

THE KU KLUX KLAN IN AN INDIANA COMMUNITY

By

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920's is yet to be written. A careful check of the American Historical Review, The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, and other bibliographies reveals Loucks' The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania¹, as the one lone study of this important organization. The Klan was important, not so much for any great achievement, but because it claimed a membership of nearly 5,000,000 Protestant, native, white, American citizens.² The popularity of the Klan revealed much about the hopes and fears of the American people then, as well as for years afterward.

The facts of the Klan are difficult to obtain because the Klan operated in secrecy, paraded behind a mask, and attempted to rule by fear. The members were under oath never to divulge the secrets of the Order. Therefore, much of our common knowledge of the Klan is based on rumor. Its official records are difficult to locate; indeed, it is doubtful if many such

1. Emerson H. Loucks, The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, Pa., Telegraph Press, 1936):

2. Ray Allen Billington, "Ku Klux Klan," in James Truslow Adams, ed., Dictionary of American History (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), III, 218.

records are extant. The Order was not active long enough to accumulate extensive records. Furthermore, members were reluctant to divulge much pertinent information concerning Klan activity, not only because of the secret oaths, but also, because the Order fell into public disfavor. The only written record left of the Elwood Klan was the membership list which contained the names of the individuals who joined the Order through 1923. The minutes of the Klan in Elwood were burned in 1943 by a former Exalted Cyclops.

Since Indiana was a leading state in Klandom, it seemed profitable and practical to make a case study of a particular community in that state. The Elwood community was chosen for study because nearly one-half of the eligible population were members of the Klan. Also, the writer, having lived there during the early 1920's, knew the community at the time. Further, he could enjoy the confidences of the persons being interviewed. In the absence of written records, it was necessary to make four trips to the community to interview eyewitnesses and former members. During the fifteen days spent in the field, approximately forty people were interviewed. people who were residents of the community during the height of Klan activity and in many cases personal acquaintances of the writer. The Elwood Call Leader, the local daily newspaper, was examined page by page, covering

a period of nearly four years. In addition, court records and personal letters have added bits of information. It is hoped that this essay will make one small contribution to a clearer understanding of the Ku Klux Klan. Only after many similar studies are made, and the findings recorded, will it be possible to write a history of the Klan on a nationwide scope.

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF THE MODERN KLAN

The Ku Klux Klan was to a great extent another manifestation of nativism which has occurred periodically in American history. From the time of the statement attributed to George Washington at Valley Forge, "put no one but Americans on guard tonight," down through the Know-Nothing movement which collapsed over the greater issues leading to the Civil War and including the anti-Catholic American Protective Association of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, we have experienced ample precedent for the Klan. Nativist movements have appeared immediately following peaks of immigration and the resulting disturbances in the character of population.³

There have been four distinct waves of immigrants arriving in this country. The first, which reached its peak in 1855, began in 1831 and ended with the outbreak of the Civil War. During this thirty year period four million foreigners arrived on our shores. The second wave covering the years 1862 to 1877, with a high point in 1873, like the first wave consisted of immigrants

³. Valdimer O. Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups* (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1942), p. 159.

from the British Isles and Germany. Nine million foreigners were added to our population during the third great wave of immigration from 1878 to 1898, the peak being reached in 1882. This wave was predominantly German and English speaking people, but in addition it marked the beginning of the tide of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. It is significant too that 1882 was the year of the first federal control of immigration. The fourth great wave, extending from 1898 to the outbreak of World War I, saw over fourteen million foreigners come into this country.⁴

The Know-Nothing movement following the first wave of immigration sought to instill pure Americanism in the population by insisting on the separation of the church and state, by maintaining public schools free from religious influence, and by lengthening the period of naturalization of aliens. During the second great wave nativism was reflected in the Democratic and Republican platforms in 1878, the Republican containing a recommendation for a constitutional amendment to prevent the use of public funds to support sectarian schools. Nativism found expression chiefly in the American Protective Association during the third wave of immigration. This organization, founded in Iowa in 1887, reached its peak of popularity in 1894 and 1895.⁵

4. John Moffatt Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan (New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1924), p. 129.

5. Ibid., p. 131.

Three conditions must be present for a nativist movement to exist on any considerable scale, all of which were present in the United States in the early 1920's.⁶ First, there must be a large, recent Catholic immigration. Twentieth century immigration for the most part, was from Catholic countries located in southern and southeastern Europe. Second, sufficient time must have passed to obliterate the memory of the excesses of the previous movement of this character. In the 1920's most Americans had forgotten the excesses of the American Protective Association movement. A third condition, is a vague, widespread feeling of fear enhanced by the pinch of economic want. The fear of Communism and the campaign of 1920 with its emphasis on the League of Nations question combined to create a feeling of fear of things foreign. The economic slump of 1921, it must be remembered, was nationwide.

According to its Declaration the Klan was not organized specifically as a nativist movement but rather as a Southern fraternal, ritualistic, and patriotic order.⁷ The modern Klan, organized in 1915 by William J. Simmons in Atlanta, Georgia,⁸ was a revival of the Klan of the Reconstruction period "remodeled and expanded" into a ritualistic, fraternal, patriotic society of

6. Loucks, Klan, p. 15.

7. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 132.

8. Ibid., p. 3.

national scope." The mannerisms, official titles, designs of paraphernalia, regalia, banners, flags, and emblems of the old Klan were retained by the new.⁹

Three of the charter members of the new Klan were members of the old.¹⁰ The anti-Negro and law enforcement aspects of the Klan were carried over from the Reconstruction period; the anti-Catholic and anti-foreign aspects were direct descendants of previous nativist movements.

The order languished in Georgia and Alabama with fewer than five thousand members until June, 1920, when the founder entered into a contract with Edward Y. Clarke and Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler, two Southern promotional experts. By terms of this contract Clarke became head of the Klan's propaganda department with complete control of organization with Mrs. Tyler as his assistant.¹¹ Under this new leadership, which exploited the hates and prejudices of the post war period, the Klan spread with amazing rapidity.¹² By tradition and spirit the Klan has been thought of as a purely Southern institution. Its real strength was never in the older South, but rather in that area west of the Mississippi including northern and eastern Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, northern Louisiana, across to California

9. Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Atlanta, Georgia., 1921), p. 3.

10. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 4.

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., p. 31.

and Oregon, and later in the Middle West with particular strength in Indiana and Ohio.¹³

For organization and jurisdictional purposes the Klan divided the United States into territorial divisions designated as Realms, each Realm usually embracing a single state. The Realms were divided into Provinces consisting of one or more counties. Both the Realms and Provinces were numbered in order of their formation. A Klan was the local unit of the organization; its territorial jurisdiction was called the Klanton, and it usually extended half way to the Klan nearest unless otherwise designated by higher authority.¹⁴

Two events were of extreme importance to the spread of the Klan, although they were both quite accidental. The first was the exposure of the Klan by the New York World, the findings of which were published in eighteen of the leading newspapers of the country including some important papers of the South.¹⁵

Concurrently with the growth of the Klan after June, 1920, there was considerable crime and lawlessness in some Southern states, particularly in Alabama, Louisiana and Texas. In fact, the World reported four killings, one mutilation, twenty-seven tar-and-feather parties, forty-one floggings and five kidnappings between October

13. Ibid., p. 31.

14. Constitution, pp. 13-14.

15. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 14.

1920 and October 1921.¹⁶ The World stated that these outrages were the direct or indirect result of Klan activity. As might be expected Emperor Simmons most emphatically denied that the Ku Klux Klan had anything to do with them. The important point about the World investigation was that it brought about an investigation by Congress in October, 1921.¹⁷

Without repeating the details of the evidence presented before the Congressional Committee, a few points should be noted. Simmons was successful in turning aside every effort of the Committee to connect the official Klan with the outrages that were attributed to it by the World and a large part of the public, and the investigators could not find enough concrete evidence to warrant federal action.¹⁸ Simmons' emphasis of the idealistic and fraternal aspects of the Klan was so effective that it precluded any thought of wrong doing and responsibility on the part of the Official Klan with the activities of the local Klan. When he denied the official Klan's responsibility for the action of the local Klans, he put his finger on the real power of the Ku Klux Klan: the local organization.¹⁹

16. Ibid., p. 9

17. Ibid., p. 10.

18. Ibid., p. 21.

19. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Since the Congressional investigators could not find sufficient cause for action against the Klan, it could proclaim its innocence to the country at large. After the exposure by the World and the failure of the failure of the investigators to substantiate the charges, the Klan increased its membership by one million within the following twelve months.²⁰

A third milestone in the development of the Order in the United States occurred in Atlanta, Georgia, during the Imperial Klonvokation held in the city in November, 1922. W. J. Simmons was ousted from his office of Emperor and Imperial Wizard by a group of scheming and ambitious men who thought he was neglecting the financial and political possibilities of the Order. This group created the position of Emperor for Simmons and gave him the harmless task of developing higher degrees and supervising the ritualistic aspect of the Klan. Dr. Hiram W. Evans, a struggling dentist from Dallas, Texas, was elected Imperial Wizard with full executive and financial control. Aiding Evans in this action was Fred L. Savage, a former private detective, and David C. Stephenson, the personable and energetic Grand Dragon of the Realm of Indiana.²¹

The effect of this change in leadership was soon reflected in Klan policy and activity. In the South the

20. William G. Shepherd, "The Fiery Double Cross," Collier's, vol. 82 (July 8, 1928, pp. 8-9.

21. Loucks, Klan, pp. 45-46.

Klan had acquired an evil name under the Simmons-Clarke regime because of masked lawlessness, and Evans wanted to raise prestige by inaugurating reform. He annulled the contract with Clarke and when the Atlanta Klansmen objected to Clarke's dismissal, Evans disbanded the Atlanta Klan. Charges of violation of the Mann Act were brought against Clarke and his influence was killed.²² Simmons was persuaded to retire and to sell his interest in the organization for \$146,500. In addition, Evans commissioned General Nathan B. Forrest as Grand Dragon of Georgia with instructions to stamp out lawlessness in the state. In an attempt to check unauthorized Klan demonstrations and make it easier to apprehend non-members who committed lawless acts while disguised as Klansmen, Evans required all members to deposit their robes with the door-keepers of their Klaverns when leaving.²³ This particular requirement was ignored in Elwood, Indiana, as some members kept their robes for many years.

Since there had been but little lawlessness on the part of the Klan in the North, D. C. Stephenson was under no pressure to regain public approval by following the reform methods used in the South. On the contrary, he was in position to relax discipline. With Stephenson,

22. Ibid., p. 48.
 23. Ibid., p. 48.

money became the important thing, recruiting was speeded up, and members came in by the hundreds. The Klan was changed from an order to a movement.²⁴

²⁴. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

CHAPTER II

THE ELWOOD COMMUNITY

As late as 1850 Indiana's population was predominantly Southern, composed of emigrants from slave holding states.²⁵ The ancestors of these early settlers in the south half of the state came through the Cumberland Gap or down the Ohio River, then north along the streams and trails to the interior of the wilderness. They were of good stock and had the best traditions as well as the worst social views of the old Virginians. From across the Ohio came many who were closely allied to the poor whites of the South. Many Scotch-Irish Calvinists found their way into Indiana after migrating from the highlands of Pennsylvania down the valleys to Virginia and North Carolina. In general, they were an energetic, industrious, sturdy, and religious group of people. The life of the state was influenced for decades by these settlers.²⁶

25. Henry Clyde Hubbart, The Older Middle West (New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936), p. 6.

26. W. E. Henry, "Some Elements of Indiana's Population," Indiana Historical Society, Publications, IV. (1908), 389.

Although Elwood is north of the old National Road, which is generally considered to be the dividing line between the Southern influence in Indiana on the one hand and the Northern and New England influence on the other, its population still shows definite influence of Southern background. The Klan, under consideration in this study, drew its members from Elwood and five townships in the northern half of Madison County which was settled by Southerners. Pipe Creek Township was organized in 1833. The first settler, who came in 1830, was a native of Ohio; of the next three, two were from North Carolina and one from Virginia. The first three settlers in Van Buren Township, which was organized in 1837, were from Virginia. The first settlers in Duck Creek and Monroe Townships were from southern Ohio and North Carolina respectively. In 1838 two settlers came to Boone Township from North Carolina and of the next fourteen, ten were from the same state, three from Virginia, and one from Delaware.²⁷

One important result of the social views of the early settlers on the life of the state was their treatment of the Negroes who have never fared well in Indiana.

27. J. J. Netterville, comp., Centennial History Of Madison County, Indiana (Anderson, Indiana, Historians' Association, 1925), I, 260.

Prior to the Civil War the Negro could not be a witness against a white. Negroes and mulattoes were forbidden to enter the state and they could make no legal contracts according to the state constitution of 1850. One group at the constitutional convention of that year advocated the confiscation of property used to shelter a Negro or mulatto.²⁸ An acquaintance of the writer still points with pride to the tree on the courthouse lawn in Marion where two Negro youths were lynched in 1930.

The residents of the Elwood community have had, and still had in the 1920's, a strong anti-Negro attitude. For many years a local tradition has existed to the effect that "no Negro should let the sun set on his head in Elwood." Grace Tyner stated that a prominent early Elwood citizen circulated a petition prohibiting any Negro remaining over night in Elwood, thus giving rise to the tradition.

In announcing a football game between the local American Legion team and a visiting Negro professional team, the local paper used as its headline, "All Black Coons!"²⁹ On another occasion, the local paper printed an item headed "Darkies Get Out of Town" concerning two young Negroes who had jumped off a freight train and were taken into custody by a patrolman. On the way to

28. Hubbart, The Older Middle West, p. 49.

29. Elwood Call Leader, October 12, 1922, p. 6.

police headquarters the two stated that they thought they were in Muncie. They were told, however, that they were in Elwood and that people of their race were not welcome there. Mayor Faust told them that there were folks of their color in Alexandria, just nine miles east and he asked them if they didn't think walking in that direction would be good. Whereupon the Negroes replied yes and started walking toward Alexandria. The paper further stated that "Elwood, while it has no Negro residents and does not encourage their people to linger here, has never mistreated anyone having business in this city or chance visitors, either."³⁰

Indiana contributed to the American Protective Association in its bitter campaign of hate against Catholicism.³¹ That attitude did not entirely disappear during the intervening thirty years as is shown by the fact that some of the members of the American Protective Association joined the Klan in order to carry on the fight. In this state, the Klan movement was largely an expression of fear and suspicion of the Catholic Church.³² The early settlers were members of the Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Christian Churches which were all anti-popish.

30. Ibid., May 18, 1923, p. 1.

31. Humphrey J. Desmond, The A.P.A. Movement (Washington, New Century Press, 1912), p. 46.

32. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 34.

As a reflection of the early migration, Elwood is predominantly Protestant. The Christian Church, which was organized in 1854, was the strongest numerically in Madison County, and in 1924 it had a congregation of twelve hundred.³³ Although the Methodist Church was organized in 1851, it did not attain the numerical strength of the Christian Church.³⁴ Other denominations which had considerable strength include: the Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, United Brethren, and Congregational Churches.³⁵ The Catholic Church was not far behind the Protestant churches in establishing itself in the community. In 1865 the Catholics established a Mission which served one Sunday each month, but it was not until 1889 that it became a regular parish³⁶ which grew to a membership of twelve hundred and sixty-five in 1924.³⁷ It has played an important role in the life of the community.

Elwood is an industrial and agricultural city located some forty-five miles northeast of Indianapolis. Like many other smaller cities in that section of the state, Elwood enjoyed the gas boom of the 1890's. On December 14, 1890, the Indianapolis Journal referred to Elwood as the "gem city of the natural gas belt."

33. Netterville, History of Madison County, I, 167.
 34. Ibid., I, 161.
 35. Ibid., I, 171-78.
 36. Ibid., I, 179-81.
 37. Father Thomas J. Hammes letter to writer, December 23, 1952.

Capitalists were expected to arrive that week from Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Columbus. To help its own cause, Elwood gave a tin-plate company fourteen acres of land on the old Kidwell farm near the well "Vesuvius," and that factory was the backbone of Elwood industry for over forty years. The factory owners sent their lawyer to Elwood where his son, Wendell Willkie, was born in 1892.³⁸ At this same factory James J. Davis, former Secretary of Labor, spent his early years. Elwood had a population of 2,284 in 1890, but by 1900 it had mushroomed to 12,950 while the total population of Elwood and the five townships included in this study had reached a total of 36,963.³⁹

Shortly after the winter of 1905 gas gave out almost everywhere in the gas belt and Elwood began to decline. With the failure of natural gas, industry closed or moved away and Elwood became an area of declining population in a state that was increasing at a constant rate. Between 1900 and 1920 the population of the area dropped by 30 per cent while the state as a whole had increased by approximately 16 per cent.⁴⁰ In 1924 there remained 15 industrial firms with 3,450 on their payrolls.

38. John Bartlow Martin, Indiana; An Interpretation (New York, Alfred A. Knopf Co., 1947), p. 77.

39. United States Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population, Vol. II (Washington, D. C., United States Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 531.

40. United States Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 Population, Vol. III. p. 282.

Among these firms were three canning factories which employed six hundred people on a seasonal basis.⁴¹ The effect of emigration on this community is difficult to evaluate. Economic motives are predominantly responsible for migration whether internal or external. Emigrants, however, are probably a little above the average of the group from which they go in respect to intelligence and adaptability. It is possible that their going might prove to be a drain on the home community which would weaken it in time.⁴² It would seem that in an area of declining, or stable population, the young and venturesome individuals would be among the first to go, leaving the more conservative element for the leadership in the community.

Politically, the community has been a Democratic area in a generally Republican state. The people of Indiana voted the Republican ticket in national elections from 1896 through 1924, with the exception of 1912 when the Republican Party split.⁴³ Madison County followed the same pattern except in 1908 and 1918 when it gave a Democratic majority, and in 1912 when it gave a Progressive plurality to Theodore Roosevelt.⁴⁴ In local politics the community was generally Democratic. W. A. Faust, a Democrat,

⁴¹. Netterville, History of Madison County, I, 260.

⁴². Warren S. Thompson, Population Problems (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1942), p. 387.

⁴³. Edgar E. Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 1896-1932 (Stanford University, Stanford University Press, 1934), p. 402.

⁴⁴. Ibid., p. 189

served as mayor of Elwood from 1922 to 1928 being succeeded by Ed Bonham of the same party. Mayor Lewis served from 1920 to 1922 and was elected on the Socialist ticket. Democrat Frank Behymer was serving as trustee in Pipe Creek Township at that time.

The educational opportunities of Elwood were not deficient; in fact, Elwood possessed a good school system consisting of five elementary schools in addition to a high school and a junior high school, and it employed seventy-seven teachers. The total enrollment for 1923-24 was 2,500 which reflected an increase of 100 per cent over the previous six years. The high school curriculum included the usual academic courses of the times as well as such vocational subjects as home economics, manual training, general shop work, metal work, electrical work, and vocational agriculture. It also maintained an orchestra, band, glee club, and it offered students the opportunity to have music lessons during school hours.⁴⁵ In addition to the public schools there was a parochial school through the tenth grade with a total enrollment of 281 pupils.⁴⁶

The adequacy and use of the library would seem to indicate that Elwood was a reasonably well-read community. A public library was organized in 1899, and the present

⁴⁵. Netterville, History of Madison County, I.
215-16.

⁴⁶. Ibid., I, 217.

Carnegie Library was opened to the public on June 1, 1904, a branch maintained in Frankton and library privileges were granted to all residents of Pipe Creek Township.⁴⁷ In 1924 the library owned a collection of 11,210 volumes and could well be proud of a total circulation of 64,392 volumes⁴⁸ which was considerably above the average over the United States as a whole. The number of volumes circulated and the number of borrowers served during the year constitute the most reliable and tangible yardstick in measuring the library's social significance to the community. While such statistics cannot be qualitative, they do show the number of citizens in a community who take advantage of certain features of a public service which is educational and cultural in nature.⁴⁹

Elwood was well served by newspapers: the local paper, the Elwood Call Leader, had a circulation of 3,162 which compared favorably with the daily circulation of other newspapers in cities of comparable size in the state of Indiana.⁵⁰ The Call Leader's circulation is more impressive when the competition with papers from larger cities is considered: two morning papers, the Muncie Morning Star and the Indianapolis Star, as well as one

⁴⁷. Ibid., I, 224.

⁴⁸. Evelyn Stickler letter to writer, December 13, 1952.

⁴⁹. Louis R. Wilson and Maurice E. Tauber, The Geography of Reading (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 96.

⁵⁰. N. W. Ayer and Sons', American Newspaper Annual and Directory (Philadelphia, N. W. Ayer and Sons, 1925), p. 209.

evening paper, the Indianapolis News were popular in Elwood.

Elwood had no Negroes, almost no Jews, relatively few Catholics or foreigners. The strength of the Ku Klux Klan must have resulted not from any problems created by these groups, but rather from vague fears of the unknown. To borrow from Harrison in the Atlantic, there are few things a man can do with greater safety in his own home in Elwood than to shake his fist at the Pope in Rome.

CHAPTER III

THE KLAN COMES TO ELWOOD

The exact date of the charter of the Elwood Klan, or the White City Klan No. 19, as it was officially designated by the Order, is not known. According to a statement of the last Exalted Cyclops of the local Klan, all records were burned in 1944 with the exception of the membership list. The list showed that one member paid the ten dollar donation September 15, 1922, and that the charter members paid their donations prior to that date to a Mr. House in Indianapolis.⁵⁵ This was nearly one year after the exposure of the Klan by the New York World and after the Congressional investigation which followed.

There was considerable talk about the Klan but the editor of the Elwood Call Leader did not know of any members or of the local chapter before October 7, 1922.⁵⁶ The general public first learned of the Klan activity in Elwood then after a notice appeared in the paper of nearby Tipton which announced a meeting to be held in Kokomo. Elwood was to be represented at this

⁵⁵. Membership list.

⁵⁶. Elwood Call Leader, October 7, 1922, p. 1.

meeting. The public did not have to wait much longer for more tangible evidence of Klan activity in the community, for during the night of October 11, 1922, ambitious Klansmen put up many posters of brown paper bearing the initials K. K. K. The posters were rather crude, drawn with ink on meat wrapping paper, affixed with stickers to the window panes of many business places. Several groups of strangers were in the city during the morning and local residents thought evidence pointed toward a Klan demonstration similar to those held in many surrounding cities. Furthermore, reports of several night meetings, which were held near the old fairgrounds, followed the appearance of the Klan posters.⁵⁷

The character of the charter members of the White City Klan No. 19 followed the general pattern laid down for the Klan by Emperor Simmons in establishing itself in a community in that only the top stratum of society was invited to join. It would be extremely difficult to choose a more respected or influential group among Elwood citizens. These men were the business, civic, and social leaders of the community; among whose names appeared on the membership list were physicians, merchants, bankers, school teachers, and other professional people.⁵⁸

57. Ibid., October 11, 1922, p. 1.

58. Membership List, p. 1.

W. H. Durr believes that they were all thirty-second degree Masons.⁵⁹ At this point in the recruiting process a prospective member was given a questionnaire to complete and return to a post office box. A photostatic copy of such an application form appears on the following page.

The questions which appear on the application are, with some exceptions, closely tied to the objects and purposes of the Order as given in the following excerpt from the Klan Constitution:

The objects of this Order shall be to unite white male persons, native-born Gentile citizens of the United States of America, who owe no allegiance of any nature or degree to any foreign government, nation, institution, sect, ruler, person or people; whose morals are good; whose reputations and vocations are respectable; whose habits are exemplary; who are of sound minds and eighteen years or more of age, under a common oath into a brotherhood of strict regulations; to cultivate and promote patriotism toward our Civil Government; to practice an honorable clannishness toward each other; to exemplify a practical benevolence; to shield the sanctity of the home and the chastity of womanhood; to maintain forever white supremacy; to teach and faithfully inculcate a high spiritual philosophy through an exalted ritualism, and by a practical devotion to conserve, protect and maintain the distinctive institutions, rights, privileges, principles, traditions, and ideals of pure Americanism.⁶⁰

Question three indicates the possibility of discriminating against some occupations. The answer to question six might deny membership to a divorced man. Question eleven

⁵⁹. Told to the writer by W. H. Durr.

⁶⁰. Constitution, Article II, Section I.

INVISIBLE EMPIRE

Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

(Incorporated)

JUN 23 1921

AULIK OF THE

IMPERIAL WIZARD

Dear Sir:

We have been requested by one of your personal friends to get in touch with you, and inform you of this organization. And, in view of this request, we are sending you this form. When we receive this with all the questions below properly answered by you and if same is satisfactory we will impart to you the information your friend desires you to have. Without delay you will fill in, sign and return by early mail. You will find stamped envelope enclose for this purpose.

Very truly yours,
KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN,

By _____

1. Is the motive prompting your inquiry serious?
2. What is your age?.....
3. What is your occupation?.....
4. Where were you born?.....
5. How long have you resided in your present locality?
6. Are you married, single or widower?.....
7. Were your parents born in the United States of America?.....
8. Are you a gentile or jew?.....
9. Are you of the white race or of a colored race?
10. What educational advantages have you?.....
11. Color of eyes?..... Hair?..... Weight?..... Height?.....
12. Do you believe in the principles of a PURE Americanism?
13. Do you believe in White Supremacy?.....
14. What is your politics?.....
15. What is your religious faith?.....
16. Of what church are you a member (if any)?.....
17. Of what religious faith are your parents?.....
18. What secret, fraternal orders are you a member of (if any)?.....
19. Do you honestly believe in the practice of REAL fraternity?
20. Do you owe ANY KIND of allegiance to any foreign nation, government, institution, sect, people, ruler or person?

I most solemnly assert and affirm that each question above is truthfully answered by me and in my own handwriting and that below is my real signature.

Signed

Inquirer.

Business Address.....

Residence Address.....

Telephone No.

Date.....19.....

Telephone No.

N. B.—If space above is not sufficient to answer question, then make your answer on the other side of this sheet. Number the answer to correspond with the question.

indicates that a chance combination of height, weight, color of eyes and hair might exclude a man in spite of his answer to the other questions. Question ten would indicate some educational qualification for membership, but that point is not mentioned elsewhere. Questions seven, thirteen, fourteen, seventeen, and eighteen cover an area which seem to be of no importance to a "patriotic, ritualistic, and fraternal order." Question twenty was put in no doubt to exclude Catholics, but it could conceivably indicate a fear of Communist attempts at infiltration.

The organizers of the Klan in Elwood knew of the adverse criticism of the Order and took measures to counteract it. A meeting scheduled for October 17 was for the purpose of discouraging any unfriendly feeling and any thought of radicalism held by a few of "the good citizens" in the community. The organization told the people it stood for the betterment of mankind and the happiness of humanity. All citizens who had received invitations were urged to attend the meeting and receive first hand information concerning the purpose, ideals and the truth of the Klan.⁶¹

Although no record exists of any serious interference with Klan parades in Elwood, with the exception of a few fist fights precipitated by the "Mad House Gang,"⁶²

61. Elwood Call Leader, October 12, 1922, p. 1.

62. Told to the writer by Earl Trick.

LOST—Detroit, Elwood and Frank-
lin, use 3515 Ford tire on rim. Re-
turned. Call 543 or see O. N. Hes-
ler. 943

LOST—Crank for Chevrolet. Finder
leave at this office. 813

LOST—Two single barreled shot guns.
Return to this office and receive re-
ward. 713

REAL HUNTERS AND DOGS.

Charles Gifford and James Casto
went out hunting Thursday night and
succeeded in bagging two of the an-
imals in the woods near Knox Chapel.
One of the animals weighed 16 and
the other 20 pounds. Both men are
very proud of their game. These two
animals were taken from a number
of other animals this year but
they were the only ones that must have
been taken from the woods.

To Have Parade

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
will parade in Elwood

Saturday Night, December 9

To be followed by public nationaliza-
tion service at the armory in which
the public is invited. The Knights
of the Ku Klux Klan are dedicated to
an operative patriotism, love of
country and to assist in law enforce-
ment by furnishing information to
regular constituted authorities of the
law.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
are dedicated to the Christian religion.
Each Klansman assumes a solemn
oath to uphold the laws of the
community in which he lives, also
the laws of the state and nation.

Certain influences who evidently do
not believe in an operative patriot-
ism in this country, the Christian religion
and Protestant Christianity,
and do not believe in the great fund
amentals of the Constitution of the
U. S., are said to be circulating a
slandering threat that they will break
up the Klan parade if it is held in
the city of Elwood.

This advertisement appears as a
matter of record to explain to the
public that the Knights of the Ku
Klux Klan is an organization which
attends to its own business and finds
itself thoroughly occupied.

It does not wish to be disturbed or
interrupted in holding its parades.

The Klan expects to hold this pa-
rade. If only one man succeeds in get-
ting through the streets. If there is
any trouble started, it will not be
started by a Klansman, but it will
probably be finished by a Klansman.

Each Klansman takes a solemn
oath to uphold the Constitution of
the United States which guarantees
to every citizen of the United States
the right of religious freedom, and
while they concede these rights to
other religious sects, creeds, dogmas
and forces, they exact the same right
to worship God according to the
teachings of their Protestant mothers
undisturbed by those who do not be-
lieve in the Constitution.

—Paid Advertisement.

profits invested in the building of new
ships and on receipts from the sale of
vessels, provided these receipts are
used to build new ships.

Adoption of a provision that no con-
tract between the government and a
ship owner for the extension of gov-
ernment aid shall extend more than
fifteen years.

Public Hearing Allowed.

Insertion of a provision that no ap-
plication for a contract for government
aid shall be refused until after public
hearing.

Hall's Catarrh Medicine

Those who are in a "run down" con-
dition will notice that Catarrh bothers
them much more than when they are
in good health. This fact proves that
while Catarrh is a local disease, it is
greatly influenced by constitutional
conditions.

HALL'S CATARRH MEDICINE con-
sists of an Ointment which Quickly
Relieves by local application, and the
Internal Medicine, a Tonic, which as-
sists in improving the General Health.
Sold by druggists for over 40 years.
F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio.

PAINTERS MAKE PROGRESS.

The painters who are at work at
the postoffice are making excellent
progress and it is thought that they
will complete the work up stairs to-
day and then give their attention to
the basement. The exterior of the
building is also to be repainted.

TROUBLED WITH WEAK KIDNEYS

"Have been troubles with weak kid-
neys since childhood," writes Mrs.
G. Hyde, Genzonia, Michigan. "Now
past forty and have had terrible back-
ache and that tired out feeling, hardly
able to do my work. By using Foley
Kidney Pills accompanied with Foley
Cathartic Tablets, I soon felt like a
new person." Backache, rheumatic
pains, dizziness and blurred vision are
symptoms of kidney trouble. Foley
Kidney Pills give quick relief. Sold
everywhere. —tu-th-st

FOUND GAS AND OIL.

Ed Roop cleaned out an old gas well
on the Dow Jones farm, five miles
south of Alexandria this week and
yesterday was started by a roar of
natural gas followed by a flow of oil.
Roop says enough gas is escaping
from the well to supply Alexandria.

Everybody reads classified ads.

DON SUNG

Makes Men Lay

One of the best ways to
get money is by giving in the
hand and doesn't force at
least the best in any way. Don Sung
to make men. Try it—if it doesn't
pay for itself and pay you a good profit
within your money will be promptly
returned. Trial size 50 cents.

O. G. Hinchaw, City Drug Store.

Dinner

Try

The

1520

Elwood

Am

Those who

Citizens

Miller or

Over

Stock

Five

Real

Per

Call 50

Road

(A)

D-

For All

Over

50

50

the Klan leaders attempted to give such an impression to the public. It was good publicity to magnify the dangers and stir the community by alluding to some veiled threat to the orderly and patriotic activity of this pure American Order. No doubt this was calculated to increase interest in the Klan and to insure a large audience for its public demonstrations. The paid advertisement on the previous page, which appeared in the Elwood Call Leader on December 5, 1922, is a typical example of such technique. It also contains many of the ideas found in the Klan Articles of Faith enumerated here:

1. Tenets of the Christian religion.
2. White supremacy.
3. Protection of our pure womanhood.
4. Just laws and liberty.
5. Closer relationship of Pure-Americanism.
6. Upholding of the Constitution of the United States.
7. The sovereignty of our States Rights.
8. Freedom of speech and press.
9. Closer relationship between capital and labor.
10. Preventing of the causes of mob violence and lynching.
11. Preventing of unwarranted strikes by foreign labor agitators.
12. Prevention of fires and destruction of property by lawless elements.
13. The limitation of foreign immigration.
14. The much needed local reforms.
15. Law and order. ⁶³

These articles are sufficiently broad to attract nearly all citizens and it was part of the Klan policy to stress those articles as local conditions might dictate.⁶⁴ As in

⁶³. Loucks, Klan, p. 33.

⁶⁴. Ibid., p. 20.

the paid advertisement, the Klan leaders stressed Americanism and Protestantism, two terms that are interchangeable to a nativist or a Klansman. The pure American was of the old American stock, and the old American Stock was Protestant. "Protestantism is but the religious phase of Americanism."⁶⁵ Here in this advertisement the principles of the Klan are being threatened, and the local leaders accepted the challenge.

As the recruiting campaign continued in Elwood, the Klan became less selective in its membership, the base was broadened, and anyone, regardless of his station in society, was acceptable provided he was a native born American, gentile, Protestant, white and had the necessary ten dollars. In one case the ten dollars was provided by the generosity of a friend.⁶⁶ The organization was so successful in its membership drive that on December 18, 1922, the 1,018th member was initiated into the White City Klan No. 19.⁶⁷ By the summer of 1924 the incredible number of thirty-four hundred names appeared on the membership list. This phenomenon took place in an area which in 1920 showed a total population of approximately twenty-six thousand.⁶⁸ Thus nearly one-half of the adult male, American born, white, Protestant residents of this area joined the Ku Klux Klan within a period of two years.

⁶⁵. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 134.

⁶⁶. Told to the writer by C. N. McClintock.

⁶⁷. Membership List.

⁶⁸. United States Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 Population, Vol. I. p. 410.

The White City Klan No. 19 was less than one year old when the Klear Konsense Klan No. 4 of the women's organization of the Ku Klux Klan was established in Elwood. On the night of May 18, 1923, two or three hundred people took part in the organization of the local women's branch of the Klan. Here again, the Call Leader reported that it was known that the project was under way but there was no advance announcement as to the exact date of the formal organization meeting.⁶⁹ The women adopted, with minor modifications, the constitution and ritual of the men's order. The donation was only five dollars, four dollars of which was retained by the Kleagle and one dollar sent to national headquarters.⁷⁰

Just five months later, on the night of October 18, 1923, the Junior Ku Klux Klan held an initiation ceremony at the old fairgrounds.⁷¹ This marked the first appearance of the Junior Klan in Elwood. On August 4, 1924, the Junior Order held a parade in Elwood, the first parade of Junior members in the state. Fifty candidates took the oath prior to the parade. "There was plenty to eat, interesting music, and it was an orderly meeting."⁷² In fact, the local paper regularly emphasized the "orderliness" of Klan meetings, suggesting a desire on the part of the editor to counteract criticism of the Klan.

69. Elwood Call Leader, May 19, 1923, p. 1.

70. Loucks, Klan, p. 150.

71. Elwood Call Leader, October 18, 1923, p. 1.

72. Ibid., August 4, 1924, p. 1.

From outward appearances, the chief business of the Klan was to hold outdoor meetings and initiations, burn fiery crosses, and follow up with a parade. These activities were widely publicized, drew huge crowds and, it seems safe to say that they were the most effective means of recruiting. It can be doubted that the Klan leaders were actually afraid that their first parade in Elwood scheduled for December 9, 1922, would be prevented. But how better could the event be advertised than to appear to be apprehensive about the safety of the participants. It was not uncommon practice to have searchlights at outdoor initiations. These searchlights were mounted on a platform about fifteen feet above the ground to enable the operator to sweep all parts of the area and detect any spies who might be attempting to gain admittance to the ceremony.⁷³

So far as is known, crosses were not burned in the Elwood area to frighten or harm any particular individual, or warn anyone to leave the community. They were a spectacular and an economical method of letting the public know about and adding to the mystery of the Order. The Elwood Klan would send requests to the Klans in neighboring cities to send members to participate in local parades. The White City Klan No. 19 would in turn send representatives to other cities to help swell the line of marchers for their parade.

73. Told to the writer by Donald Brown.

In the months that followed the initial appearance of the Klan in Elwood there were numerous parades and demonstrations in the city as well as in surrounding communities. Elwood was well represented at the meetings held elsewhere and the Call Leader gave publicity to such events. It has not been established that the editor of the Call Leader was a Klansman but the publicity of the local chapter was never unfavorable in the early years and usually all items concerning the Klan appeared on the front page.

Summaries of a few articles in the Call Leader will serve to illustrate the favorable publicity given, as well as the nature of Klan activities.

Several Elwood people attended a parade in Anderson on Saturday night, October 28, 1922.⁷⁴ Some two hundred Elwood Klansmen participated in a parade in Tipton on Saturday night November 18, 1922.⁷⁵ On November 27th, several hundred men were initiated by the Klan while two thousand Klansmen were in attendance. Scores of people watched while the members drove through the city to the south and into a field where everything was in readiness for the ceremony. A spotlight was mounted on a platform so that the entire field could be kept under surveillance.⁷⁶

74. Elwood Call Leader, October 30, 1922, p. 1.

75. Ibid., November 20, 1922, p. 1.

76. Ibid., November 28, 1922, p. 1.

A large crowd witnessed a parade and Klan meeting Saturday night, December 9th. Approximately three hundred robed marchers participated in the parade which ended at the armory, but only a few marchers entered the building. The remainder went to their parked cars and then on home to Tipton, Anderson, Muncie, and possibly some other towns nearby. The parade was headed by several men on horseback, accompanied by a good band from Muncie and one from Alexandria. The bands played patriotic airs along the way including Onward Christian Soldiers. A huge fiery cross was kept burning at the south end of the building during the exercises. The words of the ritual were spoken so that they were plainly audible to the audience. The oath pledged allegiance to the nation and the flag, reverence to God, and the protection of womanhood. The ceremony was given the most respectful attention by the large crowd which at the close of the meeting joined in the singing of America. The Reverend P. E. Greenwalt pronounced the benediction.⁷⁷

An item in the Call Leader announced that Reverend Blair of Atlanta, Georgia, who was a national speaker for the Klan, would speak in Elwood the following night on the full object and purpose of the Ku Klux Klan. A cordial invitation was extended to the public to attend the meeting.⁷⁸

77. Ibid., December 11, 1922, p. 1.

78. Ibid., December 19, 1922, p. 1.

Two days later the Call Leader gave front page space to the meeting. Reverend Blair, a Christian pastor, gave a "sincere speech which lasted over one hour." He spoke on pure Americanism and explained why membership in the Klan was confined to certain citizens and denied to others. "He was given the closest attention by the audience and some congratulated him for his talk."⁷⁹

The Elwood chapter initiated twenty members into the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the Methodist Church in Frankton, January 18, 1923. The ceremony performed before a packed house was followed by several speeches by hooded figures.⁸⁰

A "meeting for Americans" was held in the Phi Delta Kappa hall on South Anderson street on the night of January 31, 1923. All white, Protestant, gentile Americans were invited to attend. The Call Leader stated that "Mr. Flickinger is a good talker, has good delivery and will no doubt say some interesting things."⁸¹

A notice of a street demonstration to be held April 4th appeared on the first page of the Call Leader April 2nd. It was anticipated to be the largest demonstration ever staged in that part of the state, and representatives from a number of neighboring places were expected.

79. Ibid., December 21, 1922, p. 1.

80. Ibid., January 18, 1923, p. 1.

81. Ibid., January 31, 1923, p. 1.

Members of the Klan were notified of a change in the location of the Klan meeting to be held on Saturday night, April 5th, by a news column in the Call Leader of that date. The place of the demonstration and naturalization was changed from the Frazier grove to the grove "situated on the old Lowder farm southwest of the city." The public was cordially invited and those who wished to attend were instructed to drive south on Anderson street to J and then west on J to the end of the street. No street demonstration was scheduled for that evening.

Elwood was represented at a state meeting held at Fort Wayne where Imperial Wizard Evans was the principle speaker of the meeting. A special train consisting of eight coaches, all of which were packed with residents of Elwood and immediate vicinity, left the city at one o'clock in the afternoon for Fort Wayne.⁸²

The next public demonstration to receive the Call Leader's publicity, was sponsored by the Elwood Klan in Summitville, April 17, 1924. The Elwood chapter was assisted by Klansmen from Anderson, Marion, Alexandria, and Muncie. The marchers consisted of fifty women, one hundred and fifty men, a Junior Klan bugler and the Summitville drum corps. An automobile bearing an illuminated cross followed the drum corps in the parade. An unmasked

82. Ibid., November 10, 1923, p. 1.

speaker, an Elwood resident, addressed a crowd of two thousand people in the grove east of the high school.⁸³

An announcement of a Klan parade and meeting to be held in Elwood on Saturday night May 3rd, 1924, appeared on the first page of the Call Leader for that day. The announcement stated that Klansmen from Kokomo, Anderson, Muncie and other places would participate in the ceremonies. The notice stated that there would be good speeches and music starting at nine o'clock at the old fairgrounds. Complete directions for the line of march were included in the announcement.

This meeting which proved to have drawn the largest Klan crowd of the year was attended by representatives from five counties. Six traction cars of Klansmen came from Kokomo. "They enjoyed a program of speeches and music and had lots to eat." One thousand men and women marchers and a women's band participated in the parade. The city never had a more "orderly meeting."⁸⁴

Several hundred Klansmen from Elwood attended a huge parade and celebration held at the state fairgrounds in Indianapolis, Saturday night, May 24, 1924. The parade had been planned originally to lead through the Negro and foreign sections of the city, but at the last minute, the Klan acquiesced to the request of the business men and city

83. Elwood Call Leader, April 19, 1924, p. 1.

84. Ibid., May 5, 1924, p. 1.

...the locals never regained the Miss Orpha Nunn has gone to An Insurance Co. Insure...
head and the visitors went home with derision for a few days visit with DeHortz, 116 North Adams
the long end of a 13 to 9 score. friends.

Open Air Meeting On School Playground

SIXTEENTH STREET

TONIGHT!

AT EIGHT O'CLOCK

National Speaker

Will Discuss Issues of Ku Klux Klan

PLENTY OF GOOD MUSIC--EVERYBODY INVITED

even
at 7c
and

officials to by-pass those sections. There was no trouble and all Klansmen agreed that the meeting was a "great affair." No accidents were reported on the trip although the roads were "filled with automobiles of parties returning until the early hours of Sunday morning."⁸⁵

The Elwood Klan received an invitation to participate in a parade and demonstration held at Kempton on Thursday, June 26, 1924.⁸⁶ The local chapter sent many representatives to the Klan district meeting at Anderson July 31st.⁸⁷ The Elwood Klan made a creditable showing at the state meeting for men and women held in South Bend November 8, 1924. A special train carried the local Klansmen and a band to the meeting place.⁸⁸

It would seem that the interest in parades and public meetings of the Klan was greatly diminished as the first Klan parade in many months was to be held in Elwood Saturday night May 2, 1925. After the parade, a public meeting was scheduled to be held at the central playgrounds at North A and 16th streets. Supper was to be served in the Klan hall from five to seven o'clock where plenty of food was promised for thirty-five cents per person.⁸⁹ On Monday, September 8th, local Klansmen attended a picnic at Anderson which was sponsored by the Ku Klux Klan of several counties. After the picnic a street demonstration was held.⁹⁰

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- 85. Ibid., May 26, 1924, p. 1.
 - 86. Ibid., June 25, 1924, p. 1.
 - 87. Ibid., August 4, 1924, p. 1.
 - 88. Ibid., November 8, 1924, p. 1.
 - 89. Ibid., May 2, 1925, p. 1.
 - 90. Ibid., September 8, 1925, p. 1.

An organization with such a program and such publicity was hardly secret.

In his plan for furthering the philosophy and ritual of the Klan, Colonel Simmons conceived the idea of setting up various degrees in the Order. For those members who wanted a little more than the first degree at ten dollars, he created a second degree with a twenty dollar fee. Beyond that was the third degree at forty dollars and the fourth degree at eighty dollars. That the Colonel was not completely altruistic in this scheme is indicated by his estimate of the numbers who might prove willing to pay the price for further degrees.⁹¹

When a member grew tired of being on an equal footing with so many fellow Klansmen, or wanted to be a little more exclusive, he could, upon payment of the additional fee, advance into the higher level of Klandom. Early in April, 1925, it required six special coaches of the Indiana Union Traction Company to furnish transportation for all those wishing to take the second degree at Indianapolis. Fully as many more went by auto, making approximately one thousand from the White City Klan No. 19 who advanced in the Order. It was reported that all felt this experience was worthwhile.⁹²

⁹¹. William G. Shepherd, "Ku Klux Koin," Collier's, vol. 82 (July 21, 1928), p. 38.

⁹². Elwood Call Leader, April 6, 1925, p. 1.

No doubt many from Elwood took the third degree but there were only two who joined the select circle of the fourth degree: W. H. Durr, and Dr. J. C. McDaniel.⁹³

Just as the Know-Nothings and the American Protective Association had circulated spurious stories in the nineteenth century in order to discredit the Catholic Church, the Klan circulated the same and similar stories in the 1920's. These accusations were no doubt intended to impress the credulous with the alleged danger that faced the country and to influence the wavering individual into joining the Klan. These propaganda stories were repeated in Elwood.

According to rumors all Catholic churches contained ammunition and weapons in their basements. A drayman was said to have been delivering a number of heavy boxes to the St. Joseph Church in Elwood, and in the process of unloading, dropped a box on the pavement which broke open, disclosing a number of rifles. In order to prevent the public from learning of their arms and ammunition, the Catholics would never permit state boiler inspectors to enter any building owned by the church.

The Klan warned that the Catholic influence in America existed in many unexpected places. It had even penetrated

93. Told to the writer by W. H. Durr.

the design of American paper currency, for Klansmen believed that the decoration around the edges of the one dollar bills of 1917 were Catholic crosses of special significance in whose corners appeared the pictures of the Pope in profile.

Another story, which was believed to be true by many local citizens, was designed to place responsibility for violence on the Klan. A Catholic business man in Muncie had some repair work to be done in Elwood and knowing the anti-Negro sentiment in that city sent a Negro to do the work. Shortly after the arrival of the Negro he was told by Dr. McDaniel that he might receive bodily harm if he remained in Elwood. McDaniel however, made it clear to the Negro that the Klan would not harm him, but someone else might do so and accuse the Klan of the act. At that point the Negro made preparation to leave immediately for Muncie and stated that he had "told his boss he shouldn't go to Elwood."⁹⁴

A prominent minister of a Protestant church active in the Klan was extremely active in liquor law enforcement. A rumor persisted that the minister was the object of the wrath of certain Catholics who, objecting to his Klan activities, planned to do him bodily harm. He met two of his

⁹⁴. Told to the writer by Edgar Jones.

enemies on the street who told him that they would thrash him if he did not "go back into his church and stay there." The good pastor, a rather large man, is reported to have answered, "now is a good time to start. I have never felt better in my life." No blows were struck, but the ill feeling continued. Finally, a Catholic woman, whom the pastor befriended, warned him that the Catholics were going to attack him in his parsonage. He obtained firearms and was prepared to defend himself in case the attack was attempted. No violence occurred, Klansmen believed, only because a warning had been sent by the Muncie Klan to the Catholics who had made the threat.⁹⁵

The Klan employed the boycott in Elwood. During Klan business meetings the intended victims of the boycott were discussed and watchers were appointed. They were given instructions as to their stations as well as the hours to be covered. Boycotts were effective in small towns where merchants as well as most residents were known personally by the Klansmen. The Cohn Clothing Company went out of business in Elwood, some believed that a Klan boycott was the cause.⁹⁶ The firm consisted of a Jewish merchant and his three sons. The sons were popular with the younger people, prior to the Klan, and belonged to a

⁹⁵. Told to the writer by C. N. McClintock.

⁹⁶. Told to the writer by P. E. Greenwalt.

local fraternity. The fraternity numbered among its members some Klansmen and on one occasion in early 1923 permitted the use of its hall for a Klan meeting. In November, 1923, the Cohn family disposed of their business and left the community.⁹⁷

A salesman for Camel cigarettes met considerable resistance among some of the tobacco merchants in Elwood. Lorah Wilson, one of the proprietors of Wilson Brothers Cigar Store, stated that he had no sale for Camel cigarettes. His customers refused to buy Camels because the manufacturers were reportedly Catholics. Furthermore, he was told, Klansmen boycotted Camels because of the hidden Catholic propaganda on the package which was in the design of the cross-like letter "t's" on the packages. In spite of remonstrances on the part of the salesman, Camels fared none too well in Elwood for many months.⁹⁸

97. Elwood Call Leader, November 14, 1923, p. 1.

98. Told to the writer by Edgar Jones.

CHAPTER IV

THE KLAN IN THE COMMUNITY

Within a few months after the Klan was organized in Elwood it became an active force in the community. Local ministers spoke on its behalf in public meetings. While it did not assume a vigilante role, the Klan did press the public officials for a more effective law enforcement policy. It was successful in introducing some Bible study into the public schools. Attitudes of the Klan were plainly discernable in proposed legislation and in some laws that were enacted.

There is no doubt that the commercial element was an important factor in the rapid growth of the Klan. It must be admitted that the Order was in the hands of extremely able promoters and it was well organized from the Imperial Wizard down to the local Kleagles. The money incentive existed and several individuals benefited from each ten dollar Klecktoken (initiation fee). The Kleagles were paid on a commission basis, four dollars of the ten, and as a result, there was considerable amount of selling done on the part of the Kleagle. In Elwood, any member who turned in the name of a prospect to the

Kleagle would receive one dollar of the fee upon the payment by the new member.⁹⁹ This added another link in the chain of recipients who benefited directly from the Klectokens.

In addition to the direct benefits resulting from the Klectoken there was the matter of hired, or professional speakers. On at least one occasion the Reverend E. S. DeMiller of the Christian Church in Elwood spoke for the Klan at a public meeting in the city. A prominent Methodist minister has stated that he made speeches for the Klan. This is not to say that these particular men of the cloth were hired by the Klan nor is there any attempt to question their sincerity in their activities. Nevertheless, it was general policy of the Klan throughout Indiana to hire Protestant ministers as Klan speakers.¹⁰⁰ It may be of interest here to point out that there were nearly eleven hundred Protestant ministers who were members of the American Protective Association.¹⁰¹

However important the financial aspect of the Klan may have been in the membership growth there were additional and more important reasons for men joining the Order. The appeal of the Klan to law and order was

99. Told to the writer by W. O. Miller

100. Harrison, in Atlantic Monthly, p. 678.

101. Desmond, The A.P.A. Movement, p. 46.

effective, especially during the uneasy and lawless times of the early 1920's. Bootleggers were a special target of the Klan. Mayor Faust was criticized by the Klansmen because they felt that he was too lax in his liquor law enforcement. However, Faust stated that there were three times as many arrests and convictions on that charge under his regime as had been made under his predecessor's term of office.¹⁰² Klan leaders knew of the appeal of law and order. In reporting meetings of the Klan the Elwood Call Leader made many references, such as "the orderliness of the meeting," the "orderly meeting," "Elwood has never had a more orderly meeting," or "Chief Parsons says he wanted to thank everybody for being on their good behavior Saturday evening and says the orderly conduct of the crowd was commendable."¹⁰³

The Klan gained the support of many of the best citizens through its stand for law and order.¹⁰⁴ In Elwood the Klan exerted pressure on the police officers to enforce the laws governing pool rooms. Police raided various pool rooms in the city and warned proprietors to comply with the law. "It is understood that some pretty strong pressure has been brought to bear to stimulate law enforcements."¹⁰⁵

102. Told to the writer by W. A. Faust.

103. Elwood Call Leader, May 5, 1924, p. 1.

104. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 40.

105. Elwood Call Leader, May 10, 1923, p. 1.

In neighboring Tipton proprietors of cigar stores and pool rooms received warnings from the Ku Klux Klan that they must clean up and "existing evils must be abated." The notices in the Tipton paper were directed at all law violators in Tipton county. "The Bootleggers were told to ply their trade elsewhere, merchants were reminded that the sale of cigarettes and tobacco to minors was illegal and pool room owners were notified to forbid minors to enter their places of business."¹⁰⁶ Clyde Bates, a pool room owner in Tipton, was arrested for selling baseball pools and lottery tickets. Charles Tudor was arrested for permitting minors in his pool room.¹⁰⁷

The Indiana Legislature enacted a law in 1907 permitting farmers to organize for the purpose of protection against horse thieves and other felons beyond the prompt attention of officers from nearby cities. Twelve local chapters of the Horse Thief Detection Association organized in Madison County.¹⁰⁸ Members of this association in Elwood received police powers from the board of County Commissioners March 15, 1923.¹⁰⁹ Among those authorized to carry arms were Earl Trick, Charles McClintock and A. J. Bannon; the first two of these were Klansmen. Many members of the Horse Thief Detective

106. Ibid., May 3, 1923, p. 4.

107. Ibid., May 7, 1923, p. 1.

108. Ibid., May 28, 1924, p. 1.

109. Ibid., March 16, 1923, p. 1.

Association were also members of the Klan. In the words of A. J. Bannon, "The Klan took over the Horse Thief Detective Association in Elwood."

It was these men who patrolled the highways and directed traffic in the cities during parades or demonstrations. This was potentially the most dangerous aspect of the Klan in the community. The mere knowledge that a man could wear a mask and legally carry arms was cause enough to make men fear for the safety of their very lives. There is no record of any violence as a result of this situation, but the presence of the constant threat was a disturbing factor in the community.

In their zeal for law and order, the Klan-dominated Horse Thief Detective Association members were impatient with, and critical of the courts for their slowness in trying cases. They so criticised the courts that Judge Kittinger of the Circuit Court in Anderson, the county seat, stated that the directing association officers were doing more to destroy morale and to obstruct the common good than could be restored by all the decent citizens in the community.¹¹⁰

One case in particular which created considerable interest on the part of the association members was that Clifford Carmody of Anderson. Carmody was arrested by

¹¹⁰. Ibid., April 24, 1924, p. 1.

the captain of the Anderson association and raiders who alleged he was caught in the act of pouring "white mule" into the kitchen sink. At the trial, the defense claimed that the warrant should not have been issued to a person who was not a proper officer. The trial was continued until June 28th on the motion of the prosecutor who said he was making the motion at the request of the counsel for the association who wished to secure additional help from Crawfordsville. The court room was well filled by members of the association and Judge Kittinger took occasion to tell them that in his interpretation of the law they had no right to be called constables or to make arrests.¹¹¹

Again on June 29, a large number of association members were present in the court room to hear the trial of Carmody. Nothing was done however, on this case as the court was engaged in another trial. An attempt to set a new date by the two sides ended in disagreement, and Judge Kittinger set the new date for August 5th. Before time for the new trial Carmody was tried on another but similar charge, brought by federal prohibition officers. The Anderson Herald stated:

111. Elwood Call Leader, May 28, 1924, p. 1.

Carmody surrendered to the sheriff yesterday and started to serve a sentence of thirty days imposed in circuit court. The sentence which included a fifty-dollar fine, was for the violation of the prohibition law for which Carmody was arrested several months ago by federal officers. The officers told the prosecutor, according to Mr. Smith's statement, that if Carmody would enter a plea of guilty and accept his sentence that further action would be dropped by the federal officers. Another charge preferred against Carmody by the horse-thief detectives is set for trial on August 5th. ¹¹²

Since the court records contain no further mention of Carmody, it must be assumed that the case brought by the Horse Thief Detective Association was dismissed. ¹¹³

For many, the Klan had a strong patriotic appeal. Most people quite properly admit of being patriotic. In the 1920's Americans were thinking in terms of "America first." The nation had only recently repudiated any entangling alliance with foreign countries: it wanted no foreign "isms." The Klan stood for one hundred per cent Americanism and it was an instrument through which the common man could give expression to his patriotism. When the Kleagle stepped forth after a rousing speech and asked the listener where he stood, it was difficult to resist.

Much of the outward appearance of patriotism was of the flag-waving variety in Elwood. A group of residents registered complaints to the mayor to the effect

¹¹². Anderson Herald, July 17, 1924, p. 1.

¹¹³. W. G. Johnson letter to writer, February 17, 1953.

that there was no flag flying from the city hall and none from the nearby flag pole. Shortly thereafter the flags were put up, not only on the flag pole, but inside the building as well.¹¹⁴ The only criticism the Klan had of Lee Montgomery, trustee in Boone Township, was his failure to keep the flags flying from the poles on various school grounds.¹¹⁵

The remarks of many former members of the Klan in the Elwood community indicate that the appeal to anti-Catholicism was the strongest single reason given for joining and upholding the Klan. This phrase was seldom referred to by the articles which appeared in the Call Leader except by way of stressing Protestantism. To a Klansman, Protestantism was almost synonymous with Americanism. Protestants landed at Plymouth Rock, most colonists were Protestants, and therefore, they were the pure American stock. When the bands played Onward Christian Soldiers at a parade, the music was described as patriotic.¹¹⁶ Chester Thomas stated that in his opinion the Klan in Elwood was an expression of anti-Catholicism. He thought there was an unusual amount of religious hatred in the area.

The school question had been stressed by previous nativist movements in America and the Klan gave the schools

¹¹⁴. Elwood Call Leader, January 31, 1923, p. 1.

¹¹⁵. Told to the writer by Lee Montgomery.

¹¹⁶. See page 32.

considerable attention in the 1920's.¹¹⁷ The school question was not so much one of opposition to Catholic schools as it was the control of the education in the public schools. To be sure, there was opposition to the Catholic schools but that did not receive as much attention from the Klan as the question of how well the school children were developing Christian character. Klansmen wanted to put the Bible in the schools and offer religious training.¹¹⁸ It has been stated that Klansmen had four criteria for judging schools in respect to pure Americanism. First, the Bible should be read according to the law and it should be a Protestant version of the Bible. Second, there should be a prominent display of the American flag. Third, there should be no Catholic teachers in the system. Fourth, there should be no recognized symbols of Catholic or foreign origin.¹¹⁹ If these four criteria were met the school was considered by the Klan to be in proper condition, regardless of the curriculum, length of term, training of the teachers and adequacy of the physical equipment.

Klansmen believed that the Catholic influence in the public schools was increasing and it was necessary to be constantly on the alert to prevent further encroachment. The first evidence of Klan influence in the public schools

117. Loucks, Klan, p. 134.

118. Ibid., pp. 134-36.

119. Ibid., p. 139.

in the community appeared in the early part of 1923. The Elwood Call Leader for March 12, 1923, stated, "It is understood that a number of citizens have been urging that the Bible be studied in the city schools." Legal justification for the teaching of the Bible in Indiana public schools was based on a law passed in 1865 which stated that "The Bible shall not be excluded ... from the public schools."

Mr. Arthur W. Konold, Superintendent of the Elwood school system instituted a Bible course. He secured the help of a minister, an honorary member of the Klan, who made the outline for the course. The Klan was still highly secret concerning its membership, and at that time Mr. Konold did not know that of the school board were members of the Klan but he suspected that the Klan influence was very strong in that direction. In spite of Mr. Konold's cooperation and enthusiasm regarding the Bible course, he was not serving in a satisfactory manner. He was not a member of the Klan, nor in sympathy with the Order and was soon given to understand that the organization opposed him, and it helped to force his resignation.¹²⁰

The Klan agitation for Bible reading in all public schools was reflected by the donation of Bibles to various schools. "Principals of each of the six schools in Elwood

¹²⁰. A. W. Konold letter to writer, July 6, 1952.

were given a copy of the King James version of the Bible for daily reading. On the fly leaf of each Bible appeared the inscription, 'Presented to the schools of the city of Elwood, Indiana, by a group of men and women who believe in thorough American ideals of faith and patriotism'."121

In the spring of 1924 the teachers of all rural schools in Boone Township received Bibles for daily reading. The writer was teaching there at the time. Mr. H. L. Montgomery, the township trustee and a Klansman, was asked by the Klan if he would give his permission for such a donation. Under the circumstances he stated that he could not refuse to grant this permission.¹²²

A highly respected Catholic teacher in the Elwood public high school was considered a spy for the Catholic Church by members of the Klan.¹²³ Many of the public school teachers in the Elwood area were members of the Klan, although there was no concrete evidence that pressure was brought to bear on the school board to hire only Klansmen as teachers. On the contrary, Lee Montgomery was never questioned by the Klan concerning his choice of teachers.

At a political meeting in Elwood the subject of free text books for schools by the state was being discussed. Earl Trick related that a Catholic proposed a motion to

121. Elwood Call Leader, April 16, 1923, p. 1.

122. Told to the writer by H. L. Montgomery.

123. Told to the writer by Earl Trick.

the effect that the state furnish free textbooks for all schools. Immediately a Klansman protested the wording of the motion and suggested changing it to read, all public schools. The motion with the changed wording was passed.

William A. McMinn, a member of the board of trustees of the White City Klan No. 19, was elected state representative from Madison County in 1924. During the 1925 session of the General Assembly he introduced six bills before the House; one, which concerned the registration fees of optometrists, became law.¹²⁴ Mr. McMinn introduced House Bill no. 421, which would permit pupils to be excused from school for two hours of religious education per week.¹²⁵ He later withdrew this bill¹²⁶ and voted for a similar one which passed the House by a vote of seventy-six to six¹²⁷ but was not signed by the governor.¹²⁸ Mr. McMinn favored most of the so called "Klan Laws" which were introduced during the 1925 sessions. He voted for a bill prohibiting the wearing of religious garb by persons engaged in teaching in the public schools;¹²⁹ a bill which provided for the reading of the American revised version of the Holy Bible in the common public schools of the state;¹³⁰ a bill providing

¹²⁴. Indiana, General Assembly, House Journal, 1925 (Indianapolis, 1925), p. 169.

¹²⁵. Ibid., p. 451.

¹²⁶. Ibid., p. 524.

¹²⁷. Ibid., p. 755.

¹²⁸. Ibid., p. 963.

¹²⁹. Ibid., p. 170.

¹³⁰. Ibid., p. 721.

for the teaching of the Constitution of the State of Indiana and of the United States of America in public, private, and parochial schools in the state;¹³¹ and a bill which authorized tax-supported institutions of higher education in the state to permit students to elect courses in Biblical and religious instruction provided by religious organizations and to receive credit for such instruction.¹³² The latter two bills became law.

Since the Horse Thief Detective Association was a Klan organization in effect, it is surprising that Mr. McMinn voted for a bill to abolish the Association.¹³³ This bill passed the House by a vote of fifty-two to thirty-five but was indefinitely postponed by the Senate.¹³⁴

At least two other school bills, which were aimed directly at Catholics were introduced in the General Assembly. One bill stipulated that all public school teachers must be graduates of public schools. The other bill called for the abolition of parochial schools in the State of Indiana.¹³⁵

As we have seen earlier in this essay one of the articles of faith of the Klan was a closer relationship between capital and labor, and another was directed at unwarranted strikes by foreign labor agitators. Although

131. 131. Ibid., p. 692.

132. Ibid., p. 698.

133. Ibid., p. 434.

134. Ibid., p. 962.

135. Elwood Call Leader, January 13, 1925, p. 1.

factory management personnel was represented in the White City Klan No. 19, there was not much evidence to support the theory that employers were in favor of the Klan in Elwood. However, a foreman in a glass factory tried to influence one of his men to join.¹³⁶ In Boone Township, an area in which 90 per cent of the eligible men were Klansmen, a farm owner refused to continue renting his farm to a man who would not join the Klan.¹³⁷

There was a miscellany of reasons for the growth of the Klan in addition to those already discussed. Some thought that it was just something to "belong to" and joined because their friends did. Others were attracted by the mysterious nature of the organization seeing in it an opportunity to escape the monotony and boredom of everyday life. Here was an opportunity to be a Knight of the Invisible Empire at a reasonable price.¹³⁸

After considering all the reasons given, it hardly accounts for the fact that nearly one-half the eligible population in the area joined the Order in such a short time. Elwood cannot be considered an illiterate community. There were no Negroes, very few foreign born, and only a handful of Jews. The Catholics were an old, stable

136. Told to the writer by Edgar Noble.

137. Told to the writer by Jesse Little.

138. Told to the writer by Donald Brown.

element in the community. The underlying reasons for the phenomenal growth of the Klan must have been the lack of critical thinking, and the lack of real tolerance on the part of a large segment of American society in the 1920's.

The Klan came to be accepted in the community as a part of everyday life, it had lost much of its secrecy, and it entered into a phase of respectability. The women were members, the children were members, so it became an organization for the entire family. Local ministers spoke in defense of the Klan at public meetings, and Elwood residents spoke unmasked at Klan meetings in neighboring towns. In early April, 1924, to the delight of most Indiana boys, a Junior Ku Klux Klan basketball tournament was held in the local armory. The Elwood Juniors lost in the semi-final round to Kokomo while the Juniors from New Philadelphia, Ohio, defeated Kokomo for the championship.¹³⁹

A daily vacation Bible school with an enrollment of two hundred children, operated in the Klan hall, Monday through Friday from nine to eleven-thirty every morning for a period of four weeks. The school began on June 15, 1925, being open to any child from five to fifteen. It

¹³⁹. Elwood Call Leader, April 7, 1924, p. 7.

was not denominational nor was it intended to teach Klan principles. The teachers were from various Protestant churches. Patriotic exercises were a part of the school program. At the close of each session the Star Spangled Banner was played while the children stood at attention. Then they gave the pledge of allegiance to the flag, followed by the singing of America. After this came the pledge of allegiance to the Christian flag and the Saviour, and finally the group sang Stand Up For Jesus.¹⁴⁰ This is another example of how Klansmen fused Americanism and Protestantism.

From 1922 through 1925 the Klan distributed baskets of food to the needy families in Elwood at Christmas time. The recipients of these donations were thoroughly investigated as to their need and worthiness by the committee of the local Klan.¹⁴¹ In order that the Klan should receive full credit, in the eyes of the public, for its charity, a communication went to the Call Leader requesting publication about a donation to an individual. The following appeared in the paper under the heading, "Another Good Deed:"

Wednesday evening at his home, 415 South 21st Street, Beecher Moore, whose illness has been noted for such an extended time, was made very, very happy by a liberal financial donation which was presented to him by members of the Ku Klux Klan. It was a great help...deeply appreciated.¹⁴²

140. Ibid., June 19, 1925, p. 1.

141. Ibid., December 22, 1925, p. 1.

142. Ibid., January 27, 1923, p. 1.

Many donations were made to churches by the Klan. The donors usually appeared hooded and interrupted the service to make their gifts and leave the church immediately. Most ministers would make some mention of the benevolence during the sermon although this was not always the case. The Reverend E. A. Briggs, of the Methodist church in Boone Township, accepted a donation during the service. He was asked by one of the donors to acknowledge the gift during the sermon, but he failed to do so.¹⁴³

For several months the Klan rented a building on South Anderson street for its headquarters, then considerable sentiment developed in favor of purchasing a building for a permanent home. J. C. McDaniel opposed the purchase of a building. In the first place, he did not think the Klan could afford the luxury of a building, and secondly, he did not believe the organization would be of sufficient stability to warrant the investment.¹⁴⁴ In 1923, he stated that in his opinion, within a short time there would be no more than seventy-five active members in the local chapter. During the course of discussion and negotiations considerable dissension arose over the choice and cost of a building. An agreement however, was reached, and in June, 1924, the

¹⁴³. Told to the writer by Lee Montgomery.

¹⁴⁴. Told to the writer by Edgar Jones.

White City Klan No. 19 purchased the property at 1420 West Main Street from the First National Bank for the sum of \$11,500. Serving for the Klan as trustees at that time were: William McMinn, Walter Holland, and Carl Boyer.¹⁴⁵

Klankraft, the philosophy of the Klan, became a religion to some of its members. The sincerity of these people can hardly be doubted in the light of their behavior in times of bereavement. There were several funerals in Elwood at which the Klan participated. In one case the body of the deceased was robbed as well as the pall-bearers and some of the mourners.¹⁴⁶ In another instance, after the funeral service in the church the Klansmen went to the basement, donned their robes and accompanied the body to the cemetery.¹⁴⁷

There was at least one instance in which the Klan was thought to provide more appropriate environment than the home or the church for the performance of the marriage rites. An Elwood girl and Reverend Wagner, pastor of the Christian Church in Alexandria were married in a typical Ku Klux Klan setting. The wedding was witnessed by a crowd of five thousand in a grove three miles north of

¹⁴⁵. Madison County, Recorder's Office, Transfer Records, 1924.

¹⁴⁶. Elwood Call Leader, February 27, 1924, p. 1.

¹⁴⁷. Ibid., October 22, 1923, p. 1.

Alexandria. Reverend Hybarger, of the Baptist Church in Orestes, performed the ceremony in the flickering light of a fiery cross. Vocal music was provided by a member of the Klear Konscience Klan. All participants were robed. The groom was the secretary of the Klan in Alexandria and the couple planned to live in an apartment in the building in which the Klan headquarters was located.¹⁴⁸

Numerous suppers and social evenings to which the public was invited were held in the Klan hall. On January 28, 1926, a box supper for the benefit of the Junior Klan band was held in the Klan hall. Lee Drawhon, the auctioneer, donated his services for the evening. A large crowd attended the supper and the boxes brought good prices so that a sizeable sum of money was raised for the band.¹⁴⁹

There was close cooperation between the Klan and the women's branch of the Order. The women used the Klan hall for their headquarters until August 1925, when the Klear Konscience Klan No. 4 purchased one-half interest in the building from the White City Klan No. 19.¹⁵⁰ No specific reasons were available as to why this transaction was made after the women's branch had been using

¹⁴⁸. Elwood Call Leader, August 15, 1924, p. 1.
¹⁴⁹. Ibid., January 29, 1926, p. 1.
¹⁵⁰. Madison County, Recorder's Office, Transfer Records, 1925.

the Klan hall for over one year. However, as has been mentioned earlier, the White City Klan No. 19 reached its membership peak in 1924. In addition, many members paid no dues after their initiation while many others paid for only a few months. Therefore, we may safely say that the sale of the property offered a means of retrenchment to an organization which was finding it more difficult to maintain a state of solvency.

CHAPTER V

THE DECLINE OF THE KLAN

The Klan in Elwood reached its peak of 3,400 members in 1924 and then steadily declined. It declined because of its political activity, corrupt leadership, and the effect of external influences.

The final stage in the evolution of nativist movements in this country has been their entrance into politics. This was true of the Know-Nothings and the American Protective Association, as well as the Ku Klux Klan. In a democracy it would seem that the only way to settle great social issues is in the political arena, but when an organization enters politics it must become a political party or attach itself to an existing party.¹⁵¹ American history has shown that when this happens, the movement disintegrates. The issues that gave the Klan its strength; namely, White Supremacy, pure Americanism, anti-Popery, and anti-Semitism, do not lend themselves to political success. Many sincere men were united in furthering Klan objectives but they could not forsake their political loyalty to carry out these objectives.

¹⁵¹. Mecklin, The Klan, pp. 42-43.

The political activities of D. C. Stephenson, the Grand Dragon of the Realm of Indiana, contributed to the disruption of the Klan in Elwood. As stated earlier, Stephenson changed the Klan from a patriotic and fraternal order to a political movement. He broke with the national organization and attached his following to the Republican party. He not only controlled the primaries, but elected his candidate, Ed. Jackson, governor of the state in 1924.¹⁵² After the election many Democrats realized that they had been misled and dropped their membership in the Klan because it was too closely connected with one political party.¹⁵³

Elwood Klansmen were active in state as well as in local politics. In June 1924 seven delegates, some of whom were Klansmen from Pipe Creek Township, attended the Democratic state convention in Indianapolis. The Klan claimed 330 members among the convention delegates. There was considerable speculation in the Call Leader concerning an anti-Klan plank in the party platform that year.¹⁵⁴ The convention did adopt a "freedom and liberty" plank, but this failed to bring about the expected schism in the party. There was neither strong pro-Klan, nor strong anti-Klan sentiment sufficient to dominate the convention.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵². Harrison, In Atlantic, p. 682.

¹⁵³. Told to the writer by W. H. Durr.

¹⁵⁴. Elwood Call Leader, June 3, 1924, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵. Ibid., June 6, 1924, p. 1.

At a parade held in Elwood before the primary the Klan took occasion to campaign against Mayor Lew Shank of Indianapolis, who was an anti-Klan candidate for the nomination for governor on the Republican ticket.¹⁵⁶ Publicity in the Call Leader to the Klan slate of candidates included both Democrats and Republicans.¹⁵⁷ Opponents in campaigns for local office were sometimes members of the Klan; consequently, a Klansman would be victorious over another Klansman.¹⁵⁸ There was little or no evidence to show that either major political party was favored by the Klan in local elections.

An exception to this impartiality occurred at the voting place in Boone Township. A Republican appeared with a stack of handbills shortly after the polls were opened, and he placed a stone on them to keep them from blowing away. A Democrat asked what they were and learned that they were lists of the candidates endorsed by the Klan which had been delivered the night before. Lee Montgomery, the Democratic candidate for trustee, examined the list and upon finding that no Democrats were endorsed, kicked the stone off and let the bills blow away.¹⁵⁹

156. Ibid., May 5, 1924, p. 1.

157. Ibid., October 29, 1924, p. 1.

158., Ibid., November 5, 1924, p. 1.

159. Told to the writer by Lee Montgomery.

A story was told that a certain county commissioner, a Klansman, refused to purchase materials for the county from a business concern in which an Elwood bank held an interest. Upon the commissioner's refusal, one of the bank officials campaigned against him because he was a member of the Klan. The influence of the banker may be open to question but the incumbent's opponent, who was also a Klansman, won the election.¹⁶⁰

There was no lack of dishonorable men throughout the United States who worked their way into the leadership of the Klan. In Indiana Stephenson was the most notorious of such leaders. The Stephenson scandal, as a result of his murder of an Indianapolis girl, caused many Elwood Klansmen to desert the organization. He did not testify at the trial because he had been assured that the jury was rigged and would not convict. Also, Governor Jackson owed his office to the Klan leader and would immediately grant a pardon if necessary. However, the jury did convict and the judge sentenced Stephenson to life imprisonment.¹⁶¹ He was never pardoned.

The events which took place on "Klan Day" at the chautauqua in Noblesville, where Stephenson was being

160. Told to the writer by Earl Trick

161. Martin, Indiana, pp. 196-98.

held for trial, brought home to the Klansmen in Elwood the unsavory character of Klan leadership. On August 1, 1925, handbills were distributed in Elwood announcing that Sunday, August 9, had been designated as "Klan Day."¹⁶² At this meeting Imperial Wizard Evans and other Klan officials made speeches. The city was under the complete domination of the Klan and hooded men controlled street intersections. Threats were made on Stephenson's life if he disclosed the Klan's political secrets. It seems that there were many people interested in silencing Stephenson.¹⁶³

In the words of one Elwood former Klansman "the rough necks and crooks spoiled the Klan."¹⁶⁴ With the loose accounting methods in use by the Klan, the opportunity for graft and embezzlement was ideal for unprincipled men. There was no lack of such men who seized this opportunity to take advantage of the situation. The Klan had been organized in Elwood scarcely six months when the local Kleagle, Irwin R. Hignett, became involved in financial difficulties of questionable character. The state Kleagle was obliged to make good a considerable amount of money.¹⁶⁵ Hignett went to London, Ontario, where

¹⁶². Elwood Call Leader, August 1, 1925, p. 1.

¹⁶³. Robert A. Butler, So They Framed Stephenson (Huntington, Indiana, The Author, 1940), pp. 137-38.

¹⁶⁴. Told to the writer by the Reverend Al Jones.

¹⁶⁵. Elwood Call Leader, March 19, 1923, p. 1.

he made public the secrets of the Klan in a series of newspaper articles.¹⁶⁶ He was a man of shady character. One informant helped the woman who was living with Hignett to pack and leave town. That informant recalled that the woman had eighteen pairs of shoes and an expensive, luxurious wardrobe. The Kleagle was the envy of other Klansmen, as several men in the White City Klan No. 19 coveted his lucrative position.¹⁶⁷

A former Klan official stated that someone sold the band uniforms of the Elwood Klan but no one knew what happened to the money received from the sale.

Evidence of disaffection within the Order began to appear on the pages of the local paper. Early in 1924, a minister who had been banished from the Klan, spoke to a crowd of three hundred Klansmen in neighboring Tipton. He predicted that the Klan would disappear within a year or so because of the machinations of Imperial Wizard Evans. The leaders of the Klan only wanted the money of members according to the speaker. He urged them to renounce the Klan and join the Knights of the Flaming Sword, a new organization led by the deposed Emperor Simmons.¹⁶⁸

In addition to the Stephenson faction, other rival organizations of the Ku Klux Klan appeared and took members

166. Ibid., March 24, 1924, p. 1.

167. Told to the writer by Chester Thomas.

168. Elwood Call Leader, February 29, 1924, p. 1.

from it. The Independent Klan of America, formed by seceding Klansmen, maintained headquarters in Muncie. The new Klan affiliated with the Knights of the Flaming Sword. D. C. Stephenson and the Reverend Daisy Barr were accused of mishandling Klan funds by officials of the Independent Klan.¹⁶⁹

The Klan lost influence when it failed to produce the laws it had promised. In Indiana the Klan promised a law to abolish private schools and thus force all children to attend the public schools. It promised to require all teachers in the public schools to be graduates of the public schools, reducing the possibility of further Catholic influence.

The Indiana Klan leaders had promised to establish a truly "100 per cent American" university for the benefit of Klansmen and their children. Announcements in the press had stated that the Klan had completed negotiations for taking over Valparaiso University. After the elapse of some time and no action had been taken by the Klan, the members began to ask questions about the funds which had been raised for the particular project. The leaders finally came up with the answer that because of a legal technicality, the Klan could not contribute to the University. The lawyer, who came to the rescue, boasted of a thirty thousand

169. Ibid., March 25, 1924, p. 1.

dollar fee for his services. Many members of the Klan lost interest and paid no more dues after this exposure.¹⁷⁰

Cedric Tubbs, an Elwood Klansman, stated that "bushels of money" was collected at the big Kokomo meeting for the purpose of establishing a university. Nothing further was ever reported concerning the disposition of this money.

Organizations in opposition to the Klan appeared. In June of 1924, the Call Leader published an article concerning an order that was organized in Linnsburg, Indiana, known as the Militant Minute Men of Indiana where two hundred men were initiated at the organizational meeting. The object of the order was to offset the influence of the Klan in the 1924 election. The Call Leader stated that there was "money in it for someone."¹⁷¹ Another organization called the Order of Good Indians was formed in various parts of Indiana. It was said to have been anti-Klan and anti-prohibition. An organizer, who was to receive "so much per for each member," operated in Kokomo. Although this was an anti-Klan order, it was refused the use of the Knights of Columbus hall in that city.¹⁷²

The more intelligent members of the Klan withdrew from the Order when they realized that the Klan had no constructive program. Any organization must have some program on which

170. Moore, In Independent, p. 474.

171. Elwood Call Leader, June 21, 1924, p. 1.

172. Ibid., June 27, 1924, p. 1.

to build if it is to flourish and maintain itself in society. It must offer concrete proposals for solving the real problems of the day. The Klan offered no such program. In fact, "the Klan could not point to a single great constructive movement which it has set on foot."¹⁷³

Before enumerating other reasons for the decline of the Ku Klux Klan it is helpful to recall the general conditions of the United States at the time of the Klan's rapid growth. There was the intense nationalism and the fear and distrust of all things foreign. The Big Red Scare was still fresh in the minds of the people. From across the country there was agitation for the restriction of immigration. Finally, the country was suffering from the post war depression.

By 1925 these conditions were no longer of commanding concern. The post-war fear of foreign influence had subsided. Calvin Coolidge was safely in the White House and the country was returning to normalcy. It was clear that America would remain free of foreign political commitments, and the Big Red Scare subsided. The public realized that there had never been sufficient cause for the panic that swept the country. Communism had not marched over Europe so it became apparent that it would not cross the Atlantic and engulf the United States.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³. Mecklin, The Klan, p. 240.

¹⁷⁴. Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 76.

The immigration restriction legislation of 1924 tended to allay the fears of the Klansmen that hordes of aliens would further pollute the strain of native stock. Economic conditions throughout the country were much improved over the post-war depression. On February 14, 1924, the Elwood Call Leader published a report from Washington on the economic conditions in Indiana, mentioning especially, the increase in mining and in steel production. The Call Leader also stated that there was no surplus of labor and that all local plants were operating at full capacity. The Klan warnings that foreigners and Negroes would put native Americans out of jobs were empty.

The life in the small towns and rural communities was not as monotonous by the end of the decade as it had been at the beginning. The gap between living standards in the small town and the city was narrowing. The widespread construction of paved highways, the increase in ownership of automobiles, and the novelty of the radio, all imparted a sense of well being. It was no longer necessary for men to go to the Klan meetings, to engage in night riding, or to burn fiery crosses in order to escape boredom.

The last recorded act of the White City Klan No. 19 was the sale of the Klan building to the Benevolent Order of Americans in 1929. Some of the former Klansmen interviewed were members of the latter organization, although this fact

was never revealed. In 1933 the property passed into private hands when it was sold to Hugh C. McKinn of Miami County.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵. Madison County, Recorder's Office, Transfer Records, 1929; 1933.

CONCLUSION

Nativism is deeply rooted in large segments of American society. It lies dormant for long periods of time, only to burst forth during periods of great social upheaval, which usually follow high peaks of immigration. In the 1920's nativism appeared in the form of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Elwood community provided the ideal milieu for the growth of the Klan. Here was an area where a high percentage of the population was composed of native born, white stock and a small, stable Catholic element. On the basis of the conditions in this community, it would seem that the intensity of Klan activity varied inversely with the number of its avowed enemies.

In completely rural Boone Township, the theory that the Klan did not thrive in farming areas is refuted. As a matter of fact, a higher proportion of the population in Boone Township belonged to the Klan than in the remaining parts of the area studied.

Although the Klan attracted a large following in Elwood, it did not offer a program that could withstand investigation. The minutes of the business meetings were burned. The membership list is the only tangible record left of an organization

that once included 3,400 members. Former members would like to forget that they had affiliated with the Order. Some realized their mistake, others were content to blame human frailty for the disruption of the Klan and had no criticism of the Klan itself.

The Elwood Klan showed evidence of dissension after it entered politics. It is extremely difficult for a fraternal order to participate in the rough and tumble tactics of party politics and at the same time maintain harmony. It may be possible to retain a degree of harmony for a time, but sooner or later, rifts develop within the order.

A secret organization which enters into the everyday life of the community cannot maintain its secrecy. Klansmen could remain unidentified in a parade, but when they went to their own hall they could not escape detection. The Klan Bible school was open to all children of certain ages, but it cannot be assumed that any except Klansmen's children attended. When the Klan lost its secrecy it lost much of its strength.

Of all the appeals of the Klan it must be admitted that the fraternal appeal was the most lasting. After the Klan lost its secrecy and strength it lingered on as a fraternal or social club for the entire family. However, a permanent fraternal club cannot be built on hatred, prejudice, and intolerance.

Former Klansmen gave various opinions as to the cause of the Klan's growth as well as to the cause of its subsidence. Only a few questioned the tenets of the organization. The attitudes which were present in the 1920's still exist to some extent. It seems safe to conclude that, after the passing of sufficient time to dull the memory of the Klan, nativism may reappear in some form.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Personal interviews contributed the most information concerning local opinion of the cause, activities, and disruption of the Klan. Approximately forty individuals were interviewed, the majority of whom were former acquaintances of the writer. The writer was introduced to some by a friend who was a former member of the Order. Many interviews were unsatisfactory because of the guarded answers to questions.

The membership list of the White City Klan No. 19 was made available by a former official upon the condition that no names be revealed. This list was arranged in numerical order and the date of each member's payment was entered after his name. There was no date following the charter members' names, only the statement as to whom, and where the payments were made. The word "banished" was written in red ink following the names of six or seven members. Transfers of membership to and from other Klans were noted. This list, which included all members through December, 1923, was kept in a moldy, leather, loose-leaf notebook.

The Elwood Call Leader, the local daily newspaper, was invaluable as a chronicler of the public activities

of the Klan in the area. The Call Leader had no editorials so the news items constituted the only means of interpreting its editorial policy. From the frequency of items appearing in the paper it would indicate that Klan coverage was quite complete.

The Transfer Records, in the Recorder's Office in Anderson furnished information concerning real estate transactions. The names of the individuals who were empowered to act for the various orders were listed therein. The House Journal of the Indiana General Assembly, 1925, revealed the record of the members of that body, although the Journal did not include debates.

Earl Trick, now living in Frankton, loaned his copy of the Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Atlanta, Ga., Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1921).

Personal letters were received from: A. W. Konold, of Winona Lake, Indiana; W. H. Durr, Evelyn Stickler, and the Reverend T. J. Hammes, all of Elwood; W. G. Johnson, of Anderson, Indiana.

Emerson H. Loucks, The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, Telegraph Press, 1936), is the only study of the Klan known to the writer which has been published since the 1920's. It gives an excellent background of nativism and a detailed account of the Klan in Pennsylvania, based on personal interviews, court records, and official Klan documents.

It is a well documented, scholarly monograph. J. J. Metterville, comp., The Centennial History of Madison County, 2 vol. (Anderson, Indiana, Historian's Association, 1925), was especially valuable for the history of the area.

John S. Martin, Indiana (New York, Alfred A. Knopf Company, 1947), devoted one chapter to Stephenson and the Klan in the state. Martin also traces briefly the economic development of Indiana. John M. Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924), is an undocumented, psychological study of the appeal of the Klan. He gives an historical account of the Klan and discusses the ancient hates and prejudices of the American people.

William G. Shepherd, "The Fiery Double Cross," Collier's, vol. 82 (July 7, 1923); Morton Harrison, "Gentlemen from Indiana," (Atlantic Monthly, vol. 141 (May, 1923); Samuel Taylor Moore, "A Klan Kingdom Collapses," Independent, vol. 113 (December 6, 1924), all gave popular treatment of Klan activity in Indiana. Periodicals of the 1920's contain numerous articles on the Klan in the United States.

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