were unnecessary and unpop-

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[23] Mulberry News, August 24, 1923, p. 2.

[24] Ibid., May 2, 1924, p. 1.

> ular, and the result was that a lot of people went to the nearby towns to trade and our merchants lost the business."
>
> Not long ago the Klan sent a letter to a widow telling her that she must look after her 14 year old daughter or the Klan would do it. She got the names of some businessmen who belonged to the Klan and she walked into the stores and read the riot act to them. The mothers of Kinsley were all indignant over the letter and their indignation boiled over that a bunch of men who were afraid to let their identity be known should undertake to tell a mother how to rear her daughter. They put on a little boycott of their own that made some Kinsley businessmen feel their displeasure.[25]

In spite of the fact that the Klan had begun to decline shortly after it reached its peak in 1924, there were many who remained sympathetic with the principles of the order even though they did not actively participate in the organization. Stanley Frost wrote, "Nine-tenths of the men who have dropped out, even those deeply disgusted with the order, nevertheless remain in sympathy with its principles."[26] Although the depression years hastened the collapse of the Invisible Empire in eastern Kansas, the order had already fallen into a decline before hard times made it impossible for members to pay their dues. William Starr Myers perhaps summed up the causes for the collapse of the Invisible Empire when he said that the Ku Klux Klan

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[25] Louisburg Herald, September 30, 1923, p. 2.

[26] Stanley Frost, "The Masked Politics of the Klan," The World's Work, LV, No. 4 (February 1928), p. 403.

had within itself the seed of its own failure, and that seed lay in the essential advocacy of racial and religious prejudice.[27]

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[27] William Starr Myers, "Know Nothing and Ku Klux Klan," North American Review, CCXIX, No. 818 (January 1924), p. 7.

Conclusion

Although the Invisible Empire encountered stiff resistance when it entered eastern Kansas in 1923, the hooded order spread rapidly. Kansas, it appeared, was ripe for exploitation by Klan organizers. The Klan leaders emphasized the dangers of catholicism in protestant communities, preached against immorality and crime, and encouraged white 100 per cent Americanism to resist foreign influences throughout Kansas. The traditional values of Anglo-Saxon protestantism, Kansans were told, were being challenged from many quarters. As a result many Kansans adopted an unreasonable form of anti-catholicism, a nostalgia for the past, a 100 per cent Americanism, and a fierce prohibitionist attitude. Thus, in spite of the fact that the papers reported tar and featherings and beatings by the Klan, the order was accepted in nearly every community in eastern Kansas. Fiery crosses were burned regularly to remind evil-doers, Catholics, and bootleggers that the Klan was on guard and would stand for no foolishness.

When the Klan was first organized in Kansas, many politicians sought to use the order's influence to gain votes. The elections of 1924 showed that the Klan-backed

candidates were the favorites of the voters in Kansas, but by 1928 politicians who had used the Klan for personal gain were no longer found in favor within the order. This Headlight element, as it was called, had been exposed and expelled.

Strange as it may seem, those who became members in the hooded order of "nightgowns and pillowslips" were not "crack pots" who were revolting against the established social order but influential and solid citizens of their communities. For the most part, the members of the Ku Klux Klan were businessmen who enjoyed the "commercial preference" of the order, fraternalists who simply liked to join secret societies for the social aspects of the organization, protestant ministers who longed to stamp out "Popism," and members of protestant churches who honestly hoped to improve their communities somehow by joining the Klan. Klansmen saw time-accepted standards slipping away and sought desperately to preserve the status quo by looking back to the "good old days" of "pure white womanhood," "100 per cent Americanism," and protestant domination. Not only klansmen but many who did not join the organization had become disillusioned about the future in the 1920's and longed to turn back the clock to less troubled times.

The aims and ideals of the Ku Klux Klan were of the highest order, but a closer examination shows that

the Klan was based on the highest type of exclusion and prejudice. While proponents of the Klan claimed to be patriotic and to uphold the Constitution of the United States, the Klan was actually operating outside and opposed to the established law.

The remarkable success of the Invisible Empire in eastern Kansas can be attributed to the long tradition that free citizens must be free to exercise their rights to revolt against faults in the established order. The Klan, then, must be seen as an extension of the Vigilantes, the Know Nothing, and the American Protective Association movements. Although they were called by different names, the various secret orders resembled each other in that they appealed to the emotions rather than reason. The Invisible Empire, too, depended on radical speech-making and half-truths to arouse and excite the fears of citizens of the small towns throughout eastern Kansas. When the press and eastern periodicals attacked the Klan, Kansans reacted by defending their fraternal order. With the passage of time, thoughtful members became disillusioned and began to desert the order. By the 1930's the organization, greatly depleted in its membership, was no more than a fraternal social order. The days of the huge gatherings of thousands assembled solemnly before the American flag and the flaming cross were over.

Kansans like to believe that they will never again be hood-winked as they were by radical organizers of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920's. The fact remains, however, that if an established society imagines itself threatened in any way, it will respond in the same manner that Kansans reacted to lawlessness, bootlegging, immorality, and change in 1923 and 1924. The elements of fear and distrust need only to be whipped into motion by concerted efforts which appeal to the emotions. When emotions rule, the ability to reason clearly is wiped out and conditions are ripe for a revival of the Ku Klux Klan or a secret order of a similar nature, whatever name it might wear. Regardless of the name, the methods and the results have always been the same. Revived again, as it was in the 1920's, the Invisible Empire could be a frightening force in American life.

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